

Christ in the Sacrifices 15-07-26b

As we resume our study of Christ and the sacrifices, we're in Genesis chapter 8 and into chapter 9 where God blesses Noah and through him all mankind who will descend from him. We like to think of the human race as the children of Adam, but essentially we're all children of Noah. There's nobody on the earth that isn't descended from Noah.

He's the constriction point. If you look at the pyramid of human expansion, then it all narrows back down to Noah and his three sons and their wives. And there's nobody that isn't descended from Noah.

The difference being that where Adam is the picture of our progenitor and his fall, he is the picture of our progenitor in his salvation and deliverance. And of course those intermingle and cross over. But one of the things we notice in Genesis chapter 8 is the soothing aroma that comes from the sacrifice.

Our study is Christ in the sacrifices. The primary idea, if you had to boil it down to one, and there are so many, but if you had to pick one in the clothing made of skins for Adam and Eve, it is substitution. The death of another on our behalf.

And that foreshadows the Lord Jesus Christ. In Cain and Abel, for a sacrifice to be acceptable, it has to be offered in faith and obedience. It has to be on God's terms.

Sacrifices are only acceptable, people are only acceptable on God's terms. We don't get to define the terms. We don't get to define the terms.

If you're going to be acceptable in God's sight, it's on His terms. Cain and Abel. Noah, it is the soothing aroma.

It is the lifting up of the sacrifice on the altar. And the sacrifice produces a pleasing aroma and because God is pleased, God's heart is expressed. The Lord said in His heart and He says it as a direct response to the soothing aroma, the pleasing fragrance of these sacrifices.

Now if you've smelled burning flesh to the human nose, that is not a pleasing aroma. If the phone rings and you get distracted and you've got stuff on the grill and you come back and it's a charcoal mess, when you open that up, it goes from the wonderful aroma of cooking steak to the acrid smell of burnt flesh. Well, offerings on the altar were consumed and it doesn't smell like your favorite steak, it smells like disaster.

But that holocaust, that whole burnt offering isn't for the human nose. The expression of faith and obedience represented in that sacrifice is a pleasing aroma in God's nostrils. In God's sight it is pleasant.

And so in the third sacrifice that we look at with Noah, the concept there is God's satisfaction and the blessing and the covenant promise that result in and through God's satisfaction. God is

satisfied. Number one, acceptability is an issue and it takes substitutionary death to make us acceptable.

Number two, faith and obedience is required for acceptability. If you do well, will you not be accepted? Number three, covenant blessing, God's satisfaction is fulfilled through that faith and obedience. It is based on it.

It is expressed in response to it. There's many other things you can say. You can look at the issue of blood.

The issue of blood is really introduced in the story of Cain and Abel. There is also the issue of blood in Genesis chapter nine after the flood. Interestingly, in the purge of the earth, blood is completely not an issue.

Everything drowning, there's no blood spilled at all. Nor is there any fire. The two primary elements of sacrifice, so when God purges the earth, it is in no way and in no sense a sacrifice.

There is no fire. There is no blood. It is a washing.

It is a removal. What is lifted up from the earth in the flood? On wood. In the judgment of the flood, who is lifted up from the earth on wood? Noah and by extension his family.

But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. He was righteous in his generations. And there's a distant echo there, a sort of a lesser type looking forward to the cross, where the acceptable man, through whom salvation is going to come to all men, is lifted up from the earth, judgment takes place beneath, and he is in a sense resurrected.

He emerges from the ark to bring about new life and multiplication of life. Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth. He gets the same command, the same purpose and mission statement that Adam received.

Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth. In Genesis chapter 9, the fear of you, the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth, on every bird of the air, on all that move on the earth, on all the fish of the sea. They are given into your hand.

This is responsibility for the oversight of living creation. And we use them for our purposes. They are given into your hand.

Fear and dread of you means you're going to be killing a lot of them. For food, for clothing, for shelter, for resources, for whatever you require, they are given into your hand. They are a provision.

They are a resource. Use them, God says. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you.

Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. There is no restriction not eating the unclean animals at this point. Noah can eat clams.

Noah can eat shellfish. Noah can eat bacon. He can have a BLT.

He can have ham and eggs for breakfast. There is no restriction here. All things that move, if you find it tasty, eat it.

Go with God. You shall not eat flesh with its life that is its blood. We're back to the issue of blood.

Surely for your life blood I will demand a reckoning. From the hand of every beast I require it. From the hand of man.

From the hand of every man's brother I will require the life of man. This is a new thing. You shed blood.

