

Christ in the Sacrifices 15-12-13a

This is Sunday, the 13th of December 2015, and we continue our study of the offerings and sacrifices that anticipate the Lord Jesus Christ in the Old Testament in the nation of Israel. We'll be resuming our study, as I said, in Leviticus chapter 4, but at this point let's go to the Lord in prayer. Father, thank You for Your grace and Your faithfulness, the constancy of Your fidelity to the promises that have been delivered to us, wonderful promises founded on a covenant that is grounded in the blood of Your Son, our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

We thank You for Him. We thank You for His presence at this moment at Your side, interceding for us, representing us, establishing our acceptability in Your presence, and we pray that as we look at these detailed anticipations and expressions of the nature and purpose of His work, that God the Holy Spirit will enlighten us and impart the truth to each heart that is so essential to our walk before You in the light, our progress toward the narrow gate that leads to life, and our fulfillment of the purpose for which we were saved and for which You even now teach us and mature us and prepare us for life in the eternal ages that are to come. We pray that each one will receive a blessing, that our fellowship will be pleasing in Your sight and glorifying to the Lord Jesus.

We pray it in His name, Amen. Leviticus chapter 4, you'll remember last time we reviewed, and I'm going to review the review very briefly, the nature of the first three sacrifices didn't really focus on sin, did it? It doesn't say in Leviticus chapter 1, if any man sin, let him bring a whole burnt offering. Think about that for a moment.

We have reviewed from Genesis all the way down, Genesis chapter 3, all the way down to Moses at Mount Sinai and the imparting of this very sophisticated sacrificial system. We've reviewed all of the major sacrifices mentioned in the book of Genesis and in the book of Exodus, haven't we? Here's your pop quiz. Which one of those sacrifices was occasioned by a particular sin? Did Abel come before God bringing an offering because he sinned? Does it say what he did? Noah, when he brought his offering after the flood, had he sinned? Was it after the too many grape fermentation experiences there? Abraham, any of his sacrifices? Jacob, some of the ones we didn't look at in detail, Jacob sacrificing to the Lord at Bethel and so on, building altars, hither and yon, Isaac building altars.

Did any of those sacrifices come from a specific occasion of sin other than the first? We looked at, do not eat the fruit, you have eaten of the fruit, you are naked and you know it, but we look at that as a sacrifice in a very indirect manner, don't we? Scripture doesn't talk about the Lord building an altar, slaying the animal. He simply gives to Adam and Eve skins for clothing and we know what had to have taken place for that to work. But there's no issue made of sin followed by sacrifice all the way up to this point, is there? Can you think of a single case up to this point? Well, I can't either.

And yet our default understanding is, well, you've got to have sacrifices because there's sin,

right? You sin, sacrifice. We go to 1 John 1, 9, confess our sins, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us. Well, here's the thing, back to Leviticus chapter 1, chapter 2 and chapter 3, what kind of chapter sacrifice was there in 1, or to reorganize my rather dyslexic sentence, what kind of sacrifice was there in chapter 1? Whole burnt offering and what is the substance of that sacrifice? What's the main point of it? What constitutes the essence and the central portion of the olah, the whole burnt offering? Is it not the body of the animal cut in pieces and placed on the altar and sent to God as a sweet smelling aroma? Isn't that it? It's the body of the animal that goes up.

There's lots of details, the skin and the rest, and there's a portion of that that is eaten by the priest. Chapter 2, what is the substance and essence of the menka, the grain offering? We know by the way that chapter 1 is an expression of dedication and desire for service despite recognized and acknowledged imperfections. Certainly the sacrifice is necessary because we are imperfect and sinful, and in order to dedicate ourselves, in order to present our bodies a living sacrifice, we have to recognize that it is God's work that can make us acceptable for that.

Trying to commit an unholy thing to God isn't going to work. We have to be sanctified so that we can be committed and dedicated to Him, and so that recognition of our imperfection, our conception and iniquity, and our birth and sin is certainly there, but it's not the occasion of a specific sin, and the substance of the sacrifice is the flesh, the body of the animal placed on the altar and sent to God. Chapter 2, the grain offering, we know that this focuses on dedication of our labor, our work.

It's an agricultural society, it's an agricultural nation, and growing grain is at the heart of everything. The harvest is essential. You think about the famine in Egypt.

