***God’s Holiness

7LW-009***

**God is Satisfied**

"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." 2 Timothy 3:16-17

"He said to them, 'Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites. As it is written, "'THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME. "'BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.'" Matthew 15:7-9

"Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men." Mark 7:8

"But blessed are your eyes, because they see, and your ears because they hear. For truly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desire to see what you see, and did not see it; and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it." Matthew 13:16-17

This morning we direct your attention to the 7 last words segment number 9.

**Sin Created a Wall**

The sin of Adam in Eden immediately created a terrible, impassable wall separating a holy God from lost humanity, making it impossible for anyone to come to God for salvation. The Lord Jesus Christ on the cross died in sinful man's place to remove this wall of separation, and he announced that it had been demolished by the words "It is finished." By faith alone, in Jesus Christ alone, as one's savior, the lost sinner can now cross over from the unsaved side of Satan to be reconciled to God. Everyone today in the world is on one side or the other of this demolished wall. And I say demolished because the wall is no longer there as a barrier. It has been removed. The question is whether the individual chooses to cross over by an act of faith in Christ and accepting him as personal savior. So everyone is on one side or the other of this demolished wall, and they live accordingly in thought, word and deed.

I heard this past week that the entertainer Cher says that she is now in communication with her dead former husband, Sonny Bono. That is the wrong side of the wall, and that's what's practiced on the wrong side. Mrs. Clinton says that she is in touch with Eleanor Roosevelt for advisement and guidance. That's an action on the wrong side of the wall.

**One Side of the Wall - Joy, Happiness, and Music Characterize Heaven**

The God and eternal life side of the wall, which is heaven, is characterized, interestingly enough, by joy and music. That is one of the characteristics of being on the right side of the wall, on God's side, the heavenly side. Perhaps you never noticed that heaven is a place of instrumentation, instrumental music, and vocal music. Revelation 5:8-10 indicate that to us about heaven. Revelation 5:8, "And when He [Jesus Christ] had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, having each one a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. "They sang a new song saying 'Worthy art Thou to take the book and break its seals; for Thou was slain and didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. "And Thou has made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth." This is the beginning of the book of the Revelation and a preview of what is coming in human history when Jesus Christ takes up the scroll that has seven seals. No one has been found who is qualified to break the seals because it takes the perfect person of God to do that. One seal is broken at a time. And as it is broken, great things happen upon this earth in the Tribulation era. All the people in heaven are so glad. Sin is finally going to get its comeuppance. The devil is finally going to be brought to his knees. So song bursts out with these people who are in heaven observing this act upon the part of the Lord Jesus Christ. These four living creatures which are cherubim type angels, standing as honor guards around the throne of God, and the 24 elders which represent the church in Heaven. Music, Happiness, etc., are associated with Heaven.

Revelation 14:2-3 also says "And I heard a voice from Heaven, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder, and the voice which I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps. And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one could learn the song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who had been purchased from the Earth." Here again, the joy and happiness that characterizes heaven. It's a wonderful place. It's a marvelous place. Therefore, the joy of singing and of instrumental music is to be heard everywhere.

In Revelation 15:2-3, "And I saw, as it were, a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had come off victorious from the beast and from his image and from the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, holding harps of God. And they sang the song of Moses the bond-servant of God and the song of the Lamb, saying, 'Great and marvelous are Thy works, O Lord God, the Almighty; Righteous and true are Thy ways, Thou King of the nations. "Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify thy name? For Thou alone art holy; For ALL THE NATIONS WILL COME AND WORSHIP BEFORE THEE, FOR THY RIGHTEOUS ACTS HAVE BEEN REVEALED." The song of Moses is the song that Moses sang after the victorious crossing of the Red Sea. They stood on the bank, looking down as the waters of that ocean area closed upon the troops of Pharaoh. And Moses sang that great song of victory. The sea of glass represents that sea in front of the Temple of God, that platform area. And here they stand before the temple in heaven again; happy to be there, place of great joy, and singing. That's what it means to be on God's side of this wall that has separated a holy God from a sinful man.

