

Mid Week • Hebrews 2

INTRODUCTION

It's been said the task of Bible preaching is to comfort the afflicted while afflicting the comfortable.

The writer of Hebrews does just that!

As we saw last week, Hebrews was aimed at Jewish Christian who were under pressure.

They were under pressure from their Jewish countrymen on one side, and the Romans on the other.

Being Jews, if there was any direction they were going to give in to, it would be to revert back to Judaism, and in fact, some had already renounced their faith in Christ.

So the author of Hebrews writes this letter to *affirm for* Jewish Christians that the Gospel is the *fulfillment* of their roots in Judaism.

He shows the *superiority* of Christ to the prophets; in fact, the prophets all spoke of and pointed to Jesus.

He aims at comforting them in the knowledge that they have come to a secure faith in Jesus as the real and right Messiah the nation had been waiting generations for.

But for those who were yielding to the pressure to revert to Judaism, he issues a severe and urgent warning.

They needed to see that they were walking down a familiar path many of their ancestors had tread to their ruin; and that was the path of a willful rejection of the voice and counsel of God.

In Chapter 1, as we saw last week, the writer shows the superiority of Jesus to angels.

He is going to elaborate on that in chapter 2 but give it a different twist.

He begins with a warning to those who were beginning to give in to the pressure.

CHAPTER 2

Vs. 1-4

1 Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.

Whenever we read a “therefore” we ask what it’s *therefore*.

It is usually a word that tips us off a conclusion is being drawn from the previous section.

And that’s the case here.

Because Jesus is superior to angels – we must pay closer attention to the things we’ve heard.

Because if we don’t, there’s the chance we might slip away.

Verses 1-4 will be my text for Sunday so I’ll keep my comments on these verses rather brief tonight.

The writer uses a common Hebrew literary device here called “*qal wa homer*” which means “*light to heavy*.”

It’s an argument that says if a *lesser* thing is true, then how much more a *heavier* thing?

If gold is precious because it’s rare, then how much more precious is platinum?

If rubies are valuable because they are difficult to mine, then how much more valuable are diamonds?

This is what the writer says in vs. 1-4.

Through the gospel we’ve heard something so incredible, it makes the previous revelations of God seem smaller.

And yet, even these smaller revelations of God were worthy of our most careful attention and compliance.

Watch how he develops his argument . . .

1 Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.

2 For if [the word “if” isn’t conditional here; it’s an assertion – so really, this ought to be translated as “since”] For since the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward,

3 how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the

Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard *Him*,

4 God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?

The *word spoken through angels* that's referred to in v. 2 means the *Mosaic Law*.

I know we tend to think of God communicating directly with Moses on Mt. Sinai, but there are several passages that say God spoke *through* the agency of angelic messengers as well.

In Acts 7:53, Stephen told the Jewish council that the Word of God was given by angels to their forefathers.

In Galatians 3:19 Paul writes that the law was -

. . . appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator.

The Greek translation of Deut. 33:2 says that when God appeared to Moses on the Mount, it was with a host of angels.

Moses was on the Mount for 40 days and as we read all the passages which speak of this time we get the picture that there were times when God spoke directly to Moses, and other times when angels spoke to him.

It seems the angels were the ones who communicated the bulk of the Law to Moses while God would come at key times and speak to him.

The author of Hebrews is saying that if the Law of Moses, which was given by angels, was binding on the people, *how much more* the Gospel which came through Jesus Christ who is far superior to angels?

Of course, the Law *was* binding, as was made abundantly clear by the fact that people were punished when they rejected it.

We're reminded of the story of Numbers 15, how a man was caught gathering sticks to make a fire on the Sabbath day. He was stoned to death!

This seems like rather severe punishment for picking up sticks!

Until we realize the context in which the man was doing what he did.

