

Nettleham Methodist Church

## Cell Outlines

Week beginning: 24<sup>th</sup> February 2008

### Theme: The Mercy Seat

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**To Get Us Started:** Have you been in a situation when you needed sympathy and understanding and received wrath? Or more positively have you ever been in a situation when you expected to receive a 'bent ear' and received kindness? Share with your cell about your experiences and the circumstances that surrounded the events.

#### Word

Read Exodus 25:10-22. The Atonement Cover or Mercy Seat was a piece of pure gold, which rested on the top of the Ark of the Covenant. Within the Ark rested the stone tablets containing the Ten Commandments written by the finger of God. The Ark of the Covenant was within the 'Holy of Holies' which was itself within the Tabernacle and latterly within the great Temple that Solomon built several hundred years later in Jerusalem. So holy was this area within the tabernacle/ temple that only the High Priest himself could meet with God once a year on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) and only after many strict regulations of cleansing had been adhered too. It was directly above the Mercy Seat God appeared in a cloud to 'commune' (Ex.25:22) with His people via the High Priest. The Mercy Seat was a precursor to the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Through His death on the cross we can receive mercy from Almighty God. See the following Scriptures: Ephesians 2:4-5; Titus 3:5-6; 1 Peter 1:3 & 2:10. See also a very interesting Psalm which some commentators suggest links the Mercy Seat and a certain 'Son of Man'. See if you can spot the subtle reference to the Mercy Seat bearing in mind the detailed description in Exodus 25 of what is on top of the Mercy Seat.

Through Christ alone we receive mercy from Almighty God and His wrath passes over us through His own blood - as per the symbolic significance of the Passover in Exodus 12. Fourteen centuries later Christ completed His mission of reconciliation on the cross as he cried, 'It is finished' (John 19:30). The Greek (the original language of the New Testament) word suggests a deeper double meaning suggesting that Jesus was saying that the debt (of human sin) had been fully paid. At that moment a significant thing happened in the Temple. Read Matthew 27:50-51. Notice which end the curtain started to be torn from. Why is this significant? Do you see the significance of 1 Peter 2:9 as a result of Christ's death and resurrection?

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#### Witness

Look up the following references regarding mercy. Matthew 5:7; Luke 6:36-37; Ephesians 4:32 & James 2:12-13. In the light of God's mercy towards us in Jesus Christ how should we be towards our brothers and sisters in Christ and non-believers? Does this affect your approach to witnessing and living amongst fellow believers?

#### Worship/ Prayer

Beware of being too 'familiar' with God is worship! Spend some time thanking Him together for showing us mercy in Jesus and ask Him to allow you further opportunities to show His mercy to those around you - particularly those who do not know Him as their Lord and Saviour and those who occasionally get on your nerves particularly in the church!