

Christ in the Sacrifices 15-08-16a

This is Sunday, the 16th of August, 2015. We continue, expand, extend, and pursue our study of the Lord Jesus Christ as He is revealed in biblical sacrifice. What began as something of a shocking event, taking the life of an animal that is very much like ourselves in the sense of having large brown eyes and red blood.

It is sobering to see the death of anything, but particularly the higher animals, such as oxen and sheep and goats. This is something that God instituted on purpose. He could have made some sort of bloodless, sacrificial animal.

We could sacrifice a sponge or a head of lettuce or something that would not be shocking. But it is designed to be shocking. That which seems to be a criticism on the part of those who decry Christian faith, biblical faith, Judeo-Christian tradition, the Bible in general, God in particular, completely missed the point that when God seems to be a God of violence and bloodshed, that's right.

He is. Why is He that way? It is a great attention-getting device, and it is attention that God wants. It is decision that God requires.

It is faith, obedience, and action that will be measured at the judgment, whether unbeliever or believer, whether advanced or immature. I heard a pastor on the radio this morning on the way over talking about, you're on one of two roads. You're either headed for heaven or you're headed for hell.

And I remarked to Patty that it seems to leave out the great wide highway to the darkness which is outside. Those of us that are saved and yet have not understood the emphasis that Scripture places on the work of Jesus Christ and the wonderful opportunities that it confers on us, the privileges as well as the responsibilities. Bless you.

Bless you, my child. So as we begin our study this morning, let's take a moment to go to the Lord in prayer and we'll pick up where we left off last Sunday. Father, thank You for Your grace and faithfulness expressed to us with the dawning of each new day as we awaken to find that Your provision is in place.

Your watch care over us is ongoing. The challenges and the blessings that are reflected in our circumstances are a constant reminder that there is a purpose for our lives. There is a reason for our being.

There is a future destination toward which we move inevitably with each second that passes on the clock. We pray that as we spend time together in fellowship and in the study of Your Word that God, the Holy Spirit, will illuminate for us the truth contained in these passages, that it will be meaningful and helpful to us as we continue with the things that define our lives and our days, our tasks, our relationships, the things that enable us to live and move in a culture and a

society and at the same time be reminded that we have a transcendent identity and we have a future that is far above this mundane world. We pray that in all things that we do this morning, our conversation, our worship, our fellowship in music, our thoughts expressed and our time of concentration on Your Word that the Lord Jesus will be glorified.

We pray it in His name, amen. I mentioned in recent classes that we are looking at things that reflect the structure and the order of God's plan. We tend to think in very, how shall I put it, pre-Copernican terms.

We ourselves exist at the center of the universe and it is about us that all things revolve. And one of the things that God's feasts and sacrifices remind us of is that history does not revolve around us, life does not revolve around us, we are part of something much larger. And it is well defined, it is calculated, it is purposed, it was designed before this universe ever started.

As with any great human effort, if it's done well, it is done by design and there is planning and there is preparation and there is provision that is made. I've looked out my window for some years now in the northern part of downtown Dallas and seen several buildings go up and I can't help it. I look out the window, here are the cranes, here are the busy little ants and my mind speeds it up in a time lapse.

I've occasionally thought wouldn't it be great if I had thought to set up a little webcam and just take one snapshot a day and I could get one of those little YouTube videos going where the thing just goes and it's done. But I don't care about it enough to do that. It's just an interesting observation, but we do look like ants or termites, depending on your opinion of the human race.

And we take virgin, beautiful Texas land and we turn it into concrete and steel and glass and our own little monuments to ourselves. Don Henley is coming to town, monuments to arrogance, reach to the sky, he's talking about Dallas, the petroleum club and all that. He's constantly singing about Dallas and his jaundiced view, which I largely share of the human race in general.

But we build these things and how does it happen? A bunch of guys don't show up in trucks with some glass and steel and concrete and say, well, Bob, uh, why don't you put your stuff over there and Tom, uh, you got the glass. Why don't you wait till Bob puts his concrete down and then we'll stick some glass. There's architects, they make models, they have engineers that do stress analysis to make sure that when they start piling floor upon floor upon floor, the bottom is not going to crush and collapse, that it can withstand wind shear and other forces, that the ground is not going to suddenly sink on one side and the whole thing become the leaning tower of Pisa.