**The Other Side of the Wall - No Joy, No Happiness, No Peace**

Now, the other side of the story is that Satan and eternal death side of the wall, which is the Lake of Fire, is characterized by no joy. The Bible never indicates that there's any music or any singing, not a bit of happiness, not even a little bit of relief, not even a little bit of peace. It's a very grim side: no happiness, no music, no joy.

Revelation 19:20, says "And the beast," the antichrist, "was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone." There is no joy. There is no happiness in the Lake of Fire. It's a place of enormous suffering. Revelation 20:10, "And the devil who deceived them [that is the nations] was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast [the antichrist] and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever." Yes, there will be tears, there will be pain, there'll be gritting of teeth. There'll be enormous lack of any fulfillment as human beings, as creatures of God. It'll be misery all the way. No one's going to be singing there. That is what is characterized by man on the Satan side of the wall. That is the two great contrasts.

**The Consequence of the Wrong Side of the Wall**

So the human songbirds on earth now who are on the wrong side of the wall are simply going to croak after death. They'll be big here, but they ain't going to have any heart to sing when they get out there. That's what's bad about leaving this life without having crossed over from the Satan side to the God's side of this demolished wall. And all it takes is somebody to tell you how to do it and your willingness to choose to do it. Relative to salvation, those who do it their way, as most people do, will end up in eternity on the wrong side of the demolished wall.

Wayne Cross and I went to a huge printing establishment here in Irving this past week in order to make arrangements to have ten-thousand new covers printed up with a revised picture for the evangelism brochure. More and more we're finding, as we have field tested this particular production, that we look upon it with a good deal more awesome respect because it's doing its job. People are reporting to us being saved after finding a clear presentation of the gospel without all the nonsense, without all the confusion, without all the misdirection that is usually given. This brochure is straight biblical here's the way to do it. It is of sufficient length that it gives you enough information to guide you thoughtfully through the fact that you're getting information that carries the authority of Almighty God upon it, because we take the trouble to give a little confirmation of the authority of the Scriptures as the book of God. A two-thousand dollar gift that one of our families gave us has opened the door for all of us. When we get these out, this new edition, we hope you will become more zealous agents of witnessing than ever before with the easiest way possible.

This time we're going to put the church name in it. This time we're going to put a little notation on the back page that you may write or call in to a number to get a tape catalog or further Bible studies. So we're going to open the door in another direction. We have had this revised picture for several years while we're using up the old covers and it is much clearer, much more defined on the very details of it. It's standing there on a little rack on the long table, and you might like to go by and look at it and the areas that I thought should be revised to make it a little clearer picture of coming into the sheepfold of God and walking onto the green pastures of happiness out toward the glory land. It all came out in a very splendid way.

**The Gospel in a Nutshell**

Now, the man in charge, as we dealt with him working on making the arrangements for this printing, he and three other men were standing by who were going to be involved in this, he asked as he looked at the picture, "Why are there so many people on one road and so few on the other?" Talk about the walking into the buzz saw of the gospel! I said, "You want to know why there are so many on one road and so few on the other. Is that what you want to know? You want to know that? Is that what you want to know?" No. I just said, "Well, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the God-man, the savior of the world, said, 'No man comes unto the Father but by Him.'" I was giving him John 14:6. "He's the only way to heaven. He says, 'I am the way, the truth, and life, No one comes to the Father but through Me.' Secondly, the problem is that most of the human race does not recognize that it is condemned before God. But the Word of God says all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Nobody matches up to the perfection required to go to heaven." I was telling him Romans 3:23 there. And I pointed out to him that the Bible says that "the wages of sin is death, eternal death, separation from God and the Lake of Fire. But the gift of God is eternal life in heaven." I was giving him Romans 6:23 there.

And I said, "Now the problem is that most of the human race rejects Jesus Christ as the savior of the world as the only way to heaven. They have their own gods and they have their own plans of salvation. They do not accept God's way. Therefore, on one occasion, the Lord Jesus Christ pointed out what this picture is trying to convey." I directed his attention to Matthew 7:13-14. I said, "Jesus says that the gate is wide and the road is broad that leads to eternal destruction and many are upon it. But He said the gate is small and the road is narrow that leads to life and few are those who find it." I say "What the Bible tells us is," and while I'm doing all this, these other three men are leaning in, listening intently while this is going on. I say, "The Bible says 'for by grace are you saved,' you see, that's a means, a gift from God, by faith, faith in Jesus Christ as your personal savior, taking Him at His Word that He has paid for your sin on the cross. That salvation says it's 'not from anything of yourself, not of works, lest any man should boast.'" So I said, "The bottom line is believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, Acts 16:31."

