

THE MERCY SEAT

FACILITATOR GUIDE

Today's lesson takes us behind the veil into the Holy of Holies. Inside that special room was a box—albeit, a golden box designed, anointed, and visited by God Himself.

Exodus 25:10— They are to make an ark of acacia wood, forty-five inches long, twenty-seven inches wide, and twenty-seven inches high.

Vs. 17-18 — Make a mercy seat of pure gold, forty-five inches long and twenty-seven inches wide. 18 Make two cherubim of gold; make them of hammered work at the two ends of the mercy seat.

Vs. 21-22 — Set the mercy seat on top of the ark and put the tablets of the testimony that I will give you into the ark. 22 I will meet with you there above the mercy seat, between the two cherubim that are over the ark of the testimony; I will speak with you from there about all that I command you regarding the Israelites.

What was the Mercy Seat made of? [One piece of solid gold]

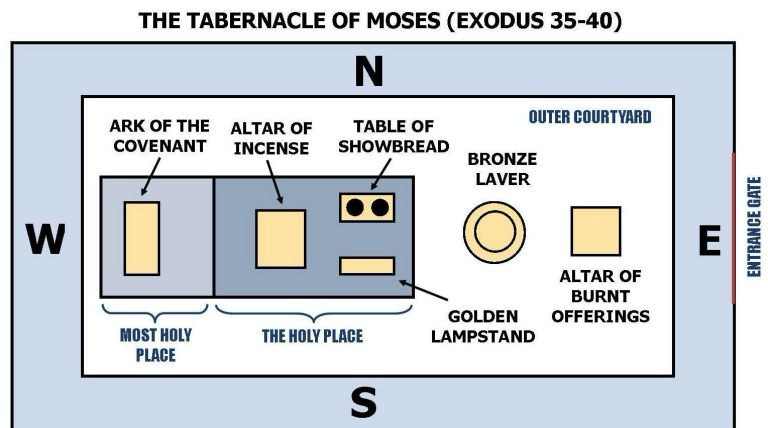
What have we learned that gold is symbolic of? [God]

Can you think of any reason why the Mercy Seat had to be of gold only and not wood overlaid with gold like some of the other furniture? [Read Ephesians 2: 8-9.]

Ephesians 2: 8-9— For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift— 9 not from works, so that no one can boast.

MERCY comes from **GOD** alone.

There is **NOTHING** mankind can do to **MERIT** the mercy of God.



Rev. Thomas Hooker was a Puritan preacher in the early years during the founding of the American colonies. He is credited with the founding of Connecticut and establishing one of the first constitutions utilizing a representative government. While he lay dying, one of his friends present in the room gently told him, “You are going to receive the reward of your labors.” Hooker replied, “I’m going to receive mercy.”

MERCY is God’s **KINDNESS** toward the **HELL**-deserving. **GRACE** gives what we **DO NOT** deserve; mercy withholds the **PUNISHMENT** that we do.

HEAVENLY WITNESSES

Hebrews 8:5— They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things. For when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God, saying, “See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain.”

The Tabernacle Mercy Seat was only a primitive **COPY** of what is actually in Heaven.

Exodus 25:18-20 — Make two cherubim of gold; make them of hammered work at the two ends of the mercy seat. 19 Make one cherub at one end and one cherub at the other end. At its two ends, make the cherubim of one piece with the mercy seat. 20 The cherubim are to have wings spread out above, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and are to face one another. The faces of the cherubim should be toward the mercy seat.

How many cherubim were to be on the Mercy Seat? [2—one on each side]

Where are their eyes to be focused? [Directly on the Mercy Seat]

An intent focus on the Mercy Seat was a form of worship and adoration on the part of these angelic beings.

How is our focus on the goodness of God an act of worship today? [When we focus on the goodness of God through difficult circumstances, our faith is strengthened, we block out the negative things around us and are reminded of how much bigger God is than our problems.]

Philipians 4:8-9— Finally, brothers and sisters, keep your thoughts on whatever is right or deserves praise: things that are true, honorable, fair, pure, acceptable, or commendable.... Then the God who gives this peace will be with you.

When the High Priest entered into the Holy of Holies, he sprinkled the blood of the sacrificed animal onto the Mercy Seat and asked God for the forgiveness of the people, just as God had prescribed. The angels were witnesses that the transaction was completed.

Angels have always been witnesses to the mercy of God.

