

Christ in the Sacrifices 15-09-27a

This is the 27th of September, 2015. We are prosecuting our study of Christ in the Sacrifices. We have come to the book of Leviticus and we are looking at the formal instructions to the nation of Israel with regard to animal sacrifice to include beyond that the meal offerings, what are called in the Old King James meat offerings that have to do with grain, dealing with heave and sheath and wave and all of these other things that we will be getting into.

But we have begun in Leviticus chapter 1 with the whole burnt offering and this is largely the offering that we have seen previous to the Levitical instructions that were given at Mount Sinai. These are the offerings that were offered by Abel, that were offered by Noah, that were offered by Abraham, that were offered during the wilderness wanderings. So it is an important subject, it is given great space in the Old Testament, it is one of the most forthright and clear expressions of many of the details of the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

So it is of interest to us for that reason because we are now the body of Christ. We are the presence of Christ on this earth. His single person has ascended and is now seated at the right hand of God the Father.

He no longer represents Himself on this earth as He did in His first coming. We do that. So in the same way that His person and work are revealed in these sacrifices and the instructions for offering them, it is useful to us because the guidance that it provided Him, the definition that applied to Him in many ways applies to us because we now represent Him on this earth.

So we will go to the Lord in prayer and then we will resume our study of the first of the great offering instructions in Leviticus chapter 1. But let's go to the Lord in prayer. Father, thank You for Your sustaining grace and the many benefits You make for us beyond mere provision, the blessings You bestow on us, the watch care, the small things that enhance our lives and remind us of Your fatherly interest in us as individuals. It is an overwhelming truth that You are the God who has created the universe with its vast quantities of stellar material and interstellar space.

The galactic dimensions are so beyond our comprehension and the microscopic world that is equally out of our reach and beyond our understanding. And yet in the middle of that You are attentive despite the vast numbers of people on this planet and the incredible complexity of thinking and motivation and action that comprises our world moment by moment, yet You are personally aware and personally interested in each one of us. And we know that that is because we are related to You through the Lord Jesus Christ.

We thank You for Him. We thank You for the revelations of Him that we find in the pages of Scripture. We pray this morning as we study this particular expression and this aspect of His person and work that God the Holy Spirit will impress it on each heart, that we will be drawn closer to You through the Lord Jesus, that we will be better and more faithful representatives of Him as we navigate the circumstances and details of this life.

We pray it in Jesus' name, Amen. We have looked at now in the first chapter of the book of Leviticus, and I want to be sure I have my sword available to me here, my somewhat dented and scuffed sword, the text of Leviticus chapter 1. What is in Leviticus chapter 1? What offering is described here? It is the whole burnt offering, the *olah*. It is also described in verse 2 as *korban*, *korban*, and we know from the New Testament and Jesus' brush with the Pharisees and His condemnation of them for declaring certain portions of their possessions *korban*, that this means holy to the Lord, dedicated to the Lord.

Sorry mom and dad, I can't support you with my substance because I have declared it all to be holy to the Lord. This would be the equivalent of saying, well, my vast holdings and stocks and bonds and my savings and my investments and everything else, I can't pull any of that out and help mom and dad because I have in my will a codicil that says it's all going to the Lord's work. In the meantime, of course, it supports me in the manner to which I've become accustomed, but nothing for mom and dad, nothing for, you know, I'm going to keep it and hold onto it and benefit from it until I die, after I die, I don't really care, but in order to preserve it while I'm alive, I have declared it to be holy to the Lord.

So I can't do the normal things like care for the man with sores that lives outside my gate and is being licked by the dogs. And I certainly can't help my parents who may be in a bad way because it's all *Corban*, dedicated to the Lord, and they had misused and abused this concept. But the whole burnt offering at its inception, in its introduction is introduced to us as holy to the Lord.

It is aimed at the Lord. We haven't talked a lot in this study about where this offering is presented. We mentioned that it is at the door of God's house, whether it is the tabernacle or the temple.

What is at the door? What is before the door? It is the altar. Let's talk a little bit about the physical context of this offering. In both the tabernacle and later the temple, which is a, of course, fixed expression of all of the accouterments and concepts that were a part of the tabernacle construction, how is that laid out? We know that there is an outer fence, and you come into this precinct.

And what's the first thing you see as you walk in from the south? The gate is on the south side. You're walking north, and this gives you some insight into the phrase you encounter from time to time in Scripture, the sides of the north. What would be the sides of the north? Well, if you're walking in, if you're thinking of the tabernacle and temple, and you're walking in from the south, what are you facing? The north.

