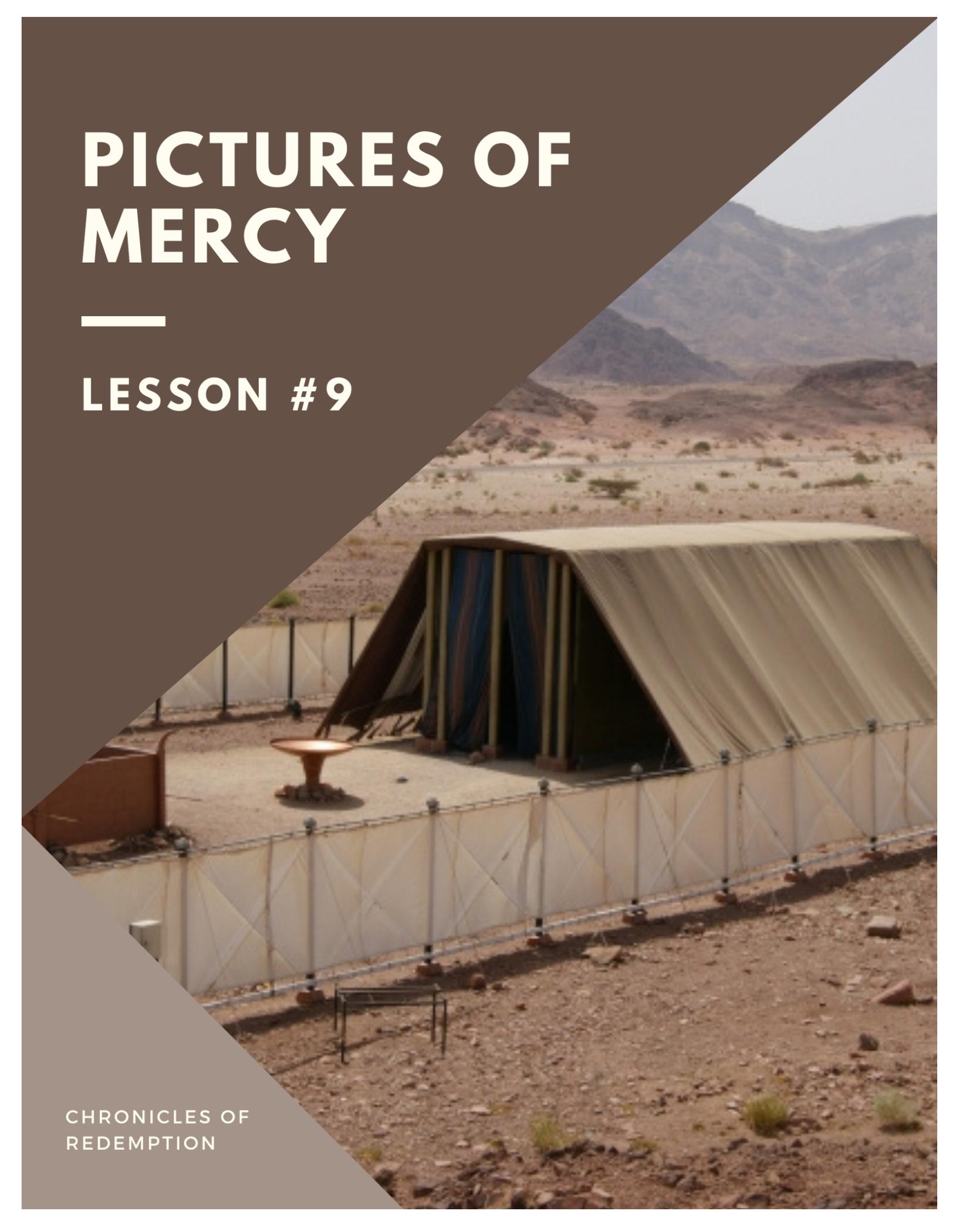


PICTURES OF MERCY

LESSON #9

CHRONICLES OF
REDEMPTION

A photograph of a desert campsite. In the foreground, there is a large, light-colored tent with a dark blue and yellow striped interior. To the left of the tent, there is a large, shallow, golden-colored fire pit. The camp is enclosed by a white fence with a diamond pattern. The background shows a vast, arid desert landscape with sparse vegetation and distant mountains under a clear sky.

