

Christ in the Sacrifices 16-01-03a

This is Sunday, the 3rd of January, 2016. We are continuing our study of Christ and the sacrifices. We have had a number of intermediate blasts from the past, if you will, in the latter part of December for various reasons, but we return now to our regularly scheduled programming.

And if you will turn in your Bibles to Leviticus chapter 1, we'll begin by refreshing our minds on where we are. This is really the central portion of the Bible that looks back and helps us understand the sacrifices that precede it. It is definitional for all of those sacrifices which follow it.

So we have spent some time here looking at the details of these offerings. Most importantly, however, these sacrifices and the details thereof are a roadmap for our spiritual function day by day now. If you understand Leviticus chapter 1, chapter 2, chapter 3, chapter 4, chapters 5 and the first part of 6, you are well down the road to having the information necessary to live a fruitful and effective life as a church age believer.

And there is something of an irony in that, that the more schooled and expert you are in the law of Moses in this regard, the better off you are as a child of God and member of the body of Christ. But that's the way God works. So often it is in the unexpected and in the almost humorous way God will hide essential truths in some of the most unlikely places.

You see this, if you think back on the Christmas season we just survived, there are prophecies related to the Lord Jesus that are cited, especially in the Gospel of Matthew. And you think, that seems very obscure. He shall be called a Nazarene, the word of the Lord might be, out of Egypt I have called my son.

And you think, that's not a neon lit prophecy in the Old Testament, that's something sort of unexpected. And it isn't until the fulfillment that you really see the resonance and the anticipation in the Old Testament, that the root shoot from the stump of Jesse is a netzer and he shall be called a Nazarene is a wordplay prophecy, that out of Egypt I have called my son would be a reference to the early career of Joseph and Mary trying to dodge being killed and having their son slain. But yet God put essential information about the early career of the Lord Jesus, in fact his entire career, in some very unlikely places in Scripture.

This is one of those places. So don't think that we're just academically looking at the slaughterhouse of the tabernacle here and it's blood, blood, blood and guts and hides and heads and fires and ashes everywhere. Our goal in studying this is twofold, to see the Lord Jesus Christ and the beauty and the magnificence and the glory of his manifold work on our behalf.

And secondly, to educate us and give us the tools and the ready at hand information to live our lives effectively before the Lord. And oddly enough, it's right here in these chapters and that's

why we have slowed down and spent some time and we're going to review it. But we'll begin first by going to the Lord in prayer and asking his blessing on our fellowship and on our study.

Father, we're grateful that you have sustained us by your grace, you have brought us to this place and this time. We're living in such a fascinating time in history. Things have advanced so fully toward the alignment and the pattern that is set forth in the prophetic scriptures that show us the things that are yet to be.

We see the opportunities that we have in our time and in our culture to be strengthened, to be guided, to be fruitful and productive even as we see a decline around us in our culture and the values that used to define our nation. And we recognize this not only as a problem but more so as an opportunity to apply what you have taught us through your word to avail ourselves of the power of your spirit and of the example of the Lord Jesus Christ and to attempt to reflect his glory in the time that remains to us in this life. We thank you for this portion of your word in Leviticus and the details of these sacrifices and we pray that God the Holy Spirit will minister it to each heart, encourage and strengthen us, help us to fully grasp the purpose for which we have been saved, the opportunity that you have granted to us, the riches of the glory of inheritance of which we partake because we are in Christ, because we are your children and we are so thoroughly equipped for every good work by these things in your word.

We pray that you will bless us and our study and we ask it in Jesus' name, Amen. Let's just quickly do a pop quiz here. What are the five major sacrifices in the first half dozen chapters of Leviticus? The number one in chapter one was what? The Ola, the whole burnt offering.

Chapter two, Minka, the grain offering. Chapter three, Shalom, peace offering. Ola, Minka, Shalom.

Whole burnt, grain offering, peace offering, fellowship offering, Shalom. You sit down, have a meal. Those are the first three.

