

## The Blame Game (The Fear of Punishment) – Week 4

**The Lie: “Those who fail are unworthy of love and deserve to be punished.”**

How often do you hear (or use) phrases like these...

*“God is punishing me.”*

*“I can never forgive that person for what was done.”*

*“I must feel bad enough about what I did for long enough in order to go on with life.”*

*“I must make this person feel bad enough for long enough so he/she will never do it again.”*

*“You must learn to forgive yourself.”*

**Those are often-heard comments, but we must ask if they are truly biblical statements. More on that in a bit...**

**What are the words / phrases you usually use to describe yourself (to yourself or others) when you make a mistake?**

**All blame is a waste of time. No matter how much fault you find with another, and regardless of how much you blame him, it will not change you. The only thing blame does is to keep the focus off you when you are looking for external reasons to explain your unhappiness or frustration. You may succeed in making another feel guilty of something by blaming him, but you won't succeed in changing whatever it is about you that is making you unhappy.**

**- Wayne W. Dyer**

### **God's Truth: Propitiation**

**Propitiation** means to “appease the wrath of, to cover, to be merciful toward.”

In the OT, the word (as such) is not found, but the word “mercy seat” is.

**In the NT, the word propitiation is the Greek word for “mercy seat.”**

**Luke 18:13** “But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’” Lit. “Be mercy-seated to me...!”

**Romans 3:21-25** But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it-- 22 the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.

**The mercy seat was the lid of the Ark of the Covenant.**

**Exodus 25:19-22** Make one cherub on the one end, and one cherub on the other end. Of one piece with the mercy seat shall you make the cherubim on its two ends. 20 The cherubim shall spread out their wings above, overshadowing the mercy seat with their wings, their faces one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubim be. 21 And you shall put the mercy seat on the top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the testimony that I shall give you. 22 There I will meet with you, and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim that are on the ark of the testimony, I will speak with you about all that I will give you in commandment for the people of Israel.

**Exodus 37:6-9** And he made a mercy seat of pure gold. Two cubits and a half was its length, and a cubit and a half its breadth. 7 And he made two cherubim of gold. He made them of hammered work on the two ends of the mercy seat, 8 one cherub on the one end, and one cherub on the other end. Of one piece with the mercy seat he made the cherubim on its two ends. 9 The cherubim spread out their wings above, overshadowing the mercy seat with their wings, with their faces one to another; toward the mercy seat were the faces of the cherubim.

**It was considered the “footstool” of God as he was enthroned “above/between” the cherubim in the Most Holy Place of the tabernacle / Temple.**

**1 Chronicles 28:2** Then King David rose to his feet and said: "Hear me, my brothers and my people. I had it in my heart to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD and for the footstool of our God, and I made preparations for building.

**Psalm 132:6-8** Behold, we heard of it in Ephrathah; we found it in the fields of Jaar. 7 "Let us go to his dwelling place; let us worship at his footstool!" 8 Arise, O LORD, and go to your resting place, you and the ark of your might."

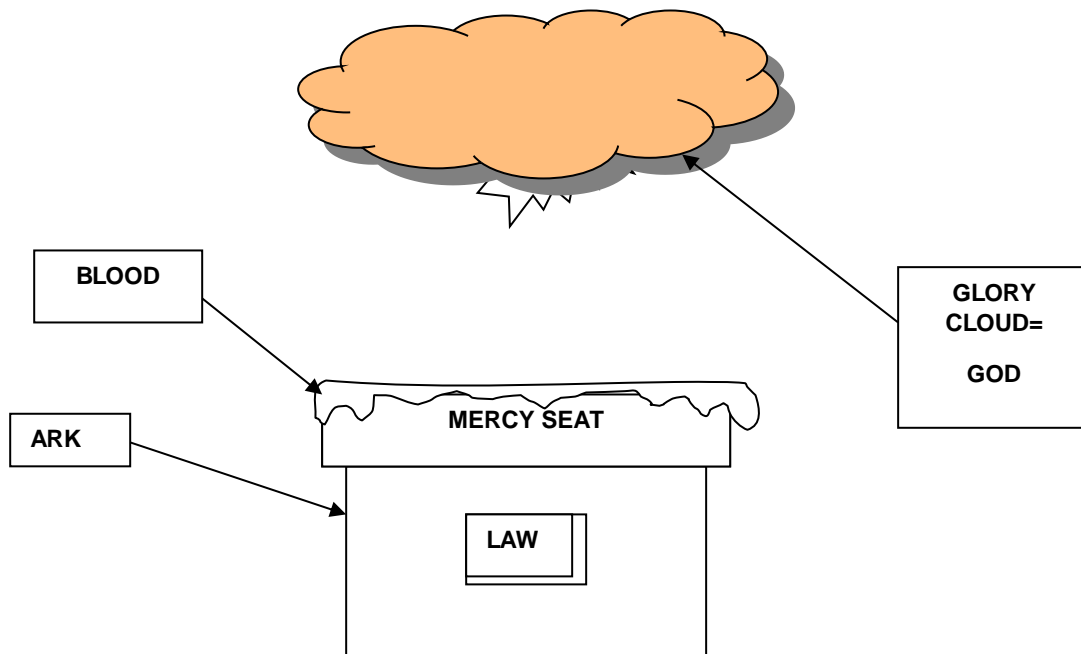
**Isaiah 37:16** "O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, enthroned above the cherubim, you are the God, you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; you have made heaven and earth. (see also: 2 Kings 19:15; 1 Chronicles 13:6)

