

Christ in the Sacrifices 15-10-25a

This is Sunday, the 25th of October, 2015. We continue our study of Christ and the Sacrifices. We find ourselves in the book of Leviticus, beginning Chapter 3. We have covered in Chapter 1, the whole burnt offering, the Ola.

We have covered in Chapter 2, the grain offering, and we begin this morning, Chapter 3, the peace offering. We'll take a moment to focus our thoughts and our concentration. I used to say clear our minds, and I finally decided that's a bad idea.

We don't want our minds totally cleared. That's like a reboot. That's like I just lost everything in my document.

So you notice I have not encouraged you to do that in a while. We should clear away distractions, and the cares of the day, and the things that tend to wander into our minds when our minds wander out of the class. But we do want to seek and ask for the teaching ministry of God's Holy Spirit, because it is His presence that makes the truth both understandable, memorable, and applicable.

That's not a both, that's three. He does all of those things, and so we recognize the importance of being susceptible to His ministry, both as we begin our study, and as we move back out into the world of application. Shall we pray? Father, we're grateful for the wonderful way You have designed our material environment.

We thank You for the cycles of rain, and of sunshine, of night and day, of the measured increments of time that are given to us day by day to remind us that Your mercies are ever-present, and they are renewed every morning. Your rain falls on the just and the unjust, a reminder of the opportunity that all of us have, because You've blessed us with free will, with the responsibility and the accountability for choice. And because of those things, we are able to live a life that is meaningful moment by moment, day by day, week by week.

The time that You have allotted to us is either wasted or invested, and we recognize that it is only Your grace that gives us that choice. And the full expression of Your love for us and Your interest in us is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. We're grateful for Him.

We thank You for His work on our behalf, both in the past on the cross in redeeming us and reconciling us to You, and His ongoing ministry of representation and intercession, assuring us that we have been made acceptable in Your sight and will ever be, because we are in Him. His righteousness has become ours. His acceptability has become ours.

His status and His privileges have been conferred on us all by Your grace and through His faithfulness. We thank You for those truths, and we pray that they will be a source of motivation and encouragement as we now seek together to improve our understanding of Your Word and Your plan and purpose for us in looking at these pictures of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Old

Testament Scriptures. We ask Your blessing on each one as we study together that the Word of Truth will make its impact and be fruitful in the days ahead in each individual heart.

We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Again we have seen now the first two of five great Levitical offerings that are emphasized here.

There are a multiplicity of offerings, but we are going to focus on these first five as their reflection of the Lord Jesus Christ is so important. Each one emphasizes to us and clarifies for us not just that the Lord Jesus Christ is the bridge between heaven and earth, not just that He is the mediator between God and man, but how. It is one thing to say there is a bridge on I-75 North between Texas and Oklahoma that crosses the Red River, and you might say, well, that is good to know, but is it a footbridge? Is it a single lane bridge? Is it a covered bridge? Is it more than one bridge? What is it made of? How wide a conveyance will it accommodate? Can I pull a mobile home across that bridge? If there is a need for a great amount of traffic, an entourage, a funeral procession of some sort, can I get across that bridge? It is good for us to know not just that a thing exists, but what is its nature? How can it best be used? What is it good for and what is it not good for? So as we look at the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Old Testament sacrifices, we see truths that actually make a difference.

My hope and my persuasion is that after we have examined these sacrifices, not just all of the sacrifices, but these in particular, that we will quickly have at our mental fingertips pertinent aspects of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. If I ask you right now to close your Bibles, get out a pencil, blank piece of paper, a little pop quiz, see this is the way we used to do pop quiz. I don't even think they have pencils and papers anymore.

I don't know what they do. The world has passed me by. But in the old days for a pop quiz you would take out a number two Eberhard Faber and something off your big chief tablet and you would put down answers to questions.

So this is my mental image. You can update yours to your Fablet or whatever it is you are going to put your answers on. But here is my question.

Jesus died on the cross for us. What exactly did that do? Why was it even necessary? One of the biggest rocks that gets thrown at Christianity today is that it's a violent and bloody religion and you've got a God that demands that somebody has to die every time somebody does something wrong. And that's just intolerant.

It's cruel. It's a vestige of our bestial past. A bunch of old dusty goat herds made it all up and the priests were trying to control the people and get free food and people were working out their guilt.

It was kind of a cathartic thing. Watch something else bleed. Now I feel better.

They just denigrate it, demean it, debauch it and reject it. Well, if that is not true, what is true? And this has been the focus of our study from the beginning. You remember when we

introduced this study, why animal sacrifice? Why sacrifice at all? Why is Romans 3.23 true? See that's a little question too on the pop quiz.

What is Romans 3.23? A. The wages, the wages of sin is death. Why? That's so brutal. That's so cruel.

