

Christ in the Sacrifices 15-08-16b

Let's pick up our study now, we're looking at Christ and the sacrifices, and those sacrifices have brought us via the Passover to the feasts, which are sacrifice-centric in many ways, and we are looking at the details of this system that God designed and ordained for the nation of Israel. Why? Why do they need a feast system at all? Why couldn't they just have a sacrifice system? Just when you sin, do a sacrifice. If once a year have a national sacrifice maybe, just have kind of a 4th of July Passover sacrifice, remember the founding of the nation at Passover.

Why is there this detailed system of sacrifice and feast? It is a constant reminder, week by week and month by month, that there is a God in heaven and He is a God of order, He is a God of purpose. And there is order and purpose to our lives, why? Because of our second birth, because of our spiritual identity, it is transcendent. Now, at the risk of belaboring an old example that I've used many times, I'm going to belabor an old example that I've used many times.

You could imagine, and you won't have to imagine for much longer, the ongoing progress of computer programming and the increasing power of hardware and the increasing sophistication of software can duplicate and simulate reality in many ways. They now use simulations for all kinds of predictive functions, whether it is weather, whether it is stress on a building, whether it is how a ship will float, they can use simulations to go back and figure out whether or not the design given in the Bible for Noah's Ark is practical. Is the thing seaworthy? Would it turn upside down and dump all the animals into the drink? Would Noah be out there clinging to the upper side hoping for a helicopter rescue? They use simulations and computers can simulate buoyancy and the flotation and the distribution of weight and the center of gravity and the forces that might be at work and how choppy a sea can any particular vessel survive? Is it going to be the wreck of the Edsmond Fitzgerald sometime or the perfect storm where the thing just bow into the wave never to be seen again? Simulations in the world of gaming, there's nothing that pushes the envelope for both hardware and software like gaming and the virtualization of reality.

Now you can explore landscapes in three dimensions. You have very realistic physics that are replicated and all of this is produced by a very complex and sophisticated system. Well they predict, wrongly in my view, but they predict, let's just set all of our spiritual knowledge aside and assume that we're just rank D-based materialists and we're just looking at the human future defined by technology.

They claim that in something measured in decades, they will be able to create such an immersive reality via computer that you won't be able to tell it from the real thing. It will be 3D. It will have acoustics.

It will have aromas. You can walk into a virtual kitchen and smell the coffee brewing and the bacon frying. You will be able to, or you know, whatever it is that you fry, the toast toasting.

And for all intents and purposes, it will replicate reality and there will be avatars both of other people and of simulated people and they will be so good at simulating people that you will not be able to tell the difference. You won't know who is some guy in Tokyo sitting in his bathrobe in the middle of the night in his immersive equipment inhabiting this environment and you sitting wherever you are and computer generated simulants who are also walking around saying and doing things based on all kinds of heuristic algorithms and whatnot. And you say, okay, fine, that's good.

Well, what if one of these simulated programmed avatar types, say 300, 400 years from now, you keep following, who's its law? That everything doubles. Who is that? Moore? Is it Moore's law? It says computing power doubles every so often. You reach the point where these things become self-aware.

All of the artificial intelligence guys think that they will eventually create something that will become self-aware. This is Mr. Data in your Star Trek universe. This is your, who was the guy in 2001, the computer? Yeah, Hal.

And who was he talking to? The one guy left? Dave. Yeah, Dave. Hello, Dave.

That idea. This is a realistic expectation on the part of those who believe that every day in every way we're getting better and better at this. Well, here's the thing.

Suppose one of these creations, suppose human history goes on for, say, 300 years, and they look back on this as the Stone Age of chisels and papyrus and bronze, and they've got molecular level computers that are capable of billions times more processing and memory and routines that have been built upon routines and sophisticated computers are now writing the software because they're better at it than we are, just like they're better at designing circuit boards now than we are. And so 300 years in the future, it's now the year 2315, and one of these programmed entities wakes up and is self-aware, and it looks around in its universe, and it probes from inside the software environment that is supported by a hardware environment, and it seeks to discover its origins, and it hears tell that ages ago, you know, humans put this all together by melting sand and getting copper and, you know, silicon and circuits and transistors and resistors, and that there was some proto-primitive time when it was all just simple one-celled life, but now here I am, and, you know, it all just happened. And so it begins to probe the limits of what it can see inside its whatever substitutes for RAM that it runs in at that time, and it probes the limits, and it says, well, do I do or do I don't believe that in some distant past something designed all of this? And you could see it arriving at the conclusion that, well, I see computers designing other computers, and I see the functions and mechanisms by which my software space here operates.