They didn't say, well, all of the animals started dying and that created a famine. What was the famine? There were seven lean years where the grain didn't grow, and without grain everything is dependent on that. It is at the heart and foundation of their economy, and so taking that and bringing that before God represents the work of the hands, sanctifying it, dedicating it, recognizing its source and its enablement is from God, and always offered on the occasion of an animal sacrifice, so that same underpinning, recognizing that we're not qualified to bring our work before God apart from that foundation, which is sanctification and cleansing and being made acceptable so that our work can be pleasing to God.

Chapter 3, the fellowship offering. Once again, what is at the heart of that? It is the meal, it is the portion of the flesh that is partaken of. Now, here's the question.

Why is the only the blood? Why isn't it the blood in Chapter 1? Why isn't it the blood that would be specifically mentioned before the grain offering in Chapter 2? Why isn't it the blood that is the main issue? Certainly the blood is recognized, things are done with it, but is it the essence? Is it the central point or is it one of the details? Yet when we come to Chapter 4, the emphasis shifts. So many things change when we come to Chapter 4. Remember before it was all about the procedure and the way of bringing it and what is acceptable in terms of the details of the

offering and the handling of the materials. If it is an offering from the herd, if it is an offering from the flock, if it is an offering of birds, then this is the variation.

This is how it will be done. There is provision made for the poor in Chapter 3, the fellowship offering. And if it is a bird offering, obviously there is probably not enough there to make a meal of, but the principle is expressed.

Here when we come to Chapter 4, we noted last time that now the variations are who is involved? Who is bringing the offering and what role do they fulfill? Is it the anointed priest, the high priest? Is it the whole congregation? Is it a ruler? Is it one of the common people? So the nature of the sacrifice opens and is dictated by who, not what is brought. Secondly, if you have memory of the details of this offering, where in the first three it is all about what is brought and how that is handled in the procedure, here what is going to happen to the flesh of the animal? Let's look at the first two situations here. The first two are the anointed priest and the whole congregation.

And by the way, those are very closely tied together. The anointed priest represents the whole congregation before God. He is the high priest, right? He represents all of the other priests and everybody else in the nation.

And so these are closely linked and that's why the details are so similar. So if a person sins unintentionally against any of the commandments of the Lord in something which ought not to be done and does any of them, that's the large outline heading. Remember I talked about Roman numerals and capital A's and Arabic numerals and small letters and so on? Well, the overarching heading here is if anyone sins inadvertently in the things which ought not to be done, the things which the Lord has proscribed.

He prescribes some things, He proscribes others. Some are in, some are out. And these are things which ought not to be done, these things which are against the commandments of the Lord.

We talked about that last time, you remember? What is the standard of right and wrong? Is it what people agree to or is it what God says? There is common agreement that shifts with the passing of time. The community may decide that some particular lifestyle or behavior is perverse in one generation. They may decide that it is to be lifted up and celebrated as a wonderful freedom from inhibition and tossing off of the shackles of Puritan, hidebound, self-righteous, condemnatory, boo-on-you religion.

So society can divine things and generally those things that a society decides are evil, are bad and should not be done, those become crimes. They become against the law. There is a subset or another broader category that may not be against the law but are almost universally condemned.

Unfriending someone on Facebook is not a crime in the law books but there are a lot of people

who look upon that as wrong. There are behaviors. There is a real sophisticated cultural set of rules for what you can and can't do on Facebook.

If you are friends with somebody and you're in the first circle why you can freely look at all of the stuff on their page but my understanding is, I'm not on Facebook, but my understanding is if you go to the friend of a friend and spend any time at all there, well now you're lurking and you're invading their privacy even though they have posted this in a public place, you're weird and you're window peeping or something if you spend too much time looking at their Facebook page. You're not really in the first circle. This is considered wrong.

There's all kinds of little mores. Is it against the law to cut in line at Walmart? No. Is it considered wrong by society? I can't believe you just cut in line.

You just cut in front of me. To cut in line is considered wrong socially by pretty much everybody except the one doing the cutting who feels right in their own eyes. Not a crime.

They can't call the police and say Bob cut in line. But it's considered to be wrong. Well here in Leviticus 4 what is wrong is specifically defined as doing something that the Lord God in heaven has said should not be done.

That transgresses these things that God defines. Now I'll give you an interesting example and this is a bit of a diversion but in studying for this lesson it solved a nagging question in my mind. Here's something that God said should not be done.