Then there are another two which are the, we will call them what they are traditionally known as, the sin offering and the trespass offering. Now, tell me again what chapters these are in, in Leviticus? One, two, three, four, five, and first eight or so verses of chapter six, right? Now, let me ask you a question. You know what's in Genesis.

In the beginning God created all the way to Joseph in a coffin in Egypt, right? That was the record of early history, all the way to the people of God being in Egypt. The book of Exodus starts in Egypt where the people of God are more or less in a coffin in Egypt. They're in slavery, they're in bondage.

It's the story of deliverance, God's mighty miraculous demonstrations of His power and His person in the nine plagues and then the tenth manifestation, the death of the firstborn, the Passover, crossing the sea into the wilderness, manna, forty years, here, there, and the other, getting in the vicinity of chapter 18 to Sinai, the Ten Commandments, the giving of the law in

the latter part of Exodus, tabernacle, ordination of the priests. Everything is now set up. Then we come to Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus.

In Leviticus, with everything in place now, the people of God are independent, they are anticipating going into the land, but they're still in the wilderness with the tent tabernacle. Now here in Leviticus, what have we got? Instructions for worship, right? You've got all of the accouterments. They've built the tabernacle, they've ordained the priests, they've got the ephods and the linens and the altar and the laver and all of that stuff, right? So now we have instructions.

Let me ask you something. You are Moses, or you are one of the high elders, chief elders in Israel. You're out there, you've got all of this stuff built, God has given the instructions from on high, and now you're going to write down a manual for worship.

You're going to write down, this is how we do it. This is going to be the reference book. We used to have a term for that in the military, where you would have a little procedure manual.

Yeah, a field manual. And we also had another one which was a real quick reference thing that you would just have on a clip right there next to a radio or right there next to a piece of equipment and it was a quick guide, a little SOP. And this is how you do it.

Now, if you were going to write this down, I'm handing you a paper, I'm handing you a pen and I want you to write down, now think about it, what is your subject? It's the worship life in Israel. This is going to be the manual, these are the procedures, this is the stuff to get all of this done. Where would you start? What's the big idea here to start the manual with? I'll tell you where I would start, if it was me.

And if I didn't know what I already know, I wouldn't do it now, but before I had this thought, here's what I would have done. I would say, well, look, our whole year is laid out and we've got these feasts that God has commanded. Right? Passover, pretty big, important, definitional feast, this will be the beginning of the year to you.

So I think if I was going to write a manual, I'd start with the big, important stuff. So I would expect Leviticus chapter 1 to be Passover regulations. Now when you celebrate the Passover on an annual go-by-go year basis, I don't know what that phrase actually means, as you go year-by-year, these are the regulations, wouldn't you? And then how about the first roots and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and then you shall count off and then you shall have Pentecost, and then you wait till the fall and you shall have the Rosh Hashanah, the head of the year.

You shall move your microphone up. The feasts, wouldn't you think? This is the big structure into which everything else fits. And then, oh by the way, as you do these feasts, you've got these corporate worship functions.

So you're going to have the Day of Atonement, you're going to have Sukkot, the Feast of Booths, you're going to have all of these different things taking place. That would be the big

stuff. This is what the priests need to know to do the functions.

And then here are your daily sacrifices. You've got to sacrifice a lamb in the morning, you've got to sacrifice a lamb in the evening, here's the stuff of the priests. Then, oh by the way, if some ram-shackled dusty Israelite comes in and he wants to do an individual sacrifice, well here you go.

This is how to do it. I would think I'd find this in, you know, chapter 25 or 30 of Leviticus, after all the big stuff is done, wouldn't you? Have you noticed the order in Leviticus? This is the order that is important to God. And the very first thing that's in there is the olah.

An individual Israelite voluntarily wants to come before God and express his gratitude, his praise, his commitment, his recognition of God and his relationship to God. This is chapter uno, number one in the book. You know where you get the Day of Atonement? Chapter 16.

You know where you get the rest of the feasts? Chapter 23. These regulations for the individual Israelite coming before their God, coming before his God, that's what it leads with. It's the most important thing.