By man shall your blood be shed. This had not yet been given to man as a delegated responsibility in the case of Cain. God told the rest of humanity, you are not authorized to judge Cain.

God judged that case. And He judged it a non-death penalty sentence. The sentence is isolation.

It is separation. It is fugitive status. It is loss of livelihood.

The very thing that Cain loved the most, tilling the ground and growing crops. The earth no longer yields its strength. Very harsh penalty but not the death penalty.

God judged that case. And God told people, keep your hands off it. I have judged him.

My judgment stands. You don't come in behind me and make your own sentence for this crime. But now God says, I'm no longer going to judge individual crimes.

You are. Whoever sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed. For in the image of God He made man.

As for you, be fruitful and multiply. Bring forth abundantly in the earth and multiply in it. Then He talks about the rainbow.

Well, this again, as we're looking for Christ in the sacrifices, we have the idea of the substitutionary shedding of blood. We have the idea of acceptability in the first sacrifice at the fall. We have separation.

We have acceptability. We have God's perfect adjudication represented in Cain and Abel. The sacrifice is representative and an expression of ourselves.

When we are acceptable, our offering is acceptable. When we are not acceptable, no offering is acceptable. You can't establish acceptability on the basis of a sacrifice alone.

It is your attitude, it is your heart that is being expressed. And a perfect sacrifice isn't going to

do if your heart's not right. This is why every man is not saved.

If Christ died for the sins of the whole world, if God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, then why isn't everyone saved? Universalism. Because it's not just the perfection of the sacrifice, it is your attitude on and about that sacrifice. And you cannot be made acceptable without your own choice, without your own volition.

All of that in Cain and Abel. Noah, we see in the same way that curse and death and sin spreads when we are not acceptable in God's sight, individually and personally. When we are acceptable, when we are faithful and obedient, blessing spreads to others.

And in and through Noah, the whole earth is going to be blessed. Well, we would move forward then to Abram, because the next mention of an altar is going to be in Genesis 12, verse 7. However, before you turn there, now that we have noticed the altar introduced by Noah, now that we have noticed the sacrifice being lifted up between earth and heaven, there's something that happens between Genesis 9 and Genesis 12 that is significant, significant in our study of that which is presented to God, that which is lifted up in God's sight. And you find this in chapter 11, the whole earth has one language and one speech.

It came to pass as they journeyed from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and they dwelt there. Flat land, not a table land, a flat land. Nice flat low valley.

They said to one another, come let us make bricks and bake them thoroughly. They had brick for stone, they had asphalt for mortar. They said, let us build ourselves a city and a tower whose top is in the heavens.

Let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered about in the face of the whole earth. It's not enough to build a city, they want to build a tower whose top is in the heavens. Why? This is the anti-altar.

This is that which lifts living men up into the heavens, raises them above the earth in the way that a sacrifice is raised. I don't need a sacrifice. I'm not going to build an altar and put a substitutionary sacrifice on it whose life is in its blood.

I'm going to build a tower, not out of unhewn stones, but out of bricks that I make myself. And they're glued together with mortar that I make myself. And I'm going to build it myself with its top in the heavens.

Why? We can ascend our own living selves. We can stand on the top of the tower. I will raise my throne above what is on the earth.

I will be high and lifted up. I'll be at the top of the ziggurat. I will be up there and I myself am acceptable as I am raised above the earth.

It's the anti-altar. It's totally man-made. None of it comports with God's instruction.

None of it reflects humility or obedience or faith toward God. It is me, myself, and I, the unholy trinity, lifting myself up by my own manufactured altar toward heaven. I'm as high as I can get.

It's the anti-sacrifice. It's the man-made sacrifice, don't you think? Isn't this like an altar? Isn't this like man putting himself on the altar and saying, look how acceptable I am. Look at this great sacrifice that I am bringing to you.

Kind of like Cain. You know, slow learners, we in the human race. It's got to be on God's terms, according to God's instructions, with God's specifications for sacrifice.

And it is the shedding of blood. And without the shedding of blood, there is no remission. And you can't impress God with your great city and with your wonderfully made acme bricks and your wherever mortar and the incredible height of your tower.

And climbing to the top and saying, here I am Lord, look at me. So I just want to point that out real quickly. If you wanted to draw just one or two observations from that, as we've seen with the other sacrifices, God makes a personal pronouncement in connection to or in the near context of each of these.

In connection with the skins and making Adam and Eve acceptable in one another's sight and by implication acceptable in God's sight, even though they're driven from the garden, even though they are now going to go out east of Eden, God speaks and God talks in that connection with Cain and Abel. God speaks and God talks. With Noah and the altar that he builds, God speaks and God promises.

