

Christ in the Sacrifices 15-08-23b

We pick up our study now, Christ and the Sacrifices. We're looking at the Feasts of Israel. We have covered in some detail now the Spring Feasts beginning with Passover on which we have dwelt for a couple of weeks.

And I've given you Leviticus 23, the outline, the broad pattern of the Feasts. It tells us about the Passover and unleavened bread in verses 4 through 8. It tells us about the Feast of Firstfruits in verses 9 through 14. Speak to the children of Israel and say to them, when you come into the land which I give you and reap its harvest, you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest.

He shall wave the sheaf before the Lord to be accepted on your behalf on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it. The day after the Sabbath. This is pivotal for understanding how to count.

This was the big disagreement I mentioned between the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Was this Sabbath the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread Sabbath or is it the Saturday Sabbath? And there was huge blood spilled and Pharisees and Sadducees with fingers around each other's throats just refusing to yield and convinced in their own minds that they had it right. And sadly the Sadducees were right and the Pharisees were wrong.

You kind of root for the Pharisees. You figure, well, they're not as bad as the Sadducees because they didn't hold with the resurrection. But there was plenty of blame to go around in the whole religious realm there and this is something the Pharisees got wrong and the Sadducees had right.

And you'll see why as we continue. Wave the sheaf before the Lord and notice when you come into the land. A lot of people come to the grain offerings and waving of the sheaf and so on and saying, well, what was so bad about Cain's offering? Well, this first fruits offering, grain offering, the first fruits of the crops is a celebration of a kind of fulfillment.

The journey is complete. You are now dwelling in your inheritance and enjoying its benefits and its fruits. This is the fruit of having conquered the enemies, having driven out the evil inhabitants of the land and dwelling in peace and safety where milk and honey flows.

Right? When you come into the land, when you have settled the land, when you have planted and cultivated and brought forth the fruit that God has promised you for faithfulness and obedience on the journey and in the conquest, then you will celebrate this. But you don't jump to first fruits right out of Egypt. You don't have anything that you plant while you're in the wilderness wanderings.

You can't stop the battles in the South and in the mid section and in the North of the land against the Amorites and say, wait a minute, I've got to have a time here to plant my crops and

bring in the first fruits. It is a peace in the land celebration. If you get there too early and try to celebrate it before it's time, this is kind of like Satan saying, look, I'll give you the kingdoms of the world now.

You don't have to go through all this cross business. You don't have to wade through all of the hard stuff. You just want to be king of the world.

I'll make you that now. Your father already gave me suzerainty over this world. I'll give it to you.

Satan had the authority to make Jesus the king of the nations. He is the God of the world. He's got his principalities and powers and he could have granted and conferred on Jesus kingship of the world.

Jesus could have said, well, you know, I can do a whole lot of good if I was king of the world. If I were the king of the world, tell you what I'd do. You know, you have a whole lot of opportunities there.

So it's important to observe the time. There is a time and a season for everything under the sun, Solomon tells us. This is one for the land.

He's going to waive the sheaf he'll offer on that day. The male lamb of the first year without blemish is a burnt offering to the Lord. The grain offering shall be two-tenths of an ephah, fine flour.

These are things we will go into more detail a little bit later on. But because we're overviewing the feasts here, keep in mind, however, that every single detail has meaning. And we will have sort of a decoding system that will help us understand what God was communicating to Israel through these sacrifices about the Lord Jesus Christ, which is the focus of our study.

Just by way of anticipation, just as an example of this, turn over to Numbers 28. Verse 16. Let's go back to the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Numbers 28.16. On the fourteenth day of the first month is the Passover of the Lord. On the fifteenth day of this month is the Feast. Unleavened bread shall be eaten for seven days.

On the first day you shall have a holy convocation. You should do no customary work. That's all tracking right with what we saw in Leviticus.

You shall present an offering made by fire as a burnt offering to the Lord. Now that was all it said in Leviticus, right? Here we are given the details of that offering made by fire. What is it? Two young bulls, one ram, and seven lambs in their first year.

