

Christ in the Sacrifices 15-06-07b

We resume our study now in Genesis, looking at the reflection of the Lord Jesus Christ in the animal sacrifice rituals of the Old Testament. They take various forms. These that we look at in Genesis chapter 15 are not sacrifices on an altar, but they like the animals that gave their lives so that God could clothe Adam and Eve with skins.

They are a picture, and as I mentioned before the first session this morning, one of the great contributions to the understanding of Scripture that has been made in the last 50 years is the portraits of Christ in Genesis by Dr. DeHaan, M. R. DeHaan. And one of the things he points out in the eighth chapter of his book is, in fact the title of the chapter is, Three Requirements in Sacrifice. And since we're looking at the number three, I thought it would be apropos to mention his observations about the nature of sacrifice, which goes all the way back to, and his first example is from, the aftermath of disobedience in the garden when God takes an animal, probably a lamb, and slays it to take the skin and provide clothing for the fallen couple.

He says, In doing so, God laid down an eternal divine principle from which there is no deviation. In this act of God, He laid down three inviolable rules of acceptable atonement for sin. The first one is that it is all done by God.

We noted this in our Genesis study, that God doesn't say, Adam, go take a lamb, slay it, skin it, tan the hide, and make yourself clothes. When you read the account, it says, God did it. Unto Adam, this is Genesis 3.21, Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins and clothed them.

It is first, entirely an act of God. Dr. DeHaan says, How beautiful and unmistakable is the type of our Lord Jesus, the perfect Lamb of God. It was the Lord alone who furnished the skins to cover Adam and Eve.

They did nothing, absolutely nothing. The only sacrifice God would accept must be God's work and God's free gift. Our first parents did not even have to put the coats of skins on themselves.

Even this was done by God, for we read that God clothed them. The second point, the inviolable and salient feature of this pattern is that atonement is made by the death of an innocent substitute. The animal that God slew so that he could make clothing and put it on Adam and Eve was not involved in any way.

God didn't make them a snakeskin suit. He didn't take the snake and slay it and make them a snakeskin suit. It wasn't a lamb that spoke from the branches of the tree and said, Eat the fruit.

Look how smart it made me, I'm a talking lamb. This is an innocent and uninvolved substitute that gives its life. The penalty for sin is death, and yet the man does not die.

And we've said, Well, he began to die. Well, God said, In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt

surely die. Well, Dr. DeHaan says, If one single day had passed without this provision of a substitute, they would have died on the very day they fell.

So before that first day was ended, God came to them with the message of redemption. On the evening of the very day Adam sinned, God came with His substitutionary lamb. The record clearly suggests this, for we read that after Adam and his wife had hid themselves and were busy making the flimsy fig leaf aprons, God came in the evening of the selfsame day to deliver them.

It was in the cool of the day, in the evening before that day ended, that God came to them, Genesis 3, verse 8. Thirdly, the first feature again is what? It's all of God, right? The second is an innocent substitute. Third, the atonement is by the shedding of blood. God didn't say, Don't use figs, use palms.

Look, I've got a cotton patch over here. You can pick these bowls. You can shred them.

Look, let me show you how to spin yarn. And you can weave yourself some nice Fruit of the Loom clothing. Then get yourself some overclothing, because the Fruit of the Loom stuff is underclothing.

But make it out of cotton. Make it out of flax. Make it out of hemp.

Make it out of burlap. Tried that once. Make it out of vegetable matter.

No need for animals to die for you to have this clothing. The shedding of blood. Blood is not mentioned in the record, but it is implied, for God could not procure the skins of the substitute.

It doesn't say He took the wool and made them clothing, does it? He took the skins. So unnecessary. What a cruel, heartless God to slay needlessly an animal.

Why would He do it? It's a picture. The shedding of blood. God could not procure the skins without putting the animal to death and shedding its blood.

Notice the difference, Dr. Dahan says, in God's covering and Adam's attempt. Adam's covering for his nakedness and sin are called aprons of fig leaves. God's covering is called coats of skin.