So this was a quiet sober moment there in this huge block long print shop. I said "When I come back tomorrow to see the proofs, I'll bring you the whole brochure with all the contents in it. You can read this in detail." "Oh, good," he said, "OK." So the next day when Mr. Cross and I went to look at the first print-out of what the new brochure will look like, the proof copies, I gave each of these 4 men one of the old brochures with the full story inside. These would be a good four people for you to pray for, to pray that they might believe and see through that inadvertent remark why so many are on one road, and so few on the other; because the world is blinded by Satan.

**Don't Pervert the Gospel**

People are blinded naturally by their old sin nature. Until somebody brings them the gospel and the Holy Spirit removes those blinders off their eyes, they'll never be saved. Isn't it sad that so many people who are in the business of giving the gospel pervert the method? They move it from believing God's word to save on the basis of His Son's death to something that is a work? They say "Receive Him" or some act of your own, but you can only receive Him by believing Him. "Invite Him into your heart." But He cannot come into your life and make you believe in Him. "Give Him your life." But you cannot give Him your life. It's a garbage pile. He doesn't want it. He wants to clean it up. All of these are pop Christianity phrases. And these are sincere Christians. If that doesn't put you on guard against the devil and falling into the trap of deception, then you're not much of a thinking person.

Those four men probably, for all I know, we're all on the war wrong side of the demolished wall and they are all desperately in need of salvation that Christ can offer them. That picture spoke a thousand words to them. I finished by saying "On the backside of the cover, you'll see the problem." He turned it over and read that phrase, that Scripture from Proverbs, "There is a way that seems right unto man, but the end thereof is the way of death." So I said, "You have to do it the Bible way, but most people are on the wrong road, the human way."

**The Wall Between Man and God**

**First Block**

So here are the blocks in the wall that we have looked at thus far that Jesus Christ has removed for us. First of all, the lost are slaves to Satan, they are in his slave market of sin. The slave market of sin has been removed by redemption; Christ paid the price to redeem them. The lost are morally guilty. They are guilty of moral guilt. They are spiritually dead. But the issue is that they are morally guilty and therefore they cannot go to Heaven. This was removed by Jesus Christ through expiation. They're their moral guilt has been removed. That price has been paid, but they are still spiritually dead.

**Second Block**

So the next block that had to be removed is their spiritual death. Jesus Christ did this by regeneration.

**Third Block**

The next block that we look at that separates man (and each one gets worse than the one before), is the holiness of God. This finishes off any human being to go to Heaven. Unless you are as good as Jesus Christ in terms of holiness, absolute righteous perfection, you cannot go to Heaven. People think that they are going to go to heaven by doing the best they can, and even though there's a little dirty fringes upon them, God will accept him. No, this is not the way God works. It has to be absolutely perfect in every respect.

**The Divine Attributes of God**

Now, how on earth can a godless, sinful human being become as holy as God himself? First of all, I direct your attention to the divine attributes that constitute the character of God. We refer to this as the essence of God. Ten basic features summarize it. Absolute sovereignty, God is in control of everything; He is the king. God is perfect righteousness, absolute righteousness; that is, He is nothing but goodness, there is no evil in Him. God is justice; that means He has unwavering fairness. God is love; the word for a mental attitude free of ill will. God is eternal life; life which has no beginning and no ending. God is omniscient; He knows all things. God has omnipresence; He is present everywhere the same time. God has omnipotence; He has all power. God is immutable; He is the same forever, He never changes. (This is one of the great contrasts with the devil. The devil makes promises to you. You say I'll make a deal with you and you follow the devil, and he'll break his promise because Satan is not immutable.) Finally, God is veracity; He has absolute truth. There are no lies.