So if we as believers think, well God is going to look at me as a member of my church, as a member of my family. I will have sort of a corporate identity first. I think a lot of believers in the modern day sort of hook their chain to their church or hook their chain to the people near them that are godly.

I'm with him. I'm with them. I'm with her.

My church does this, that, and the other. I plunk in the plate. So everything that the church does I get credit for because I support it.

I finance it. There is a lot of passive Christianity that is justified, I think, mentally, and I'm talking big outfits, by just identification with the group. Well, I'm an evangelical.

I'm a something or other-ist. I'm a denomination fill-in-the-blank-here-ist. So I'm going to sort of get credit by osmosis for being associated with this group.

When you look at the emphasis in Leviticus, it is individual. Notice in chapter 1, and we've seen this before but look again, the Lord called to Moses and spoke to him from the tabernacle of meeting, saying, Speak to the children of Israel and say to them, When any one of you, and if you mark your Bible, that's a good thing to circle. Any one of you.

It's second person. When any one of you brings an offering to the Lord, you shall bring your offering. When any one of you brings an offering, you shall bring your offering.

It isn't done by proxy. It's not done as a group. It's not a corporate, conglomerate thing.

You individually, you one, bring your offering. And that's how it begins. And notice when you

get to verse 3, the person shifts.

God tells Moses, I want you to stand up in front of the people and say, When any one of you brings your offering. What does that do? That creates a decision point. Imagine yourself in the audience.

There's Moses standing up. You can bring your offering. Well, that's a decision that you make and you're confronted with it face to face.

Prosopon, it says in Greek, you know, face to face. Then the instructions become generic. If his offering is a burnt sacrifice, if it's an offering of the herd, male without blemish and all the rest of it, and it changes person because now we're talking objectively about the one who does this.

But the first blush is a confrontation. You, if you are going to bring your offering, you bring it. Then you have the generic instructions.

I think that's real significant. Out of those five offerings that we just reviewed, this chapter 1 is the Olam, the whole burnt offering. It is specified to be a male animal.

It is a male without blemish in verse 3. Interestingly, it is only here and down in chapter 5 that a male animal is specifically designated. It's important that it be a male. Why? Male and female created he, them.

There is a structure of headship on the part of the male and this is symbolic of initiative. It is symbolic it also specifically pictures the Lord Jesus Christ in his initiative to do the will of his father. So it is a male.

Now these animals that are detailed here, whether it is a sacrifice of the herd in verse 3, whether it is an animal of the flock in verse 10 of the sheep or the goats as a male or whether it is in verse 14 of the birds, all of these are domesticated animals. They had domesticated pigeons and doves. These weren't available for free.

But in these three levels of sacrifice there is an economic factor. If you are very well off you can afford a bullock. If you are less well off you can afford a ram or a male of the sheep.

If you are poor, as Mary and Joseph were at the time of the birth of the Lord Jesus and you are economically limited, then it is the birds. But no one can afford to bring a sacrifice without cost. It doesn't say go pick a flower and bring it to the priest and lay it on the altar.

It costs you nothing. Even the poor, there is a cost associated with obtaining these birds. That is why when Jesus went in and purged the temple, he turned over the tables of people that were selling these birds.

They were selling them. Somebody had to buy them in order to present them as an offering. So there is always a cost associated.

David recognized this when he told Aaron, I don't want you to give me your oxen and your plow. I will not offer to the Lord that which cost me nothing. There is a personal investment when we come to the Lord.

Now it doesn't mean that we are earning or deserving blessing that we have somehow worked or purchased merit in his sight. But what it does mean is that if we are going to dedicate ourselves to God, think about it. If you are going to dedicate yourself to God, it will cost you something.

It will cost you time that you would invest in other pursuits, whether it is entertainment or work or hobby or avocation. You are taking that time away and you are dedicating it to God. I am going to take this time and I am going to bring myself before the Lord in this time.

I am going to do something with an eye toward my spiritual life with this time. And it costs me. There is a cost.