Luke 2:8-14 — In the same region, shepherds were staying out in the fields and keeping watch at night over their flock. 9 Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10 But the angel said to them, “Don’t be afraid, for look, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people: 11 Today in the city of David a Savior was born for you, who is the Messiah, the Lord. 12 This will be the sign for you: You will find a baby wrapped tightly in cloth and lying in a manger.” 13 Suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying: 14 Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to people he favors!

John 20:11-12— Mary, however, stood there and cried as she looked at the tomb. As she cried, she bent over and looked inside. 12 She saw two angels in white clothes. They were sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying. One angel was where Jesus’ head had been, and the other was where his feet had been.

Who announced Jesus’ arrival into this world and His resurrection from the dead? [The angels]

How many angels were inside the tomb when Mary looked in? [Two]

Where were they sitting? [They were seated where Jesus’ body had been—one at the head and one at the foot.]

The Mercy Seat was a lid for the Ark of the Covenant. We think of the word “ark” as a place of protection or preservation. The Hebrew word for *ark* is “arow” (a-roun), which means a chest or coffin. How appropriate it is then, that the angels on the Mercy Seat are witnesses to the blood being applied for atonement, and the angels in the tomb are seated as witnesses at the very seat of mercy itself! The host of angels heralded the birth of our Savior, and the angels in the tomb heralded the greatest message—HE IS RISEN!

SHINE!

Moses took two trips up Mt. Sinai to talk with God. The first time he came down with two stone tablets, he broke them out of disgust because of the sins of the people. So he cuts more blank

stones and goes back up.

Exodus 34:4, 6-9, 30-33 — So Moses cut two [more] stone tablets like the first ones. Early the next morning he went up on Mount Sinai, as the Lord had commanded him, carrying the two stone tablets....6 Then he passed in front of Moses, calling out, “The Lord, the Lord, a compassionate and merciful God, patient, always faithful and ready to forgive. 7 He continues to show his love to thousands of generations, forgiving wrongdoing, disobedience, and sin. He never lets the guilty go unpunished, punishing children and grandchildren for their parents’ sins to the third and fourth generation.” 8 Immediately, Moses knelt, bowing with his face touching the ground. 9 Then he said, “Lord, please go with us! Even though we are impossible to deal with, forgive our sin and the wrong we have done, and accept us as your own people.”

30 When Aaron and all the Israelites looked at Moses and saw his face shining, they were afraid to come near him. 31 Moses called to them, so Aaron and all the leaders of the community came back to him. Then Moses spoke to them. 32 After that, all the other Israelites came near him, and he commanded them to do everything the Lord told him on Mount Sinai. 33 When Moses finished speaking to them, he put a veil over his face.

In verses 6-7, what does God say about Himself? [“The Lord, a compassionate and merciful God, patient, always faithful and ready to forgive. 7 He continues to show his love to thousands of generations, forgiving wrongdoing, disobedience, and sin. He never lets the guilty go unpunished, punishing children and grandchildren for their parents’ sins to the third and fourth generation.”]

What is He [God] focusing on? [He is focusing on His own merciful attributes. He is reminding Moses of His goodness. Perhaps Moses was unable to put his focus where it needed to be at the time.]

Have you ever been so bombarded by difficulties that you have forgotten the goodness of God? [If you have, you are not alone! And you can rest assured that God is reminding you all the time of His faithfulness to you!]

What mark did God’s glory leave on Moses? [a radiant face]

What was the response of the Israelites to Moses’ appearance? [fear]

What did Moses do? [He put a veil over his face.]

Where else was there a veil blocking the glory of God? [The Tabernacle—between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies.]

The glory of God was radiant upon Moses. Have you ever met someone who has been changed after an encounter with Jesus?

Paul tells us what happened to Moses after a while...

2 Corinthians 3:13— We are not like Moses, who put a veil over his face so the people of Israel would not see the glory, even though it was destined to fade away.

What happened to Moses over time? [The radiance of the glory of God began to fade away.]

What happens when we fail to meet with God for a period of time? [The glory of God fades in our hearts. We forget about His goodness and how faithful He is.]

Some people today still let a veil come between them and God's Presence. Jesus tore away the veil, making a way for us to meet with God ourselves. The radiance of God's glory should be seen by others. If your "shine" has faded, perhaps you need to spend more time in the Presence of God.

PRAYER TIME

As you pray, consider these prayer points:

- Meditate on the faithfulness and attributes of God. Praise Him for His mercy on your life. Tell him that you remember a specific time when He came to your rescue.
- Ask God to help your life shine with His glory so that others can see Him through you.
- Ask God to help you focus more on the good things He is doing, rather on your bad circumstances.
- Pray that you and your small group friends will grow in their faith and walk with God.