It is well for you to be able to rattle off these 10 features that constitute the essence of God, because whatever problem you get in life, you will find that if you remind yourselves of the character of God it will be a great deal of comfort, a great deal of stability, a great deal of orientation, a great deal of knowing that you're going to be carried through. You will be carried through because of the character of God.

**God's Attributes Never Violate One Another**

God's attributes however, never violate one another, nor are they antagonistic to each other. Psalms 85:10 points out how harmonious are all these facets of the character of God? Psalms 85:10 says "Lovingkindness and truth have met together; Righteousness and peace have kissed each other." So God, who is perfect righteousness, cannot do something that would violate His veracity, that would violate His love, that would violate His justice. God is absolute sovereignty. He can do anything He wants to do, but He cannot contradict His own character of holiness. The attributes of holiness and justice are joined together to constitute the Holiness of God. When we speak about God being holy, we are saying that He has absolute righteousness and that He is perfect justice.

**Man's Sin violates God's Holiness**

Man's sin has violated this holiness, which in Romans 3:23 is referred to as the glory of God. In 1 Samuel 15:23, the holiness of God is recognized in these words, 1 Samuel 15:23, "For rebellion is as the sin of divination, [witchcraft, the occult world. Rebellion against God is like going into occultism.] And insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He has also rejected you from being King." God's holiness will not tolerate the occult, rebellion, insubordination, or rejection of his word. He is true to himself. His word is placed, the Scriptures say, above His name, the name savior God. His word is supreme, and that will not be violated. Therefore he cannot do something that would violate his character.

Now, if you're a young person here this morning, I think you should have caught what I said here, this first sentence, might be the best thing for which you came to this service. Rebellion is as a sin of divination. From time to time, I see the sneaky little rebellion among our teenagers here and there. When we get into an operation like summer camp, we're in a high powered situation. We're in a high demand integrity situation on the part of everybody. We don't have a police action. All we need is somebody who decides that they're going to be a sneaky rebel against the policies, and the rules, and the procedures, and how they are to conduct themselves. And that is why sometimes I have to send people home from camp.

Rebellion is a serious thing. When you rebel against constituted authority, (authority which is acting upon principles of righteousness and integrity and compatibility with a moral code of God), it is the same as getting into spirit worship, into divination, into witchcraft. Because when you do not obey the authorities of God and God Himself, there's only one other authority to obey. That other authority is your sin nature who is governed by Satan. That's why the Bible says when you disobey the authorities that God has placed in charge and disobey God Himself, then you are obeying Satan and you are obeying the Sin Nature that Satan manipulates to his ends. Insubordination to God is the same as sin and idolatry. If you will not obey God, then you're obeying something else in your life that is your idol that has become your God. So the next time you want to be a sneaky rebel, to sneak around, to use double dealing language to deceive your parents and to say one thing while you mean another thing, please remember this verse. Another one of prophets says, for the youth who acts like this, may the eagles pluck out his eyes. That's pretty severe talk. That's an analogy for how severe it is to be disobedient to the authorities that God has placed over your life. That applies to young people, applies to the adults as well.

So God's righteousness demands absolute righteousness for man. God's justice requires the penalty of death for sin. That's His Holiness. So the holiness of God prevents Him from being lenient with sin or the sinner. Satisfaction is required to show His abhorrence for sin.

God still loves man in spite of the violation of divine holiness. God Himself is love, as we have said; and He must be true to His own character, which is mental attitude goodwill. The expression of divine love, however, is restricted by violating His Holiness. He cannot express his love when His Holiness is standing in a way. That holiness has to be properly dealt with before He is free to express His love.

**Why Human Efforts Always Fail**

Human efforts, however, to satisfy the holiness of God will always fail. You cannot satisfy the justice of God. You cannot pay the price; you don't have it. You cannot be absolutely perfect. You do not have the capacity for absolute righteousness. Human efforts will never satisfy. Adam and Eve tried right from the beginning; you know what they did! They created clothing. They were now ashamed of each other in their nakedness. And they were the only 2 that were there. Now, suddenly, where they should have been open and happy before God in freedom, they were now ashamed. So they were quickly covering themselves up because they knew God could see them. And they were trying to cover their unrighteousness by this human effort. It didn't work. Cain tried to cover up his unrighteousness by bringing a best of his produce from the field instead of a blood sacrifice. That didn't work. People today are still inventing their own ways to get to God, to satisfy God's holiness. None of them are good enough. Isaiah 64:6 says all of our righteousnesses are as filthy rags in his sight. And Romans 3:10, says "THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE."