One sin and you die? Why aren't the wages of sin a rap on the knuckles? Why aren't the wages of sin a gentle rebuke? The wages of sin is death. If you write the wrong zip code on a letter, anybody that still sends letters, that's a falsehood. That's an error.

You've made a mistake. You've caused the postman and his whole system trouble because they're going to take it to a place where it can't go and they're going to have to deliver it and there's expense involved. You're a weight and a burden.

You have committed probably the mildest of all infractions, but you goofed. You erred. You die because you said 75057 when you meant 75075.

You die? Seriously? Well, wait a minute. There's no moral component to an honest slip. Well, here's Leviticus chapter 3. It is the unintentional sin.

Didn't mean it, didn't have an immoral thought, wasn't intending or trying to disobey, to incur loss, or burden, or otherwise partake of imperfection, but I did. And yet, intentional or unintentional, intentional, unintentional, the wages of sin is death. And intentional or unintentional, payment must be made.

So these are things we're going to be thinking about as we go through this third sacrifice in the third chapter of Leviticus. Let's read it. Leviticus chapter 3 verse 1, when his offering, whose offering? An individual's offering.

When an individual's offering is a sacrifice of a peace offering. What's a peace offering? What exactly is this? What is peace? Sorry about that. You know, I study ahead, and I've already done chapter 4, and so now I have chapter 4 and chapter 3 amalgamated in my mind.

And so I'm talking about, I introduced a couple of things from chapter 4, and we're not there yet. We're in chapter 3. But my head is full of chapter 4 because I found several interesting things there. So the unintentional sin is going to be chapter 4. We are now doing chapter 3. We did the whole burnt offering, we did the grain offering, and now we're going to do the peace offering.

And what is peace? Peace is fellowship. We'll get to the unintentional sin. It's just on my mind.

I just committed one. So again, sorry about that. Let me fall back and regroup.

We're in chapter 3, and this is the peace offering, which is the one right before the unintentional sin offering. When his offering is a sacrifice of a peace offering, if he offers it of the herd, whether male or female, he shall offer it without blemish before the Lord. He shall lay

his hand on the head of his offering, and kill it at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.

And Aaron's sons, the priests, shall sprinkle the blood all around on the altar. Then he shall offer from the sacrifice of the peace offering, an offering made by fire to the Lord. The fat that covers the entrails, and all the fat that is on the entrails, the two kidneys of the fat that is on them by the flanks, and the fatty lobe attached to the liver above the kidneys, he shall remove." It's interesting how familiar old days people were with the anatomy of animals, because they didn't have Kroger and Albertsons and the butcher shop where you would go and get it in nice shrink-wrapped packages.

They took their animals and converted them into food sort of personally and on the fly. So they knew where the joints were and how to separate. Everyone was a butcher in that sense.

Families helped. The father would carve things up and everyone was familiar with the anatomy, the entrails. And God used this knowledge and this everyday experience in the Old Testament symbolically the same way Jesus used figures and examples in His parables.

Everyday life, a meaningful imbuing of those things with spiritual truths. So when, I promise you, if you and I, I don't think there's any of us that have been real avid hunters and gone out and done deer hunting and skinned and prepared meat, you know, hanging off a tree. Those guys probably know a lot of this.

But I will tell you I would be nonplussed if somebody put a dead cow in front of me and said, find the fatty lobe on the liver. I might eventually get there, but these are things that were well known and understood in that day. The two kidneys, the fat that is on them by the flanks, the fatty lobe attached to the liver above the kidneys he shall remove.

Now depending on how similar it is to a frog, I have dissected a frog. So if he looks like a frog, I can probably figure it out. Verse 5, Aaron's sons shall burn it on the altar upon the burnt sacrifice which is on the wood that is on the fire as an offering made by fire a sweet aroma to the Lord.

Well, we've got a number of details here to parse before we even continue into the alternate form which is of the flock. This is of the herd. We know herd is cattle.

Flock is going to be the sheep and the goats. It's going to be very similar. If his offering is a sacrifice of a peace offering to the Lord, it is of the flock, whether male or female.

Whoa, there's something new. Were we allowed to use a female animal in the previous two? Of course there was no animal in the second one, but in the whole burnt offering it was always a male, right? Male bullock. This male or female, he shall offer it without blemish.

If he offers a lamb as his offering, he shall offer it before the Lord. He shall lay his hand on the head of his offering, kill it before the tabernacle of meeting. Aaron's son shall sprinkle its blood all around on the altar.

Then he shall offer from the sacrifice of the peace offering, an offering made by fire to the Lord as an offering, its fat and the whole fat tail which he shall remove close to the backbone and the fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails. The two kidneys and the fat that is on them by the flanks and the fatty lobe attached to the liver above the kidneys he shall remove. And the priest shall burn them on the altar as food, an offering made by fire to the Lord.