It would be remarkable, I think, if God were not the same. We made in the image of God, as it says in the Bible, who undertakes an endeavor without first counting the cost, without first making the calculations. If we build this big, tall building, how much rent are we going to have

to charge per space, whether it's residential or commercial, to recover our investment and have this be a profitable endeavor.

God, in eternity past, and this is God incorporated, by the way, this is God, the father, God, the son, God, the Holy Spirit, had a divine conference and planned human history. It has structure, it has purpose. God would never have undertaken human history if He didn't think there was a profit to be gained, a purpose to be fulfilled.

It isn't simply the, you know, random happenings of chaotic billiard balls smacking one against another. Somebody could get in a helicopter and look down at traffic, or you could sit in your car and look at traffic, for that matter, and think, what unbridled chaos is this? People that try to impose order on traffic are largely engaged in futility because they make HOV lanes and they say, well, you know, if we make HOV lanes, all the people that drive the same route will get in cars and high-occupancy vehicles will reduce traffic and will save the ozone and cut pollution and it'll be a wonderful thing. Well, nobody, you know who drives in the HOV lane? Single drivers who are impatient with the slow traffic in the multiple lanes and so they break the law and they drive in the HOV lane.

Because there's no monitoring, there's no enforcement, there's no cameras, there's, nobody gets stopped for driving single in the HOV lane, nobody. So everybody does it. And except those of us who don't want to look at ourselves and say, I am a lawbreaker, the only reason I don't drive in the HOV lane, it looks like it'd be much more convenient and faster, but I refuse to be the kind of person that would drive in the HOV lane when you're not supposed to.

It's just my own personal, I'd rather be stuck in traffic and say, I am not that kind of clown than to be somebody who doesn't. What we do and what we decide and why we decide it defines us, doesn't it? But you look at the chaos of traffic and you think there can't possibly be any order to it. But what there is, is hyper order.

Each person within those cars has an objective and has a destination and a place to go. There's a reason why they're in traffic. But somebody looking at it from the outside would just say, this just looks like somebody has stomped just outside the ant nest.

Look at all these ants running helter skelter. In fact, you can look at ants and think that they are chaotic and they're not. They are very orderly.

They function on this incredibly sophisticated program. And they have assigned tasks and they have jobs and studying ants is fascinating to see that what seems to be just a swarm is actually a very well-ordered and high-functioning society that is a model for humans to try to emulate. There is everything from idealism and self-sacrifice to authority structure.

There are those who find and there are those who carry and there are those who feed and there are those who care for the young and it's amazing. All throughout nature we see design and order. Well it should be no different for us.

And if you think about the word of God, it is almost entirely God's revelation to us of that plan, purpose and order. When we look at the sacrifices as just one slice, one subject, we are seeing God's plan, purpose and order reflected as it looks toward the center, toward the heart, toward the main idea which is Jesus Christ himself. There is therefore for us a dual existence.

This is where if the tones of my voice have started to lull you, I'm now getting to my point. It is easy to get caught up in the material side of our life. We are born, we are children, we grow, we get educated, we launch out into the great beyond with some trepidation, our parents calling to us, navigational instructions as we try to cross the bay because the ocean lies before us.

That's a nod to the Sequoia class of 1975. We have crossed the bay, the ocean lies before us. But we have this physical world in which we live and move.

However, as believers, there is also a spiritual world in which we live and move. God lets us know this in multiple ways, but one of the intriguing ways, which is the study which we have been pursuing now for some weeks, is the overlay, the third dimension beyond our two-dimensional lives here in the material world or the fourth dimension beyond the third or the fifth beyond the fourth, however you want to define this life. There is an added spiritual dimension that is transcendent, that is immaterial, that is spiritual.

Now how did God communicate this to Israel? God let Israel know that they were not only an earthly people, but they were also a heavenly people. They were not only an entity here on earth, but they were an entity in the sight of God. Can you think, this is quiz question number one, can you think of how God did that? How did God specifically let the nation of Israel know? You have a clue because of the topic of our study and our most recent sacrifice.

