

Christ in the Sacrifices 15-09-13a

This is Sunday, the 13th of September, 2015. We continue our study of the Lord Jesus Christ portrayed through the sacrifices, the animal sacrifices in particular, of the Old Testament. We pick up our study this morning at the beginning of a six and a half chapter section of God's Word in the Old Testament, Leviticus chapter 1. Let's take just a moment as we begin our study to dedicate our time and our concentration to the Lord Jesus and to the purpose of God in our lives.

Shall we pray? Father, thank You for the privilege we have of coming before You and praying in this manner, of celebrating the relationship that we have with You through the Lord Jesus Christ, not just individually but as a group. We thank You for the gifts that You have given to each one of us and the blessing that we receive as we spend time together benefiting, receiving ministry, being encouraged and lifted up and strengthened in our faith and in our training as we look forward to the day when the Lord Jesus comes to receive us to Himself and to bring us into Your presence. We know that that is not only a wonderful time of gathering and of moving forward in Your plan, but it is also a time of evaluation.

It will be a time of judgment. And we pray that the things that we look at this morning will inform us and equip us and motivate us to faith and obedience and service that will qualify us to reflect Your glory and the glory of the Lord Jesus on that day. We pray it in Jesus' name.

Amen. Our study is Christ and the sacrifices. You know where we have been.

We've reviewed the more salient and prominent sacrifices that are recorded in the book of Genesis, beginning with the animals who gave their lives so that Adam and Eve could be covered and their shame and their nakedness could be masked. It wasn't solved, but it was masked. It was covered.

And that is the meaning of the word translated in the Old Testament, atonement. Kephars, to cover. Yom Kippur gets its name from this.

Yom Kephars, the day of atonement. And we proceeded through to see the other major sacrifices, Cain and Abel, Noah, Abraham, covenant God makes where He walks between the pieces. And we began to see that as the sacrificial system unfolds, it has a manifold set of purposes.

One, it is designed to shock and dismay people. Nobody likes to see arterial bleeding. I don't care who you are.

To see an animal, much less a human. And those of you that have seen devastating injury to people know how this is. I can't even put a good adjective to it.

If you have seen seriously injured people where blood is involved, it is unforgettable. Same

thing with animals, especially mammals, especially those that we invest and observe to have human-like qualities. They welcome you, even a cow when its feeding time will come up and they are happy to see you.

Sheep, goats, the sacrificial animals in the Bible have qualities that we cannot help but identify with. And this makes the animal sacrifice system in particular, the blood sacrifices, particularly noteworthy in our minds. And noteworthy is about as neutral as I can make it.

It is shocking. It gives us dismay. Well, I want you to pay attention this morning now as we pick up our study of the specific sacrifices that were prescribed by God in Israel and the way that they were sacrificed.

The way that God uses this extremely potent experience. It's not just an image. We are just reading about it.

These people did it. If you have been in and among or near or looking over the fence at a farm animal, a cow, herd of cows, we are more likely to have seen those. Not so many of us have had exposure to sheep and goats.

But most of us have been near cattle. Some of us have fed cattle and spent quite a bit of time around them through the summer, through the winter, and so on to take your own hand and kill one by slashing its throat and watching it bleed out. Even those of us that have been around cattle typically have not done that.

We don't live in pioneer days where that was a necessity. But these people did, and they did it regularly. Why? Because God told them to.

Why would God prescribe such a heinous thing? To our modern sensibilities this is just brutal. The ASPCA would be out there in a heartbeat. Neighbors would be calling the police.

In fact this has been tried. There are some people who have a different religious persuasion from us and there have been cases where somebody tried to sacrifice a goat in the backyard. It's a community incident at that point.

But it was routine. Look at Leviticus 1. Now the Lord, see that? Did Moses make this system up? Did people decide, well here's a good thing. This will benefit us.

This will improve and advance our agricultural economy. Let's kill our best animals. It is the Lord who originates this.

Now the Lord called to Moses and spoke to him from the tabernacle of meeting. It wasn't a dream. It wasn't a vision.

And guess what? It wasn't on Mount Sinai, was it? It was from the tabernacle of meeting. Is that significant? That's a loaded question. Are you going to say no? Something in the Bible is not significant.

Simply there for filler. Perhaps a better way of asking the question is, what is the significance? We know it's significant. Why does God give the law of offering from the tent of meeting and not from Sinai? What does Sinai represent? Paul gives us an extended discussion of this a couple of places in the New Testament, Galatians, Romans.

What does Sinai represent? It starts with C and ends with ment. Not cement. Sinai wasn't made of cement.

Commandment, ordinance, law. This is the definition of what is right and what is wrong. Think of the Ten Commandments.