What about here? The man-made altar, the Cain altar. This is sort of the, you go back to number two here, the Cain bad sacrifice. God made a covenant and what did he do to Cain? You're not dead, I'm not slaying you, what am I doing? I am separating you and I'm driving you out and away.

What does he do here in chapter 11 with the tower of Babel? The Lord came down to see, verse 5, the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. By the way, that reflects back on Genesis chapter 6, the sons of God saw the daughters of men. Well, the sons of men and the daughters of men seem to come from the same human source.

The Lord came down to see this and the Lord said, verse 6, the people are one, they have one language, this is what they begin to do. Nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. Come, let us go down and there confuse their language that they may not understand one another's speech.

The Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth and they ceased building the city. God drove them apart and away from one another. The same type of thing he did with Cain, driving him out and away from others.

This is the result of man's efforts. God will judge it. God will pronounce sentence on it and the

result is going to be not building, it is going to be division and scattering.

The name is called Babel because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth. Well, that brings us now to the next mention of an altar which is in the next chapter. It's interesting to me, by the way, and I haven't really noticed this before, but in taking sort of a quick scan through Genesis, at the end of chapter 11, verse 27, this is the genealogy of Terah.

Terah begot Abram, Nahor, and Haran. Haran begot Lot. Haran died before his father Terah in his native land in Ur of the Chaldeans.

So Abram and Nahor took wives. Abram's wife is Sarai, Nahor's wife is Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah. But Sarai was barren, had no child.

Terah took his son Abram and his grandson Lot, pay attention now, Terah took his son Abram and his grandson Lot, the son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, his son Abram's wife, and they went out with them from Ur of the Chaldeans to go where? To the land of Canaan. Who is the guy that gets up from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to Canaan first? Terah. And there's no mention of Lot's wife.

There's Abram, there's Sarai, and there's Lot. Terah takes those three. You wonder if even Mrs. Terah is still alive at this point.

Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot, the son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, his son Abram's wife, and they went out with them from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to the land of Canaan. You know what it makes me wonder? Chapter 12 verse 1, the Lord had said to Abram, get out of your country, from your family, your father's house, to the land that I will show you. There is a fair possibility that God first said this to Terah.

Terah could have been the father of the, it could have been Terah, Abram and Isaac as the three great patriarchs, Isaac might have had the 12th son, it could have been a whole different thing if Terah had made it to Canaan. Why did he leave Ur to go to Canaan? Seems like an odd thing to do. We give Abram credit for doing that.

But Abram was halfway there because of his father Terah. Terah is the one that actually left Ur and took Abram and Lot with him. But he only got as far as Haran.

He only got that far. You get the idea, maybe he stopped there and decided, well this is good enough, I'll just build a little town here and I'll name it after my son that died. There is precedent for naming towns after your son.

If you go back, remember the whole two-bulk cane thing? And he stopped short. And so then in chapter 12 verse 1, God says to Abram, get out of your country from your family and your father's house to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation.

I will bless you and make your name great and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you. I will curse those who curse you.

All the families of the earth in you shall be blessed. So Abram departs as the Lord had spoken to him and Lot went with him. Abram was 75 years old when he departed from Haran.

God apparently didn't speak to Abram in Ur. He spoke to him in Haran. I keep going back to my Oklahoma, when I was a child in Sunday school, Abram was in Haran because up there we watched TV.

You know, in the rest of the world you watch TV, but in Oklahoma, it's TV. That's what you watch when you don't go to the picture show. Anyway, in Hebrew, it's Haran.

If I say Haran, just forgive me. It's just my background catching up with me. But God spoke to him.

Abram departed as the Lord had spoken to him and left Haran. That's where he leaves from, interestingly. Then you've got to back that up against the New Testament account where his actions are reviewed, but it's interesting.

Tiber is the one that leaves Ur. Abram is the one that leaves Haran. Both of them destined for Canaan.

Only one of them gets there. Anyway, that's not our study, but it is interesting. Abram departed as the Lord had spoken.

Abram took Sarah's wife, Lot, his brother's son, all their possessions that they had gathered, the people whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. They came to the land of Canaan. Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem, as far as the terebinth tree of Moreh.

The Canaanites were then in the land. What does verse 7 say? The Lord appeared to Abram and said to your descendants, I will give this land. And there he built an altar to the Lord who had appeared to him.

This is the next altar mentioned after Noah's altar. Abram builds one at Bethel. He moved from there to the mountain east of Bethel.

Of course, it's not called Bethel yet. It's still Luz. It's not going to be Bethel until Jacob names it that.