Be sure they are without blemish. Now, is this just a configuration that God picked out of the air? Why these animals? Why these numbers? Why special emphasis on without blemish? This is a daily offering, a burnt offering to young bulls. What does the Bible say about a bull? What do oxen represent as sacrificial animals? We're going to see this in great detail in the future, but I

will suggest to you, just as something we'll substantiate later on, that the ox, the bull, represents domesticated power.

It is power under authority. You take this animal that is stronger than you, you put a yoke upon him, and you direct him, and his strength is used in your service. Make sense? That's kind of the picture.

It wouldn't be like a fox. It wouldn't be a chicken. Those would represent different things.

Or a duck. There are a lot of different animals. Why aren't there other animals in Scripture? Of course, I don't think they had any ducks in the ancient Near East.

But if they did, making one of them a sacrificial animal would have an entirely different implication, wouldn't it? Something that floats on the water and has duck-like qualities, that would be something to investigate. I'm glad we don't have to. I've got a soft spot for ducks.

I used to have a couple myself, but that's not what we're looking at. We're looking at the ox, the bull. What do you think of when you think of these great oxen? You think of a yoke of oxen.

Here, you've got two young bulls, two young strong oxes. They are a domesticated animal, not a wild animal, unlike, say, the ram that you often find in the wild and has its own ability to function independently and to contest leadership of a flock. Rams are famous for butting heads, for establishing dominance and superiority and victory and climbing into high places.

The sure-footed goats, they climb into the hills and they ascend into the heights. These are qualities and characteristics that are memorable and attached to the animals. So two young oxen.

And if you think about the anticipation of the Lord Jesus Christ, in what sense is there a double or a two-fold quality about Christ? Well, you might think humanity and deity, but those are two unlike things that are wedded in one person. What are two like things that have to do with the earth and strength in the earth? How about the first and second coming? In both the first and second advent, the Lord Jesus Christ subordinates His strength in service to the plan of God the Father. He is not doing His own will, He is doing the will of the Father in both the first and the second advents.

So you have these two bulls. And you think, well, in the mind of an Israelite, as he contemplated these sacrifices and realized that they were foreshadowing the Messiah, he would say, well, there must be something about the Messiah that is dual. It could be that He is serving both earth and heaven.

Remember that Jesus said, the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many. He came to serve. He said, I do not do my own will, I do the will of the Father in the garden.

Not my will, but Thine be done. So you have the two oxen. Then it says, one ram.

What do you think of when you think of the ram? You cannot help but think back to Mount Moriah and the ram with its horns caught in the thicket. And this is the substitutionary idea. Where is he? He is on top of a mountain.

Where do the goats dwell? Where do they climb? They ascend. They are earthly animals. They don't fly.

They are not the eagle. They are not the dove. So you don't see deity here.

But what you see is the highest attainment of strength and competition and ascent on earth. And so this is the victory, the competitive strength that brings you to the top of the mountain. And yet that is sacrificed.

The Lord Jesus could have been king, but He sacrificed Himself on our behalf. He was our substitute. So you have the substitutionary idea in the ram.

You have the strength, competition and ascending the heights. Those are ideas in the ram. One ram.

You don't need two because Christ is only going to come and be the substitute once. This is how Moses got in trouble. Striking the rock too many times on too many occasions.

There is only one occasion where the rock is stricken. Even though you come to the rock twice. Two rocks that provide life-giving water, right? You strike the first time, you speak the second time.

Moses strikes it the second time and that means he can't go into the land. God says that picture is important. So you have the two bullocks.

Two times the Lord Jesus will come in service of His Father's plan and purpose. One ram. He is going to be the substitute once.

Then it says seven lambs in their first year. Be sure they are without blemish. Lamb without spot and without blemish.

Christ the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world. But there are seven of them. What does seven speak of? What's the first thing you think of when you think of seven? Perfection.

Completeness. In seven days the week is complete. In seven days God's work is complete and He rests and reviews it.

The cycle is complete. It's the eighth day where you start over with something new. Someone is a baby boy circumcised on the eighth day because that's a fresh day.

He's seven days. You make sure he's going to live. Most early infant death, if the child is not going to survive, they don't typically last a week.