The Hebrew word for apron is kagor and can be translated belt, while the word for robe is ketoneth and signifies a complete covering from head to foot. Not just the material, but the extent of its utility and coverage is in view here in the use of these words, as Dr. Dahan suggests. So, he summarizes.

We repeat once more the three elements of an acceptable atoning sacrifice. One, it must be God's gift and His work alone. Secondly, it must be by the death of an innocent substitute.

And thirdly, it must be by the shedding of blood. This then is God's initial declaration of the one and only acceptable sacrifice for sin, which God will receive. Where one or more of these

elements is missing, it must be rejected by God.

And he goes on then to talk about Cain and Abel. Abel brought a lamb, a firstling of the flock. Secondly, he put it to death upon the altar.

And thirdly, it was by the shedding of blood. So, Abel's sacrifice met those conditions. Well, three requirements, three essential features for acceptable sacrifice for sin.

Now, we know that there were offerings. There were things that could be brought. The minchah, the grain offerings, the wave heave offerings that are mentioned later on.

But in the essential acknowledgement of sin before God, it is an animal sacrifice and partakes of these three elements. They didn't lay their hand on the sheaves of wheat before they offered them to God. They did lay their hand on the head of the animal that constituted the sin offering, denoting transference and substitution, right? So, that is the essential feature of these sacrifices.

Well, we mentioned that the three years and the three animals are implicated and very closely associated with the period of affliction and hardship that the descendants of Abram are going to experience before the fulfillment of the promise. When the sun went down and it was dark, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces. The three animals, three years old.

There is a threefold promise of personal resurrection, of descendants, and of inheritance. And there is a separate reference to Eliezer three times. And the implication is, a veiled implication is, he too is going to have an inheritance, but it's not going to be Abram's covenant.

Something else is in store for Eliezer. Born in his house, faithful man, used by God, essential to the ultimate deliverance and fulfillment of God's covenant promise. Because without Rebekah, there is no Jacob.

Without Rebekah, there is no Israel. Without a wife for Isaac, what happens? Eliezer is used by God to bring about the ultimate fulfillment of God's covenant promise. God uses means.

He says, I will do, but he uses agency. And we see this throughout the scriptures. So it's a very interesting retrospective identification of truth that pertains to us.

Well, the number three, I also mentioned earlier E.W. Bullinger and his number in scripture book. How somebody could look down into a cradle and name their son Ethelbert, I have no idea. And I think this is why he signed all of his books E.W., E.W. Bullinger, Ethelbert.

Ethelbert William Bullinger. But what a tremendous resource. Let's review with E.W. the concept of the number three in scripture.

And this is directly from Bullinger. In this number we have quite a new set of phenomena, having covered the numbers one and two. We come to the first geometrical figure.

Two straight lines cannot possibly enclose any space or form a plain figure. Neither can two plain surfaces form a solid. Three lines are necessary to form a plain figure.

Three dimensions of length, breadth and height are necessary to form a solid. Hence three is the symbol of the cube, the simplest form of solid figure. You can define a cube with three dimensions.

I was doing this earlier. Our double wall oven has died to death. Yeoman service for many years, but it's gone to wherever dead ovens go.

So I've got to identify a replacement. But as any of you that have done this know, there is a pre-cut hole in your cabinetry. And you've got to know the dimensions for a replacement.

And especially if you've got something of an antique in there now, you've got to be careful of what you get is going to fit. How do I know that whatever oven we eventually get is going to fit? I identify three dimensions. The width, in this case 27 inches.

The height, which in this case is in the vicinity of 51 inches. And the depth, which is something on the order of 2 feet, 24 inches. Three dimensions identify a solid oven.

If I only had two dimensions and had a flat oven, where would the food go when I put it in? Into the realms of dark energy and dark matter, I would presume. I don't know. You've got to have three dimensions for a solid.

Therefore, three stands for that which is solid, real, substantial, complete, and entire. Three. The Trinity is obviously the first, best, and final ultimate example of that truth.