If his offering is a goat, he shall offer it before the Lord. He shall lay his hand on its head, kill it before the tabernacle of meeting. And the sons of Aaron shall sprinkle its blood all around on the altar.

Then he shall offer from it his offering as an offering made by fire to the Lord, the fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails, the two kidneys and the fat that is on them by the flanks and the fatty lobe attached to the liver above the kidneys he shall remove. The priest shall burn them on the altar as food, an offering made by fire for a sweet aroma, all the fat is the Lord's. Now if you didn't notice it already, there is a preponderance of fat in this offering.

You almost might want to call it the fat offering instead of the peace offering. It's the offering of fat, not in the New Orleans sense of where they have Fat Tuesday. This is the fat of the offering.

Perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwellings, you shall eat neither fat nor blood. So, low fat diet for the Israelites. When it says no fat, it says none of the globs, none of the layers that are entirely fat.

Obviously there is going to be marbling and meat. You can't assiduously pick out every little bit of that. But they were not to partake of the fat itself.

This belonged to the Lord. In the positive sense, they were not to partake of the blood. This had sort of a negative connotation.

You don't eat the blood. The life of the flesh is in the blood. It was to be drained and it was a gross infraction to eat blood in Israel.

And a similar infraction to eat fat. Fat and the blood are linked here. So what's going on in chapter 3, the peace offering? What is peace? Paul says the Lord Jesus is our peace.

In the sense that He has broken down the middle wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles. Between the people of God who are in God's favor and those who are out. Those who are in the covenant and those who are out.

There was a wall just like there was at the temple. And this is in Paul's mind. There is the court of the Gentiles and then there is the court of the Israelites.

And if you are a Gentile, you can come this far and no farther. There is a wall of separation. And

he says Christ is our peace.

He has broken down that wall. What happens when that wall is eliminated? What happens between East and West Germany when they took down the wall? Now there is commingling. There is contact.

There is, and this is our word, fellowship. This is the fellowship offering. One of the primary concepts of fellowship, as we noted recently, is a shared meal.

Revelation 3.20, Jesus says, I'm knocking at the door. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and sup with him and he with me. We will share a meal.

The Bible is replete with examples in the kingdom. We sang this morning, brethren we've met, to worship. In the last verse it says, Christ himself will gird himself and serve us manna.

And that's biblical. When I first got to, you know how it is, you hear songs, it's like the Pledge of Allegiance, it just rolls over your head and you don't really think about the words. And one day I was thinking about that and I thought, Christ himself is going to serve me manna? Wait a minute, whose notion was that? And I got to looking in the Bible and that's what it says.

I was surprised. I felt like Peter. The Lord shouldn't be washing my feet and the Lord shouldn't be waiting tables coming by until I studied that whole context and then I realized you do want the hidden manna that the Lord Jesus will serve to those who qualify, to those who are faithful now and are interested now.

We'll be faithful then and interested then and the Lord Jesus is going to share unimaginably great things with us. But he does it at a cost. It is a service.

He has to work to do it and that's the concept. Christ will gird himself. Why doesn't it say he'll bring manna around? It says he will gird himself and serve and that's in the scripture.

Why? It is something that costs him, something he has to invest himself in. It isn't free and it is a privilege and it is a reminder of how humble we ought to be if the Lord Jesus is serving us rather than we serving him. The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many.

Let this mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus. And our attitude of service should be connected directly to that. Well, and by the way we're going to see something related to the upside downedness of that picture here momentarily.

When his sacrifice is a sacrifice of a peace offering, if he offers it of the herd whether male or female, male or female, what is the interpretive value? What's the meaning when God specifies that a sacrifice is only going to be a bullock or a ram, a male animal, or that it can be either one? What difference does that make? What does it tell us? One suggestion is when you see that it must exclusively be a male, you tend to think this is a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ who

is the Son of God. I am probably the only person on the planet who will make this suggestion this morning and may have ever made this suggestion to my knowledge. But couldn't God have sent two saviors, a man and a woman, to sort of, you know, Jesus is the last Adam, why didn't he send a last Eve? It could have been a couple.

They could have been crucified together. I mean, ask yourself, when God was originating the plan of salvation in the eternity past, he could have done it any one of a number of ways. We just take for granted, well, of course, there is one Son of God.

But if you think about it, you've got the Father and you've got the Son, where is the Mother? And a lot of people have had that thought and decided, well, there must be a Mother and it's the Virgin Mary. Or God is both. He is the Father-Mother God.

And they pray in that mode. And I'm going to leave that where it lies and just suggest to you that there is a reason why God didn't send two saviors, one of each gender. It is only his Son.

