

# CHRIST OUR MERCY SEAT

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ROMANS 3:24-26 • TV389B

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by

**HENRY T. MAHAN**

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Zebulon Baptist Church  
6088 Zebulon Highway  
Pikeville, KY 41501

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### **Romans 3:24-26**

*Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.*

Now, this is the text today and it will be taken from the **Book of Romans Chapter 3: verses 24, 25 and 26**. I know that some of you read your Bible with me when I am preaching and you will want to follow along as we read the scripture. The subject today is: **“CHRIST OUR MERCY SEAT.”** If you will listen, I believe you will learn (at least in your head) the gospel, the good news, and the glad tidings of God’s redeeming grace in Christ Jesus. This is the gospel.

It says here in **Romans 3:24**, *“Being justified freely, (without charge) by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood to declare His righteousness.”* We have been acquitted, just as if I had never sinned and we are reconciled. All sin is forgiven and put away, covered, and

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blotted out. Watch this **verse 26**, *“That God might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.”*

There are several things that I want you to see here. *“God set Him forth.”* What does that mean? *“To be a propitiation.”* What does that mean? *“Through faith in His blood, to declare God’s Righteousness”* that God might be God, that God might be just and Holy, and justify folks like you and me.

My friends, I desire above all things and when I thought about saying that, I thought about it again. I desire above all things (and may God be pleased to grant it), and as long as this program stays on television and as long as I am able to preach and you are able to hear, that our subject shall always be, every time we preach or every time you hear, the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is what Paul declared, He said; *“I preach Christ and Him crucified.”* In fact, he said, *“I’m determined, not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”* He said again, *“We preach not ourselves.”* We are not preaching ourselves. *“We are preaching Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves, just your servants for Christ’s sake.”*

I want our message always to be Christ in His glorious Deity. He’s a very God of very God. Let that note be sounded loud and clear. Let that arrow go straight to the mark. He’s none other than God in human flesh. The Father said unto the Son, *“Thy throne O God is forever.”*

I want to preach Christ in His true humanity; bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. Let it be said, let it be heard, let it be understood, that the *“Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”*

I want our message to be Christ crucified, Christ risen, and Christ exalted. *“Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather is risen again; who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.”* Christ is the only Mediator between God and men. **First Timothy 2:4** says; *“There’s one God.”* Do you believe that? There is one Mediator. *“There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men and that’s the man Christ Jesus.”* He said, *“I’m the way, I’m the truth, I’m the life; no man cometh to Father but by Me. Neither is there any other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.”*

I want to preach Christ Jesus as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He has all power over all flesh. He has all authority in heaven and in earth. He has been given a name above every name. Jesus Christ is worthy to receive honor, power and glory divine and blessings; *“O Lord be forever thine.”* This is a whole lot more than I can give.

I never get tired of preaching the gospel. I hope you never get tired of hearing it. Paul wrote to the church at Philippi and said, *“To write the same things to you, to me indeed is*

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*not grievous* (not tiresome) *and it is profitable for you.*” So, he went right on and preached Christ to them again.

No true believer, I know I can say this without hesitation, no true believer ever gets weary of hearing the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Never, never, never! Who among us ever complained about us having too much sunshine? Did you ever complain about having too much sunshine? I rejoice to see the sun rise every morning and drive away the darkness, don't you? Who among us has ever complained about the monotony of bread? I like bread every meal. Bread is the staff of life. Whoever complained about having too much water? Do you ever get tired of water?

Christ is the “*Sun of Righteousness rising with healing in His wings.*” Christ is the bread from heaven. Christ is the water of life. Christ is the hope of glory. Christ is the “*rose of Sharon.*” Christ is the “*lily of the valley.*” Christ is the “*fairest among ten thousand.*” No believer whose heart has ever been touched by the Master's hand will ever tire of looking into His face and hearing of His wonders, beauties and glories. No true preacher will ever run out of things to say about the Lord Jesus Christ. He never will!

Let's look at our text. “*God hath set Him forth. Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood.*” The word “*set forth,*” means several things. If you have a Bible there, with a center reference, a marginal reference, there will probably be a little number by the words, “*set forth.*” This refers you to that center reference and it says, “*foreordained.*” In other words, He is set forth, Christ is set forth to be the propitiation. This means that God foreordained Him. God predestinated Christ to be our propitiation before the world began. This was before the morning stars sang together, before the Sons of God shouted for joy, before the world was ever made and before Adam and Eve ever breathed.