The rules for observing the Sabbath had just been given.
The voice of God – speaking in glory from the top of Mt. Sinai
- was still ringing in the ears of the people!
This man wasn't just gathering sticks; what he was doing was
the most flagrant and dangerous kind of rebellion.
He knew what he was doing was forbidden, but chose to defy
God and do it anyway.
He did it publicly and brazenly.
So his actions demanded the severest kind of punishment.
Let me give an example of just how very wrong his picking up sticks
on the Sabbath was, and how it revealed a very bad heart.
Let's say you paint a wall in your house and you tell your teenage
daughter not to touch the wall because it's wet.
Then, while you are there watching, she walks over, stands next to
the wall, looks you straight in the eye and reaches out a dirty
hand and plants it, flat on the wet paint.
That's what this man in Numbers 15 did when he picked up sticks
on the Sabbath day.
You'd be right to be totally outraged with your daughter and to
apply the gravest of discipline on her.
They stoned him to death.
But the author of Hebrews takes it further – he says that if such
infractions of the Mosaic Law, which was given through angels,
received this kind of endorsement and attention from the people so
that when someone showed a calloused disregard for it, then how
much more attention ought to be shown to the Gospel?
Let's say it isn't you painting a wall in your house, but you take your
teenage daughter to the Getty, and as you're touring the exhibits,
you enter a room where Thomas Kinkadee is painting a
masterpiece.
Just as he places the last brush strokes on a beautiful canvas, your
daughter walks over and rubs her fingers all over the wet oils
and smears them into a mess.
How much *worse* is that than soiling your wall at home?
It's much worse isn't it?
That's the comparison we find here.

Two different words are given in v. 2 for sin:

1) Transgression

2) Disobedience

Transgression - means a *willful stepping across the line*. We might say that these are sins of *commission*, of willingly choosing to do that which we know is *wrong*.

Disobedience - means *to not hear*; but not the lack of hearing of a deaf person. It means to be *inattentive*, it's the result of being careless about what is right. These are the sins of *omission*, of not doing what we know is *right*.

Under the Law, every sin received a just punishment, because justice is part and parcel of the character of God.

Again, the idea is that the seriousness of the infraction equals the severity of the punishment.

So, as he says in v. 3, if this principle of just retribution applies to the law which came through angels, how much more does it apply to the Gospel which came through God's own Son?

How could anyone escape if they neglected the salvation God offers?

Here he calls it "so great a salvation."

He's referring to what he'd just said in v. 14 of chapter 1 and what he will go on to elaborate on in vs. 5-9.

This salvation is what had been preached to them and what they had heard.

Jesus began to preach and teach it in His earthly ministry.

Then it was picked up by the Apostles, those men He commissioned to be His ambassadors and to lay the foundation of the church on the bedrock of His life and ministry.

God confirmed the reliability of their preaching and teaching by endorsing it with signs, wonders, and various miracles.

Just as Jesus had confronted the people of His day with His authority to teach by his power to heal and perform the miraculous, so God continued this method of endorsing the message of the apostles by doing many of the same things Jesus had done.

Jesus said to the people of his day – "If you don't believe me – then look at the works I do."

Just before His ascension, he told the disciples that as they went

and preached the good news, signs would follow – and indeed they did.

The word “sign” means something that *points* to something else.

The signs the apostles performed all had the purpose of confirming their authority and so were aimed at building *credibility* in the minds and hearts of the people they were teaching.

The word “wonders” speaks of the effect something has on a person; it creates a sense of awe and an openness to information that a person has been closed to.

The wonders the apostles performed were of such an effect that it cause people to stop and say, “Wait a minute – what’s going on here? This doesn’t fit in to my worldview. There must be more to life and living than I have allowed myself to believe.”

The word “miracles” is literally “powers” and speaks of the demonstration of something that transcends the normal laws that govern the physical universe.

We don’t have a bona-fide miracle unless the laws of *nature* have been superceded by the higher laws of the *supernatural*.

God allowed the apostles to perform miracles like raising people from the dead as demonstrations that there is a power inherent in the Gospel that transcends the things of this time and space – and that power is able to change their lives and eternal destiny.

Whenever God has moved definitively in human history to enact some new direction in His dealing with mankind, He always surrounds these shifts with a plethora, an abundance of the miraculous.

The Birth of the nation of *Israel* and the establishing of the *Old Covenant* is one such time.

The Exodus and events at Mt. Sinai, as well as the entrance in to Canaan, were all periods of heightened supernatural activity.

God was making it abundantly clear to all who would pay attention that He was moving dramatically and definitively in the affairs of earth.

The Birth of the *Church* and the establishing of the *New Covenant* is another time that was attended by an abundance of the miraculous.