Pictures of Mercy

Exodus 25-Leviticus

INTRODUCTION

During the time that Moses was on Mount Sinai, God gave to him not only the tablets of the Ten Commandments, but also many civil and ceremonial laws which would govern and protect Israel as a nation separated unto God. The Ten Commandments embody God's perfect moral standard for man. Yet even before Moses descended the mountain, Israel had broken God's Law by turning back to pagan idolatry and worshiping the golden calf.

This did not take God by surprise. Rather, knowing that Israel would fall short of His standard, God prepared intricate plans for the construction of a tabernacle—a place where He would dwell with man—and gave instructions to Moses for a sacrificial system which would teach His people how to approach a holy God and find forgiveness. If the Law revealed the holiness and justice of God, then the tabernacle and offerings reveal His compassion and mercy. God has always had the redemption of man in His heart.



The Tabernacle—God Dwelling With Man



Read Exodus 25:1-9



GOD REVEALS HIS PATTERN FOR THE NATION'S WORSHIP CENTER

- ***"Tell the sons of Israel to raise a contribution for Me" (25:2).***

The freewill offering of gold, silver, precious stones, metals, and animal skins would come from the wealth that Israel received from the _____ after the Passover (Exod. 12:35-36).

- ***“Let them construct a sanctuary for Me, that I may dwell among them” (25:8).***

A *sanctuary* is a structure which is set apart or dedicated for a special purpose. In this case, the sanctuary was to be dedicated to God alone as the place of His divine presence among Israel. As Israel had witnessed God’s presence on the mountain, so they would now experience His special _____ in their midst. In spite of their complaining hearts, disobedience, and general failures toward God, He compassionately planned to dwell among them. For this reason, the sanctuary was also called a *tabernacle*, meaning “dwelling place.”

- ***“According to all that I am going to show you...just so you shall construct it” (25:9).***

The tabernacle, with all of its intricate details and furniture, was designed by God. It was to be constructed exactly according to the _____ which God showed Moses. Similar to the instructions God gave to Noah in building the ark, neither man was left to his own designs, for in both cases the specific materials and exact dimensions were determined by God. So important was the reality of the symbolism displayed in the tabernacle and its design that fifty chapters are devoted to it throughout the Bible. By comparison, only two chapters explain the creation of the heavens and earth.

Blueprint for the tabernacle

Since Israel’s appointment with God on Mount Sinai was only a temporary interruption from their journey to the promised land of Canaan, God instructed Moses to build a _____, tent-like sanctuary which suited the nation’s nomadic lifestyle. It embodied everything necessary to rally the new nation around the worship of the Lord, and yet it could be dismantled, moved about, and reconstructed at the next camp. As God was to be the focal point of their nation, so the tabernacle would be erected in the center of Israel’s encampment with the twelve tribes surrounding it in military array.

The court of the tabernacle (Exod. 27:9-19)

Surrounding the sanctuary was a _____ measuring one hundred and fifty feet by seventy five feet. With the exception of a single gate, the court was enclosed by a seven-and-a-half-foot-high fence which prevented anyone on the outside from casually wandering in or even looking in on the courtyard. This was yet one more reminder of the separation between a holy God and man.

The tent of meeting (Exod. 26)

Within the courtyard was the _____ proper, a forty-five foot by fifteen foot tent constructed of wood overlaid with gold, with curtains of goats' hair, ram, and badger skins without, and masterfully designed curtains of woven linen within. The tent of meeting was divided into two rooms...

1 The Holy Place

All were banned from entering the _____ (separate place) except for the priests who could perform their service only after having first sacrificed and washed themselves.

2 The Holy of Holies

The heart of the tabernacle was accessible only to the _____ on one day of the year—the Day of Atonement.

A veil of woven linen, embroidered with cherubim, separated the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place. No light from without was allowed to penetrate the inner chamber where God would demonstrate His presence (Exod. 26:31-33).

Furniture within the tabernacle

Within the court:

1 The altar of burnt offering (Exod. 27:1-8)

The altar of burnt offering, measuring approximately seven-and-a-half feet square, was located in the courtyard. It was constructed of wood overlaid with bronze and was to be used specifically for _____ sacrifice. Its craftsmen were to follow the precise pattern God had given (Exod. 27:8).