**And on either side of the ark, in the Most Holy Place, were 15-foot tall, olivewood cherubim with their wings touching as they stretched out over the ark.**

**1 Kings 6:20-28** The inner sanctuary was twenty cubits long, twenty cubits wide, and twenty cubits high, and he overlaid it with pure gold. He also overlaid an altar of cedar. 21 And Solomon overlaid the inside of the house with pure gold, and he drew chains of gold across, in front of the inner sanctuary, and overlaid it with gold. 22 And he overlaid the whole house with gold, until all the house was finished. Also the whole altar that belonged to the inner sanctuary he overlaid with gold. 23 In the inner sanctuary he made two cherubim of olivewood, each ten cubits high. 24 Five cubits was the length of one wing of the cherub, and five cubits the length of the other wing of the cherub; it was ten cubits from the tip of one wing to the tip of the other. 25 The other cherub also measured ten cubits; both cherubim had the same measure and the same form. 26 The height of one cherub was ten cubits, and so was that of the other cherub. 27 He put the cherubim in the innermost part of the house. And the wings of the cherubim were spread out so that a wing of one touched the one wall, and a wing of the other cherub touched the other wall; their other wings touched each other in the middle of the house. 28 And he overlaid the cherubim with gold.



On the Day of Atonement, the High Priest would enter into the Most Holy Place and sprinkle blood over the mercy seat. The action would give a dramatic and clear picture of the forgiveness for sin. God's presence hovering above the ark, the law of God (the stone tablets from Sinai) broken by the people inside the ark, and blood spread over the mercy seat, meaning God views the broken law through the blood of the sacrifice.



**But why is blood necessary to appease the wrath of God?**

**Leviticus 17:11** For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life.

**Romans 6:23** For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Hebrews 9:22** Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.

**Jesus is our high priest...Hebrews 8:1, 2 Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.**

**And he is the sacrifice...Hebrews 9:12 Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.**

**Made once for all. Hebrews 9:12 Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.**

**Hebrews 10:18-14 Previously saying, "Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them" (which are offered according to the law), 9 then He said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God." He takes away the first that He may establish the second. 10 By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. 11 And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. 12 But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, 13 from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. 14 For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.**

**Jesus is our representative before God: Hebrews 2:17 Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.**

**Jesus bore the wrath of God for sin: Isaiah 53:4-6 Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. 5 But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned--every one--to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.**

**God sent Jesus as our propitiation out of his love: 1 John 4:9-11 In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. 10 In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.**

**There is nothing that anyone can do to me that can compare with my sin of rebellion that Christ has completely forgiven. (S. for S.)**

**So, let's get back to those statements we hear so often and look at them in light of the fact that Jesus has taken the full wrath of God on behalf of those who follow him...**

**"God is punishing me."**

**1 John 2:2 He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.**

**1 John 4:10 In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.**

**God never punishes his children. His children never face eternal wrath. But they do face temporary discipline.**

**Hebrews 12:7-9 It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? 8 If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. 9 Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live?**

**"I can never forgive that person for what was done."**

**Colossians 3:13 Bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.**

**Ephesians 4:32 Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.**

**Matthew 6:14 For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.**

**See also: Matthew 18:21-35**

*"Not forgiving is like drinking rat poison and then waiting for the rat to die."*

**- Anne Lamott**

**"I must feel bad enough about what I did for long enough in order to go on with life."**

**1 John 3:20 For whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything.**

**Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.**

*We must speedily return to Christ when we sin, not linger and "do penance" before coming to him. This idea is one of "doing" enough to be accepted instead of trusting in his sacrifice.*

**“I must make this person feel bad enough for long enough so he/she will never do it again.”**

**Luke 6:36-37 Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful. 37 "Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven.”**

**This idea of making someone else “do penance” until we are satisfied puts us in the place of God himself. When we do this, we are also trying to motivate someone by means that are opposed to the truth of propitiation. We are standing against the truth of God and promoting a false idea of what it means to be accepted.**

**The Dake Study Bible lists 1,050 commands to the Christian in the NT. Have you ever condemned someone because of one of them? What if you condemned yourself every time you disobeyed like you may condemn others?**

**“You must learn to forgive yourself.”**

**1 John 1:8-9 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

**The Bible never says that you must forgive yourself. You must *fully receive the blessing of God’s forgiveness. Sometimes people might say, “Well, fully receiving God’s forgiveness and forgiving yourself are the same thing.” No, they are not. They are not even close. To say something of the sort is to totally miss the biblical truth.***

***Statements like, “I know God forgives me, but I am having a hard time forgiving myself,” point to the truth that the person making that statement really doesn’t understand what it means to be forgiven by God. What they are saying is, “I have a higher standard for forgiveness than God himself.”***

**"Many years ago, a father and his daughter were walking through the grass on the Canadian prairie. In the distance, they saw a prairie fire, and they realized that it would soon engulf them. The father knew there was only one way of escape: They would quickly begin a fire right where they were and burn a large patch of grass. When the huge fire drew near, they then would stand on the section that had already burned. When the flames did approach them, the girl was terrified but her father assured her, 'The flames can't get to us. We are standing where the fire has already been.'"**

**- Erwin Lutzer**

When Mary entered the tomb...

**John 20:12 And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet.**

**The death of Jesus was our propitiation; and his resurrection showed the sacrifice was accepted and God’s wrath was appeased. And two angels were sitting on that empty “mercy seat.”**