Jesus Christ was ordained, foreordained from the beginning. He was predestinated to be the Surety of the everlasting covenant. He was to be the lamb slain, ye, even before the foundation of the world. He has always been our Messiah. He has always been our Redeemer. He has always been our Mercy Seat. Do you see that? Long before the world began, and long before there was a sinner, there was a Saviour. “*For known unto God are all His works from the beginning. God declares the end from the beginning. From ancient times the things that are not yet done; saying my council shall stand.*”

God never learns anything. Jesus Christ is not a remedy that God came up with after the fall. Jesus Christ is the remedy and was foreordained and predestinated before the fall. This is what the word “*set forth,*” means first, God ordained Him.

Secondly, the word, “*set forth,*” “*Whom God has set forth,*” means this; God has placed Him in public view. He has set Him forth. God has placed Him in public view. He has set Him forth and exhibited Him in a most conspicuous manner, in an undeniable manner that there can be no doubt who He is. There is no doubt concerning His claims. There will be

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no doubt of His office and His work. *“The Father hath set Him forth, (publicly, in a conspicuous manner), the Father hath set Him forth to be a propitiation.”*

How has the Father set Him forth? Well, first of all, the Father set Him forth in the promises. When Adam and Eve fell, the first promise God made of a redeemer, was; *“The seed of woman shall bruise the serpent’s head.”* Who is this seed of woman? *“Behold, the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; a virgin shall conceive and bring forth a Son, calling His name Immanuel,”* (God with us). So, God set Him forth right there in the garden as *“the seed of woman.”*

He set Him forth in **Genesis** as the seed of Abraham. He said, “Abraham look up at the sky; can you count the stars?” Abraham said, “No, Lord.” God said, “Can you count the sands of the seashore; even so shalt thy seed be?” He didn’t even have a son then. That seed is Christ, the seed of Abraham. That seed (Christ) was to come through Isaac.

In **Genesis 18**, Moses said, *“I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.”*

God set Him forth in all the promises. I could go all the way through the scripture and read promise after promise of Christ’s coming.

The Father set him forth also in the Old Testament patterns and pictures. The Ark of Noah is a picture of Christ. When judgment was upon the whole face of the earth, every living human being was perishing. There was the ark floating upon the water. All in the ark, not only survived, they victoriously conquered. They were delivered and that Ark is Christ.

The Passover Lamb is Christ. *“Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.”* That smitten rock in the wilderness that gave forth the thirst quenching and refreshing water is Christ. That rock is Christ. Paul said it was.

The manna from heaven is Christ. He said, *“Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; My Father giveth you the bread from heaven. I am the true bread from heaven.”*

The brazen serpent is Christ and the tabernacle, the atonement, the priest, and the sacrifice are all Christ. God sent Him forth. Do you see that? God set Him forth in promise, in prophecy, and in picture. God set Him forth and exhibited Him in a public manner. This was an undeniable manner and a conspicuous manner that it be not denied. This is God’s way. Would you come to God? You will come by Christ.

God set Him forth when He came into the world. He set Him forth conspicuously and publicly, undeniably so. The angels appeared to Mary and Joseph and said to Mary, “You’ll have a son.” She said, “I can’t have a son, I don’t know a man.” The angel said,

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*“That son born of you will be conceived of the Holy Ghost and shall be called the Son of God.”* That is pretty public and pretty conspicuous.

The angel said to Joseph, *“She (Mary) shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.* The angels appeared to the shepherds on the Judean hillside and they declared conspicuously and publicly and openly. They said, *“That’s Christ born down there in Bethlehem of Judea.”*

The star stood over the manger and God said, *“Here’s the place where My Son will come into this world.”* John the Baptist pointed at him and said, *“Behold the Lamb of God.”* The voice from heaven said, *“This is My Beloved Son, hear Him.”* The works that He did bore witness of Him. Do you see what I am saying? *“Whom God has set forth.”*

The Father set Him forth on a cross. All things written of Him were fulfilled when He died on that cross. *“Having fulfilled all that was written of Him, they took Him down from the tree.”* They plucked His beard. The scripture said that they would. They spat in His face. The scripture said that they would. They drove nails into His hands and feet. The Word said they would.

