



# MAYFAIRKIDS

## JESUS IS THE MERCY SEAT

“WHO IS JESUS?” FAMILY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE - Week 13, November 13



## JESUS IS THE MERCY SEAT

God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith.

ROMANS 3:25A

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e already learned about the tabernacle in the wilderness, the place of God's Presence among his people. Now let's close our eyes and take a walk. Enter the courtyard, go past the altar and the basin, and step into the Holy Place. Notice the bread on the table and the golden lampstand bringing light to the tent. See the smoke rising in front of the curtain decorated with angels. Carefully move aside the heavy curtain and step into the Most Holy Place. What do you see? Just one thing: the ark of the covenant, a beautiful chest covered with a lid of pure gold. Two golden angels sit

on the lid, facing each other with their wings spread upward, covering the ark. What are they doing? Worshipping? Guarding? And what's in the box? I'll tell you. Inside the box are the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments, a jar of manna, and Aaron's budded staff. This chest with its lid, known as the atonement cover or mercy seat, is the most special part of the entire tabernacle. Why? Because it was right here, in this small but special place, that God's Presence came. Right on the cover between the cherubim (Exodus 25:22).

If this were Bible times, you would *not* be allowed in here! (You can open your eyes now.) This place was *very* special and *very* holy. *Only* the high priest could go behind the curtain into the Most Holy Place, and *only* on the Day of Atonement, which was *only* once a year! And even then he had to be sure to wash himself, wear his sacred garments, and follow very specific instructions for sacrifice. Even that was not enough. He also had to burn incense so that the smoke from it would hide the mercy seat and the glorious Presence of God from his sight, or he would die! This was a holy place!

So what was the high priest doing in there that was so important? Why would he even dare to go in there? He had a very, very important job to do. Something that was necessary for the Israelites to maintain their relationship with the one true Holy God. His job was to sprinkle the blood of a sacrificed goat on the mercy seat to atone for the sins of the people. Blood was what God required as payment for sins. This atonement cover, this mercy seat, drenched in blood, was the place where an unholy people were reconciled to a holy God.

In the book of Romans, Paul tells us that God presented Jesus as a sacrifice of atonement (Romans 3:25). The phrase “sacrifice of atonement” is the same Greek word that is translated as “mercy seat” in Hebrews 9:5.<sup>1</sup> Paul is telling us that Jesus is the mercy seat. Jesus is the “place” where we are reconciled to God. He

is stained with blood for our sake. He is the atonement cover for our sin. We can join with the cherubim surrounding his throne of grace singing, “Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain” (Revelation 5:12)!

Today we don’t have a tabernacle. We don’t have a curtain separating us from God. We don’t have to kill a goat to pay for our sins or rely on a priest to help us. We have Jesus living among us, the One who made atonement once for all. His body was torn just as the curtain was (Hebrews 10:20), so we don’t have to be separated from God ever again. Jesus is the way we are able to meet with God. Thank you, God, for your mercy!



## REFLECT

1. Describe the ark and the mercy seat. What did they look like? What was their purpose?
2. How is Jesus like the mercy seat?
3. Read John 20:11–13. What similarities can we draw between the angels in this story and the cherubim on the ark?
4. Read Leviticus 16:20–22, about the Day of Atonement. How is Jesus like the scapegoat?

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**BIBLE REFERENCE** EXODUS 25:10–22;  
LEVITICUS 16:1–19; HEBREWS 9:1–5

**KEY VERSE** ROMANS 3:25A