What is directly north of you? God's presence and God's house. So the sides of the north put you in mind of the temple or the tabernacle and its precincts. And of course, the sides of the north, what's the first thing you see when you walk in? You remember the layout? What's the first thing that confronts you as you walk through from the south? What do you see? It is the altar.

It is the altar. What is beyond the altar? The great bronze C, the subject of much ink on the part of atheists and skeptic Bible sorts because all they know about it is that the Bible says something about its dimensions and they say, see, the Bible is wrong because it doesn't know the value of pi. It gives the circumference and it gives the parameters of the circle that constitutes this basin and even though the thing is said to be three times as pi r d, pi 2 pi r, it is very close and it's actually exact because what all of these naysayers don't take into account is the thickness of the wall of it.

And when it gives the circumference, it gives the outer circumference. When it gives the diameter, it is the inner dimension. And if you work that out, it tells you the thickness.

We actually know the thickness of the walls of the laver because of what Scripture says. There's no error there at all. But they like to imagine that the laver had walls of zero thickness and therefore what the Bible says about its diameter versus its circumference is wrong.

No, it's exactly right. They just don't know how to visualize a real thing instead of a geometrical abstract. Anyway, that's the laver.

So if you're walking in from the south and you see the altar and you see this gargantuan laver, especially in the days of the temple, the altar is large and the laver is large. If you're going to see the house of God, where do you have to look? To each side. You've got this gigantic altar and this gigantic laver and the sides, as you look north, are what you can see of the temple.

And that's what surrounds and is the backdrop for these things. If you were ever to approach the door of the holy place, what do you have to go through to get there? The altar and the laver, the blood and the water. He came not by water only, but by water and by blood.

There is sacrifice, there is cleansing water, then there is the presence of God. Highly significant. Now, what do we know about this altar? We're talking about these sacrifices and in the past, men would build altars.

Abraham built an altar on top of Mount Moriah. You have Noah building an altar there at Ararat. You have Abel building an altar.

What do we know about the altar where these Levitical sacrifices were offered? Well, the instruction from God says what the altar is made of. Do you remember? It reminds you of something that's in the holy place. It is wood overlaid with bronze.

Interesting, is it not? You're going to make a fire pit out of wood. We were looking at a fireplace in a house yesterday and speculating about, well, would it make any sense to frame the firebox with wood? And we say, well, people typically don't do that. If you look at fireplaces that are framed in wood, this one is not.

But if you see those that are, typically there is brick and then the wood is on the outside. But you have the wood sort of well away from the fire because wood is combustible, right? It just

sort of makes sense. You don't want to burn down your fireplace, much less your house, by putting something that flammable.

So how is it that this altar is made of wood? It is acacia wood, but it is overlaid with bronze. The bronze is what protects the wood. There is a shielding, there is a coating, and it is thick enough and has enough integrity to protect the inner acacia wood structure.

Now why isn't the whole thing just made out of solid bronze? Because you don't want to have a bunch of herniated Levites trying to cart this thing through the wilderness. It has got to be light, but it has to be fireproof. So its inner structure is wood and it is overlaid with bronze.

But this also has significance because the wood is a product of the earth. It has come up from the ground and it represents humanity. The bronze is that which protects the wood from the fire, which in the Bible almost universally represents the judgment of God, the righteous judgment of God.

So how is the wood, the flesh, protected from the fire of God's judgment? There is something in between. There is something that covers. There is an atonement.

The bronze is sort of the kipper, the covering, that interposes between the righteousness of God and the perishability of man. So the altar's construction itself is significant. Now how big was this thing? It is said to be five cubits long and five cubits wide.

What's a cubit? Kind of elbow to the fingertip, give or take. They had the royal cubit and they had the different things, but generally it's thought to be about a foot and a half. So it's big.

It's seven and a half feet on a side and it's about four and a half feet high. This is a substantial piece of equipment. Why? There's a lot of sacrificing going on.

You need a big receptacle to contain the fire that is going to fully consume an entire bullock. And if you've seen bullocks, they're fairly large. If you're going to get it all on the altar, you know that song, put your all on the altar? Well, if you're going to put it all on the altar, it's got to be a big altar.

You can't have something the size of this stand here and expect to stack the pieces up and not have them falling off the sides. So it is substantial. It tells us all of this in Exodus chapter 27, verses 1 through 8. By the way, how do you make stuff out of bronze? Is it something that you chip at with a hammer and a chisel? What makes bronze an even hotter fire? There's an even hotter fire that melts bronze and allows you to cast it and to make it malleable enough to hammer or to mold or to make these things.