This is the moral code. This is God's righteousness being expressed in definitional terms. Murder is wrong.

Honoring your father and mother is right. Adultery is wrong. Remembering the Sabbath day to keep it holy is right and so on.

Right and wrong. Moral code. Along with a lot of other things given at Sinai.

What does the tabernacle represent? What's its symbolic value? What is the tabernacle? And I'm talking specifically about the tabernacle because this wasn't done at the temple either. This is the tabernacle. What is the tabernacle? As Israel journeys around in the wilderness, are they always at Sinai? No.

Did any of them go up as Moses did and hear the voice of God and receive the commandments at Sinai? They did not. It was mediated. Moses went up.

Moses came down with a shining face. You have one brief episode where 70 elders go halfway up and that's it. But it is not an individual experience for Israelites.

They're fleeing. They're earthquake, thunder, clouds, smoke. They flee.

They run the other way from Sinai because the righteousness of God is intimidating. It's so high and far above us and pictured in the fear of the Israelites at the presence of God on the mountain. It is, what makes the mountain smoke? What makes the cloud and the thunder and the fire at Sinai? Why is it doing that? Is it a volcano? Why is it doing that? You can answer.

Why is Sinai such a scary, quaking, noisy, foreboding and forbidding and intimidating place? What made the mountain suddenly become that? Exactly. It is the presence of God. It's the presence of God.

Now, what does the tabernacle signify in Israel? This is an interactive quiz so I need you to answer. What is the tabernacle for? Why do they have it? What's at the very heart of it? What's inside the Holy of Holies? Say what you said before. Say what you said before.

The presence of God, right? So what's the deal here? We have the presence of God on the

mountain and we have the presence of God in a tent. One everybody runs away from. The other is definitional to the nascent nation of Israel.

It's the presence of God. So it can't just be the generic presence of God. It has to be some aspect of the presence of God that makes Sinai imposing and forbidding where only one guy can survive it and the tabernacle where everybody comes and worships God, right? Okay, keep this in mind now.

This is not a pointless review. This isn't a quiz with no purpose. This is loading up some of your well-known information as we read this chapter.

Now the Lord called to Moses and spoke to him from the tabernacle of meeting. Bad, scary presence of God or fellowship and relationship presence of God. This is why this information comes from the tabernacle and not from the mountain.

Make sense? This is going to be something positive. This is going to be something related to relationship, to approach, to converse, fellowship, right? And we haven't even gotten out of the first verse yet. The Lord spoke to Moses from the tabernacle of meeting saying, this is God talking.

Still talking to Moses by the way. He doesn't say, Moses gather the people. I've got something to say and they all assemble and there's some sort of amplification system and the words of God reverberate out to everybody.

This is conveyed by a messenger. Moses is God's spokesman, God's voice to the people. This is a consistent pattern in Scripture.

Why are we all in here and one guy is talking? Same model. God designates, God decides that somebody is going to be the spokesman, imparts what he wants to say to that individual and that individual speaks. By the way, this is how salvation works.

When somebody is going to get saved, when somebody is going to come to faith in Jesus Christ and enter into relationship with God, God's not going to send an angel to evangelize them. The Lord Jesus isn't going to come, stand at the foot of their bed in the middle of the night and have a conversation and say, you really need to believe in me because bad things are coming if you don't. The information, the truth that fleshes out the challenge issued by God the Holy Spirit to each heart about sin, righteousness and judgment, the information related to that decision is given by people.

You are people and there will be occasions, they may be few and far between, they may be frequent, it may be once in a lifetime, it may be all the time. Some people are gifted in this. Some people are recruiters.

Some people are informational officers. I recently saw a reference in my alumni magazine to a captain and he's got kind of a unique last name and I realized, and I didn't know this at the

time, but the information officer that helped me apply and go through all of the steps to get into the Naval Academy was himself a Naval Academy graduate. I knew he was a blue and gold officer.

I didn't realize that he was class of 69 or whatever it was and I spotted his name. They put the people's names in bold in the class news and I was scanning through the pages and there was his name and I thought, my blue and gold officer, I had no idea that he was actually an Academy graduate. It's not surprising, but I just didn't know that.

He was an information officer. He had information that I needed in order to initiate a new thing in my life. Something about which I did not know.

I had a desire, but I had no knowledge. And there is someone whose job it is to give that information. Your job, you as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, is to know enough that if someone asks you a reason about your hope, you can give them those essentials.

That's why this study is so valuable because knowing what we are looking at in the sacrifices, you know what Christ means. You know not just that He is the mediator and the way to the Father, but how and why. So these things are important.

The Lord called to Moses and spoke to him from the tabernacle of meeting, saying, Speak to the children of Israel. I am giving you information, you speak it to them. This is essentially the command that is given to everyone in this age who has a teaching or preaching gift.