This is in the instructions given in Exodus chapter 34. In Exodus chapter 34 he talks about how much interaction there is going to be or is allowed to be that he is going to allow or that he will permit between Israel and the nations in the land of Canaan. Exodus 34 chapter 34 verse 10.

God says I am making a covenant before all your people I will do marvels such as not been done in all the earth or in any nation all the people among whom you are shall see the work of the Lord. It is an awesome thing that I will do with you. Now you think about what the role of the people of God is.

Are you people of God? Yes. Why are you here among the hoi polloi? Among the nations at large? God is in our midst. He dwells in us like a tabernacle.

What would his purpose be? It is this purpose. I will do marvels such as have not been done in all the earth. Who can cure innate perverse behavior? Who can cleanse the heart and redirect the purposes of the soul? Who can transform what the world can't transform with counseling, with medication, with operations, with social acceptance, with support, with talk shows? What is it that God can do as a marvel that isn't seen in all the earth? He does it all the time in the lives of believers.

You look in vain for the testimonies in other religions of this type of personal miraculous transformation. Does becoming a Muslim, does becoming a Christian characterize hundreds

and thousands of people who have beaten addiction and alcoholism? Does becoming a Hindu characterize hundreds and thousands of people who have been delivered from a lifestyle of perversion or of criminal behavior? Does any religion, any religion have as its signal characteristic personal transformation? Try to find those stories in any other religion. It is not Christianity as a religion, but it is belief and a walk with God through Christ that accomplishes a marvel that isn't seen anywhere else in the earth.

That's you. That's me. It is as miraculous as anything you read in the book of Exodus.

I will perform marvels such as have not been done in the earth nor in any nation. All the people among whom you are shall see the work of the Lord. You are going to be a walking testimony of the work of the Lord and that's what we are.

Notice he didn't say you're going to go forth and tell my works and that's going to be the great witness to the nations. He says your presence. I will do the work and you will be the evidence.

He doesn't tell them to say anything, does he? He tells them to be. Observe what I command you this day. I am driving out from before you the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite.

Take heed to yourself lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land where you are going lest it be a snare in your midst. Destroy their altars, break down their pillars, cut down their wooden images. You shall worship no other God for the Lord whose name is Jealous is a jealous God.

God demands exclusive obedience, not temporized, compromised, ameliorated, amalgamated. Put those two words together and you get ameliorated. Compromised worship.

It is exclusive. Why would a husband be jealous over his wife? He considers their marriage exclusive. Jealousy isn't the green-eyed bitter monster in this context.

It is a recognition of exclusivity. It is one and only one God that they are to worship. Look at verse 15.

Lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land and they play the harlot with their gods and make sacrifices to their gods and one of them invites you and you eat of his sacrifice and you take of his daughters for your sons and his daughters play the harlot with their gods and make your sons play the harlot with their gods. No intermarriage with the Canaanites. Right? Makes sense.

The same thing in Deuteronomy 7, verses 1-6. When the Lord your God brings you to the land you are entering to possess, drives out from before you many nations, Hittites, Kirkishites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hyphites, Jebusites, seven nations larger and stronger than you. The Lord your God has delivered them over to you and you have defeated them.

You must destroy them totally. Destroy them totally. Well that seems harsh.

Why can't we take them as slaves? That's what's common. That's what's acceptable among the nations. You enslave them.

Why wipe them out? Leave them no posterity at all. Make their names a mere memory. Did you ever see a Girgashite? Canvas the world.

Look around. Anybody in the last many, many centuries ever see a Girgashite? They were utterly and totally destroyed. As were the Perizzites.

As were the Hyphites. Ever see a Hyphite? Can you go over and visit Hyphite land? No. They're gone.

Destroyed. Be careful not to make a treaty with those who live in the land where you are going or they will be a snare among you. Break down their altars.

Smash their sacred stones. This is what you are to do to them. Burn their idols in the fire for you are a people holy to the Lord your God.

Deuteronomy 7-6. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be His people, His treasured possession. Now what's this got to do with Leviticus chapter 4? What is a sin? What is it that transgresses what God has instructed His people? Is it what we all get together and agree? Can a big church get together and say, you know what? Here's what the Bible says.

Here's what God wants. Can a denomination get together and decide this is okay and that is not? And it holds. It will abide and God will respect it.