Well, guess what? That's us now. We are inside God's game space, if you will. There was a design and a program that was put into place a long time ago by our standards could be just days ago by God's standards.

Look at Psalm 90 and verse 4. Psalm 90 used to always tell us when we were learning the sword drill, you know, just open your Bible in the middle. That was before all the helps got put in the back, and I open mine in the middle now, and I hit Isaiah. Psalm 90.

This, by the way, is the daily psalm recited on the occasion of the daily sacrifice or was in the days of sacrifice in Israel. Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, you are God.

You turn man to destruction and say, return, O children of men. For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is past and like a watch in the night. You carry them away like a flood.

They are like a sleep. In the morning they are like grass which grows up. In the morning it flourishes and grows up.

In the evening it is cut down and withers. And that's enough for our purposes. A human lifetime is a morning and an evening, a sunrise and a sunset in God's eyes.

And in another view, a thousand years is just a day. God isn't bound by or restricted by time. He functions far above and beyond it.

And we think, well, that's just unimaginable. And really it's a function of our human pride because we can't imagine anything much smarter than ourselves. We don't like to look at ourselves as exceedingly small and exceedingly limited and exceedingly slow to grasp who we are and what we are and where we are.

And that there is a far greater and grander creation in which we are, as I like to think of it, just a snow globe on God's desk. Just a, to use a modern analogy, just a computer running on some hardware. It booted up and we call that the Big Bang.

It's going to get reset and we call that the elements melting with a fervent heat. Far bigger, far grander. It is the small intellect, it is the tiny mind that refuses to consider just how small we are and temporary and ephemeral this concrete physical universe really is.

And that even our perceptions of it are representations, analogs. What you see isn't reality. What you hear isn't reality.

It is a machine interpreting particular frequencies of radiated energy and particular frequencies of reflected sound. Sound, whether it's a voice or music, is an interpretation of wiggling molecules in the atmosphere. The molecules themselves are unknown to us in their origin and composition.

We define them by sort of ham-fisted rules based on our limited observations, but we don't really know what reality is or what it's made of except as it is revealed to us by the originator, by

the creator. And not only does he tell us where it came from, but he tells us what it is for. God is transcendent.

He is outside and infinitely unimaginably beyond anything that we can wrap our mind or limited minds around. Unlike a computer programmer who might create some artificial intelligence, a human, at least with any technology that we know of now, cannot take an artificial entity and promote it into genuine flesh-and-blood reality. But God's promise to us, because he is so much greater and grander than we are, has made that promise to us.

We are in this limited time-bound space, but God made us, unimaginably so, in his image and after his likeness. And we have the potential for eternal life above and beyond. We will be promoted up and out of this mere physical universe into that greater and grander place where the angels dwell, where God himself lives.

That is where the new heaven and the new earth will be. And our capacities and our opportunities will be greatly expanded. But the point here, and the thing to remember, is there is purpose.

There is purpose. And it is defined not in the material sense. This is why for Christianity and for Christians, meaning us, you and me, to fall for the accomplishment of mere material goals as the point, the goal and the end of human life, is to utterly miss the point.

We are not here to make the world a better place. We are not here to cure diseases and solve famine. The poor you will have with you always.

Hunger and disease and famine are ordained until the end of the world. Can we ameliorate suffering? Can we shine the light where we are? Can we be a blessing to others? Of course. Is charity a mandate and a great opportunity for us? Yes.

But don't think that you can mount a campaign to cure any of it. We can make a difference where we are. But we are not going to change the grand situation.

So what is our purpose? If it's not to bring in the millennial kingdom, if we build it, He will come. This is your post-millennialists. Honestly, there's just scads and rafts and cargo ships full of Christians who think post-millennially, well we've got to protect the world and then Jesus will come back and be king of it.

It's just absurd. But a lot of them believe it. Not so much now.

The thing that really put the spike through the heart of that notion, that was really popular back in the 1700s and 1800s. And World War I pretty much killed post-millennialism. When they saw what humanity is really made of and what we're capable of and how much more effective evil is in this material world, they realized we're never going to be able to build it.