They mocked Him in His Kingly office. The Word said they would. Judas betrayed Him and denied Him and with the pieces of silver that he brought back to the temple the chief priest took the money to buy the potter’s field. The Word said he would. This was all done on time. *“Him being delivered by the determinate council and foreknowledge of God, ye with wicked hands have crucified and slain. You did what God determined before to be done.”*

Oh yes, the Father set Him forth. He set Him forth on a cross and He set Him forth when He raised Him from the dead. Whereby, He gave a witness to all men that Jesus Christ was approved, accepted and exalted.

The Father set Him forth in the gospel. That is what I am preaching to you, the gospel. God has set Him forth.

Not many want to hear it. They would rather hear people sing, entertain, perform or act like a fool. They would rather give away dolls, prizes, and pictures. They would rather talk about most anything than Christ. Yet, Christ is the very heart of God revealed. God set Him forth! Do you see? *“Wherefore, God set Him forth to be a propitiation.”*

Well, what is a propitiation, preacher? Well, everybody that studies knows this; they know that the word propitiation means mercy seat. Now, back in the Old Testament there was a Tabernacle. There were 12 tribes of Israel. They were abiding in their tents and tabernacles on the land where God had brought them. In the middle of that whole encampment was a courtyard, surrounded by a white fence. The fence was eight feet high. This fence was made of white linen and it surrounded a tent, the tabernacle. The tabernacle

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was about 45 feet long and 15 feet wide and 15 feet high. This was the tabernacle in the wilderness.

This was in the courtyard surrounded by the white linen fence. This speaks of the Righteousness of God. Everybody stayed outside the white linen fence except the Priest. There was only one gate and one way of entrance. You had to either come in or come out this one way. This was the eastern gate that faced the rising of the sun. Right in front of that eastern gate was an altar. On that altar is where they slew the sacrifice. The lamb was slain on that altar and was roasted with fire.

That altar is the picture of Calvary, where the Lamb of God was slain. He was roasted in the fiery wrath of God for our sins. His blood was shed. So, the Priest would bring the lamb for the Day of Atonement and would slay the lamb and catch the blood in a basin and roast the body on that altar.

He would come across that courtyard with the blood and he would stop in front of the tabernacle. There was a laver of fresh, clean, clear water. There he would wash his hands and feet. This is a picture of sanctification; Christ our justification at the altar at Calvary and our sanctification is also in Christ.

He would come into the tabernacle. The tabernacle was made of two sections; it was a Holy place. This Holy place was 30 feet long and 15 feet wide. It was called the Holy place. There were only three pieces of furniture in the Holy place. There was the candlestick, which is Christ the light of the world, and on the other side was the table of shewbread. This is picturing Christ, the bread of life.

Right in front of the veil, the second veil, which was about 4 or 5 inches thick, had no entrance or doorway, it hung from top to bottom and side-by-side. Right in front of the veil was an altar of incense. It kept burning 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The Priest kept it burning. This signifies the prayers of Christ that would ascend up before God and His people. Everything is Christ. *“He tabernacled among us.”*

Once a year, the High Priest would go under the veil into the Holy of Holies. He would go into the awesome, Holy place, the Holy of Holies. He would go in with the blood and a censor of incense, the prayers of Christ and the blood of Christ. That priest himself was a picture of Christ.

In that Holy of Holies was the Ark of the Covenant. This Ark was about two and a half feet long and about two feet wide and about that high. Inside that Ark of the Covenant were three things: There was Aaron’s rod that budded. There was a pot of manna, the manna that God gave from heaven and there was the broken law. There were the Ten Commandments on the tables of stone that God gave to Moses. This was inside that Ark. This was the chief thing, the Ten Commandments, and the broken law, was in that Ark of the Covenant.

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Over the top of the Ark of the Covenant was a Mercy Seat. This Mercy Seat was of beaten gold. On either end was a Cherubim (a winged creature) facing one another. Over that Mercy Seat was the Shechinah glory of God. That high priest would come into that Holy of Holies, once a year, not without blood.

He would sprinkle that blood, which is typical of the blood of Christ, which is a pattern of Jesus Christ, and which is a picture of the blood of Christ. He would sprinkle it on the Mercy Seat that covered the broken law. It was called a propitiation and it was called atonement, (at-one-ment). This was called reconciliation. The blood fell on the mercy seat before the glory of God, before the Shechinah glory of God. That is where propitiation or forgiveness is pictured.