But it's even worse than that. To try on your own to satisfy the righteousness of God is to put yourself in really big trouble, because that's a human work effort and Romans 4:4 points this out. Romans 4:4, "Now to the one who works, his wages is not reckoned as favor, but as what is due." If you are going to come to God with your human works, God is going to give you the wages for your effort, and the wages for your effort is punishment in the Lake of Fire. So all the nice moral people who are running around, piling up one human good work on top of another, being so pleased that maybe God will treat them nicer and will take care of them, don't realize that they are getting as much condemnation and punishment for those human good works produced by the sin nature as the guy who is in the dregs of corrupt living, because it all is tainted by the sin nature. Human good or sin, it's all under the category of evil with God. So the greater the human good you produce, the greater will be your torment in the Lake of Fire.

**God's Way**

However, God had a way to solve this dilemma. He wanted to express His love but His Holiness wouldn't let Him do it. So He had a plan of salvation that was going to be a grace plan alone. He would make all the necessary provisions to remove the wall of separation. He would demolish this block of His holiness Himself. So His eternal life for sinful man depends entirely on who and what God is, and not on man in any way whatsoever.

To the man that I was speaking to, the fellow who is in charge at the print shop, when I said to him "most people think that they get to Heaven on a basis of how good they are," I saw one of those glints in the eye and a little movement of the head as he looked up and what his mind was saying, "Well, yeah." And I said, "But that's wrong!" Now I saw the inquisitive look, because that is the normal thing. I suspect I have an inkling of what religious system he is part of; at the heart of it is being good, and works, and earning your way.

**God's Plan Preserves His Holiness**

God's plan preserves His holiness, preserves His perfect righteousness and justice, and yet gives the sinner eternal life. That was the problem, how to bring a sinner into Heaven without compromising the holiness of God. God's righteousness declared the penalty of death for sin, and His justice required that it be paid. God's grace plan is so certain of success. There was no question about it that even before Jesus Christ made the provision, centuries rolled by, people who were trusting in God for salvation died. Yet there had been no covering, no provision made for their sin. But God said, "Don't worry, not to worry. I have a plan that's a sure fire success. It's going to be a sure fire success because man will not be involved in it. We of the Godhead will carry it out Ourselves entirely." For this reason, God could, in full righteousness, extend eternal life to people for whose sins there had been no provision, no provision for death. The penalty had not been paid. The Holiness of God had not been satisfied. He took them in on credit, and He said, "My Holiness will be satisfied against you." Romans 3:25-26 says "Whom God displayed publicly, [Jesus Christ], as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, [God's holiness], because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus Christ." Romans 3:24 says, "being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, "whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith." That is what was coming. But it took centuries. But God said, My plan will cover and satisfy My Holiness. I will be just and I will justify the sinner at the same time.

You must realize that this is absolutely the hardest thing that God had to do for a human being. There was nothing that was more impossible for God to do: to justify, that is to impute absolute righteousness to the credit of a sinful human being, and for God himself at the same time not to have sin in doing so. That is an absolute impossibility any way you look at it in human terms. If God came up with a solution, and He did, that solved that problem, He can give absolute righteousness to a lost sinner and yet Himself not sin in the process of doing it because He preserves His Holiness through having paid the price of death for that sin, then what in the world is there in your life that you think is so big that He can't carry you through? What is there in your life that you're going to start whining and belly-aching and moping around about how bad things are, how bad you feel, how oppressed you are, how much there is upon you? Just thank God that you got another breath to take. Sometimes he brings signals into our life to wake us up, that the next breath may not be coming. But as long as that next breath is coming, he's telling you, I still have it. I still have a use for you. I still think you can perform your mission. You're off track now, but I think you can grow above that and get on track. I think you can still get there to start getting your cotton-picking eyes off yourself and get them on Me because I'm the one who's going to carry you through. I've done the hardest thing for you. I've qualified you for Heaven. Do you think I cannot qualify you emotionally, spiritually, mentally, volitionally, financially, socially to do what I need you to do? I can qualify you on every account. The rest is easy. After having arranged for you to be able to live in My holy presence.