This is a later name for an earlier town. And he pitched his tent with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. And what? There he built an altar to the Lord and called on the name of the Lord.

He called on the name of the Lord. When he first gets to the land of Canaan, he builds an altar. He moves, builds another altar, and there he calls on the name of the Lord.

I heard tell of somebody who, the first time this is mentioned, back in the earlier chapters of Genesis, men there began to call on the name of the Lord. And they were saying, well, this was idolatry. And the descendants of Seth were making idols and calling them by the name of the Lord or something.

Well, you've got to contend with this verse because I don't think Abram turned to idolatry at this point. And he's calling on the name of the Lord. So if you hear any funny commentary about the earlier reference to calling on the name of the Lord from the descendants of Seth, bounce it against this passage and another one coming up.

So that's two altars now for Abram. Now, let's skip down a little bit in chapter 13. You have the separation between Abram and Lot.

And Abram says, you go where you want to go. And so Lot goes. And verse 10, Lot lifted his eyes, saw all the plain of Jordan.

He's going to go down there. Verse 14, the Lord said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are, northward, southward, eastward, and westward. All the land which you see, I will give you and your descendants forever.

I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth. He doesn't say as the stars of the sky. He says, I'll make your descendants as the dust of the earth.

How significant has the dust of the earth been all along? So that if a man could number the dust of the earth, your descendants also could be numbered. Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you. So Abram moved his tent and went and dwelt by the terebinth trees of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and did what? Built an altar to the Lord.

How many Abram built altars are there now in this account? Three. Three altars. There's not going to be another altar mentioned in connection with Abram until the one that we studied in chapter 22 on Mount Moriah.

But when he comes into the land, and God speaks to him, and he calls upon the name of the Lord, and then God speaks to him again, you have this wonderful set of three altars. One is at Alon Moriah, one is at Bethel, and this one is in Hebron at the Alon Mamre. So you have Alon Moriah and you have Alon Mamre, one on each side, and right in the middle you have the one at Bethel.

Three altars. And Abram calls on the name of the Lord specifically at the one in the middle. God speaks to him on each side.

But it's a significant appearance of the concept of sacrifice, but focused on the altar. By implication there is sacrifice. You don't build an altar and not put a sacrifice on it.

But the focus here is on the altar. Just in the building of the altar you see the faithfulness and the obedience of Abram. This is why he is the father of God's chosen people.

Abraham is the friend of God. Why? Unlike his father Tera, when he gets the word and heads for Canaan, he gets there. When he hears the word of the Lord and heads for Mount Moriah, he gets there.

He carries through, he perseveres. And so these altars, the significance of these sacrifices related to the Lord Jesus Christ, is what? Perseverance. Carry through.

Finish what you start. One thing to be a tall spirit at the beginning is something else to be that long spirit that carries through and finishes. Take the word of God at face value.

If God has promised that through Isaac my seed will be called, then Isaac is immortal until he has offspring. And I don't care what happens on the top of the mountain, God has promised. The physics of it, the laws of nature of it, I don't understand.

The morality of it, the idea of actual human sacrifice, I don't understand. But Abram says, I'm taking to the bank the promise of God. In Isaac shall your seed be called.

You're going to have descendants so numerous that if you could count the dust, then you could count your descendants. As the stars of the sky, so shall your descendants be. And Abram lives his life on the foundation of the promise of God.

That's what the Lord Jesus Christ is going to do. That's how he's going to live his human life. That's his example for us.

Take the promises of God as fact. It isn't always going to reconcile with human wisdom, with human ideas. We're going to want to try to start building the tower.

We're going to try to start lifting ourselves up before God and making that acceptable. We're going to bring our tossed salad before God, and we're not going to be accepted. Acceptability is on God's terms.

It is according to God's promise. It requires faithfulness and obedience. The consequences of lack of faith and lack of obedience is unacceptability, separation, scattering, and cursing by association.

You see that with Cain. You see that with the tower of Babel. You see blessing by association.

You see acceptability in these alternate examples. Well, this catches us up now by way of review to and through Abram, and we're going to see real quickly as our time runs out here, turn to Genesis 26, verse 25. Genesis 26, verse 25.

This is the life of Isaac. You can look up in verse 17. Isaac departed and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar, dwelt there, dug wells of water, as they had dug in the days of Abram his father.

The Philistines had stopped them up after the death of Abraham. He called them by the names that his father had called them. Isaac's servants dug in the valley, but the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with Isaac's herdsmen, the water is ours, so he gives it a different name, and he dug another well, and they quarreled over that one, and he gives it a name, and he moves from there and dug another well, the third well in verse 22, and they did not quarrel over it, and so he calls its name Rehoboth.