All things that are especially complete are stamped with this number three, Bollinger says. God's attributes are three, omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence. There are three great divisions completing time, past, present, and future.

Three persons in grammar express and include all the relationships of mankind. First person, second person, third person. Thought, word, and deed complete the sum of human capability.

I would personally add to that goals, values, and priorities. That's my own personal formulation of one's life strategy. How you get on in this, what constitutes your walk through this life.

It is defined, it is expressed through the goals that you set, the priorities for your multiple goals, and the values that define how you work your way toward those goals and respect those priorities. Indeed, they all interact with each other. What goals do you set? That's informed by your values.

What are your priorities? Well, they are in many ways defined by your goals and informed by your values. Many times people will compromise their values because they've got goals that are not what they should be, or they have priorities that aren't what they should be, and people will corrupt their values in the service of illicit priorities and goals. Anyway, that's my little addition

to the number three.

The three degrees of comparison complete our knowledge of qualities, good, better, and best. This has been largely lost in our grammar. If you have two children, you can say there is the younger and there is the older.

You don't use youngest or oldest unless you have three or more. The good, better, and best, the middle one, is used for comparing two things. I have the elder, I have the younger.

I have the older, I have the younger. Oldest, youngest, you need three or more for the relationship. Simplest proposition requires three things to complete it.

The subject, the predicate, and the copula. What is it that joins the subject and predicate together? Three propositions are necessary to complete the simplest form of argument. The major premise, the minor premise, and the conclusion.

Three kingdoms embrace our ideas of matter. The mineral, the vegetable, and the animal. When we return to Scriptures, this completion becomes divine.

Three denotes divine perfection. Seven denotes spiritual perfection. Ten denotes ordinal perfection, things that you count.

And twelve denotes governmental perfection. That's why you've got twelve tribes with elders. That's why you've got twelve apostles.

Twelve gates on each side of the city built four square, the New Jerusalem. I said each side, I mean twelve gates in the New Jerusalem. Hence the number three points to what is real, essential, perfect, substantial, and complete and divine.

There is nothing real in man or of man. Everything under the sun and apart from God is vanity. Several Scripture references associated with that.

Three is associated with the Godhead. Three persons in one God. Three times the seraphim cry holy.

One for each of the three persons in the Trinity. In Isaiah chapter 6 verse 3. The living creatures in Revelation chapter 4 verse 8. Three times is the blessing given in Numbers chapter 6. Verses 23 and 24. The Lord bless thee and keep thee.

And he has in parenthesis the Father. The Lord bless thee and keep thee. The Father.

Source of blessing and security is the Father. The Lord make His face shine upon thee and be gracious to thee. That's the Son.

We see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Make His face shine upon thee and be gracious to thee. That's the second element of that three-fold blessing in Numbers 6. Third, the

Lord lift up His countenance upon thee and give thee peace.

The Holy Spirit. Three-fold blessing Numbers 6, 23, and 24. Each of those three blessings is two-fold so that there are two members in each.

While the name Jehovah, Yahweh, occurs three times. You think about those divided animals, the three divided animals. Two pieces of each of the three animals.

There is an adumbration. There is a reflection. There is an echo in this blessing in Numbers.

Of that early reflection of God's promise of blessing. Expressed in elements of death. From death comes life.

It is an early notion, an early suggestion that out of death, life is going to come. Life of inheritance. Life of seed, of descendants.

And life for Abram himself. How do I know that I will inherit? Look at this death. Through death.

And as I pass through and the divine presence of oven and torch passes through. Life comes out of this death. And it is manifestly dead.

Given the action of those birds. So, in Genesis 18, verse 2. You remember, Abram looked and lo, three men stood by him. Verse 1 declares that it was Yahweh, the Lord, that appeared to him.

It is remarkable that Abraham addresses them both as one and as three. We read first that they said. Then he said.

And finally in verses 13, 17, 20, etc. And the Lord said. The whole narrative which begins with the appearance of the Lord ends.