So all that we can do as human beings is one simple thing. Romans 6:23 says we accept it. We receive the provision that God gives us. "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ, our Lord." God's sure-fire plan is symbolized by the clothing of the animal skins which he gave to Adam and Eve. He stripped them of their human plan, the fig leaves, and He gave them animal skins which were secured in a process of a blood sacrifice. He put that on them, and says, now wear this. This will be the symbol of a temporary covering for your sin that I will, through My Son in the future, bring to a permanent conclusion. In the meantime, I give you eternal life on credit. So here is this holiness of God and one facet of that holiness is this business of satisfying the justice of God. The justice of God says you sin, you die.

**The Meaning of Justice**

The penalty of sin is death. What's the solution? The solution is that wonderful, magnificent word, propitiation. Propitiation - big word - simple meaning - satisfaction. You get a speeding ticket, you stand before the judge, and that judge has a penalty for you for the law you broke. That judge, representing the law, the law has to be propitiated. It has to be satisfied. So you pay your fine. The law is satisfied. You're free. But the judge and the law have to be satisfied by the penalty being paid. That is justice.

So God's plan has solved the problem by propitiation. The magnificent statement of that is in the first book of John. 1 John 2:2, "and He Himself, [the Lord Jesus Christ] is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, [not for only those of us who are Christians] but also for those of the whole world." Those of the whole world. Those who once had a voice of song on this earth, and who have now croaked in Hades in the compartment of torments, because they were on the wrong side of the wall when they died. Even the justice of God against that person has been satisfied. That is not the issue. The issue is not believing in the Lord Jesus Christ and coming across this wall.

So the justice part has been removed by the propitiation of God Himself. The Bible tells us that the Lord Jesus Christ was declared to be the propitiation for our sins. He has been the satisfaction. He appeased the divine wrath against us. The Father's justice, satisfied by the work of the Son on the cross, burying our sins, paying the penalty for our death, was demonstrated by raising the Son back to life. The satisfaction of divine justice covers the whole world, even the unsaved humanity. We call that Unlimited Atonement. Jesus Christ died for everybody.

Now, here's something interesting, by the way. This word propitiation looks like this in a Greek language. That's the word "hilasterion" - satisfaction. In Romans 3:25, "Whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation..." That's the same word hilasterion as the word we have in 1 John 2-2. He is the satisfaction for our sins.

Notice something else. The blood of Jesus Christ, representing his death on the cross, is our satisfaction. How is God, the holiness of God, the Justice of God, the factor of His Holiness, satisfied by blood covering the penalty? Now notice Hebrews 9:5. Hebrews 9:5 "And above it" [speaking of the Ark of the Covenant, that box the holiest item in the holy of holies of the Jewish Tabernacle, above it, this box, were the cherubim, in there was an angel, a terrible angel, with outspread, wings touching one another, and the angels were looking down upon the top of this box.] "And above it [the ark] "the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat; [which was the lid on the box] but of these things we cannot speak now." Guess what word is mercy seat - hilasterion - same word. So what is he saying here? He's saying 'hilasterion' is mercy seat. The angels are looking down upon the satisfaction of God toward sin. This oblong box that constituted the Ark of the Covenant was covered with gold. It was made of wood representing the humanity of Christ symbolically. It was covered with gold, representing the deity Of Jesus Christ. So the box represented the God-man messiah coming. The Jews understood that. That's why it was such a holy thing. That's why it was such a terrible thing when they took it into battle and lost it to the Philistines.

**The Contents of the Ark of the Covenant and Their Significance**

The Ark in the Holy of Holies that the angels were looking at through the mercy seat, the hilasterion, the propitiation lid cover, contains certain things that symbolize man's evil, sin. There was a pot full of the manna that they ate in the wilderness where they complained to God, whined to God about the food that He had given them to eat, what they needed to eat, the food they needed. He gave them the manna every morning on the ground to pick up to eat. This pot of Manna reminded them of their lack of faith in God and their complaining to Him about what He was going to do to them now that He had led them out from Egypt into freedom.