And if there were any of them that had any gasping hopes, World War II and all of the other

wars and atrocities, looking around at Pol Pot and Stalin and Ho Chi Minh and the other great massacre specialists of the last century, pretty well put post-millennialism to bed. But it was a viable thought for a while. We're not here to accomplish material purposes.

The material exists to help us accomplish spiritual purposes. Israel wasn't there simply to be a nation among nations. They had a new calendar that started with the birthday month.

It had been the seventh month, now it's the first month. And what had been the first month is the seventh month. Why? They have a spiritual identity and that is definitional.

That is who they are and that is what they are for. They are a people separated to God, sanctified by the blood of the Lamb, as are we. This is why if you turn to Romans chapter 8, this is the context.

Before we go any further forward in our study of the feasts and the sacrifices, rather than it just being sort of interesting biblical details, this is what it is for. This is what it ought to do. Yes, I went to Grace and Truth Bible Church.

Yes, I participated in the study of feasts and sacrifices as they reflect the Lord Jesus Christ. But the most important effect of this study should be to enhance, to encourage, and to strengthen our understanding of who we are and why we're here on a daily basis, on an hourly basis. This study ought to make a difference.

You look at Romans chapter 8 verse 6, well you can, you can, let's start up in verse 3. What the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh on account of sin. He sent the Lord Jesus into the material world made out of material to solve an immaterial problem, which is sin. You're never going to find a material solution to immaterial problems.

If your child is disobedient, you're not going to be able to give him a pill and now he's obedient. You may think that you have addressed that symptom, but what you have done is shifted. Did you ever have a partly inflated balloon and you had a child and you squeeze one part of it, what happens to the rest of it? It expands.

You squeeze this part, it expands over here. You can't get rid of the air in the balloon by squeezing the balloon. It just moves around.

And you cannot solve immaterial problems in this life with material efforts. It just shifts the problem. I'm so happy that my sister is no longer addicted to gambling.

It cured her of an addiction to gambling. But now she's on QVC and the Shopping Channel all the time. We cured the Shopping Channel addiction and buying 12 toasters because they're on sale, but now she's clinically depressed.

Well, we gave her a pill for the clinical depression, but now her liver is failing. Well, we gave her

a liver transplant and some treatment for the liver, but now she's anemic. Well, we're treating the anemia, but the anemic stuff has given her too much iron and now she sticks to the refrigerator every time she walks by.

One thing and another. Human solutions always are inferior, inadequate, and ineffective. You simply replace one problem with another.

How many times have I reminded you of the current medicines that are available and advertised on television? Side effects may include. And you think, what moron would risk bleeding out the ears and stroke and heart failure? They're pitching all these things that fix one problem and potentially create 20 others, which they're legally required to list. It's the nature of human things.

Look at Romans 8 again. God sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, Romans 8.3. On account of sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, in the material world. God is showing and dealing with sin in the material world, but sin itself is an immaterial concept.

Can you teach your pet that doing their business in the house is a sin? Do they come to a moral conviction about not waiting until they're let out? How does it work? How do you house train a dog? If I leave anything inside the house, that person over there is going to pop me with a newspaper or speak harshly to me or something. It's action reaction. It's act and consequence.

Well, I'm going to do that, not because I think it's wrong, but because something bad will happen to me. This is the animal level. It isn't sin.

It's, well, it's not worth it. I have to go, but I'm not going to go because something bad will happen to me if I do. That's the simple animal reaction.

This, by the way, is what they're trying to base modern morality on is at the animal level. Well, you can do whatever you want to as long as it doesn't have a bad consequence. If it has a bad consequence, if somebody gets hurt, if a child gets traumatized, then don't do it, which is the least common denominator, mundane, two-digit IQ level of function.

Well, don't do that. It has a bad consequence. My dog can understand that.

Sin requires intellectual understanding. Morality requires a function in the immaterial world, the world of ideas, the world of what matters. God sent His Son into the material world to solve an immaterial problem and to make that issue clear, so that, verse 4, the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit, not according to the old calendar that starts with Tishri, but according to the new calendar that starts with Aviv.

Do you see it? You are not defined by your materiality. If you worry excessively about the configuration of your physical body, I'm not muscular enough as a man, I'm not hairy enough, or I'm too hairy, or I'm too bald or not bald enough, or I'm too short, too tall, too big, too small,

too loud, too soft, too light, too dark. You're living in the material world.