By the time they reach the eighth day you're pretty sure they're healthy enough to make it, barring some later incursion. So the eighth day, the day of renewal, the day of fresh start, the day of entry into a new thing, entry into the community and so on. But this is seven lambs, seven young lambs.

They are innocent. They aren't guilty of anything. They haven't participated in anything.

And they are spotless. It is purity. It is freedom from any moral taint that is being symbolized.

And there are seven of them, which means it is perfection of perfection. Now, how many days of the Feast are there? How many days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread? So how many days are offerings to be made by fire? What does it say in Leviticus? Seven. If there are seven lambs sacrificed on seven days, how many lambs get sacrificed? What's seven times seven? I know most of you weren't raised on calculators.

Forty-nine, right? Seven times seven, forty-nine lambs of the first year. What is the great jubilee? What is the great fulfillment that is commemorated in the jubilee year and at the Feast of Pentecost? It's not forty-nine, but? Fifty. So if there are forty-nine lambs in this week, where is number fifty? Passover lamb.

The Passover lamb, plus the lambs. So that is the Passover lamb. That week is looking back at the first sacrificed lamb.

And remember in a couple places in the Bible it talks about the sevenfold Spirit of God. People say, oh my gosh, are there seven Holy Spirits? The seven spirits that are before the throne and the sevenfold Spirit, the Spirit of, you know, the Spirit of God will be upon Him, the Spirit of, and then it lists seven things in the Old Testament. And in Revelation it says there are seven spirits of God before the throne.

Well, it's one Holy Spirit, but seven speaks of His perfection and His fullness and His completeness and His absolute fitness for all of God's purposes. In the same way, the seven lambs every day give you a chance to think about that first great Passover lamb and there is a total of fifty and that is the jubilee. It's not accidental.

It isn't capricious. It's not arbitrary. The things that God gave His people to think about, to meditate upon.

You can't be blowing along and take a glance over your left shoulder and say, oh, I see they are sacrificing some animals at the temple. Isn't that interesting? And then go on. To appreciate and to receive the benefit of the Levitical system, people in Israel had to stop and think, right? They had to spend time reflecting and analyzing and putting like things together, going before the Lord in prayer, asking for wisdom, receiving God's words and hiding His commandments in,

inclining their ears, applying their hearts, lifting up their voice and crying out, seeking it like silver and searching for it as hid treasure so that they could understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.

If it was important for them, how important do you think it is for us, upon whom the ends of the ages have come? God is a God of order. He is a God of beauty and symmetry and manifold multi-level communication. He is a God of detail.

He is a God of faithfulness. He is a God of commitment and fulfillment. Do not think that our individual lives are any different.

We, praise God, are held in His hands. He knows everything, everything about our circumstances, about our hopes and dreams, our goals and aspirations, our difficulties and challenges, our tests, our failures, and He keeps us anyway, because when He comes to our doorway, He sees the blood on the lintel and on the doorposts. And what ought to come to us because of our corruption, because of our failures, because of our shortcomings, because of our insufficiency, the blood of the Passover lamb remedies.

The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin. That defines us in the way that these feasts and observances defined the nation of Israel. The Lord Jesus Christ defines us.

That's who we are. And to ever forget that or to ever let that slip is to be the sons of Jacob who forfeit inheritance, forfeit double portion, forfeit the opportunity to rule and reign and sit with the Lord Jesus on His throne, forfeit the opportunity to walk with Him in white, to partake of hidden manna, to be given personally by the Lord Jesus Christ a white stone and a new name. The overcomer blessings are to those who recognize that this world is a brief paradigm, that prepares us for eternity.

That's what these feasts are about. So again in Numbers, just by way of example, we will look at these in more detail as we get into the Levitical offerings proper. But you can see that there's, whenever when you're in grade school maybe and you wanted to, you know people, of course they probably do all this on phones now and you couldn't do it.

In the days of paper and pencils and ink, sometimes you'd want to pass notes in class. You want to tell somebody something. And you think, well I don't want this to be intercepted and you know this is the days of the spy movies and James Bond and you know Flint and James Coburn and Lancelot, Link, Secret Chimp and all the other, you know, smart, all the other spy things and everybody was interested in codes.