It’s interesting that more often than not, whenever the gospel of

Jesus Christ presses in to a new area of the globe that's been dominated by spiritual darkness, the missionaries who are bringing the gospel see the hand of God moving in power.

Like the original apostles, they are laying the foundation of the message of salvation in a new area, and the same signs and wonders that attended the planting of the church 2000 years ago are seen today.

But once the gospel is preached, and has been confirmed by signs and wonders, gifts of the Holy Spirit are given to all those who respond in faith.

These gifts, given to each believer, are confirmations of the truth and power of the Gospel.

They're evidence that the salvation Christ provides is real.

The writer's point is this: "Look, when the message was first preached to you, when you first heard, you saw things that were clearly supernatural – that was God's stamp of endorsement on the message!

Then, when you responded in faith and received Christ, the Holy Spirit Himself took up residence in you and equipped you with specific gifts so that you could be a functioning and profitable part of the Body of Christ. –

So tell me, since you didn't see the miraculous and you lacked the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit when you were unbelievers, following the ways of Judaism, why do you want to go back?

In fact, what the author says is even stronger than that – it's a sober warning!

How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?

Escape what? – JUDGMENT!

Vs. 5-8

In vs. 5-9, the writer elaborates on just what we are saved to.

He's called it a *great salvation* in v. 3 – and now we find out what makes it so great.

Friends, buckle up because what we are about to read is so incredible it borders on the staggering.

5 For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels.

To his Jewish readers, the phrase, “the world to come” was a common one and referred to the New Age that would come when the Messiah came and ruled on earth.

They understood according to the OT prophets that the curse would be lifted from creation and the earth would be restored to a place of paradise.

All the effects of the Fall would be reversed.

Sin, sickness, and sorrow would be exiled.

The lion would lie down with the lamb and the child would play with poisonous snakes and not be harmed.

That is what they thought of when they thought of the world to come. Here the writer says that that world, that age, the Messianic Age, has not be put in subjection to angels.

The word *subjection* means *to arrange under* and was used in a military sense of soldiers lining up under their commander.

It referred to administration and how there are ordered ranks of responsibility and authority.

When he says that the Messianic Age will not be in subjection to angels, he means they will not be the ones administering it.

So the question is – who will? The Answer is in the next verses .

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6 But one testified in a certain place, saying:

“What is man that You are mindful of him, Or the son of man that You take care of him?

7 *You have made him a little lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, And set him over the works of Your hands.*

8 *You have put all things in subjection under his feet.”*

For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing *that is* not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him.

He quotes King David and Psalm 8.

And at first sight, reading it from a NT perspective, we might conclude that this refers to Christ.

But that is NOT primarily who this refers to.

In Psalm 8, David was not speaking about the Messiah – he was referring to man!

Listen to the whole context . . .

- 3 When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained,**
- 4 What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him?**
- 5 For You have made him a little lower than the angels, And You have crowned him with glory and honor.**
- 6 You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all *things* under his feet,**
- 7 All sheep and oxen—Even the beasts of the field,**
- 8 The birds of the air, And the fish of the sea That pass through the paths of the seas.**

You can almost picture David as a young shepherd, sitting at night out under the stars, looking up in to that great big glorious sky and thinking about the vastness of heaven.

And then he thinks about man, little puny man.

Here he is this tinny speck; and yet, as David meditated on the scriptures and remembered the opening words of Genesis, he realized that God originally created man to exercise dominion over the earth.

The original plan was that man was created in the image of God, and that he was to rule.

He was to fill the earth and subdue it – meaning he was to study it, understand it, and then order it in such a way that the image of God was reflected throughout the creation.

Contrary to the way some skeptics and critics of Christianity mis-interpret scripture today, man’s primal dominion mandate was not to rape and pillage the earth but to steward it and invest it with care so that justice and equity were spread across the face of the earth.

That was God’s original intent and plan for mankind – to rule, to

administer the Creation.

But the Fall resulted in man losing dominion of earth.

A curse fell across the planet.

Now there's enmity between man and the animals and the ground only gives up it's produce by the sweat of hard work.

This world, fallen as it is, and made bereft of it's rightful rulers, has fallen under the administration of angels – some holy, others fallen.

