

The Meeting Place

Exodus 25:10-22

Thank you for joining us this week as we continue our study through Exodus. As we are going through this section of Exodus, don't lose sight of the big picture. Some of these chapters are filled with lots of small details and sometimes we wonder why all this information is in the Bible. If you start to feel that way, remember where this fits in God's story. God is building a kingdom and He will redeem what was lost to sin, He will restore His kingdom in the whole world. We know the children of Israel go on and fall away from the true God, but from the children of Israel comes one called Jesus. Through Jesus God will get it all back! God's plan will not be thwarted.

I give you this short introduction to remind you of the big picture. God's plan will be accomplished, He was working then, and He still is at work despite how things appear. I thank you again for joining us on Hope for Today, let's go now with Bible teacher, J Mark, for a closer look at today's lesson.

What do you think of this statement? All people everywhere are searching for God. Where can they find God? Where can they meet God? The meeting place with God is where God said, "There I will meet with you."

People in Bible-times built altars as meeting places. When Abraham first came into the land promised to him by the LORD, he built an altar at Shechem and worshipped God. He built other altars at Bethel and at Hebron.

Elijah built an altar on the top of Mt. Carmel when he called the people of Israel to a decision regarding the worship of Baal or the worship of the true God. Perhaps you remember that dramatic contest when the true God, Jehovah, answered Elijah by fire. That fire consumed everything, the sacrifice, the wood, the stones, the water in the trench, and even the dust!

Between Abraham and Elijah was Moses. On Mt. Sinai he received instructions on how to build a dwelling place for God, THE MEETING PLACE with God.

Some people today travel a long way to visit a holy site. They hope somehow to meet God there. But is that the way to meet God? In **Exodus 25:10-22** we see what God has to say about it.

10. *And they shall make an ark of shittim wood: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof.*

11. *And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, within and without shalt thou overlay it, and shalt make upon it a crown of gold round about.*

12. *And thou shalt cast four rings of gold for it and put them in the four corners thereof; and two rings shall be on the one side of it, and two rings on the other side of it.*

13. *And thou shalt make staves of shittim wood and overlay them with gold.*

14. *And thou shalt put the staves into the rings by the sides of the ark, that the ark may be borne with them.*

15. *The staves shall be in the rings of the ark: they shall not be taken from it,*

16. *And thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee.*

17. *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.*

18. *And thou shalt make two cherubim of gold of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat.*

19. *And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: even of the mercy seat shall ye make the cherubim on the two ends thereof.*

20. *And the cherubim shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubim be.*

21. *And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee.*

22. *And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.*

In this text we notice the ORDERS which God gave for the construction of the meeting place.

The First ORDER He gave was,

The Definitions.

The first order defined the ark. Notice the size. It was not large: a little over one meter long (42 inches), three fourths of a meter wide (27 inches) and three fourths of a meter high (27 inches). It looked like a box really. Moses was instructed to overlay it with pure gold both inside and outside.

Then he was to cast four rings of gold and fasten them to the ark, two on each side, and put poles in them so the ark could be carried. Apparently four men were expected to carry the ark. The poles were never to be taken out of the rings because they were there so the ark could be carried. That is the definition of the construction of the ark and how it was to be transported.

God instructed Moses to put into the ark, “the testimony which I give thee.” The “testimony” refers to the tablets of the Law because that was what happened later when the ark was built. The two tablets of the law were placed inside the ark, that gold covered box or chest.

Never again would God’s people be without the law. Never again would they wonder what God’s will was because the law was to be right there with them.

Another ORDER He gave was,

The Dedication.

The second order defined the dedication as designed in the mercy seat. In verse 17 the Hebrew word for mercy seat is *kypporeth*. It comes from the word to make atonement. That is interesting because that mercy seat, as it is called in our English Bible, was to be the cover to the ark although it was not exactly a lid. It was much, much more than just a lid. Moses could have made various other covers for the ark, but God said he was to make a *kypporeth*, a mercy seat of pure gold.

Notice the dimensions of this mercy seat. Two and one-half cubits was the length and one and one-half cubits was the width. It was to fit exactly on top of the box, the ark of the covenant. The box was lined and overlaid with gold, but the mercy seat was to be pure gold. It was, in fact, a covering for the law.

When the Jews translated the Hebrew Bible into Greek, they gave this mercy seat the term *elasterion*. That is important because that word carries the idea of a sacrifice. Notice further that the cherubim, one on either end, were to be made also of pure gold, not cast but hammered into shape. The cherubim and the mercy seat was all to be one piece. The cherubim were to face each other and stretch their wings over the mercy seat.

Cherubim are angelic creatures, created by the LORD. It seems they were given the responsibility of guarding the law. The cherubim overstretching the mercy seat; the mercy seat covering the law. When we study the Old Testament Law, we learn that it contained more requirements than any human being could fulfil.

Someone said, “the law was divine holiness *par excellence*.” So, there was the mercy seat over the ark of the covenant because God knew that no human being could ever attain through works the holiness described in it. Because of this reality, the mercy seat was over the law.

The last ORDER He gave was,

The Designation.

The third order explained the experience of the meeting: verse 22. “And there I will meet with thee and there I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat and between the two cherubim.” A certain procedure was required to arrange for that meeting. Moses was instructed to put the tablets of the Law that the LORD would give to him inside the ark. Then, the mercy seat would be place as a covering over them. To meet God a certain procedure is necessary: the mercy seat must be over the law to meet God at the center of everything.

Several ideas come through regarding this meeting place, designated as the mercy seat between the two cherubim. One idea is that God holds man responsible to His law. The law is there at the meeting place, and it outlines the criteria for meeting God.

In the second place God reaches out to man by His law. There is a difference between revealed religion and any other religion because in revealing Himself, God reaches out to man by His law. The third idea is that God expresses His will in His law. The people of Israel would never need to wonder what God wanted, because God’s law was there in the ark of the covenant.

We can look at this from the historical standpoint and get very little from it, or we can consider it as being relevant for all of us as God's children.

Today we also need a meeting place with God. Where should we meet? Should we have a special building? Perhaps that's important in some cultures. In other places it is impossible. Is the place important? Not so much. We had better meet at the mercy seat. That is the cross of Jesus Christ. We meet God on the basis of Jesus' shed blood and in obedience to His Word.

God still provides mercy and peace as we come to that meeting place of mercy.

Thanks J Mark for this teaching and thank you for being here for this teaching. It is neat to see God's heart for His people. He shows the children of Israel more of Himself.

It is incredible to realize the Lord of the universe wants a relationship with people. He wants your heart. Way back here at Mt Sinai, God came close. Again, many years after this, God came closer. God came in the flesh and limited Himself to a body. His desire was and is the same. He desires a relationship with you, He wants to be the object of your worship, after all, He alone is worthy. We see God going to extreme measures to make this possible. Today we saw a small part of the story and thankfully Jesus has completed it. Through what Christ has done on the cross, we can come into the presence of our Holy God and be in relationship with Him. This is worth thinking about.

If you'd like a copy of today's teaching, or if you'd like to contact us for any reason here are a few ways you can reach us. The best way is through email. Our email is hope@heraldsofhope.org. If you don't have email, no problem, just write to us, our address is Hope for Today, Box 3, Breezewood, Pennsylvania 15533. Or you can connect with us on our website. Our website is Heraldsofhope.org. On our website you will find some resources and under the listen tab there is other teaching similar to what you just heard. If you go to the connect tab you can message us directly. Again, our website is heraldsofhope.org.

Thank you so much for joining us. We look forward to being with you next week and till then go with God and grow in your connection with Him. He is an amazing God to love and serve.