What's the topic of our study? Christ and the sacrifices. What is the most recent sacrifice we looked at? Passover, right? What happened? What monumental paradigm shifting thing happened at the Exodus with the Passover? As you look at Genesis chapter 9 and you see Noah having emerged from the ark into a new transformed world, geo-engineering having taken place by the flood, and you see that Noah it didn't happen. What happened in Genesis chapter 9? God blessed Noah and his sons and what did He say to them? Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.

The fear of you and 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. Spiritual or physical? It's physical. You're going to go into the physical world, you're going to be fruitful and multiply in the physical sense and you're going to dominate physical creation, even the fish.

You say, well how can the fish be afraid of me? Well there's all kinds of ways. One is the net, the hook. The other of course in the modern day is everything that we wash into the sea with our self-indulgent human efforts, you know, coral and everything else is dying.

But the moving things that live shall be food for you. I've given you all things even as the green herbs. There was a change, there was a shift.

It was a diet shift. It was a physical life change. You have been a herbivore, now you will be an omnivore.

You were a frutivore in the garden, you were a herbivore between the garden and the flood. After the flood you are now omnivores. Every living thing shall be to you for food.

And yet we know from preceding chapters that there is already a distinction between clean and unclean animals. You shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. Surely for your life blood I will demand reckoning.

From the hand of every beast I will require it from the hand of man. From the hand of every man's brother I will require the life of man. This is the spiritual correspondence.

Blood in the physical sense represents life. In the ephemeral sense, the ethereal sense, the non-material sense, there is life which is conceptual. This animal is alive, oh look, now this animal is dead.

And it is a status change, it is a position change, it is a circumstantial change. These things are immaterial as well as material, but the material evokes the transcendent. But that's as far as it goes.

That's what happened in this monumental shift in Noah's day. The next great monumental shift, and by monumental I mean something that is memorable, something that stands for something big, like the Washington Monument, and believe me it does stand for something big. Every time I look at Washington, he deserves a taller monument than what he's got.

He deserves more credit than what he gets, especially in this day. But the next great shift is at Passover. What happens at Passover? Turn over to Exodus chapter 10.

The Lord says to Pharaoh through Moses, let my people go. Here at the beginning, the Lord said to Moses, go into Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, that I may show these signs of mine before him. Great signs.

There have been few events that were at such portent and so many harbingers of change as the nine plagues plus one. And God set up Pharaoh, and like the sun on Adobe, hardened his heart, that you may tell in the hearing of your son and your son's son the mighty things I have done in Egypt, and my signs which I have done among them, that you may know that I am the Lord. There is purpose.

You know, there have been these documentary programs that talk about what might have caused the plagues in Egypt, the volcanic eruption and the darkness and the, you know, disturbances that would have produced the frogs and the flies and the moraine and various

things. And they've tried to find physical causes, which is fine. God may well have worked through some sort of volcanic means, but it was no accident.

The timing, the prediction of each thing in turn, and it has a purpose. Natural things have a purpose. And you see it no more clearly than here.

These things come and they have meaning. Now, did the animals understand the meaning? It's dark. I have moraine, I have this, you know, lesion, skin type affliction, I'm being pelted with hail, I'm, it's dark, whatever it might be.

The animals have no concept. And if you function at an animal level, you're never going to figure out what's going on. We are blessed with intellect.

We are blessed with capacity to, in the immaterial realm of our thoughts, understand meaning and purpose. And there is a purpose. And God declares it here, so that you may know that I am the Lord.

And there's nothing like telling you what's going to happen before it happens to let you know that He is the Lord. He knows the end from the beginning. And this harks back to my original opening point.

Before the foundation of the world, God designed history. It unfolds according to a plan and it has a purpose and it comes to a fulfillment that is profit, that is gain. It's worth doing.

No man setting out on an endeavor fails, if he's got any smarts at all, to sit down and count the cost. God counted the cost. This is why the Lord Jesus is the Lamb, the Passover Lamb, capital L, slain before the foundation of the world in Revelation.

It was planned. It was foreordained that this would take place. Well turn a few pages over in Exodus, because how do we know, how did God communicate to Israel? Back to my quiz question.