At some point, God says, fill in your name here, speak the truth of the Word of God, that's your job. That was Moses' job in this time. Speak to the children of Israel and say to them, When any one of you brings an offering to the Lord, you shall bring your offering of the livestock, of the herd and of the flock.

When any of you brings an offering to the Lord, herd and the flock. What are the components of a herd? What kind of animal is in the herd? It's one kind, bovine. It is a cow, it is a bullock, that's the herd.

You have bulls and cows and calves, cows, cattle, that's the herd. What is in a flock? What were the flock animals in Israel? Did they have flocks of turkeys? No. Did they have flocks of sheep? Yes.

Did they have flocks of goats? Yes. Did they have flocks of emus and all these other wild looking long necked animals that I see now over on the Haggard farm? No. One herd animal, two flock animals, cattle, sheep and goats.

That is the pool from which you may come and bring an offering to the Lord of this type. If his offering is a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish. He shall offer it of his own free will at the door of the tabernacle.

Three new pieces of information here. If it is going to be a burnt offering from the herd, it will be a male, it will be a perfect male and it will be offered at the door of the tabernacle, at the entrance. What do we say the tabernacle stands for? Presence of God for the purpose of communion, fellowship.

This is the positive, beneficial side. This is not the fire and smoke, lightning and thunder. Nobody can go but Moses and when he comes back his head is glowing.

He has got to throw a bag over his head because it scares people when he has been in the presence of God. God in his glory, God in his righteousness and in his perfection. God in his full potency.

Actually not his full potency or Moses would have been incinerated, but to the extent that a person can endure it, that is as close as anyone has ever gotten as Moses in the cleft of the rock, hidden with God's hand, seeing the departing side of God's glory. If his offering is a burnt sacrifice of the herd, now what are we doing here? We are decoding, we are deciphering the elements here. If you hand this chapter to somebody and say read it, 99.5 people, 99.5 people would read it and have no clue.

When you read this you should have every clue. You know who is talking, you know who he is talking to, you know where he is talking from and you know what he is talking about, right? So, if his offering is a burnt sacrifice, now burnt sacrifice is the one thing we have not yet really defined of what we have covered so far. Burnt sacrifice is the Hebrew word Olah.

This is a whole burnt offering. This is what they used to call a holocaust. The term has come over to mean something entirely different related to the actions of the people of Israel, the people of Israel, German Nazi party in World War II and the slaughter of 6.5 million Jews and several other categories of people including the Roma, the Gypsies, great carloads of homosexuals and anybody else that was deemed unfit were mercilessly slaughtered.

Now, I do not agree with a lot of lifestyle choices that people make or certain things that they engage in but rounding them up and slaughtering them is wrong and it was wrong in World War II, it's wrong now. However, that event specifically as it relates to the Jews is called the holocaust. They have a holocaust museum.

Here is the problem with that. It's inaccurate. It is misleading because what happened to the Jews as tragic and catastrophic and heinous and evil as it was, was not a holocaust.

What did I just tell you Olah means? Whole burnt offering. If every Jew had been wiped off the face of the earth, that would have been a holocaust. It's imprecise.

Language uses words and words mean things. Be precise. One of the ways that fools will drag you down to their level and beat you with experience is by redefining words, making words mean what they don't really mean.

Don't be fooled. Do not accept a premise that somebody offers by way of an argument until you have established what it actually means and what they are actually saying. So many Christians embarrass the cause of Christ because they are not knowledgeable and they allow people to get away with a false premise and then they get kicked all over the block in debate and it is because they grant a false premise and there is no way to win.

Know your terms. Know your words. Know your definitions.

Know who you have believed in and who you are persuaded is able to keep what you have committed to Him against that day. You've got to know. This is pertinent and valuable information.

The Olah, the whole burnt offering is a holocaust. It is an entire offering. All of it is sent to God.

If any one of you is bringing an offering to the Lord of the livestock, of the herd and of the flock as an Olah, a sacrifice of the herd, burnt sacrifice, let him offer a male without blemish. Whole burnt offering, male without blemish. Of his own free will at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the Lord.

God is speaking from the tent of meeting, the tabernacle and this is the place where the sacrifice is to be offered at the door of the tabernacle, later on the temple. What is at the door of the tabernacle? What is at the door of the temple? What is in front of the entrance into the holy place? It is the altar for sacrifice. That is the place where this is offered.

Now, just by way of emphasis, keep your finger here and turn a page or two in your Bible over to Leviticus chapter 4. Leviticus chapter 4. We are talking in chapter 1 about the Olah, the whole burnt offering. Chapter 4 talks about the sin offering. Speak to the children of Israel saying, if a person sins unintentionally against any of the commandments of the Lord in anything which ought not to be done and does any one of them, if the anointed priest sins, then let him offer to the Lord for his sin which he has sinned.