Going back to the 40s and 50s, you know they had these decoder rings from, who's the guy, Spaceman that had the serial series. You could get a decoder ring from him. So anyway, there would be little codes.

You could do a substitution code and just shift the alphabet underneath it. And so you write A through Z and then underneath you start with G and you write the letter and then you just do a

simple substitution. They still have that today.

The crypto quote in the newspaper is a substitution code where one letter stands for another. And so you can puzzle the thing out. I like those for some reason unknown to myself.

Like if I see the crypto quote, I'll solve it. I'm almost compelled to solve it. And so we used to make a, have you ever seen the box and dot code? The box and dot code is something I used when I was in grade school to encrypt my meaningless little messages.

But you basically do a tic-tac-toe thing three times. You make three tic-tac-toe patterns and in the first one it's empty. In the second one you put a dot in each square where the Xs and Os would go.

And in the third one you put two dots. Well, then you go back and the upper left quadrant of the empty hash mark is A. The middle one is B and the right one is C. So the letter A in your box and dot code looks like a backward L. It's that section of the grid. B looks like a U and C looks like a regular L. D looks like a backward C. E is a square.

F is kind of like a square C and so on. Well, when you get to A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, when you get to J, well now it's going to be like an A only it has a dot in it. And you go through that part and when you run out of that you go to the one with two dots.

And so you can find a piece of paper and it's got these little weird geometrical linear deals and some of them have dots and some of them don't. You say, oh, what is this? I have no idea. Well, it's the box and dot code.

It's simple to reproduce and simple to use. And you decode a message. You find the little things and you say, well, this stands for this.

This means this. That's a long, windy example to emphasize that in the sacrificial system of Israel, one thing stands for another. And it is consistent.

A square with a dot in it is always the letter M, I think. A square with no dot is always the letter E. And if you want to use punctuation, I think you have a couple of little things left over at the end. But the ram, the lamb, the dove, the grain that is roasted, these things have a consistent interpretation and correspondence.

And those Israelites who would pause and reflect, knowing that these are harbingers and anticipations and adumbrations of the Messiah to come would solve that code. And learn wonderful spiritual truths that comported with their spiritual calendar. And they would begin to figure out there are two sets of feasts, just as there are two bulls.

Spring and fall feasts separated by a hiatus. John the Baptist, are you the one who should come or do we look for another? Do the two sets of feasts mean two different Messiahs or two comings of the same Messiah? And Jesus didn't answer him outright. He gave him clues.

And John in his prison cell cracked an enormous smile when they came back and said all you've got to do is look at what this Messiah is doing. And that tells you that he is both the one who is and the one who is to come. And John went to his beheading a happy man because he had seen God's Messiah and knew that he would see him again.

He said well this is just going to hasten the process, chop my head off, I'll be right back. You're not getting rid of me. You think you're chopping my head off and I'm going to be gone? I'm going to be instantly back.

And the Messiah of glory, he who is to come, the conquering king is going to be there as well and you are going to be incredibly sorry. I don't think John had lost a wink's sleep just as the Apostle Peter once he got things figured out. Angels had to kick him to get him awake when he was in prison.

He had no thought for his life. He had it figured out. He knew the Lord Jesus had already told him that he was going to die in a manner similar to the Lord and he said what an honor.

So these things are meaningful to us, to you and to me. As we look at them we can derive the same applicational benefit. But we need to learn the code because it tells us about the Lord Jesus.

Yes the Lord Jesus is our Savior. Yes He has given us the Holy Spirit. The Bible is our guide for faith and practice.

But there is so much more in terms of representing the Lord Jesus Christ. If you are a representative of a thing, it would be helpful if you knew all about that thing. Yes? Suppose I say your name here.

I would like you to go and speak on the merits of field artillery to this ladies auxiliary group that is meeting tonight. Ladies auxiliary has got a meeting and they are interested in the history and accomplishments of field artillery in the United States. Please go and represent the glory and majesty of the artillery to them.