And the Lord went His way. As we have in the number 1, the sovereignty of the one God. And in 2, the second person, the Son, the great Deliverer.

So, in 3, we have the third person, the Holy Spirit. Marking and completing the fullness of the Godhead. This word fullness is remarkable.

Occurring only three times. And in connection with the three persons of the Trinity. Ephesians 3, 19.

The fullness of God. Ephesians 4, 13. The fullness of Christ.

And in Colossians 2, 9. The fullness of the Godhead. The fullness was manifested visibly in Christ. And is communicated by the Holy Spirit.

For it is a fullness of which we receive by His mighty power. John 1, 16. This is why Abraham.

And I am covering this now because we are not going to cover it in sacrifices. But in that visit. In

Genesis 18.

Abraham brings three measures of meal for his heavenly guest. Remember that? Wait here while I prepare you a meal. This is why three measures of meal form the great meal offering.

It is set forth. It sets forth the perfection of Christ's perfect and divine nature. In Leviticus, no particular quantity of meal was prescribed.

But in Numbers 15, 9 we read. Then shall he bring with the bullock a meal offering of three-tenth deals of flour. Numbers 15, 9. So, the meal offering itself is three measures of flour.

This was the measure for the whole burnt offering. Also for great special occasions. Such as the new moon, new year, etc.

It was also the special measure for the cleansing of the leper. Leviticus 14, 10. We've gone through that in detail a few times.

In the ritual of the cleansing of the leper. Which as you know is a picture of going from death to life. Leviticus 14, 10.

Mentions the special measure for the cleansing of the leper. The poor leper had several gracious blessings beyond others. He alone is favored with the anointing which is given only to the prophet, priest, and king.

Remember the cleansed leper is anointed with oil. At one point in that series of ritual acts. That anointing is only mentioned as pertaining to prophets, priests, and kings.

Another three-fold set. He alone had the priestly consecration. It is sinners who are now singled out from the mass of those who are lost.

Dead in trespasses and sins to be anointed with the spirit. And made in Christ kings and priests unto God. This is why I recommend Bollinger.

You can take one page and spend a week thinking about it. Digesting the content. It is a rich and God-blessed resource.

But there is more in these three measures of meal. We have them in the parable, Matthew 13.33. Pointing to Christ in all the perfection of His person and work. When He said, Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God.

There are different opinions about the leaven, but what is the meal? This is the point on which the interpretation turns. If you turn quickly to Matthew 13.33 to see what he is talking about. Matthew chapter 13.

Another parable, He spoke to them, The kingdom of heaven is like leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal until it was all leavened. Three measures of meal. Could have

been any number, but He chooses three.

Why? What is the meal? You can talk about the leaven. We have talked about leaven almost universally representing sin. And in the course of the thousand year kingdom, millennial kingdom, what begins as very minor and limited presence grows over the course of those ten centuries until you have Gog Magog at the end.

That is my understanding of the leaven that is hidden in it. It is invisible at the beginning, but by the end it is all leavened. And that is why the millennial kingdom comes to an end.

That is why Satan is released. Anyway, He says there are various interpretations on what the leaven means. But what is the meal? This is the point on which the interpretation turns.

According to the popular interpretation, this pure meal is the corrupt mass of mankind and the defiling leaven is the pure gospel of Christ. Was there ever such an exhibition of man's perversity in calling sweet bitter and the bitter sweet? Was there ever such a proof that man's thoughts are contrary to God's? No! Ethelbert says. The three measures of meal point us to the perfections of Christ and the purity of His gospel.

And the hidden leaven points us to man's corruption of the truth. A corruption for which we have to look, not after the third century, but in the first. And at the present.

And even in the kingdom age when Christ is on the throne. The corruption is present and if it is tolerated it will spread. Corruption tolerated.

Point of application. Tolerated corruption will spread. It's minor.

It's insignificant. No big deal. I see a lot worse elsewhere.