I've gotten far enough away now from the bad guys. Separation. Spaciousness.

Now the Lord has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land. So he went up from there to Beersheba. Beersheba means seven wells.

The Lord appeared to him the same night and said, How many times have we seen God speak in connection with sacrifice and in connection with an altar? The Lord appeared to him and said, I am the God of your father Abraham. Do not fear, I am with you. I will bless you and multiply your descendants for my servant Abraham's sake.

So he built an altar there and called on the name of the Lord. Why is Isaac mentioned? Why is it Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? We don't have near as many details on the life of Isaac as we do the ones on each side. But remember the three altars that Abraham built? He built one and God spoke.

He built another and God spoke. In the center he called on the name of the Lord. Well, between Abraham and Jacob you have Isaac, and here's Isaac in the center calling on the name of the Lord as he builds an altar.

And this is the only altar and the only occasion that is reflecting Isaac in faith and obedience, sacrificing to God. This is it. Because the next mention of an altar is going to be with Jacob.

And if you turn a few passages, a few pages rather, forward to the passage, Genesis chapter 33, this is not the next mention of sacrifice, but this is the next mention of an altar. Genesis chapter 33, look at verse 17. This is after the whole reconciliation with Esau and this is way down the road.

He's come back from Laban. He's got his two wives, Rachel and Leah. Many of his sons have already been born.

So verse 16, Esau returned that day on his way to Seir, on his way to Edom. Jacob journeyed to Sukkoth, built himself a house and made booths for his livestock. Therefore the name of the place is called Sukkoth, just like the Hebrew feast of tabernacles, feast of booths, shelters.

Then Jacob came safely, where? To the city of Shechem. Where's the first place Abraham ever built an altar? Shechem. Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Paddan Aram and he pitched his tent before the city.

He bought the parcel of land where he pitched his tent from the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, a hundred pieces of money. He erected an altar there and called it El Elohei Yisrael, the God of Israel. Builds an altar at the same place grandpa built one, Shechem.

Well, the faithfulness and obedience that are required for acceptability would be meaningless without the sacrifice. It is the substitutionary atoning sacrifice that renders faith and obedience acceptable in God's sight. They are inextricably linked.

You can't be faithful and obedient in some sort of human altruism. We're all going to get together and cooperate. Think about the wonderful cooperation at the Tower of Babel, a wonderful human effort.

Look at our unity, look at our beneficence, look at how well we're all getting along. God says, it is not acceptable in my sight, and God's sight is the only sight that counts. And no human endeavor will last for long, and God knows this, and before they slaughter each other, God scatters them.

Before they become like the pre-flood civilization with that concentration of corruption and evil, God says there's nothing they're not going to be capable of if they stay here together. It's going to go back to what it was before the flood. And because I promised to not purge the earth with another flood, I've got to prevent that critical mass of evil from forming here.

God wasn't just arbitrarily scattering mankind because He didn't like the Tower of Babel. It is actually a blessing on man that He scattered them and separated them so that they would not become what mankind became when they were focused and centralized before the days of Noah, when every imagination of his heart was only evil all the day. This prevents that, just like a nuclear reaction, the critical mass from forming.

God preventatively scatters them. This is what is going to happen inevitably anyway. Well, the Lord Jesus Christ in Him is a kind of unity that is transcendent, a unity that doesn't multiply evil and doesn't concentrate corruption.

And because of the Lord Jesus, pictured in these offerings, in these sacrifices, we have a unity that God does not have to scatter. It is one that He approves and that He blesses. And we are one in Him, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all.

El Elohei Yisrael. God is our God. We claim Him personally and individually.

We claim Him as our God and Savior. Abraham looked forward to the perfect sacrifice as he observed this ritual sacrifice. Isaac did the same.

Jacob does the same. And we see in these anticipations the looking forward to what you and I enjoy fully and someday ultimately in the perfect work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, we'll continue this study next time as we finish out the references to sacrifices in the book of Genesis.

But let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank You for the Lord Jesus Christ. We thank You for the manifold ways that Your Word reveals Him, and He in turn reveals You to us.

He is Your fullness in bodily form. He reflects to us all of the eternal attributes, the eternal character, the eternal future for us that we are headed toward, all because His perfect sacrifice has made us acceptable in Your sight. We pray that these things will be meaningful to us as we seek to live a life of faith and obedience, that God the Holy Spirit will use them as a power and as a motivation and as an encouragement to us in the days ahead.

We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.