You are immediately thinking what Google words would I type? Right? You don't know anything about it. What if the President calls up and says we are having a ceremony and we need a representative for the field artillery, would you be there? You say why? The only person in this room I know of that has got any association with artillery is me. Are you going to go? And the President says well here is our artillery representative and all the reporters are saying why? They have no knowledge, no association, no history, no practice, no experience, no training.

Do you really want that to be the case when it comes to the Lord Jesus Christ? You are His representative on earth by definition, by faith in Christ. You are body of Christ and body of Christ on this earth is representative of Christ on this earth. How much do you know? How much can you say? How much experience do you have? Well this is of course why we are in Bible class and one of the great things about seeing Christ in the sacrifices is it is going to give

us that knowledge, that experience, that identity.

The reason I use that example is when I was drilling for points and not pay, you know when you leave the active reserve and you are trying to get to 20 years so that you have some retirement, sometimes you are in what they call an MTU which is a complete misnomer. Mobile training isn't anything. You just sit around thinking up ways to try to earn drill points that you don't get paid for and if you get enough points in a year that's a good year toward retirement.

And so one of the things you can do is go and speak to groups, the ladies auxiliary or the moose lodge or whoever it might be and you can get a four hour drill credit if you go talk up the service to a civic group. And so I did that multiple times. Well when it comes time to talk about the artillery, I know all about the artillery.

I was an instructor in gunnery. I've eaten, slept and drank artillery for six years and it's easy for me. I didn't have to study.

I didn't have to do that much preparation. I knew all about it. I can tell you all the different howitzer types.

I can tell you the difference between a 105 and a 155 and an 8 inch and a 175mm. I can tell you the difference between indirect fire and direct fire. I can compute the gunnery solution for you.

I can map it all out and tell you the difference between complementary angle of sight and angle of sight and why it is that elevations make a difference and what intervening crests are and how to avoid them and how to talk in aircraft without shooting them down with your projectiles. And I can tell you how much a 105mm projectile weighs and what its bursting radius is and 155mm. I'm steeped in it.

I know it intrinsically. I know all about it. You and I should be this way with the Lord Jesus Christ.

You want to start rattling off information about the Lord Jesus. Why? So that you can share it with somebody else? How about so that we can be that and do that? One of the reasons I was a gunnery instructor is to teach lieutenants how to eat, sleep and emulate and pass along artillery doctrine to their platoons and to their enlisted men when they got to the fleet. And teaching is not just so that you can go talk about it.

It is so that you can do it. And I was never more grateful for my gunnery instructors and my field artillery training than when I went to Okinawa and was assigned to a 105mm battery and, okay, well, you are the headquarters platoon commander and you are the officer in charge of the fire direction center. Meaning you are going to calculate the data.

We are going up to Camp Hansen and we are going to shoot live artillery rounds and you are the guy who is going to make sure that when we shoot them they hit the earth where they are supposed to. And if you mess up there is going to be a bunch of little Okinawans all descending on you with machetes and police and governmental authorities to try to get you locked up for

creating harm and chaos. It is a big job.

We are going to have some low flying aircraft coming in. They are going to drop some rounds. Be sure you don't shoot them down.

Be sure that you construct safety diagrams and that you observe all the procedures. Well, I was thoroughly trained. I was experienced.

I had had practice at Fort Sill and when I went to Okinawa it was a little daunting to do it for real, but I fell back on my training. I have seen this before. I know how this is supposed to work.

And very quickly it becomes routine. It's based on knowledge. That's what our study is.

So, why is it important to know that the two bullocks and the ram and the seven lambs represent the Lord Jesus Christ? Well, what is it about the Lord Jesus Christ that they represent? If we are to represent Him on this earth then what should we reflect? If I look at my life, this is a difficult thing because we are going to conclude here in a few moments and we are going to fold up our Bibles. We are going to go find some lunch. We are going to do whatever it is we have planned for the rest of the day.

Will the things that we have seen from the Word of God penetrate back into our consciousness and affect in any way how we spend just the rest of this day, much less the future? Just think about the rest of this day. Well, let's think. If these sacrifices for the Feast of Unleavened Bread represent the Lord Jesus and we represent the Lord Jesus then there should be some similarity, right? So, let's think about the two bullocks.