What is the issue here? How many times does the word sin occur there? If a person sins unintentionally, something ought not to be done and does it, if the anointed priest sins bringing guilt on the people, let him offer to the Lord for his sin which he has sinned, a young bull without blemish as a sin offering. Well, isn't this the same thing? Male of the herd without blemish? He shall bring the bull to the door of the tabernacle meeting before the Lord. Isn't that the same thing? Lay his hand on the head of the bull.

Kill the bull before the Lord. If you look at chapter 1 verse 4, he shall put his hand on the head of the burnt offering. So you got the hand on the head in both cases.

Verse 5, the anointed priest takes some of the bull's blood, brings it to the tabernacle meeting, dips his finger in it, sprinkles it, puts some in verse 7 on the horns of the altar which is in the tabernacle of meeting, pours the remaining blood at the base of the altar of burnt offering which is at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. Seems very similar, doesn't it? He shall take

from it all the fat of the bull as the sin offering, the fat that covers the entrails, all the fat which is on the entrails, two kidneys, the fat that is on them by the flanks, the fatty lobe attached to the liver, above the kidneys he shall remove. As it was taken from the bull of the sacrifice of the peace offering, the priest shall burn them on the altar of burnt offering.

But, verse 11, the bull's hide, all of its flesh with its head, its legs, its entrails, the awful, the whole bull he shall take where? What does it say in verse 12? Outside the camp, outside the camp to a clean place where the ashes are poured out and burn it on wood with fire. Where the ashes are poured out it shall be burned. So, one of the stunning and signal differences, one of several by the way, but the only one we're going to point out right now, is the place where the bull is incinerated.

In our whole burnt offering in chapter 1, where is the bull wholly and entirely burned? Where? At the door of the tabernacle of meeting, on the altar. There used to be a song, put your all on the altar. That is this ola, this whole burnt offering.

It is entirely burnt at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. And to understand this and why it is, one thing that helps us is to look at the sin offering where certain things are removed from the bull at the door of the tabernacle. Certain things are done in and at the tabernacle with those parts, but the majority of the animal is taken outside the camp and is incinerated where the ashes are poured out in a clean place, but not in the camp, not in the precincts of the tabernacle, and certainly not at the tabernacle door, and not on the altar.

Isn't it interesting? The sin offering was not burnt on the altar. Did you know that? Did you remember that? If there had been a pop quiz at the beginning and I said, where was the sin offering sacrificed, I suspect most of us would have said, well, of course, on the altar. It's not on the altar.

The bull, a large majority of the bull, was burned outside the camp. So what does this mean? Well, it means a lot, and I promise you some raggedy Richard Harris old goat herd priest didn't make this up. It is consistent.

It is not a sin offering. Consistent with what we have already seen going back into Genesis. It is consistent with what we have seen in every part of the New Testament that talks about the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is detailed. It is multi-level. It is complex.

It is design. And anytime you see design, you start looking for a designer. This is by design.

This is no accident. This isn't the word of men. This wasn't made up by some guys that just thought they'd cook something up.

They didn't borrow something from the Hittites. You ought to see some of the goofiness in the rituals of the ancient competing cultures, competing in terms of what religion would you

choose in the ancient Near East. Oh, my gosh.

No meaning, no purpose. In many cases it was human sacrifice, burning children, all kinds of grotesquerie, and it's in the tablets and it's in the records that have survived down to the present. Everything about the Bible is unique.

The creation story is so largely consistent with everything science has discovered. Have you looked at the competing ancient Near Eastern myths about origins and creation? Sometime if you want to educate yourself on what everybody else was thinking at the time, look up in Wikipedia the, what is it, the something egg. Just Google creation egg myth and you'll see that the Hindus and many, many other cultures that were around at the time or were beginning at the time had the wildest, it goes way beyond balancing the earth on a turtle, or Tiamat spitting in the dirt and people springing up like plants.

Wildest nonsense. And then you come to the Word of God and the order and the progress and the structure and the consistency and the nature of what is given us in Genesis chapters one and two has been confirmed over and over again by what science digs out of the rocks. Your Bible is not a conflation of myths.

It isn't something written by men. We're going to take our break, and when we come back and look at the details of this whole burnt offering, where it is done, how it is done, the reflection of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, the nature of the Lord Jesus Christ, His purpose, which was multifaceted by the way. It wasn't just to pay for our sins.

It is revealed and it is magnified. It is put in a large screen format in this sacrifice. So we'll pause here and take our break.

When we come back, we will pick up at verse four.