2 The laver (Exod. 30:17-21)

The laver, a large bronze basin made to hold water, was placed directly before the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. A priest could not enter the Holy Place without having first performed a ceremonial washing of his hands and feet. This constant reminder of God's purity and man's need for _____ was so important that failure to comply would result in his death (Exod. 30:20-21).



Exodus 25:22

"And there I will meet with you; and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of testimony I will speak to you."

Within the Holy of Holies no light could penetrate from without, and there were no lamps. It would be both filled and lit by the brightness of God's presence.



THE GLORY OF THE LORD FILLED THE TABERNACLE

The tabernacle was under construction for at least _____ months and completed close to one year after leaving Egypt (cf. Exod. 12:2; 40:2,17). Israel had done exactly as the Lord commanded (cf. Exod. 39:32-33). God showed His approval by filling the tabernacle with His glory shown by a cloud covering the tent of meeting.



Read Exodus 40:34-38

2

The Priesthood—Mediating on Behalf of Man

In the past, the heads of families such as Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob acted as priests for their families by receiving instruction from God and offering sacrifices. Here God established the official priesthood who would serve as mediators before Him on behalf of the nation of Israel.



Chosen by God

God ordained the concept of official priesthood. From the nation of Israel—the kingdom of priests—God selected the tribe of _____ to make up the priesthood (Num. 3:5-10). Moreover, from the tribe of Levi, He specifically designated Aaron and his sons to serve as High Priests (Exod. 28:1-5, 40:12-15). High Priests were set apart from the rest of the priesthood by their special priestly garments and their distinguished privilege of entering the Holy of Holies.



Holy to God

The priest was set apart from the ordinary worshiper by his sacred office, and holiness was to be his defining mark. This was apparent in the physical requirements, for no blind, lame, or otherwise disfigured man could serve God as a priest. These external requirements merely reflected the inner moral requirements of a _____ life (Lev. 21).

► **Representatives of God**

The function of the priest was basically two-fold: First, he was a _____ between God and the worshiper by facilitating the atoning sacrifices commanded by God (Lev. 1:5). Secondly, he was also a _____, responsible for the maintenance and care of the tabernacle and its furnishings (Num. 8:19).

3

The Sacrifices—Atoning for the Sin of Man

From the coats of skins which God provided for Adam and Eve, to the sacrifices offered by Abel, Noah, and Abraham, the way of sacrifice was followed in shadowy form. Little explanation had been given throughout that early period prior to the official establishment of the sacrificial system. Here God fully discloses to Moses the need for and the instructions regarding appropriate sacrifice to Him.

► **Why sacrifice?**

Since the day God warned Adam, *"For in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die"* (Gen. 2:17), the payment for sin has been _____ (cf. Rom. 6:23). The Law of God was given to remove all doubt that men were sinners by both birth and deed, incapable of living right, unable to escape judgment, and left with no way to reconnect with God through any actions of their own. What was needed was forgiveness and a way to turn God's anger away from their sin. God prepared that way for man—and it was through sacrifice.

► **Why blood?**

As life is identified with blood, so the shedding of _____ is identified with death. The blood sacrifice was God's provision to make atonement for sin for all who came to Him in faith (cf. Heb. 11:6). It simultaneously satisfied God's judgment against sin and bestowed mercy to man by transferring to the animal sacrifice the death penalty he deserved.

Leviticus 17:11

"...The life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement."



Hebrews 9:22

"...Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness."

- ***“And he shall lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering” (Lev. 1:4).***

This was a tangible sign of _____ by which the guilt of the sinner passed to his animal substitute.

- ***“That it may be accepted for him to make atonement on his behalf” (Lev. 1:4).***

As the sinner’s substitute, the death of the animal would atone for—_____—the guilt of the sinner before God.

- ***“And he shall slay the young bull before the Lord...and the priests shall offer up the blood and sprinkle the blood around on the altar” (Lev. 1:5).***

Though the sinner identified with the sacrifice, it was the _____ who applied the blood on his behalf as a mediator. The sinner needed someone outside himself to represent him.

