

Christ in the Sacrifices 16-01-31a

This is Sunday, the 31st of January, 2016. We continue our study of Christ in the sacrifices. We're rapidly approaching its conclusion, and you will be able to confirm that as you look at the passage which will be the object of our gaze this morning, and that is the Millennial Temple section of Ezekiel.

Ezekiel chapters 40 through 48. If you remember the study we did in this book a few years ago, this was a fascinating anticipation of worship during the thousand-year reign of Christ, the sons of David, here on earth in Israel, dominating the entire planet from that location, Jerusalem being the capital and the center of government for the entire planet. Ezekiel is given a vision of that time, and central in that is the reconstructed and fully functional, and yet in many ways new, temple.

This will be the third temple. You had Solomon's as the first. You had the second temple that was reconstructed in the days after Ezra and Nehemiah and continued to be refurbished and refurbished all the way up to close to the time of the Lord Jesus, and then was destroyed after his death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and the first few decades of the church age, away it went.

And now there is a hollow place where the temple once stood on the Temple Mount. And Ezekiel says there will be a physical temple, and at that temple there will be an altar, and on that altar there will be sacrifices. So our study of Christ in the sacrifices would not be complete if we did not look at the purpose and meaning of those sacrifices, particularly in the light of the somewhat vexed question, if Christ has come and died on the cross, fulfilled the law, and has been the substance that all of those shadows anticipated, then why is anybody slaughtering animals afterward? Is it a memorial and what is the purpose of that? We have a memorial by looking at Scripture, why does there need to be a physical one? So we are going to investigate that this morning because Christ will be pictured in those sacrifices just as He was in the Levitical and the Patriarchal sacrifices that we have seen in such great detail.

Let's take a moment to pause and set aside distractions, focus our attention, cultivate the ministry of God's Holy Spirit, and ensure that the time we spend together in fellowship will be productive and give the Holy Spirit the wherewithal to lead us and guide us. Shall we pray? Father, there are so many circumstances that drive us to the foot of Your throne in prayer, recognizing our dependence on You for the strength and the wisdom and the guidance to fulfill the purpose for which You have given us life and placed us on this earth in this time as members of the body of Christ, fellow believers in fellowship with one another as we seek to live both individually and collectively before You. We thank You for the light that is shed on our path by Your Word, the essential truth that can transform our souls when we make it the object of our faith.

We thank You for the gift of the Holy Spirit, His presence and His enabling power so that we

can, in fact, avail ourselves of the truth that we learn from Your Word. We thank You most of all for the Lord Jesus who has opened the way to this life and this hope, this confidence that as we spend this time of preparation and training and development and growth that it all looks forward to the day when the Lord Jesus will come and bring us into His own presence and then through Himself bring us into Your presence. And we pray that as we pursue our study this morning that God the Holy Spirit will teach us and enable us so that on that day when we are presented before You it will be a day of glory and not of shame, it will be a day of opportunity and not of being set aside in the darkness which is outside.

We pray that as we look at these things the Lord Jesus will be revealed in these sacrifices as You intended for us and certainly in the literal fulfillment in the age to come. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

Christ in the sacrifices, there is no point to taking the life of an animal and shedding its blood before God in His presence with an awareness of our distance, the gulf that stands between us and God. There would be no point to that if it could not be ultimately remedied in the Lord Jesus, if it did not anticipate and foreshadow Him. In the Levitical offerings we saw in the varied procedures that were prescribed for Israel under the superintending Levitical priests that there are facets of His work that are brought to the fore.

The Ola, the Minka, the Shalem, the peace offering, the trespass and sin offerings, we will call them that for purposes of instruction. But all of these and then the other Zabak type sacrifices that cover the special sacrifices, you stop and think of the first several chapters of Leviticus, do any of those chapters cover the Passover lamb? Is the Passover lamb an Ola? No. Is it a Minka? No.

Is it a peace offering? No. Is it a sin or a trespass offering? No. How about the offering that produces the scapegoat? How about the offering that produces the birds that are involved in the cleansing ritual in Leviticus 14 for the leper? These are special, in Hebrew the term is Zabak which means sacrifice and it covers these special, occasional and unique sacrifices that are occasioned by some specific feast or some specific event.

All of them in their various, the timing, the way in which they are offered, the disposition of the parts of the animal or of the grain in the case of the grain offering, whether there is frankincense, whether or not there is leaven, whether or not there are parts of the animal that are consumed by fire, whether they are given to the priests. All of these as we have seen have great significance. It isn't just rigmarole for the sake of keeping the Israelites busy.

Every part of it and to do an exhaustive study would consume the rest of our lives. To take each detail of each sacrifice would be a study of years at a minimum. So we have sampled, we have done something of an overview, we have slowed down and showed in some sacrifices the nature of every single detail being significant, others we have given a necessarily light touch.

We are going to leave the Levitical offerings at this time. We are not going to continue to

tweeze apart the individual strands that are so beautifully woven together in God's presentation of the Lord Jesus in those. But we have enough of a paradigm, we have enough of a pattern that we have seen that you yourself could take any given sacrifice on any given occasion and watch for those signal details.

We know now something of the language of physical sacrifice. We know that what is done with various portions of the animal's body is significant. We know that the head would represent something related to thought and intention and direction and motivation.