How did they and how do we know that there is not only a material world and a material purpose, but also an immaterial and a heavenly one? Look at Exodus 12, verse 1. Now the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, This month shall be your beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year to you. Now, Moses and Aaron glance over at the wall and there's hanging a calendar made out of papyrus.

It's got a picture of an Egyptian tire shop there and, you know, Al's wheel fixing, you know, up on the top and down on the bottom. He looks at the calendar and it is not the equivalent of January. It is the equivalent of July.

It is the month Tishri, which is the seventh month. And God says, it's not the seventh month anymore. Now it's the first month.

This month, Abib, later known as Nisan, with one S. Don't y'all put two S's in your notes like it's a

car. Nisan, Abib, A-B-I-B, was originally not the fourth month, not the eleventh month, not the ninth, not the seventh. It is the seventh, the seventh month.

Seventh month is now the first month. In a 12-month calendar, what does that do? Well now, if Nisan, Abib, is the first month, Tishri is the seventh month. They trade places.

This month shall be the beginning of the year for you. And so ever since the first Passover, Israel has had two calendars. The original calendar, called the civil calendar, which was Noah's calendar.

You know, there are dates given in the career of Noah with regard to the flood. That was the original old-time civil calendar. The new year begins in the fall, around our, around now, around August.

God says, no. I give you a new calendar and it starts now in the spring. It starts with this month.

Used to be the seventh month, now it's the first month. Do you catch that this 4 times 3, 4 plus 3 that we've been talking about, adding to 7, multiplying to 12, makes a difference? Addition is kind of a physical process. Multiplication, more of a spiritual process.

You know, even horses can add. You know, they paw the ground. I saw this at Pawnee Bill's Wild West show.

You know, what's 4 plus 3? Paws the ground 7 times. What's 2 plus 2? Paws the ground 4 times. If you say, what's 4 times 3? You know, if he even understood addition.

But there is the overlay of the spiritual on the physical. And it is communicated to Israel in the institution of this second calendar that overlays the first. Doesn't replace it, it is alongside.

Why here? Why now? Why Passover? Trivia question for you. What was the first film ever made? First silent film ever made. What was the name of it? Birth of a Nation.

Birth of a Nation, first film. What is Passover for Israel? Birth of a Nation. What accompanies birth? This one came not only by water, but by water and blood.

What happens at a birth? What occurs? How do you know it's time for the birth to take place? Water. What's the very first sign that Moses performs in Egypt? What's the first sign? First of the plagues. Water turned to blood.

Birth, water and blood. This one came not by water only, but by water and by blood. Water and blood, birth.

How is the nation born? Passover night, blood of the Lamb. What do they do three days later? Pass through the water, they're baptized. They go in and out and that is truly their new life.

There is that three day distance between the blood and between the new life for the nation.

They are freed from Pharaoh's thrall, freed from his ownership. Passover is 14 Abib, 14 Nisan.

Their freedom is on the other side of the sea, 17 Nisan. Water and blood, blood and water, water and blood. Noah survives the flood, offers offerings on an altar.

Water and blood. It is a new dispensation. It is a new world.

And God makes statements related to taking of life. And He doesn't just say if someone takes a life, his life shall be taken. What does He say? If a man sheds blood, by man shall his blood be shed.

It's blood that is in view. So at the Passover, you have the birth of the nation. And it is a new calendar.

They still observe the calendar of the world. They know that Tishri is the beginning of months in the fall. But Abib, Nisan is their new year.

And it is unique to them. Nobody else has that as the new year. God says this will be the beginning of months for you.

And there is an offset. There is a shift of seven months. Where the fall was the new year for everybody else.

Now the spring, where the latter rain, the harvest time, was the beginning. Everybody said, well, this is when the year really begins. Look at all the bounty we're bringing.

And God says, no, it's the spring. New life and overlay. Well, this defines Israel.

Just as it defines us. We have two birthdays, don't we? What did Jesus tell Nicodemus in the upper room? Are you a teacher in Israel and do not know? What? What is it Nicodemus did not know? Ye must be born again. I don't understand.