But the lesser fire of the altar is not sufficient to remelt the bronze that was cast or forged or made malleable in a much hotter fire, which tells us about the judgment we experience versus the judgment that the Lord Jesus Christ experienced, a much hotter fire. What He interposes between us and the righteous judgment of God has been tested beyond what any of us would

be able to bear and routinely survives that lesser fire. You will make for it a grating or a network of bronze and on the net you shall make four bronze rings at its four corners.

Put beneath, under the ledge of the altar, that the net may reach halfway up the altar and you shall make poles. You can visualize this just like your barbecue grill's got little stick outs. Mine rusted away and so I've got field expedient things that go through to hold up the grate, the grill, and that's down.

There's a lip there so that you can put things on and the lip contains whatever is in there, allows the ashes to fall through and is inside. That's what it's talking about. There's a grating.

You will make poles for the altar, poles of acacia wood. Overlay them with bronze. This is so you can move the thing before it has fully cooled.

If you've got to pick up and go in a hurry, these poles will also be impervious to the heat. The poles shall be inserted into the ring so that the poles shall be on the two sides of the altar when it is carried. You shall make it hollow with planks as it was shown to you in the mountain so they shall make it." Moses got a multimedia presentation on the mountain.

It wasn't just a voice talking. He got a visual. Won't that be fun to see the movie in the eternal future to get to be a fly on the wall so to speak and see what it was that God revealed to Moses on the mountain.

I think this is sort of the hidden manna. It was certainly hidden to the nation of Israel. They couldn't even stand to look at Moses' glowing face, much less see what Moses saw in the mountain.

But those of us who are qualified, those of us who are interested and faithful, who are seekers, ask and it shall be given. Seek and you will find. Knock and it will be opened.

And these things that we are so curious to know and would be so fascinated to see and would benefit from and be able to grow thereby with the revelation, not just revelation for curiosity's sake, but to enter into a deeper understanding of the mind of God and the plans and purposes of God, wouldn't it be something to be given the privilege of seeing what Moses saw? Because he didn't just listen. He was given pictorial representations as it was shown to you, as you saw it in the mountain. That's how you'll make it.

So Moses was able to guide the tabernacle workmen and the people who, the artisans who made these things from what he himself had seen. And notice there is the communication from one person to another person about details of the will of God. And this is so often the way it works.

Why is church constructed the way it is? Why does God say, I want a person to delve into the truth of the Word and serve it up and make it available to others? It isn't an elevated job. It is a service job. It's no different, I've told you many times, than the lance corporals who sling hash

on the mess decks.

Somebody's got to be in there moving the food from the containers onto the trays so that those who need it and use it can consume it and be energized thereby. And nobody says, wow, I just love that lance corporal. What you love is getting fed.

What you love is having what you need to go do what you've got to do. And we don't spend any time gazing at the lance corporal, right? And that's how it should be. It is revealed to Moses in the mountain.

But was Moses supposed to be elevated and become a great celebrity in Israel? He serves. Moses was the most afflicted man who ever lived. It says so in Scripture.

But it was his job to reveal this that he had seen to those who had not seen it so that they could use it. And it's a model. It's a picture, even for us today.

So we've got this altar. It's made of acacia wood. What else do you know that's made of acacia wood? Here's a little pop quiz.

What can you think of related to the tabernacle-sized temple that was made of acacia wood? What else? Think bread. Table of showbread. Acacia wood, is it overlaid with bronze? What's the table of showbread covered with? What's everything in the holy place covered with? Gold.

Outside the house, acacia wood overlaid with bronze. We've got to get this judgment problem solved first. Inside, what is the acacia wood overlaid with? Gold, which represents what? Well, it's not wood, hay, and stubble, so what is it? Gold, silver, and precious stones represent what? That righteousness, that positive production that is pleasing in God's sight, right? Outside, you've got to be judgment-proof.

Inside, you've got to bring that which is positive before God. We think about our own lives. Do we need to confess our sins so that He's faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us? Yes, we do.

Is that enough? Are we done once we, 1 John 1, 9? Are we done? We're just going to stand outside in the courtyard and say, well, sure glad I'm not going to be judged. What else needs to happen if we are interested in personal contact with God? What has to happen? We have got to appropriate for ourselves gold that has been refined in the fire. How do you get that gold to follow its shape and to be available? Where did the gold come from? You've got to find those nuggets and you've got to melt them down.

You've got to heat them up. You've got to hammer them flat. You've got to work that gold to make it a covering for acacia wood.

You can cast things out of gold such as the golden lamp stand. You can cover wood with it such as the table of showbread. Who counsels us to buy gold refined in the fire? Remember where

that is? Book of Revelation, chapter 3, who is he talking to? You think you're rich, but you are poor and miserable and blind and naked.