Who did God send to cast Adam and Eve out of the garden and guard it's entrance?

And angel.

In Ephesians 6:12 we read that we are now locked in a battle with “principalities, powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.”

Satan is called the god of this world, and the prince of the power of the air.

In Jacob's dream at Bethel, he saw a ladder that stretched from earth to heaven, with angles going up and down it, speaking of the interchange between heaven and earth, and their activity in the affairs of earth.

You see, though man was created a little lower than the angels, he was still originally intended to rule on earth.

The Fall resulted in man losing dominion and now earth's been subjected to administration by angelic beings.

When Messiah comes and brings in the New Age, He will reclaim man's lost dominion and restore it to its rightful heirs – redeemed men and women!

They will rule and reign with Him for a thousand years!

So the author says in verse 8 that although we do not see all things under man's feet at present, the day will come when all things will be – man's rule over earth will be reclaimed.

When he says in v. 6 that man is made a little lower than the angels – he does not mean that man is *inferior*.

He is referring merely to the limitations that mortal man possesses.

Having a physical body means that there are some things man cannot do that the angels as pure spirits can.

Man is earthbound and limited to time and space.

The angels realm of travel is from earth to heaven and live in a dimension not bounded by time or space as we know it. One of the primary ways the angels are superior to mortal man is their ability to enter in to the very presence of glory in heaven.

Human beings, in their unglorified state do not possess these abilities – YET!

This is what makes them lower than the angels.

But the day will come, when through the work of the Messiah, the limitations that have made man a little lower than the angels will all be overcome.

Before we move on, there's one phrase here that gives us a clue as to just what the author is aiming at – what image he's trying to paint in the minds of his readers.

Look at v. 7 again . . .

7 *You have made him a little lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, And set him over the works of Your hands.*

8 *You have put all things in subjection under his feet.*

For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing *that is not put under him*. But now we do not yet see all things put under him.

This phrase, “under his feet,” and “under him” would have meant one thing to the readers of the letter.

You see, in the ancient world, the king's throne was always elevated, and everyone who came into his presence bowed down before him and sometimes even kissed his feet.

His subjects, therefore, were often spoken of as being *under his feet*.

Psalm 8, and its quotation here are meant to present redeemed men and women as kings and queens!

That was the original plan for mankind and is our reclaimed destiny through faith in Christ, which is what the writer goes on to explain.

V. 9

So the writer says that while we do not see all things under man's feet – what do we see?

9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.

Jesus, God's Son and Himself fully God, took on humanity – and by doing so, shared for a time man's humble estate of being a little lower than the angels.

He did this – He became man, so that He could do something He could not do otherwise and that was suffer death.

By dying, He paid the accumulated debt of the sin of the entire human race.

And because the Father said so, because in His grace God allows His substitution in death to pay for our debt, the Fall is reversed – the curse is lifted from earth.

It's important that we note who Jesus died for because this is an issue of some contention and debate today.

Did Jesus die only for the elect, or for everyone?

Well, what does it say? He tasted death – for everyone!

Those who believe in a limited atonement agree – He died for everyone – of the elect, they say.

But this not what the text says – and furthermore, it misses the point of this passage.

Because Jesus died FOR EVERYONE – atonement has been provided for ALL SIN, and that means there is now no legal basis for the curse to be in effect!

This is why Jesus will be able to ban satan from earth during the Messianic Age and why man can be re-established in His role of dominion – because all sin has been paid for.

Does this mean then that all people will be saved – absolutely NOT!

Individual redemption must be personally embraced and applied.

Think of it this way:

A scientist devises a medicine that cures a plague everyone has contracted.

He makes more than enough of the medicine for every person to

get an injection.

All a person has to do is line up and get a shot.

But some people don't like needles – so they bow out.

The result is they die – all because of an irrational thought process that de-valued the cure for a fatal disease at the cost of a pin-prick.

If you're one of those whose resisted and held back from coming to Christ – understand tonight that Jesus died FOR YOU as much as He died for anyone and everyone else.

There's room for you – there's forgiveness and cleansing from sin.

There's new life for YOU – but you have to respond!

Think for a moment how incredibly tragic it is that Jesus, when He hung on the cross, tasted death – for everyone – and yet, there are many who don't care – they turn away, shrug their shoulders and say, “So what?!?”