A little leaven leavens the whole lump. A little leaven, three measures of meal. Even the truth of the perfection of Jesus Christ will be corrupted.

The understanding of Jesus and His work and His purpose for us in this life will be corrupted. That's what it means. No leaven could be put into any sacrifice or offering made by fire to the Lord because in Christ was no sin.

Therefore there was to be no leaven. He was in Himself a sweet savor to Jehovah. And he goes on to talk a little bit about the one offering in which there was leaven.

But back to the number three. The number three must be taken as the number of divine fullness. It signifies and represents the Holy Spirit as taking of the things of Christ and making them real and solid in our experience.

Real and solid in our experience. It is only by the Spirit that we realize spiritual things. Without Him and His gracious operation, all is surface work.

All is what a plain figure is. A two-dimensional figure instead of a solid. He it is who has wrought all our works in us and by whom alone we can serve or worship.

John 4, 24. Remember John 4? Woman at the well. Those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.

Not just the truth. Not enough to sit in Bible class. Not enough to know a lot of the Word of God.

The Spirit has to be present. Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit. That's what makes things solid.

Hence it is that the Holy of Holies, which was the central and highest place of worship, was a cube. And thought of that. Holy of Holies was a cube.

Not a cubicle. A cube. Hence it is the third book in the Bible is Leviticus.

In the book we learn what true worship is. It's in Leviticus that we see Jehovah calling His people near unto Himself, prescribing every detail of their worship, leaving nothing to their imagination or their taste, crowning all with the must of the great rubric of John 4, 24. Those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.

In true worship we see the Father seeking these true worshipers. Remember Jesus told the woman the Father is seeking those who will worship Him. The Father is seeking them.

The Son, the one object of all worship, and the Spirit qualifying and enduing the worshipers with the only power in which they can worship. Thus in Genesis we have sovereignty. That's the number one.

Sovereignty and giving life. The Father, the beginning of all things. In Exodus, the second book, we have the oppressor and the deliverer, the Son redeeming His people.

Remember the twain, the divided pieces, the two pieces. The animals weren't split up into several parts. God could have said piece them out, but they are halves.

The second book, Exodus, the Son redeeming His people from the oppressor. While in Leviticus we have the Spirit prescribing and ordering and empowering them for divine worship. Isn't that great? What a great summary.

So Christ in the sacrifices. All things for us begin and end with the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the author and He is the finisher of our faith.

And seeing these expressions, these detailed expressions of the work and person of the Lord Jesus Christ is a tremendous privilege for us. So interestingly found in the pages of the Old Covenant, the Old Testament. Because God's promise to Abram lives and breathes in and through the physical descendants of Abram to His spiritual descendants, which is us.

We who have a fuller and more complete set of resources given to us to complete our journey through the dark veil. So in the time that remains to us, we hope to be informed and exhorted and encouraged even as we should be rebuked and corrected. To maximize that opportunity.

The darkness is necessary for us to appreciate the light. The corruption and death is necessary for us to appreciate the life and the perfection that God gives us through the Lord Jesus Christ. So we recognize this, we express our faith and we develop our patience.

So that patience can have its perfect work in us. There's nothing to be impatient about, you don't need patience. And patience is a character feature devoutly to be wished.

Especially for those of us that have had a really hard time growing it, developing it. Getting it to be a dominant instead of a recessive feature. Faith and patience, that's how we inherit.

This passage in Genesis 15 is about inheritance and it's about God's grace in making it possible for us to do so. Let's close here in prayer. It will be two weeks from today that we meet again to continue our study.

Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word. Thank You for the powerful way that it illustrates and pictures for us invisible, ineffable, immaterial truths. We pray that in our lives in the material world and in this time of testing and challenge that Your Holy Spirit will keep these evidences alive in our minds and in our hearts.

That we will be able to see clearly the path on which Your light shines. To walk in a way that is pleasing to You. To reflect glory on the Lord Jesus Christ and to prepare ourselves for presence and service with Him in the ages to come.

We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.