

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, June 3, 2012

Passage: Romans 3:25a

Memory Passage: Romans 3:21-25a (review)

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Ex. 25:17-22 & Rom. 12.** Imagine yourself to be the artisan charged with making the mercy seat and (1) carefully read the instructions given here in Ex. 25, (2) draw plans for the mercy seat that represent what you will build as a result of your careful reading (and yes, I mean to actually draw the mercy seat!), and (3) what symbolism do you see in the specifics of the instruction (e.g. Why do the cherubim need to have their faces “toward the mercy seat?”).

(b) Why is it important to follow these exact measurements? Where is the mercy seat to be placed? What is its purpose?

(c) The Hebrew noun translated in the ESV as “mercy seat” is probably related to the verb kapar (also transliterated as kipper) which you studied last week with the concept of redemption in mind. Its basic meaning is “to cover, to make atonement for,” hence the NIV’s “atonement cover.” If this was the only passage of Scripture that mentioned the mercy seat (a term that came from Luther in 1523 and Tyndale in 1530), what does God’s choice of this Hebrew word to describe the cover of the Ark of the Covenant tell you about its intended use? Since all Scripture bears witness about Christ (John 5:39), how does this passage draw your mind through types and shadows toward Christ and His work?

(d) *Family: Read Ex. 25:10-22.* Before you read, tell your family to pretend that they are the artisans tasked with creating the Ark of the Covenant and the mercy seat. So as you read, they should follow along in their Bibles and make notes where God speaks in specific ways about what should be made (note: a cubit is app. 18 inches). Then, give them time to draw their plans of what the Ark & the mercy seat will look like (save this picture for use in tomorrow’s lesson). As each person shares their drawing, explain the details of the passage (e.g. the Ark would be placed in the Holy of Holies, a place where only the High Priest would enter only once a year, the meaning of the word translated “mercy seat” is “place of atonement,” the angels look toward the ark because this has them bowing their heads in reverence, the angels’ wings formed the throne for God when He would meet with Moses, the angels were there to guard [“overshadow”] the Ark, etc.

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Lev. 16.** What was the sin committed by Aaron’s sons Nadab & Abihu that prompted God’s words in this chapter? What would happen to Aaron if he committed the same sin? Why would this judgment take place? (all found in vs. 1-2.)

(b) Why is it necessary for Aaron to “make atonement for himself” (v.11)? Why must the incense form a cloud of smoke that “covers the mercy seat” (v.13)? Don’t just say, “So Aaron doesn’t die!” Answer the pressing question, “Why would he die?”

(c) How is the mercy seat prominent in these verses? How does it fulfill the purposes found in Exodus 25 about which you learned yesterday? How does it prefigure, foreshadow, or serve as a type of Christ? (Think of the circumstance in Lev. 16: God revealed Himself in a specific, hidden place where access was limited to those who obeyed His appointed means.)

(d) Summarize the point of this chapter in one sentence. Now summarize the point of this chapter in one word.

(e) *Family:* Ask you family, “What does the word ‘atonement’ mean?” After a discussion, explain that the word means to restore the relationship (reconcile) between two parties, specifically between God and man. Write on your white board “At-one-ment” as a helpful reminder that God reconciled God and His people, made their relationship “one,” or whole, again, through the work of Jesus on the cross. Now **Read Lev. 16:3-15** and explain how God provided the means of atonement to His people in the Old Covenant. Point out the role of the mercy seat, and have your family draw the High Priest completing his specific tasks in the picture they made last night of the Ark of the Covenant & the mercy seat.

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Rom. 3:21-25a, Heb. 2:14-18, 1 John 2:1-6 & 4:7-12.** “Propitiation” means, “a sacrifice that bears God’s wrath and turns it to favor.” In Heb. 2, what was required for Jesus to “make propitiation” for “the offspring of Abraham?”

(b) What does 1 John 2 tell us that Christ’s propitiation accomplishes with regard to our sin? What does it accomplish in our lives if we “know Him?” How do we know if we are “in Him?” What do the words, “for the sins of the whole world” mean?

(c) According to 1 John 4, how has God loved us? What should be the result of this gift in the lives of those who have received it? How do we know if we are “born of God” and experienced this gift? Does your life prove this to be true?

(d) In Romans 3, how did God “put forward” Jesus? What was the means through which He provided propitiation?

(e) *Family: Read Rom. 3:23-25a.* Ask, “What does propitiation mean?” Write the word on your white board and recap the main teaching of Romans 1:17-3:23: Every person is guilty before God and worthy of His righteous wrath because they disobeyed God and became idolaters, but God has revealed His righteousness now, in Jesus Christ, apart from the law, and

any person who has been justified (legally declared righteous) by faith in Jesus will not suffer His wrath. Then explain that Jesus being put forth as a propitiation means that He became a sacrifice that bears God's wrath and turns it to favor. In other words, God no longer needs to punish us as sinners with His wrath because He has placed His wrath on His Son, Jesus, instead and now He looks at us with favor instead of wrath because He looks with favor upon His Son in us.

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Ex. 9:4, Lev. 17:11, Deut. 12:23, Rom. 3:21-25a, 5:9-11, Eph. 2:13-16 & Col. 1:19-20.** What important facts did you learn from the 3 OT texts you read (I can see at least 3 facts!)? According to the NT texts, what was the means by which atonement was provided?

(b) Since the means by which atonement is provided in the New Covenant is Christ's blood, how does this help you understand Lev. 16 and the offerings presented? Think through not only the sacrifices, but also how they were to be offered.

(c) Explain Paul's thought in Rom. 5:9-11. According to Eph. 2:13-16 & Col 1:19-20, how does Christ's blood accomplish peace?

(d) *Family:* Spend some time leading your family through the passages above. This should lead to an understanding of how the OT blood sacrifices were a type of Christ's once-for-all offering of His own blood. Note that in the OT passages we find that the life of a living thing is in its blood, that it provided atonement because the life was given, and that it is God who provided blood for atonement to be made (whether in the Old Covenant sacrifices or the New Covenant sacrifice of Christ). Remind your family what propitiation is, and that Christ shed His own blood to provide our at-one-ment with God by shedding His own blood.

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Rom. 3:21-25a & Rom. 13.** How is this propitiation to be received? How would you describe the process of receiving Jesus' sacrifice by faith to a person who does not yet know Christ (i.e. someone to whom you are witnessing)?

(b) Spend some time thinking through what you have learned this week about sacrifice, specifically Jesus being put forward as a propitiation, and answer the "how" question of vs. 21-26: How does Christ's propitiatory sacrifice accomplish justification in a sinners' life? You should interact with Paul's thesis statement in 1:16-17 as well.

(c) Knowing this truth should have a great impact on your daily life. How would you use it to counsel another believer (or yourself) who is struggling to "feel" loved by God? Who is struggling with legalism? Struggling with antinomianism (i.e. someone who does not think the commands of God need to be obeyed)? What about someone who is struggling with sharing the gospel with others? How would you use these truths to help someone who felt good about their relationship with Christ when they succeeded in "doing spiritual things" (even good spiritual things) but lacked confidence in their relationship with Christ when they "failed at doing spiritual things"?

(d) *Family:* Preach the gospel again to your children by leading them through how a person is justified by the blood of Jesus when they repent of their sins and place their faith in Him. Also help those in your family who are redeemed to understand what this actually means in their daily life by discussing the questions in (c) above.

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Our Righteous God Who Justifies (Part II)

In Romans 3:21-26 Paul reveals two realities about the righteousness of God as he explains how believers are justified by faith in Jesus.