

Exodus 37:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

The mercy seat (כַּפֹּרֶת, kapporet, from כָּפַר, kaphar—'to atone, cover') made of pure gold covered the law contained in the ark. This covering illustrates that mercy triumphs over judgment (James 2:13)—the law condemns, but mercy covers transgression through blood sprinkled on this lid once yearly (Leviticus 16:14). Christ is our mercy seat (Romans 3:25, ἱλαστήριον, hilasterion—'propitiation'), where God's justice and mercy meet, where the law's demands are satisfied through substitutionary atonement.

Historical Context

The mercy seat (lid of the ark) measured approximately 3.75' × 2.25', exactly fitting the ark's dimensions. On the Day of Atonement, the high priest sprinkled blood seven times on this golden cover, atoning for Israel's sins (Leviticus 16:14-15).

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 the relationship between God's justice and His mercy?
2. In what ways does Christ as our mercy seat (propitiation) demonstrate mercy triumphing over judgment?

Interlinear Text

וַיַּעַשׂ	כִּפֹּת רֶחֶם	זָהָב	טָהוֹר	וְאֶמָּה	וְחֵצִי
And he made	the mercy seat	gold	of pure	thereof and one cubit	and a half
H6213	H3727	H2091	H2889	H520	H2677
אָרְכּוֹ	וְאֶמָּה	וְחֵצִי	רֵחְבּוֹ:		
was the length	thereof and one 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.