The Mercy Seat is where the glory of God was revealed. The Mercy Seat is where the atonement was made. The Mercy Seat is where the broken law was dealt with by death, sacrifice and blood. The Mercy Seat is where men met God. Would you meet God?

You are not going to meet Him in a baptistery. You are not going to meet Him at an altar. You are not going to meet Him at the front of a church. You are going to meet Him at the Mercy Seat. That is where you will meet God. You are going to meet God where Israel met God, at the Mercy Seat.

Would you be forgiven? You are not going to be forgiven because you make religious signs. You are not going to be forgiven because you count beads. You are not going to be forgiven because you go to a confessional. You are not going to be forgiven because you turn over a new leaf. You will be forgiven because the blood is on the Mercy Seat. Is that clear?

Would you know and worship God? You'll only know God in Christ. I'm telling you the truth. God has revealed His glory in the face of Christ Jesus. "*God has set Him forth to be a propitiation,*" (a mercy seat). This is what this is all about. That is where it is all done. That is where God meets with men.

Back yonder in the day of Israel, as long as that Tabernacle stood, the only place of the atonement was in the Tabernacle. It was in the Holy of Holies, on the Mercy Seat before the Shechinah glory of God. That is where God met them. That is where they were forgiven.

I'm telling you now; "*God set Him forth.*" He is the fulfillment of all that. "*God taketh away the first that He may establish the second.*" The law has been fulfilled in Christ. The type has been fulfilled in Christ.

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*“We have a High Priest who is ascended into the heavens, Jesus Christ the Righteous. Having a High Priest over the House of God, let us come boldly.”* Christ is our High Priest and He ministers not in the tabernacle made with hands but in heaven itself. He has gone not into the Holy Place made with hands but into heaven itself. There, not to put the blood of an animal but His own blood on the Mercy Seat of glory. He is our propitiation! I can't make it any clearer than that. That is what God says.

Then, the word propitiation is a covering. That is what the Mercy Seat did; it covered the Ark. The Mercy Seat covered the broken law; it covered it up. The blood made it an effectual covering. The Mercy Seat covered the broken law and so covered that which is the cause of God's wrath.

What's the cause of God's wrath? The answer is sin, the broken law. Why are you going to cover your sin? Well, you might say, “I'm going to wash them away in water.” Oh no, *“Without the shedding of blood there is no remission. It is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul.”* The blood covers our sins. *“The blood of Jesus Christ God's Son cleanseth us from all sin. In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sin. The blood maketh atonement for the soul.”* How can I make that clearer? The Word means what it says. The Mercy Seat covered with the blood, covers the broken law. *“God has set Him forth to be a Mercy Seat and a covering.”*

Now, the preacher of doctrine sets forth a creed. The preacher of experience sets forth a feeling. The preacher of law sets forth a work. *“God set forth His Son to be a propitiation for our sin.”* Do you see? God set Him forth and God set Him forth as a Mercy Seat and as a covering. For whom is the Mercy Seat intended; for whom is the covering intended?

Notice the next line: *“Through faith in His blood.”* It is for those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. *“God is just and justifier of those who believe. Abraham believed God and it was counted to Him for Righteousness. This was not for his sake alone, but for our sakes to whom it shall be imputed if we believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”*

It is not the baby in the manger that saves. It is not the healer or the stranger of Galilee that saves. It is not the reformer that saves; it is the Christ of the cross that saves. *“It is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul.”*

What can wash away my sin?  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus  
What can make me whole again?  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Let others who will, praise the cross of the Christ. The Christ of the cross is my theme. While we must cherish the old rugged cross, it's the Christ of the cross that redeems. Religion today, makes much of the cross. It is not the cross that saves it is Christ who saves. The cross has no blood in it. The cross has no Mercy Seat. The cross has no



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propitiation; it is the blood of Christ. The royal bath in which black souls are washed white from their sins, were drawn from the veins of the Son of God. Do you see that?

He lived that we might have a perfect righteousness. He died that justice might be satisfied. He arose that we might arise in newness of life. He ascended as our forerunner. He's accepted that we might be accepted. He reigns that we might reign.

I sing:

Just as I am without one plea  
That thy blood was shed for me,  
And that Thy bids me come to Thee  
O Lamb of God I come, I come.