

Exodus 25:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And thou shalt make a mercy seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof.

Analysis

The mercy seat (*תְּכִלָּתָה*, kapporet) derives from *כַּפֵּר* (kaphar, 'to cover, atone'). Made of pure gold (unalloyed divinity), it covers the law whose demands man cannot meet. This is the place of atonement where sacrificial blood is sprinkled (Leviticus 16:14-15), prefiguring Christ as our propitiation (Romans 3:25, using *ἰλαστήριον*, the LXX translation of kapporet). God's justice and mercy meet at the cross.

Historical Context

The mercy seat, approximately 3.75' × 2.25', formed the lid of the Ark. On Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement), the high priest sprinkled blood here seven times, making atonement for the nation's sins (Leviticus 16).

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does the mercy seat 'covering' the law illustrate Christ's atonement covering our guilt?

2. What does it mean that mercy and justice meet at the place where blood is applied?

Interlinear Text

וְעַשְׂתָּה יְתָמָר	כְּפֶרֶת בְּ	בָּרָת	בָּרָת	בָּרָת	וְעַד הַ						
And thou shalt make	a mercy seat	gold	of pure	thereof and a cubit	and a half						
H6213	H3727	H2091	H2889	H520	H2677						

אָרֶךְ הַ	וְעַד הַ										
shall be the length	thereof and a cubit	and a half	the breadth								
H753	H520	H2677	H7341								

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 9:5 (Grace): And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly.

Exodus 37:6 (Grace): And he made the mercy seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half was the length thereof, and one cubit and a half the breadth thereof.

Hebrews 4:16 (Grace): Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Exodus 40:20 (Grace): And he took and put the testimony into the ark, and set the staves on the ark, and put the mercy seat above upon the ark:

Romans 3:25 (Parallel theme): Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

1 Chronicles 28:11 (Grace): Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch, and of the houses thereof, and of the treasuries thereof, and of the upper chambers thereof, and of the inner parlours thereof, and of the place of the mercy seat,