Let me tell you a little story.

During the wilderness wandering of the people of Israel, they grew bitter and angry at Moses and God.

Of course it was their own faithlessness & foolishness that resulted in their wandering around the desert for 38 years – but like so many people they wouldn't own their own failure and blamed it on Moses.

To correct their bad and complaining attitude, God sent poisonous snakes into their camp.

They bit the people and inflicted them with painful bites.

Then slowly the people began to get sicker and die.

When the people cried out for help, God told Moses to quickly fashion a bronze serpent, place it on a pole and raise it in the center of the camp.

The remedy was this – just turn and look at the bronze serpent, and you will be instantly healed!

So Moses made the serpent, put it on the pole and hoisted it in top place.

Sure enough, all those who looked up at it were instantly delivered.

But guess what – some people refused to look!

They obstinately refused to look to the answer to their pain, and impending death.

All they had to do was look!

But they refused because they would rather die than obey
God!

Do you think them stupid? Do you consider them insane?

You are doing the very same thing if you refuse to look up to
Christ.

He even said, that just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the
wilderness, He would be lifted up.

He was lifted up and made a curse in our place – He took our
place there on the cross.

He tasted death for everyone.

All we need to do is look to Him in sincere faith – and we can be
saved.

Vs. 10-15

**10 For it was fitting for Him, [meaning the Father] for whom
are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing
many sons to glory, to make the captain of their
salvation perfect through sufferings.**

The captain of our salvation is of course – Jesus.

He's like the commander of a hostage rescue team who's single-
handedly gone in to enemy occupied territory, taken out the
terrorists, and set the hostages free.

But in order to do this, Jesus had to become a man.

You see, dominion of earth had been given to man, lost by man,
and could only be reclaimed by a man.

Jesus was that man – the only man would could qualify to do it
because unlike other men, he was free of the stain of sin.

By becoming a man, God has now taken on the experience of
humanity – and knows firsthand what it means to suffer
physically.

This union of God and man in the person of Christ has made possible
a whole new order of creation – as he goes on to say in the next
verses . . .

**11 For both He who sanctifies and those who are being
sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not
ashamed to call them brethren,**

12 saying:

“I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You.”

That’s from Psalm 22 – which is clearly a picture of the crucifixion. This is v. 22, which comes after the work of the cross is complete. What the Psalmist was saying was that through the death of the Messiah – a door would be opened to the redemption of fallen man so that man could reclaim his place at God’s side, as part of God’s spiritual family.

13 And again:

“I will put My trust in Him.”

And again:

“Here am I and the children whom God has given Me.”

This is from 2 Samuel 22 and Isaiah 8, which are prophetic of the Messiah’s death and resurrection.

Like Psalm 22, they speak what the redemption of Christ at the Cross accomplishes.

It opens the door to the family of God.

Through His Sonship, we can become sons and daughters of God.

14 Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,

15 and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

The incarnation was necessary so that Jesus could die.

But his death became the means of the end of death.

Let me explain it this way – if there’s a raging fire sweeping down a canyon side, firefighters will often light a clearing fire in front of it on the opposite hillside.

This smaller fire they can control and by burning up the fuel, when the other fire gets there, there is nothing left to burn and the fire

goes out.

Or think of it this way – when the fire-fighters were trying to douse the oil fires started by Saddam Hussein at the end of the Gulf War, they put them out by dropping bombs on them.

Jesus' death on the Cross, was like an explosion that ripped death wide open and turned the grave into a doorway to glory.

Death has now lost its sting, it holds no terror for those who put their trust in Christ because we realize that while the circumstances that lead to death may be uncomfortable, death itself is no longer a mystery – what lies a heartbeat beyond death is eternal glory and bliss!

Vs. 16-18

16 For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham.

The aid spoken of here refers to His work on the cross.

Jesus didn't die for angels.

The demons can't be saved; their fate is sealed.

What Jesus did, he did for human beings.

And for all those who respond in faith and receive Him as Lord and Savior, they become the spiritual children of Abraham – who was the first of the Called and Chosen of God.

17 Therefore, in all things He had to be made like *His* brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

18 For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.

These last two verses were aimed directly at those pressured Jewish Christians.