- ***“And the priest shall offer up...all of it on the altar for a burnt offering” (Lev. 1:9).***

The sacrifice was to be wholly consumed by _____, a demonstration of the worshiper’s desire to be completely committed to God.

2 The sin offering (Lev. 4:1-6)

The sin offering was a mandatory sacrifice for everyone. It was offered to obtain forgiveness for _____ sins. The procedure for offering the sacrifice was similar to the burnt offering, with one exception being that the blood was taken by the priest into the Holy Place and applied to the altar of incense and the veil, as well as the altar of burnt offering in the outer court.

- ***“So the priest shall make atonement for them, and they shall be forgiven” (4:20).***

The sin would be covered and the sinner _____ because the punishment was placed on the substitute animal.

➤ The Day of Atonement

Still observed today as the Jewish holiday _____, this is clearly the most graphic display of sacrifice for atonement. God commanded that this ritual be performed once a year by the High Priest on behalf of the nation of Israel...



Leviticus 16:29-20

“And this shall be a permanent statute for you: in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall humble your souls, and not do any work...for it is on this day that atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you; you shall be clean from all your sins before the Lord.”

The ceremony involved three aspects...



Read Leviticus 16:11-14

1 Purification of the High Priest

The High Priest must first offer a sacrifice to cleanse _____ before he could mediate for Israel. This is the first mention of blood being sprinkled on the mercy seat.



Read Leviticus 16:15-16

2 Atonement for the nation

- ***“Then he shall slaughter the goat of the sin offering...and bring its blood inside the veil” (16:15).***

After atoning for his own sin, the High Priest would kill a second goat and bring its blood within the Holy of Holies. On this day alone, and only with _____ was the High Priest permitted to enter this sacred room (cf. Lev. 16:2; Heb. 9:7).

- ***“...And sprinkle it on the mercy seat” (16:15).***

The High Priest was to sprinkle blood on the mercy seat, the golden lid of the ark situated directly between the commandments of God which had been broken and the holy presence of God between the cherubim. It was on the blood-covered mercy seat that Israel found forgiveness. The God of the Bible is a _____ God. Unlike the pagan gods of the nations, sacrifices were offered not to appease Him—but to appropriate His mercy.

NOTES:



MERCY:

that compassionate help which God gives to those who are miserable and in need, to those unable to help themselves, or without rightful claim to His goodness.



Read Leviticus 16:20-22

3 Release of the scapegoat

This third aspect of the Day of Atonement is another beautiful picture illustrating the important Biblical concept of substitution. The repeated sacrifices were forever reminding Israel of their sin. The oppressive weight of their sin-guilt could only be equaled by the exuberant _____ they must have experienced at seeing the scapegoat bear their sins far from them.



Psalm 103:11-12

"For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him. As far as the East is from the West, so far has He removed our transgressions from us."

But the cycle of sin, sacrifice, and forgiveness would begin again. The very fact that the Day of Atonement was to be repeated each _____ evidenced that sacrificed animals could not permanently take away sin, but merely covered, or atoned for it—for one more year.



Hebrews 10:3-4

"But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year. For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins."

CONCLUSION

Only an infinitely wise God could design these three expressions of mercy—the tabernacle, priesthood, and sacrifices. These dynamic pictures were utterly necessary for the wellbeing of Israel, yet "only a shadow of the good things to come" (Heb. 10:1). The need for atonement was not limited to Israel, for sin had passed to all men. These three expressions of mercy pointed to a future and more perfect redemption available to all.



1 Corinthians 10:11

"Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come."

 **Questions**

1. What was the purpose of the tabernacle?

2. What does the word tabernacle mean and what significance did its meaning have for Israel?

3. How many rooms did the tabernacle consist of, and what were their names?

4. What was in between the two rooms? What was its significance?

5. What was the name and function of the box placed within the Holy of Holies?

6. How was the presence of God evident within the tabernacle?

7. Who was allowed in the Holy of Holies? How often? What had to accompany him?

8. What was the brazen altar used for?

9. What did God prescribe for the person who committed a sin and wanted forgiveness?



Questions

10. What was the significance of placing one's hand on the head of the animal while it was being killed?

11. What vital lesson could be learned each time an Israelite presented a sin offering?

12. Whom did God designate as priests? What was their function?