Then there was the time that Cora and one of the ladies, Moses sister, joined in the rebellion against Moses. Who are you Moses? You're walking around here telling us all what to do. You're telling us that you know, and you're guiding us. This is the will of God. This is the mind of God. Just who are you? We're as smart as you are. We know how to study the Bible. We don't need you to be telling us this is what it means. Guiding us and telling us is what God does. We have opinions about this, too. Well, sister got leprosy and God said, take this dead stick, this almond branch. Put it in here and I'll show you. I'll give you the sign, if it buds, if it burst into life, this is my sign that Moses speaks for me. So Aaron, the High Priest, got the rod. Sure enough, next morning it budded. Cora, and his family, and all the princes and leaders who had joined him in the rebellion suddenly found themselves in one of those monstrous earthquakes where the ground opened up. They, their families, their tents, their belongings, everything they had, 250 princesses alone dropped into this hole and then it closed over them. That's why that has been a popular feeding ground for underground animals to this day. They learned what it means to violate the holiness of God.

Then there were the 2 tables of stone upon which Moses had written the moral code and no sooner came down from the mountain than he found them worshiping one of the golden calf animals from Israel. So the Law representing the holiness of God was again violated and broken.

So these angels are looking through the propitiation, which is the lid called the Mercy Seat on the Ark of the Covenant, which covers these terrible symbols of sin. You see the picture? The symbol that God has made it possible to be forgiven with what these symbols of sin represented. His Holiness has been preserved. The Hebrew word is kapporeth, and that means a place of covering, or the word atonement, the covering. The lid covered the remainders of man's sins from the eyes of the 2 golden cherubim looking downward, so to speak. The cherubim [are] representing God's holiness, that is, His justice and righteousness. The mercy seat was sprinkled with blood once a year on the Day of Atonement by the High Priest, so that symbolically the coming blood of Christ was again activating the propitiation of that mercy seat, that place of judgment, because a holy God cannot be approached, Leviticus 16:2 says, by sinful man. So when Aaron, the priest came in there the first time on that annual Day of Atonement, he had to sprinkle blood on the seat first, and then he could sprinkle it in behalf of the nation. Leviticus 16:13-16 tells us that. Hebrews 9:7 tells us that. The mercy seat of the Old Testament thus became the meeting place for God and man to restore fellowship. But it was done then on an IOU basis for another year. Man and God brought together by the blood of the coming Messiah through the propitiation that satisfied the Justice of God. All of this anticipated the propitiation that was to be made by the Lord Jesus Christ yet in the future. God's justice is satisfied that part of this block separating men from God has now forever been removed.

There is a great reality to propitiation that sometimes Christians miss. There is a depth to this that you need to get together in your own mind, in you're thinking. Then the magnificent demonstration and illustration of all this in the great story of the Pharisee and the tax-gatherer. They used to call this in the King James Version the Pharisee and the publican. But there was a political party that did not like that name. It made it to seem they were it. So they've changed it to tax-gatherer. No, I'm kidding. He was just a tax-gather. But these two men coming to worship God in the temple, what a magnificent demonstration of the propitiation of God.

Is it all right for you to say, "Oh, God, be merciful to me, a sinner?" Is it all right for you to say, "I want you to call upon God to save you. Just call out to Him." As a great evangelist, of a previous generation, used to end his great afternoon meetings at Long Beach, California at the municipal center, he would call upon people in advance in the audience. "Call upon God, say to Him, God be merciful to me a sinner." One day, Lewis Sperry Chafer, riding with him in a car out in California, said, "You know what a wrong thing you are telling millions of people out there when you ask them to do that? Some of them do that and what consequences will be theirs if they do that!" I'll tell you about that tonight. Please join us.

Father, we thank You for this Thy word. We pray for Thy wisdom as we apply it to our own lives. This is the Word of God and it is truth and it is magnificent. Amen. Dr. John E. Danish, 1999

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