This is the function. Walk your dog. Two dogs meet.

They're sorting themselves out, who's the alpha and who's not. You're a threat to me, I bark at you. Rise above this.

Walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh, verse 5, set their minds on the things of the flesh. But those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

To be carnally minded, to be fleshly minded is death. Your life, your efforts, your accomplishments will all die with the flesh. But to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

Did you ever see somebody and you thought, that person really ought to be self-conscious. I mean, they got a bad, they got dealt a bad hand. You know, when those genes fell together, that was not a happy combination.

And yet when you look at them, they don't seem to be aware of it. They don't know and they don't care. And after you're around them for just a few minutes, you think, this is a really interesting person.

They're clever, they're witty, they're relaxed, they're fun to be around. What a great friend. What a great companion.

What a great person to do something with or to have in the family, meet some long lost cousin or something. And those initial impressions immediately fall away. Why? Because that person is not living in the flesh.

They're not defined by how they were born. They're not defined by what happened to them when they lost something, lost a limb, got a scar, got burned, had an affliction of some kind. And because they are utterly insensitive to it, unaware of it, unaffected by it, you see the light of their soul, their intellect, their personality, their character shining through.

And you almost think, wow, you know, I don't know how it happened, but this person is so much greater than the sum of the parts, so much greater than what I initially perceived. That's you living in the Spirit. Living according to the Spirit is life and peace.

Nothing better than to be around somebody who has peace. They're not uptight. They're not wrapped around anything.

They are not kinked. They are not unduly concerned with minor things. They are not impatient.

They are not unlikable. They are not caustic. They are not abrasive.

You know why? They have peace. Peace that passes understanding. Peace that doesn't make

sense in the material world.

Living not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. To be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because life is not defined by the material, it is defined by the spiritual.

It is not the Tishri calendar, it is the Abib calendar. Carnal mind is enemyship against God. Do you see this in our society today? Do we have, you know, what has become recently fashionable, which is militant atheism, the Sam Harris, Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens, oh by the way, I'm making a mint off of all my books kind of atheism.

It's fashionable. It's popular. It buys into post-modernism.

It trades in the popular science and materialism of the day. The carnal mind is enmity against God. It is not subject to the law of God.

Why is that? The law of God is spiritual. It functions in the spiritual realm. Well, I don't acknowledge the spiritual.

All I acknowledge is the mechanical. All I acknowledge is that which is made of substance. So I wave my hand and flaunt my utter disregard of the law of God, because I don't acknowledge it.

I say it doesn't exist. The carnal mind is enmity against God. It is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

So then those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit. If what? If indeed the Spirit of God is at home in you.

If you are attuned, if you are sensitive, if you are using your God-given intellect and your God-given spiritual life to acknowledge those things. This is why God gave Israel the other calendar. It is superimposed.

Yes, they still plant and cultivate and sow and reap. Yes, there is a barley harvest in the spring. Yes, there is a wheat harvest in the fall.

Yes, the feast calendar uses and incorporates those physical things, but it gives them transcendent meaning. The Feast of Firstfruits isn't just grabbing the first of the crop and celebrating the bounty reflected in this miracle that we put in seeds and we are getting edibles. We put in little things and we are getting big things.

It's a miracle. I like the point that has been made before that people say, well, the Bible is full of miracles, but where are the miracles today? Miracles happen all the time. Every time a tree springs up in your lawn, that's a miracle.

The conversion of elements into living things on every second is miraculous. Life is miraculous. The order in the universe is miraculous.

God does miracles every second of the day. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God, but you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God is at home, dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.

If you don't have an Abib calendar, if you don't celebrate Passover, if you don't recognize the significance of unleavened bread and firstfruits, if you are not counting the days to Pentecost, you are insensitive to it, you don't belong. You are not in that group. If Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

Now we don't accept Jesus and keel over, do we? So what does He mean when He says, if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin? We are still in this earth, we are still fallen, we are still corrupt, and we still produce the material fruits that are not eternal. A lot of what we do is useless. How much of our entertainment time is going to count on eternity? Entertainment is great.

There is a place for entertainment. People ought to rest and relax from time to time. But how much of it is an investment in eternity? The body is dead because of sin.