In the physical world, return to my mother's womb, be born again? I don't understand. God, through Jesus, says, look, this is a spiritual thing. It's like the wind.

There is an effect, but it's invisible. We're talking about the invisible world of force and movement and purpose. The spirit goes where it listeth.

It has its own purposes. It accomplishes its own goals. There are spiritual purposes in the world.

This is why I say to you, you must be born again. A spiritual birth. Many people in the modern day say, well, I have two birthdays.

I have one birthday when I was physically born and my spiritual birthday is the day I came to faith in Christ. Perfectly legitimate thing to say. A lot of us don't know the exact day.

We just didn't glance over at the calendar and see the picture in the month. But it is no less real. There are people who don't know when they were physically born either.

Nobody paid any attention. The people that were there are gone. Hollywood actresses are notorious for being born on various days, usually making them younger and younger.

Doris Day recently celebrated her 91st birthday. There was some doubt that maybe she was actually 93. But she swears up and down she's 91.

Younger. But this is what we're talking about. Christ in the sacrifices.

Christ in the feasts. Why is it important? Because you are spiritual beings. And we are looking at the overlay calendar.

It's not just a year that is defined by the barley harvest in the spring and the wheat harvest in the fall. Anybody can see the physical planting and harvesting of crops. God gives Israel a new calendar and invests it, imbues it with meaning that is transcendent.

And He knew this from the beginning. Turn back to Genesis. Go a little bit further back.

Go back to Genesis 7 and 8. You know the flood story begins in chapter 7. Actually in chapter 6 with the building of the ark. The flood itself occurs in chapter 7. The Lord said to Noah, Genesis 7, 1, Come into the ark, you and your household, because I have seen that you are righteous before me in this generation. He doesn't say come into the ark because I need some people to repopulate after I cleanse the generation that is currently occupying.

God has a spiritual purpose and a spiritual reason for preserving Noah. Couldn't God have let Noah and his family perish and just scooped up some fresh mud and made a second Adam? Let Jesus be the third Adam? Reshuffle the whole symbology there somehow? Why does He preserve Noah? Why doesn't He resurrect Noah? Why doesn't He let Noah drown and then just say, But behold, Noah was righteous, so God brought him out of the earth and undrowned him and undrowned his sons. There are so many different things God could have done, but God imbues this and invests it with meaning and purpose.

I am going to preserve you because you are righteous. You are righteous before me in this generation. Take with you seven each of every clean animal and so on.

Skip down to verse 17. The flood was on the earth 40 days. The waters increased and lifted up the ark, rose high above the earth.

Waters prevailed, greatly increased. The ark moved about on the surface of the waters. All flesh died.

Chapter 8, verse 1. Then God remembered Noah and every living thing and all the animals that were with him in the ark, and God made a wind to pass over the earth and the waters subsided. God made a ruach, a spirit. Wind and spirit, both Hebrew and Greek, same word.

God made a wind to pass over. The waters subsided. The fountains of the deep and windows of heaven were stopped.

The rain from heaven was restrained and the waters receded continually from the earth. At the end of 150 days, the waters decreased. 15, 150, 1500.

These numbers have significance. If you're thinking, you know why I mentioned 15, as in 15 years, as in 1500 years, as in 150 days. The ark rested when? When did the ark come to rest? What does it say? Verse 4, chapter 8, Genesis.

Let's all read this out loud together. Then the ark rested in the seventh month, the 17th day of the month, on the mountains of Ararat. On the old calendar, this is the month of Tishri, right? And it's the seventh month, 17th day of the month.

Now, if you move forward to the new calendar that God institutes at the first Passover, what month is this? This is the month Abib. On the old calendar, it was the month Abib. On the new calendar, the seventh month is Tishri.

But on the old calendar, the seventh month was Abib. See, nobody spoke up. I said a wrong name and nobody said, don't you mean Abib? Seventh month on the old calendar is what? Abib.

With Nisan. Yeah, it's called Nisan later. They got that name from the Babylonians.

But it's originally called Abib or Nisan. It's the seventh month. On the old calendar, Noah's Ark comes to rest on Ararat in the seventh month, which God in Exodus chapter 12 says, this is the first month for you.