Will you be expending any strength today? Will you be using your skills and your abilities to accomplish anything this afternoon? You may say, well, this is my Sabbath. I'm not doing any work today. Alright, tomorrow, today or tomorrow, are you going to be expending any strength? Are you going to be the bullock? Are you going to be in yoke? Well, how are you going to do that? Are you going to do it faithfully as under the Lord? Are you going to examine your attitudes and your motivations and the way you do those things to ensure that you are without blemish? That without blemish applies not only to the seven lambs but also to the ram and the two bullocks.

Ensure they are without blemish. As you exert your strength and apply your skills, be sure they are without blemish. How can you blemish your strength? How about doing what you're supposed to do with a terrible attitude? Doing it for the wrong reasons? Doing it with a grinding of teeth? Doing it in spite and bitterness? Is that the way the Lord Jesus served God in His first and hopefully not in His second coming? Well, we represent Him.

So as we apply our strength. What about the ram? The ram in the sense of competition and attainment and trying to seize and hold the high ground as it were. By the way, we're going to see the ram has an even more interesting connection when we do our detailed fall feasts.

The ram is a hugely significant animal in the sacrificial system. But in terms of when we compete, when we strive, when we want to drive out things that shouldn't be there so that we can stand on that high ground, are we doing it in the right spirit? When the Lord Jesus resisted Satan, when we resist the minions of darkness, the principalities and powers and the rulers of the darkness of this age, spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places and all of the manifestations of their efforts in the political world and the economic world and the social world around us, are we still opposing without blemish? Are we tainting ourselves? Are we getting down in the same mud when we oppose? The Lord Jesus did these things without spot and without blemish. He wants to present Himself a glorious church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and without blemish.

Can we look at the things we do? Can we look at the way we do them? Can we look at the thoughts and intents of our heart and strive to eliminate blemish? We should. It isn't what you do, it is how and why you do it. You may get things accomplished but if you've done them in a bad manner, it's a waste.

It's not an investment in eternity and it is not a reflection or a representation of the Lord Jesus Christ. How about the seven lambs? Perfection and innocence. How do we ensure that we don't have the spot and stain of sin? Well, we've got to look to what those lambs look to.

The Passover lamb, the lamb whose blood preserves us from judgment and who cleanses us from all sin. Because the Passover was slain, the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son cleanses us from all sins. Is that how John 1.7 and John 1.9 goes? First John? Isn't there a condition in there? If we acknowledge our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive and to cleanse.

If we walk in the light as He is in the light, the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son cleanses us. Seven perfect lambs for seven unleavened bread days. Pretty clear that there is an unleavened lamb of God, right? So, are these practical things? Are they things that we can do? Yes, they are.

Are they things that we should do? Yes, they are. So, what will we do in the days ahead? That's a matter of choice. That's a matter of concentration.

It's a matter of focus. It's a matter of remembering who we are and why we're here. And that's what the feast schedule in Israel did.

Year by year, month by month, it reminded Israel of who they are. They were defined by these feasts. No other nation in the world before or since has had these feasts, only Israel, because they were uniquely the possession of God.

We have that same opportunity because we are uniquely body and bride of Christ. So let's not fail the grace of God as we do the things we do, as we travel through the circumstances of this afternoon and tomorrow and the days to come. Think about the feasts.

Blow the shofar. It is a signal. It is a call to convocation, holy convocation.

And thankfully we don't do this alone. We have God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, and we have the fellowship of believers who are like-minded, who understand that this is who we are. Israel didn't celebrate the feasts individually.

They didn't go into their homes and construct little tiny altars and little tiny memorials. This was a community observance. And we as the community and body of Christ need to be looking out for one another as we all together pursue these great and worthy objectives.

Let's close here in a word of prayer. We'll begin next week with a detailed look at the fall feasts. And let me tell you, it is really going to rock your world.

Let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word. Thank You for the powerful and memorable ways that You remind us of the immaterialities, the spiritual realities that are transcendent and are more real than what we see around us, and the mundane details of this life.

We pray that God the Holy Spirit will impress upon us our identity in Christ, our opportunity in Him to reflect His glory and to be pleasing in Your sight. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.