And things that please us that are part of the carnal world, that don't invest in or partake of spiritual life, and this doesn't mean we have to sit around thinking about verses all the time. What it does mean is that we have our glasses on, we see the world through the lens. And you can watch movies, you can participate in games, you can go to concerts, you can listen to music, you can evaluate art of all different kinds and forms, but always as a spiritual creature.

Jesus looked around at the beauty of the rebuilt temple. He appreciated it. He saw it.

He looked at nature. He saw the sparrows. He saw the mustard plants.

He saw the wheat fields that were ripe for harvest. Jesus looked around and appreciated a lot of things. But in His heart and in His soul, it was always a part of and an investment in His spiritual identity.

And it was incorporated into that and became reflected and inwoven with it. If Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, is that a yes or a no? If and it's true, first class condition.

If and He does, the Spirit dwells in you. He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through the Spirit. You are going to enter into a new reality with a mortal body that will be an immortal body through His Spirit who dwells in you.

Therefore, brethren, we are debtors. We have a debt. We have an obligation.

If you're obligated, you owe something. We have an obligation not to the flesh to live according to the flesh, for if you live according to the flesh, you will die. Your efforts, your time, your

thoughts, all the things that you thought were important will perish.

But if, and here's the punchline, this is the point, if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. Look at verse 17, if you're led by the Spirit, you are children of God.

And if children, then heirs, inheritors, those who receive, those who gain, those who are blessed with an abundance, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. So that if we suffer with Him, if we set aside many of the allurements of this world, many of the things that seem so important and so prominent in society and in culture and so on. Jesus was the original counter-culture individual, wasn't He? In the latter part of His ministry, He couldn't go openly into any town because it would create a riot.

These are the sons of God and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with, suffer with, notice Him is in italics, suffer with, that we may also be glorified with. What world are you living in? Is it the short-term, mundane, grass withers, flower fades world of the original calendar or is it the new calendar, the new understanding, the fresh perspective that God gives us through our new birth. We are born by water and by blood.

The washing of water and renewing of the Holy Spirit, the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, His Son cleanses us from all sin. That's our identity, that's what defines us and that definition is not just helpful in terms of who am I, but it also in the sense of purpose tells us why we are here, why life is important, why your thoughts matter, whether they are seen or not. What are you like when you are alone? What are you like when you are by yourself? Left to your own devices, no supervision, no oversight.

What are your priorities? What are your goals? What are your values? Are they defined by the material world? Are they defined by the Tishri calendar? Or are they defined by new life in Christ? Looking ahead, looking to the purpose and the goal and the reason for things. This is something that materialism will never be able to answer because in the secular humanist material world there really is no reason for anything. It's just kind of happened and isn't it fun to look at while we are here and we will perish and we are gone.

But it really has no purpose and because it has no purpose there really don't need to be any rules. If there is not a goal to be scored in a football game then what do you need rules for? If there is no purpose to be accomplished in having a sewing machine and cloth and thread, if there is no purpose to be accomplished in having the materials for painting or sculpture or music then why do you need rules? Why do you think you have a lot of chaotic music being produced? There is no real purpose. There is no real goal.

There are rules and guidelines and effective and efficient ways of doing things when there is a goal to be achieved, a purpose to be accomplished. That's us. That is us in Him, in the Lord Jesus Christ.

He is our Passover. Why would Paul say that? He is our Passover because in Him, like the nation of Israel, we have new life, new birth, new purpose, new hope, life and peace. Well, that's the fabric into which is woven the tapestry and the pattern, the picture that we see in the sacrifices and in the feasts.

It is part of this larger thing. You put a decoration on something bigger. You don't just have a decoration that floats.

Decoration by definition is something that enhances and is carried on something larger. Well, the feasts and the sacrifices and the reflection of the Lord Jesus Christ is part of that something larger and this is what it is. Let's close here in a word of prayer.

Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word. Thank You for the Lord Jesus Christ and the embodiment of grander, invisible and spiritual truths that He represents, that He became to communicate to us the fullness of Your deity in bodily form, to live life among us, to show us what a life defined by transcendent truth is and can be. We pray that these things will remain with us, that God the Holy Spirit will provoke us to love and good works as we realize what is on the line, where we are headed by the way of destination and who we represent in the person of Your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

We pray these things in His name. Amen.