Does God say, look, two or three of you get together and agree, that will be my standard of righteousness? No. Two or three of us can get together and agree on a worship format. Two or three or more of us can get together and agree on a lot of things, but not what is right and what is wrong.

God determines these things and what He says goes. And sometimes He will make the reasons for it fairly inscrutable. So I mentioned last time, no shellfish.

People say, well, you know, it could spoil easily and it might have been harmful. That's not why God said it. God said, put tassels on the corners of your garments and don't shave the edges of your beard.

What? I'm going to get an infection because I shaved the corners of my beard? Some bad thing is going to happen to me if I don't have tassels on my garments and some of the other, don't mix two different kinds of thread in the same cloth. Big trouble now, polyester and cotton, who doesn't wear it? But in ancient Israel, you don't mix two kinds of cloth. It's all wool or it's all linen, but you don't mix them.

Why? It is a demonstration and a reminder that whatever God says goes. God says, no women leading in the assembly and in the congregation. No women as priests.

Are we not daughters of Levi? Are we not daughters of Aaron? Are we not equally qualified? Are we not capable and probably handier with a knife and more able to haul ashes and sprinkle blood and all the other priestly duties? Are you denigrating and diminishing and saying we are inferior and second class citizens? God says it for His own purposes and that makes it right and makes the alternative wrong. It has nothing to do with quality judgments. The Levites themselves, why can't Ephraimite be a priest? Why can't a Judahite be a priest? A couple of them tried it, walking in as king into the holy place.

Why can't they? Are they lesser? Are the Levites special? God says it and that makes it so. Remember this in the blowing currents of our society? I don't care what the arguments are for and against. You know, monkeys do it or whatever.

It doesn't matter. What God says is the standard and to transgress that standard is to be in a status that requires remediation. That is the essential lesson of chapter 4. But back to my particular example here.

The people that Israel loves, the people that Israel would displace in the land, no intermarriage, no confederation, no toleration. They are to be eliminated and destroyed, right? Not only that but when you get to Deuteronomy chapter 23 verses 3-6, other people were proscribed and forbidden. This is where we are getting to our point here.

Deuteronomy 23, 3-6, no Ammonite or Moabite or any of his descendants may enter the assembly of the Lord even down to the tenth generation. And tenth generation pretty much means forever. Nobody can remember much further back than that.

It's pretty much an everlasting command. No Ammonite, no Moabite, nor any of his descendants down to the tenth generation. What if you get down ten generations? Well, what about his descendants? That's another ten generations.

And that ten generations that he still got descendants, that's another ten generations. For they did not come to meet you with bread and water on your way when you came out of Egypt. They hired Balaam the son of Baor from Pithor in Aram, Naharim to pronounce a curse on you.

However, the Lord your God would not listen to Balaam but turned the curse into a blessing for you because the Lord your God loves you. Do not seek a treaty of friendship with them as long as you live. No treaty of friendship with the Moabites or the Ammonites, Laolam, unto the ages essentially.

Tenth generation as long as you live. The Lord's anger burned against them. You can read about that in Numbers chapter 25.

Now, here's the thing. There are two names when I mention them, you will see their connection

to what we just read in Deuteronomy chapter 7 and Deuteronomy chapter 23. The first name is Rahab and the second one is Ruth.

Is Rahab a Canaanite? No, she's not. She's a Canaanite. Is Ruth a Moabitess? The answer to both questions is yes.

Were these two ladies accepted into the fellowship and congregation of Israel and are they not both grandmothers of David and in the line of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself? Yes, they are. How did that happen? How did that happen? Here we are talking about the standards that God sets up as right and wrong. This is a clear violation.

Rahab is a clear violation of multiple prohibitions against any contact, any confederation with the Canaanites and particularly not intermarrying with them. But she's going to marry an Israelite and coming down through Boaz and Jesse, they are descendants of Rahab, directly so. And then when you come down to the later days, the family of Naomi, her husband, her sons, they all go to Moab during the famine and both of the sons marry Moabite women.

And all three men die. Naomi says, I'm going home. Orpah and Ruth accompany her and when they get to the border, Naomi says, look, thanks for bringing me to the airport, but you can go home now.

I'm getting on the plane and going to Israel, going to Bethlehem. See you later. And Orpah says, well, okay.