The writer wanted to remind them that Jesus Himself knew what it was like to face opposition from His fellow Jews.

He knew what it was like to walk around and see the scowling

Romans glaring at Him as they marched through the streets.

He knew what it was like to be mis-understood and hated.

He knew what it was like to be tempted, and to suffer the pressure

of living in a fallen world that seems bent on making us stumble.

We may think the only temptation Jesus endured was the three temptations that came at the end of the 40 days he spent in the wilderness at the beginning of His public ministry.

But that is not the case.

It says that the devil left him for a more opportune time.

You can be sure there were many of them.

As when Peter rebuked Him for saying He was going to Jerusalem to die.

He said, “Get behind me Satan!”

The level and power of a temptation is directly proportional to our ability to make it happen.

Since Jesus had all authority and power, the level of temptation He endured was in all likelihood far greater than what we endure.

So when you are tempted, don't fall in to the trap of thinking that no one knows just how pressed you are.

Don't think that somehow – if others knew what kind of a battle you were facing they'd give you the go-ahead.

That's all the lies of the enemy who just wants to see you fall so he can then stomp on your head with guilt and feelings of unworthiness and make you start thinking you're no good to God and He doesn't want you.

Let's end right there – here's how much God wants, values, and loves you –

God the Son rose from His glorious throne, laid aside His glory, wrapped Himself in Human flesh and nature, became a vulnerable infant and entered in to a humble human family.

He grew up as a young child, learning how to tie his own sandals and eat with a spoon.

He learned a trade as a *technon* – which means he worked with stone or wood.

His hands grew calloused as he handled the chisel and hammer.

The sweat rolled down his forehead as he worked in the hot sun.

He knew what it was like to get blisters and sore muscles.

He knew thirst and hunger.

And then, when the time was right, he left home, to the

disappointment of his mother and brothers, and set out as an itinerant rabbi who was opposed and hated by the religious elites.

For a little over three years as he traveled the country-side His popularity rose and fell in proportion to the hardness of His words.

Then, at the end, even His friends forsook Him and He stood alone.

He was arrested, falsely accused and condemned and led out to a brutal and excruciating execution.

Now, here's what's amazing, from the very moment He rose from His heavenly throne to begin this whole thing – He knew the Cross was out there – he knew the Cross was coming.

Every step He took was in the shadow of the cross.

For it was AT THE CROSS that He made propitiation for our sins.

We might have expected the translators to find some other word than “propitiation.”

The problem is – there isn't one.

Some translations render it as “atoning sacrifice” but that's a bit wide of the point.

The word is the same one used of the mercy seat that sat atop the ark of the covenant.

The mercy seat was the place where the high priest would sprinkle the blood of the goat on the Day of Atonement.

Picture the ark.

On top of it are the two cherubs who face each other with their wing tips touching.

They rise up out of the mercy seat which is like a lid or covering for the ark of the covenant which is like an open box.

Inside the ark are the two tablets containing the 10 commandments, which symbolizes the law of God, a pot of manna which symbolizes the provision of God and Aaron's staff which had budded and grown shoots, which symbolizes God's leadership.

Right above the mercy seat, between the outstretched wings of the cherubim is a brilliant glowing cloud of light that is so bright, even with welding goggle son you'd be blinded.

That's the Shekinah Glory – the visible presence of God.

The Shekinah floats above the mercy seat, only because the blood of a goat has placed a covering over the contents of the ark.

You man had rejected God's law, provision and leadership.

The blood was a covering of man's guilt and so a temporary stay of God's judgment.

The meeting place of God and man was symbolized by the mercy seat.

It was there that the blood was applied and fellowship between God and man could be restored.

When the writers says in v. 17 that Jesus is our propitiation, he uses this word for mercy seat.

Jesus is the meeting place between God and man.

He is in himself, God and Man, and provides through His work on the cross the final and complete sacrifice that doesn't merely cover over sin, but forever takes it out of the way.

This is the force of the argument the writer is using.

Why would his readers want to go back to a temporary arrangement of covering over sins when in Christ sins have been taken away forever?

And because of that, we can now enjoy a new relationship with God as His sons and daughters and reclaim our heritage of glory and honor to rule with Him as Kings and Queens.