I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire. Acacia wood overlaid with bronze on the outside. This is where the offering is made.

On the inside, what do you have? It's a table. There's bread on it. What does that suggest? What do you normally do when there's a table with bread on it? What is that an emblem of, a symbol of? What does Jesus say if any man hears my voice and opens the door and he gets to walk in? What is he going to do? Sup with him and he with me.

It is peace. It is communion. It is fellowship.

The Lord's table is called communion for a reason. It's fellowship. It is contact.

It is productive, peaceful enjoyment of presence, right? You don't do that on the outside. That's fire and smoke and judgment and ashes and blood. On the inside, it's gold and it's bread and it's oil poured over the bread.

Whole different picture. So you know these things. We've done the tabernacle in detail.

Just a reminder. So we've got this altar on the outside made of acacia wood overlaid with bronze, almost eight feet square, nearly five feet high, four and a half feet high. And that's the first thing you encounter on your way to the tabernacle.

That problem has got to be solved before you can get any further. Between the altar and the tabernacle doorway, you have the laver. It is filled with water.

And this is the washing of water, renewing of the Holy Ghost type of thing. We approach not by water only, not by blood only. It is water and blood signified at the cross at the point of a spear.

Baptism, the answer of a good conscience toward God, was a picture. That water is a picture. What is it a picture of? What do we understand today so that we're not tied to animal sacrifice of blood and we're not tied to submersion in water because the reality of those things is now our heritage and our possession.

In the same way that we don't have to perform the ancient Levitical rituals, we also don't perform the ancient Israelite and Judaistic nunking ritual. You can if you want to. There's a lot of these things you can do.

But it is not a requirement because what is the reality for us? The washing of water by the Word. We immerse ourselves in the Word of God. I ask you, do you think God is more pleased with somebody that gets their head pushed under the level of some body of water, large or small, indoor or outdoor, or someone who is immersed in His Word, in His name, the name of the Father, the reputation, the doings, the purposes, the plans, the goals of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit? Who do you think God is more pleased with? One guy has been

baptized in the Word.

One guy has been baptized in some H₂O. Which one is he looking for? What does it mean? Who do you think is going to be more acceptable in God's sight? Someone who has slaughtered an animal or someone who has accepted the work of God's Lamb that was slain before the foundation of the world by faith? The laver. Men are enabled to draw near to God through the altar.

And who bathes at the laver? Do all the Israelites come up there and wash and then go into the holy place? Who is allowed to approach? The priests. Your random hapless Israelite can get as far as the altar. Who goes further than that? Who enters the holy place? Who bathes at the laver and enters? A representative, a priest.

Israelites don't bathe in the laver and they don't go into the holy place. The priest does that for them. And God uses representative truth, whether it is the firstborn representing the entire family at Passover.

By the way, back to Leviticus chapter 1. The Lord called to Moses, spoke to him from the tabernacle of meeting, saying, What's my concept here? Why did I say by the way? What was my big idea there? Starts with R, ends with IV. Representative, right? Priest is representative, firstborn is representative. Who else is representative? Look at chapter 1. Speak to the children of Israel and say to them, When any one of you brings an offering to the Lord, bring your offering of the livestock, herding of the flock, if his offering is a burnt offering, if any man of you, how many women brought burnt offerings to the altar in Israel ever? How many children brought offerings ever? Who brings these offerings? The man.

The man. Now, here's what's interesting to me as we go to our break. I have a question for you.

We haven't reviewed this yet, but the burnt offering here described in Leviticus chapter 1 is perhaps the most common offering in the Old Testament, and one of the most common offerings in the Levitical system. We have seen that Noah's offering was a whole burnt offering. Abraham's offering was a whole burnt offering.

The ram caught in the thicket, that was a whole burnt offering. The clean animals that Noah sacrificed, those were whole burnt offerings. The offering of Abel was a whole burnt offering.

Now, because we know this, why? Firstlings of the flock, entirely consumed, didn't say that he ate any part of it or kept any part of it. Noah offers clean animals. So, what do we know about this? There was already extensive knowledge about the whole burnt offering and about what is clean and what is unclean before Leviticus.

This isn't really news to anybody when it is revealed here. But, it was a common offering. And it is not only offered voluntarily, as we have seen here, when any man desires to bring one, here's how he does it, but it was prescribed.

They were made every day. The morning offering and the evening offering that the priests routinely offered on behalf of the nation, this is Exodus chapter 29, verses 38 through 42, it is prescribed for the nation. The priests bring whole burnt offerings every morning and every evening.