Been to good knowing you. Back she goes. Ruth gives one of the most beautiful declarations of love to be had anywhere in human history.

And she says, your God will be my God. Your people will be my people. Where you go, I will go.

Where you die, there will I be buried. I'm sticking with you. And she comes on over and you know that story.

She's a Moabitess. So, how does this reconcile? Well, you reconcile such questions, oddly enough, by going to the word of the Lord. Turn with me to the book of Isaiah chapter 56.

You probably suspect the answer to this, but it is not just a suspicion. It is a statement of the word of God. Isaiah chapter 56.

Start at the beginning of the chapter. Thus says the Lord, keep justice and do righteousness, for my salvation is about to come and my righteousness to be revealed. Isn't that the point of the law and the point of God's standards is to highlight His righteousness and His glory? Blessed is the man who does this and the son of man who lays hold on it, who keeps from defiling the Sabbath and keeps his hand from doing any evil.

Do not let the son of the foreigner who has joined himself to the Lord speak, saying, the Lord has utterly separated me from His people. Whoa! Let me read that again. Do not let the son of

the foreigner who has joined himself to the Lord.

What kind of foreigner? What kind of foreigner? Say it out loud. Do not let the son of the foreigner who has joined himself to the Lord. Not just any old foreigner, a foreigner that has joined himself, dedicated himself, committed himself to the Lord.

Don't let him say, the Lord has separated me from His people. Don't let the eunuch say, here I am a dry tree. For thus says the Lord, to the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths and choose what pleases me and hold fast my commandment, even to them I will give in my house and within my walls a place and a name better than that of sons and daughters.

You think it looks like there's a hopeless inability and prohibition? He uses eunuchs as an example of what he's really saying about the foreigners. Those who are incapable of having children for whatever reason. God says, if they have joined themselves to me, if they have dedicated themselves to me, if they keep my word and my commandment and they seek my righteousness, I will bless them with something greater than sons and daughters, a name and a place within my walls and in my house, better than sons and daughters.

I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off. You think a name in the earth comes from sons and daughters? Well, there's holes in the 1800s, there's holes in the 1900s and now there's holes in the 2000s because people had offspring, carried on the name. God says, I'll give them an everlasting name and there's nothing that can cut it off.

You can blow the earth up with a giant incursion from space and incinerate every human being, these people are still going to have a name. Also verse 6, the sons of the foreigner who join themselves to the Lord to serve Him and love the name of the Lord to be His servants. Notice the condition.

These children of foreigners join themselves to the Lord, serve Him, love the name of the Lord, choose to be His servants. Everyone who keeps from defiling the Sabbath and holds fast my covenant, even them I will bring to my holy mountain. I will make them joyful in my house of prayer.

Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar. For my house, remember the Lord Jesus quoting this, my house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations. So what is the qualifier? Physical descent from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob or spiritual descent from Abraham? These are children of Abraham who follow Him in faith by choice and choosing to be that rather than being born into it earns a better name and a better heritage from God.

Why is it that Rahab was acceptable? What is notable about Rahab? She chose to believe the God of Israel and to join herself to the God of Israel and the people of the God of Israel. She made that decision and chose it. She hung the scarlet thread in the window.

She shielded the spies. She became an Israelite by choice. How about Ruth? That great declaration, your God will be my God.

Your people will be my people. I join myself to that God and Ruth trusts God. She trusts the counsel of Naomi for the provision of God in their case and she entrusts herself to Boaz who is a godly man.

So guess what? Choosing God in faith and obedience lifts the Canaanite curse. Choosing God in faith and obedience lifts the Moabite curse and transforms that curse into blessing. These two ladies not only are not prohibited, not only are they not cast out, what kind of name do they have? What kind of descendants can they claim? Think about that.

There were many women in Israel. How many of them are in the line of the Lord Jesus Christ? Does God honor that attitude? Yes, He does. Will God honor that attitude in us? Yes, He will.

It is all about attitude. It is about choice. It is about priorities.

It is about committing, personal commitment to God and to the things of God. You see many examples of it but none more clear than those two great ladies. And as we think about the birth of Christ in this time of the Christmas season, that is a wonderful sidelight, isn't it? To remember that those ladies' names are forever joined to that of the incarnate Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

Let's pause here and take our break. When we come back we are going to see how that bears on, relates to and is reflected in Leviticus chapter 4.