The Lord said, what man when he gets ready to build doesn't sit down first and count the cost. So count the cost because there is a cost in following Christ. When he said if any man will follow after me, let him take up his cross, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

Deny himself and take up his cross. That's a sacrifice. That's a burden.

And you see that in this Ola. If you think that the order is significant and that God is putting the most important things first, you notice that in this very first chapter he emphasizes that there is an exercise of volition. There is a choice.

It is an initiative. That's why it's the male animal in the herd and in the flock. And it is costly if you are unwilling to sacrifice.

That's something to acknowledge in ourselves. Well, I am just not willing to do that. I am not willing to make that investment.

So there is a cost. What is the purpose of this? It is that he may be accepted. That he may be accepted.

It will be accepted on his behalf, verse 4, and it will make atonement. And atonement, as I mentioned before, the etymology of that in English is literally what you see, at-one-ment. We are brought before the Lord and accepted.

We are one. We are not divided. We are not separated.

Your iniquities are separated between you and your God. Your sins have hid His face from you. That does not pertain.

You are acceptable in His sight. And your offering, your desire to commit yourself before Him is accepted. It will be accepted for Him.

Now there are parts, you remember, that the offerer does and there are parts that the priest does. What does the offerer do in the whole burnt offering? First of all, you go back to the beginning, he is the one that brings the offering. He is the one that makes the investment in this offering.

He is the one that bears the cost of the offering. If you bring an offering, this is how you bring it. You bring the offering.

Then in verse 4, the offerer puts his hand on the head of the animal. This is identification. Notice he doesn't put his hand on the leg.

He doesn't put his hand on its abdomen. He doesn't put his hand on its tail. He doesn't put his hand on its hoof.

He puts his hand on the head. Why? What does the head represent? And this is important for everything else that follows. What does the head represent? This is the place of decision, right? This is the place of planning and intent.

Placing the hand on the head is identification. It is recognition of substitution. What I cannot do, this animal is going to do on my behalf.

I cannot go to God and present myself before Him at this point. This animal is going to do that. That's why the animal has to be without blemish.

It has to be acceptable in God's sight. It will be accepted for Him. It will be accepted instead of Him.

And the offerer stretches out his hand and places it on the head of the animal. What else does the offerer do? In verse 5, and it's real easy to figure out here what the priests do and what the offerer does because it's singular and plural. If it's singular, it's the offerer.

If it's the plural, Aaron's sons, the priests. So when it says, he shall kill the bull before the Lord, who slices the animal's neck with the knife? Not the priest, the offerer. The one who walked that bull all the way from his own herd and brought it in and brought it before the Lord, he is going to bring it.

And when it says, he will kill it before the Lord, where is before the Lord? We know this from later on in the chapter. Look at verse 11. He shall kill it on the north side of the altar before the Lord.

Do you remember the layout of the tabernacle? Remember that? I'm going to put it up here on my imaginary earth wherever Israel is encamped. There's an east-west, north-south element, right? And everything is oriented east-west, right? So you come in and you've got the altar right there after you come in. You've got the place of the ashes, which is east of it.

So you've got to kind of walk by the ashes to get to the altar. Then you've got the laver. Then

you've got the tent with the holy place and the most holy, right? It's all east-west.

It was later mirrored in the temple. And Jesus could sit up on the Mount of Olives and look through the gate, look right through, all the way through from east to west. The Mount of Olives was due east of the Temple Mount.

It was and is. So, he's coming in and it says, he will slay it before the Lord on the north side of the altar. Well, I thought the Lord was in the holy place.

So if he does it before the Lord on the north side of the altar, what does that say? The actual omnipresent aspect of the throne of God and the heavenly presence of God and his whole otherworldly existence, this is his location in Israel. His glory is there at the mercy seat, right? In the Holy of Holies. But that's behind a veil, inside a tent, on the other side of the laver.

So, when you want to do it before the Lord, the Lord is known to dwell in the sides of the north. And so you do it before the Lord and you recognize that the Lord is actually looking at this entire thing from a heavenly perspective. You're not expecting him to peer through the veil or use x-ray vision through the entire tabernacle tent to see your offering.