It's kind of what opens up the day. It's what starts the sacrificial day, the whole burnt offering. It's what ends the sacrificial day.

It begins and ends with the priests offering a whole burnt offering. Exodus 29, 38 through 42. Numbers chapter 28, early, first half dozen verses.

There's also every Sabbath day a special whole burnt offering. This is Numbers 28, 9 and 10. Every Sabbath, a Sabbath day whole burnt offering.

At the beginning of each month, Numbers 28, 11, a whole burnt offering. Of course, you remember Passover. There's a whole burnt offering, Numbers 28, 16.

At Pentecost, Numbers 28, 27, whole burnt offering. Same thing in the fall feasts, on the Feast of Trumpets, celebration of the new moon. There's a whole bunch of places and times where this whole burnt offering is offered.

There are also occasions of ritual defilement that require... Now, I'm getting to my point. What was my word? Started with an R? Representative, right? Who comes before God and brings this offering in Leviticus chapter 1? Who is it? What gender? It's a man, right? Okay, let me ask you this. Among the many occasions, and I've already listed many of them, on which a whole burnt offering is offered, here are some others.

The cleansing of a woman's uncleanness as a result of childbearing. Leviticus chapter 12, verses 6 through 8. Whole burnt offering is required. Now, did you ever think about this? I had not, until I was working on this.

A woman has become unclean through childbirth. It's a normal course of things, you know, liquids coming out of the body in any form typically requires a status of unclean to be solved by ritual in Israel. How is a lady going to offer this? She's impure because of childbearing.

A man with a discharge. A woman with an abnormal discharge. Leviticus chapter 15.

Remember, 14 is the leper, 15 is if you've got bodily emissions of various sorts and kinds. The woman with the issue of blood that Jesus healed. This, for cleansing, requires a whole burnt offering.

How does a lady that just had a baby offer a whole burnt offering? How does that work? Ladies don't approach with offerings. So, how does their offering get made? What do you think? Her husband, in the case of childbirth, if she's young and unmarried and has a situation, medically speaking, that requires, biologically speaking, that requires a whole burnt offering, who's going

to offer it on her behalf? If she's not married yet. Her father.

Representative. Someone must be the intermediary. Someone must do this on behalf of.

Right? As a husband loves his wife, so Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it, on behalf of it, offered the offering that we could not make. Right? Make sense? Hence, the patriarchal system isn't just an arbitrary denigration of female gender. It has typological significance.

It has spiritual significance. There is a reason God has assigned these functions. In the same way that being a pastor, or being a missionary, or being an evangelist, doesn't make a believer any better or any worse than anyone else, being assigned as a priest in Israel, being a member of the tribe of Levi and the sons of Aaron, did not make anyone any better or any worse.

It is an assignment of function. The male who represents his daughter or his wife at the altar isn't any better, or necessarily any worse, than the daughter or wife for whom he is bringing the sacrifice. It is just a designated function, and it has a purpose.

It is imbued with meaning. And to read it any other way is to miss the point. And the point is everything, because it is approached to God.

God is very particular. God is very specific, isn't He? How many ways are there to get to God? If you're a good person, and you're a Hindu or Buddhist, or a Koran reader, or a wonderful Jew, an Orthodox Jew, if you're a Zoroastrian, or if you're a Scientologist, or if you're a Universalist, or a Church of Christ Scientist, or whatever you might be, if you're a Catholic, or if you're an Episcopalian, or if you're a Greek Orthodox, are there just sort of multiple paths, and multiple ways by which you can approach God? It's like the old Good News Club song aid. It's a one-way sign.

One way, God said, to get to heaven. Jesus is the only way. I am the way, the truth, and the life.

No man cometh to the Father, but by me. He is the offering on the altar. He is the one that has made possible the laver, and the table, and the lampstand, and the altar of incense.

He is the veil that has been rent in twain, so that we enter through the altar. We enter through the cleansing of the laver. We enter into the holy place.

We benefit from the table of showbread on the right, the lampstand on the left, and the altar of incense before us. We go through the veil, and we go into the holy place, where the Ark of the Covenant, and the Mercy Seat are. The very presence, the Shekinah of God, dwelling in the most holy place, we walk right in, because of our representative.

In Him, we have access. He is the High Priest. We enter in right with Him.

It's a new and living priesthood, a new and living way. So these things are significant, and it's important to see the context as we study these offerings. Where is it taking place? It is fraught.

Every detail has meaning and significance for us. We're going to pause here and take our break. When we come back, we're going to see the outcome, the application for us of this whole burnt offering, so that we can move into Leviticus chapter 2, and look at the grain offering.

Let's pause here and take our break.