Now, now that we're in the month Abib or Nisan, what happens on the 17th day of the month? What is 17? Well, go back. What is 14 Nisan? Passover, 15, 16, 17. What happens on 17 Abib, 17 Nisan? Which is a Sunday.

Resurrection. The Ark of Noah comes to rest on Ararat on Resurrection Day. On the Feast of Firstfruits Day.

That's the day. Now, did God just happenstance put this into Genesis? Do you see anybody in later pages of Scripture making this correspondence because it's all of human manufacture? And, well, we just thought it would be kind of nice to coincide. This is God's doing.

In eternity past, before the foundation of the world, God designed human history. And these things happen for a reason. Of the 360 possible days in the Jewish calendar for the Ark to come to rest, it is the seventh month and the 17th day of the month.

Which later, God is going to say, this is the first month for you. And Passover occurs on the 14th. They go to Sukkot and collect the body bones of Joseph on the 15th.

They travel to the Red Sea. And what happens on the 17th? The 17th day of this very same

month, when Noah's Ark came to rest, what does Israel do? Cross the Red Sea and come out on the other side. Passover on dry ground.

Free. With a new life. A new birth.

Born out of water and of blood. Right? You and I belong to a God in heaven that is a God of order, of purpose, and of design. Don't think that your life is a random collection of happenings.

Don't think that it is an accident that you were born where you were born, when you were born, to whom you were born. And the people who constitute now your family, your friends, your co-workers, your location, your associations, are no less woven into the fabric of God's purpose and order and design. That's why these things are recorded for us in Scripture.

God knows exactly where you are. He knows exactly what you need. He knows exactly what His plan and purpose is in your life.

Nothing is accidental. Nothing is chaotic. Nothing is beyond God's knowledge.

All things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His, what? Purpose. Called according to His purpose. There is a purpose for you.

There is a purpose for your existence. There is a purpose for whatever you are undertaking and undergoing right now. There is a reason for it.

There is a purpose in it. You can see this design, order, and purpose reflected in the pages of Scripture. In the same way that Noah's Ark comes to rest on Resurrection Day, the Israel nation is born on Resurrection Day, there is a future Resurrection Day for us.

We live in this carnal, earthly, mundane life. We already have a foretaste, a foreshadowing in our spiritual lives, in the presence and ministry of the Holy Spirit, in our understanding of the Word of God. But there is coming a day when we will have a true second birth into resurrected life, into transcendent dimensions.

And there is a purpose in it. It isn't just a happy fantasy to make us feel better as we go along. There is a purpose in it.

If it was just pie in the sky, by and by, something to comfort ourselves with and ease the pain of loss and death and suffering. Well, you know, I suffer in this life, but I'm going to glory. I'm going to walk the streets of gold and have wings and flap around plucking my harp and so on.

That would truly be pathetic. There is a purpose, and we are being prepared for it now. And it is important to get hold of the purpose.

Israel as a nation, in many of its generations, most of its generations, failed to grasp its purpose. And for that reason, they fell in the wilderness. They fell in the land.

They fell before their enemies. They fell in captivity. And they failed when the culmination in the appearance of the Messiah occurred.

And on the last great day of the feast, when Jesus stood up and identified Himself and offered them the fulfillment of their purpose, they missed it. And even as He died on the cross on Passover, they missed it. Don't miss it.

There is purpose in what we're doing now. And we look ahead because we see the calendar. The calendar reflects the forward progress in God's plan.

And as time moves on, God's appointments, God's moed that says in Hebrew, moed, they are appointments, they are appointed times. That's the word that is often used for feasts in the Old Testament, moed. They are God's appointments.

There are seven of them in a 12-month year. And as they defined a transcendent spiritual life for Israel, they reflect to us the transcendent spiritual truths that define us. We're going to pause here and take our break.

When we come back, we're going to see, well, what should we know about this structure? We've been seeing Christ revealed in the sacrifices, but even that revelation has a purpose and is part of a design. Why do we need to see Jesus in the sacrifices? It's great that He's the Lamb that dies for our sins and we're all going to glory. That's wonderful.

But even that is subordinate to the grand purpose and design that God has in human history. And we're going to see a little bit of that when we come back from the break.