There is a verticality in the ola. Ola means to ascend. It goes up to heaven.

And since you're picturing, you know, you don't blow the smoke into the Holy of Holies, do you? They could have done that. They could have had, you know, suck it up in bellows and blow it into the Holy of Holies so that God can see the smoke and be pleased. The ola, the ascent of the sweet smelling aroma goes up into heaven, doesn't it? And so your consciousness of God, you're not thinking of, well, there he is behind the veil and over the mercy seat.

You're thinking, this is God in heaven. So when you slay the animal on the north side of the altar, you do it before the Lord, you are aware of his majesty and his heavenly glory above and beyond this whole earthly scene. Slay it before the Lord.

But the offerer does that. The offerer brings the animal. The offerer lays his hand on its head, and the offerer slits its throat with the sacrificial knife.

Now, how many of us would be willing to do that? Go up to a nice, healthy bull, grab it under the chin, raise its head, and rake a sharp knife across its throat so that the blood comes gushing out. That's what the offerer did. What else does he do? Well, he slays the animal.

Verse 6, he, singular, shall skin the burnt offering. Now, when we say it costs you something, it's not just the economic cost. You have to do this.

You have to take this animal's life, and you have to take this animal apart yourself. The offerer will skin the animal and cut it into its pieces. And in the course of skinning, part of the skinning process is to remove the head.

Anybody that's ever skinned animals knows this is part of what you do. The head is separated

from the rest of the body, and then you can divide it down and then start taking off the limbs and so on. So he skins it.

The priests do some things here. They take the parts that the offerer has divided, and they lay them on the altar, and then they put the head on top of those parts. And then on top of that, they take the fat, the fat that was removed from the inside of the animal, and lay it on top.

Now if you think about this, the fat is the most prized part. The Israelites were told not to eat fat. It was offered to God.

But the fat represents prosperity. Remember kavod, heavy, glory. This is the part that belongs to God.

This is God's portion. So if you think about it, here are the parts. The head is on top, and then the fat is on top of that.

So it is increasingly more valuable and increasingly more significant. The other practical benefit of this, if you think about it, is on the altar, as that fat melts and gets into the fire, this is going to feed the flame that will incinerate a very large quantity of meat. And the fat helps fuel the fire.

If you have ever seen the fat in the fire, you know what I'm talking about. So the offerer, down in verse 9, shall wash its entrails and its legs with water. Having skinned the animal, while the priests are setting in order these pieces and head and fat on the altar, the offerer is washing the entrails and the legs, and then the priest takes that and burns it on the altar.

But there is this cleansing process. Nothing of a defiling nature should be on the altar. So there is an intimate involvement of the offerer in the olah.

This sacrifice is detailed for us and is mentioned in a number of places in Scripture. I'm just going to give you three, and then we're going to go to the break. Turn over to Psalm 20.

You remember the first 50 psalms are authored by David. It's the book of David. Psalm 20, it's subtitled in your New King James, The Assurance of God's Saving Work.

It's dedicated to the chief musician. It is a psalm of David. May the Lord answer you in the day of trouble.

May the name of the God of Jacob defend you. May He send you help from the sanctuary and strengthen you out of Zion. May He remember all your offerings and accept your burnt sacrifice.

The word offerings there is the one that's used in Leviticus chapter 1 when He says, if any of you brings an offering to the Lord and accept your burnt sacrifice, that is olah. May the Lord remember all your offerings and accept your singular burnt sacrifice. This isn't something that was repeated very often.

It might have been kind of like the once a year pilgrimage that some religions have. I mean once in a lifetime pilgrimage. This olah might have been sort of a one time thing.

May He grant you according to your heart's desire and fulfill all your purpose. We will rejoice in your salvation and in the name of our God we will set up our banners. May the Lord fulfill all your petitions.

Now I know that the Lord saves His anointed. He will answer Him from His holy heaven with the saving strength of His right hand. Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we will remember the name of the Lord our God.