And there is a very important picture in bridging the gap between God and man that the Lord Jesus is both deity and humanity. And yes, he was born of the Virgin Mary, but the picture is not that she takes her place in the pantheon of deity and can be prayed to and appeal made and rosaries said and, you know, Hail Mary, etc., that that has any effect. It is a typical human misunderstanding of God's picture in, like Joseph taking a wife from the Egyptians.

How much freight was there? How much weight was assigned? How important was it to Abraham that Isaac get his wife from among the people? How important was it to Rebekah that Jacob go up and get his wife from among the people? And yet here's, and there's all kinds of grief and woe when Esau marries of the people. And that's where you get your Edomites. And there was such great importance on it.

And yet here's Joseph and because of his unique path in being sold into slavery and coming up from slavery and arriving as the second in the land in Egypt to Pharaoh himself, that necessarily his wife is Egyptian. And from that union come twins, or not twins, but two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. And you have the crossing of the hands and the blessing.

But Joseph is interesting in that he has a wife from the union, the double portion blessing goes there. And there's a lot of meaning to it. But we're back to the gender issue, male and female.

Priests can only be male. Why is that? Because the Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son, is male. And those priests picture His work.

These animal sacrifices that are exclusively male pertain directly to Christ and picture Him. So that's our clue. If you've got a sacrifice that can be male or female, we're moving a step away from a direct picture of the Lord Jesus Christ and we are looking not so much at the source of the work as its target.

The application of the work is to all. God is the Father, the Lord Jesus is the Son, but if you are a

believer in the Lord Jesus, you can be male or female. If you're in the nation of Israel, the priests are all male, but the Israelites themselves are necessarily male and female.

And the application of the work is to all. It universalizes the direction of the work. You know what a vector is, if you've taken enough math, and it is a line that has source and end.

And it's a line that has source and direction. They use vectors to represent force. A force is applied somewhere and has a direction.

And this is the nature of these sacrificial pictures. They start somewhere and they have a direction. When we're focusing on the source and the origin, that's the Lord Jesus and that's your male sacrifices.

When we're looking at the direction and the application and you have both genders, that is our clue, male or female. It tells us we're looking now at the effect rather than the source as an emphasis. The work of the Lord Jesus is always there.

Every sacrifice, everything that goes on the altar is in some way a picture. But sometimes those pictures talk about what the Lord has done for us rather than what He has done before the Father. When the Father looks down, He sees the Son.

When we look at the Son, we see His work for all of us. So my suggestion to you is, it says male or female. This tells us that the work of the Lord Jesus Christ has effected, has brought about, has made possible peace, fellowship for everyone.

And the appreciation of this and the recognition of this is in the fact that here are female offerings that can be brought, male or female. It is an expression. And here is where the wives and the daughters see their representation go directly to God.

It isn't exclusive. It's not so narrow that there isn't a picture available for the ladies. Why can't they do a whole burnt offering? Can they not dedicate themselves fully? Of course they can.

You think about Hannah and you think about so many of the other great ladies in the Bible, of course they can. But that dedication is in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. And so it's always a male in Chapter 1. Here in Chapter 3, male or female, without blemish before the Lord, the same standard of holiness pertains.

He shall lay His hand on the head of His offering and kill it at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. It is still a He who is bringing the sacrifice. This is the head of the family.

This is the father. This is the husband. He's bringing this offering.

But if He's bringing a female from the herd, this is a cow rather than a bull, there is a sense of representation that goes beyond just He and His sons. And He is going to lay His hand on the head. What does this always represent? Transfer.

Identification. What is He transferring? Sin? It's not a sin offering. We tend to think, well, lay His hand on the head, I'm transferring my sins.

This isn't a transfer of sin, so what is it a transfer of? What's the purpose of the offering? Fellowship. To be in the presence of God would be perfect fellowship, right? You can't be in the presence of God. We're on earth, He's in heaven, He's holy, we're unholy.

So how do you symbolically enter into God's presence in the Old Testament? You identify with the animal, parts of the animal in this case, and you send that to God. It's representative. And that identification means, if things were ideal, it would be me coming into your presence, O Lord, holy and acceptable.

So what do you think about Hebrews chapter 12? We can now enter by a new and living way through the veil, which is the flesh of the Lord Jesus. And it isn't restricted and it isn't limited anymore. Well, we have a lot more to see about the peace offering, but we're using our interpretive code book here, our keys, to grasp the meaning of the elements of the sacrifice.

Every one of them is important. And what we want to look at in our second session is the prominent and dominant feature of this sacrifice, which is the fat. Why the fat? What does it mean? Why is it so specific? We have three very detailed repetitions of the fat coming from the same places and serving the same function in this sacrifice.

What is it? And ultimately, so what? Interesting to figure it out, but so what? How should we then live? We'll hopefully answer those questions when we come back from the break.