You notice the recurring theme of the name. May the name of the God of Jacob defend you up in verse 1. In the name of our God verse 5 we will set up our banners. We will remember the name of our God in verse 7. They have bowed down and fallen, but we have risen and stand upright.

Save Lord, may the King answer us when we call. That is the olah. Are there two passages very quickly? 1 Samuel chapter 7. This is the positive side as we think about our own olah.

1 Samuel chapter 7. This is in the days of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas. Remember the ark was captured and taken away by the Philistines and the ark in chapter 6 of 1 Samuel comes back to Israel. So that in chapter 7 verse 2, the ark remained in Kiriath Yarim a long time.

It was there 20 years. The house of Israel lamented after the Lord. Then Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel saying, If you return to the Lord with all your hearts, put away the foreign gods and the asterisks from among you and prepare your hearts for the Lord and serve Him only, He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines.

Similar theme to Psalm 20 isn't it? So the children of Israel put away the Baals and the asterisks and served the Lord only. Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpah, I will pray to the Lord for you. They gathered together at Mizpah, drew water, poured it out before the Lord.

They fasted that day and said, We have sinned against the Lord. Samuel judged the children of Israel at Mizpah. When the Philistines heard that the children of Israel had gathered together at Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel.

When the children of Israel heard of it, they were afraid. The children of Israel said to Samuel, Do not cease to cry out to the Lord our God for us, that He may save us from the hand of the Philistines. Samuel took a suckling lamb and offered it as a whole burnt offering to the Lord.

Then Samuel cried out to the Lord for Israel, and the Lord answered him. Notice this is an olah and Samuel knows the law, but what does the male of the herd, or the male of the flock, or the birds, it's not a suckling lamb, is it? Why would he substitute a suckling lamb here? A. He's a prophet of the Lord and divinely inspired. B. It is symbolic.

They say, We bring ourselves before you, O Lord, but because we have so recently abandoned the asterisk and the baals, we don't have a strength to commit to you. We don't have a holy self to commit to you. We are like dependent suckling lambs.

And so Samuel makes an olah of this lamb, symbolic of the people who recognize their helplessness before the Lord. Samuel was offering up the burnt offering. The Philistines were near to battle, but the Lord thundered with a loud thunder upon the Philistines that day, and so confused them that they were overcome before Israel.

That's when Samuel sets up the stone and calls it Ebenezer, the stone of help. Here I raise mine Ebenezer, hither by thy help I have come. Our final passage relative to the whole burnt offering is just two pages over in 1 Samuel 13, or a few pages over.

Remember when Saul is also facing the battle, Saul goes to Gilgal. The Philistines gather together to fight them in verse 5 of chapter 13. The men of Israel saw they were in danger, in verse 6, and they hid in caves and thickets and rocks and holes and in pits.

They don't have a strong and faithful people to present before the Lord. Some of the Hebrews crossed over the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. As for Saul, he was still in Gilgal.

All the people followed him, trembling. He waited seven days according to the time set by Samuel. Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and the people were scattered from him.

So Saul said, Bring an olah and a shalom, and he offered the burnt offering by himself. Remember that? As soon as he had finished presenting the olah, hadn't gotten to the shalom yet, just did the olah, Samuel came. Saul went out to greet him, and you know the rest of that story.

Samuel is not happy. Verse 14, Your kingdom shall not continue. The Lord has sought for himself a man after his own heart.

The Lord has commanded him to be commander over his people, because you have not kept what the Lord commanded. Now the interesting thing about this, and I'll answer the question after the break, but it seems that the breach of protocol here is that the king offered the sacrifice himself. Who's supposed to preside over the sacrifice according to Leviticus chapter 1? The sons of Aaron.

What tribe is Samuel from? You've got to go to 1 Samuel chapter 1. Elkanah lives in the land that his tribe occupies, which is Ephraim. Samuel is an Ephraimite. So why is it that an Ephraimite can sanctify, hallow, and legitimize a sacrifice when he's not a son of Aaron? Well, I'll answer that question after.

You can chew on it while you're chewing on your snacks at the break, and we'll return afterward.