We know that the inward parts, the thoughts and intents would be in view. We know that the skin is what can be seen on the outside and what is observable to others. We know what the blood represents.

Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin, it is life for life. We know the laying of the hand on the head and the whole concept of substitutionary sacrifice means that this is something that must be done in my place else I would pay the penalty and be separated from God forevermore. That's all well and good.

So we started in the past, we went all the way back to the beginning, the first detailed sacrifice, at least labeled a sacrifice, with Cain and Abel and through Noah and all the way forward. So now we are going to move from the past through the present where there is no physical sacrifice prescribed by God in the sense of animal sacrifice to the future when that concept is going to return. This has been quite the topic of discussion because first of all you have to decide is it really going to happen.

There are those who believe that Ezekiel in his prophecy is speaking spiritual truth through symbolic visionary language. He envisions the Millennial Temple, we call it the Millennial Temple, he just envisions a future temple beginning in chapter 40 and going through chapter 48. And people say well you are taking this literally and you should not.

This is eschatological anticipation perhaps of the church. And the Romans 12, 1 and 2, sacrifice, present yourselves a living sacrifice. These are types and visionary reflections of what will be a spiritual function and a spiritual reality.

Well if you have turned to Ezekiel chapter 40, let's just sample a little bit of that first chapter and see if we tend to think that this is something in a physical reality or if it is suggested to us that we should take it in a typical or spiritual fashion. In the 25th year of our captivity, at the beginning of the year, now you figure 586 minus 25. If I can do my math that would be 585, 575, 561-ish, 561 B.C. It is going to be nominally a 70 year captivity.

So you are about a third of the way into it, right? One third down, two thirds to go, 25, 50, 75, give or take. So the 25th year of our captivity. This is after the shock of the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple and the deportation of the people.

What is something that happened 25 years ago? 1990, 1991, some of our kids were being born

around that time. It is a ways, right? In human experience, 25 years in the past, you think back circa 1990, 1991, our family was popping into existence out of nowhere as if by magic. I was called back to active duty.

That is the time of Desert Shield, Desert Storm, a lot of things going on. But you think about that distance. If you can think back that far, those of you that are old enough to think back that far, 25 years, two and a half decades, pretty good chunk of time.

That is where Ezekiel is, down by the River Kabar in the community of captives. They are sort of a suburb of Babylon where they tend to live. They are not in grievous bondage.

They are a servant class. They are a low caste. They have freedom of movement.

They can go to the market. They are not in chains. They are not being whipped.

They are not making bricks without straw type of things. But they are subservient. They are the worker class.

Many of them are in sort of an indentured capacity where they are expected to be certain places at certain times and grievous consequences will follow if they are not. 25 years after the last of the three deportations. At the beginning of the year on the 10th day of the month.

Now, at the beginning of the year, the 10th day of the month. Well, we have to ask ourselves which beginning of the year? Because the classical calendar would start in the fall. Right? The old calendar and the one that was used elsewhere in the ancient Near East, it starts in the fall.

Kind of like ours starts in the winter in January. Well, theirs would start in the fall. And you remember Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement.

You remember Rosh Hashanah, the head of the year. Then 10 days later you have the Day of Atonement. So, if this is the classical calendar, then this is on the Day of Atonement.

Right? This is the day when the priest, if he had access to the temple and it had not been all knocked down, would have been going in with the blood and doing one of those special Zabak sacrifices to take blood in and enter into the Holy of Holies and sprinkle it on the mercy seat. Right? So, it's a significant day. 14th year after the city was captured on the very same day.

So, 25th year of our captivity at the beginning of the year and the 14th year after the city was captured. Well, this tells us the distance perhaps between Ezekiel's captivity and the fall of the city. If this is 14 years, then my calculations are off.

586 minus 14 is 572. Right? So, it would be a little bit newer. But for Ezekiel, 25 minus 14 is 11.

So, this would have been the 598 captivity. Remember 605? 598. 586-ish.

597. So, this tells us that Ezekiel, if he says our captivity, then he is in the group that was taken in the second incursion by Nebuchadnezzar. So, we're just trying to get a fix on where we are generally speaking here.

In the visions of God, He took me into the land of Israel, set me on a very high mountain toward the south with something like the structure of a city. He took me into the land of Israel, set me on a very high mountain. And on it, toward the south, was something like the structure of a city.

He took me there, a man with an appearance like the appearance of bronze. He had a line of flax and a measuring rod in his hand, and he stood in the gateway. Son of man, look with your eyes and hear with your ears.

Does this resonate at all from our Thursday study? Son of man, look with your eyes, hear with your ears, and fix your mind on everything I am going to show you. For you were brought here so that I might show them to you. Declare to the house of Israel everything you see.

So, what high mountain is this? Once he says there's a wall all around the outside of the temple. The very high mountain here is Mount Zion. But, it seems to be altered somehow.

It's a very high mountain now. If you've seen the topography, I've never been there of course, but those who have, and if you look on films, there's a video called the Holy Land from the Air, or Helicopter Visit to the Holy Land, Helicopter Holy Land, I don't know what it's called, but it's from the air. They go all around the world, and here's Istanbul from the air, here's Cairo from the air, and there's a Jerusalem from the air thing.

It's fascinating to see it in its geographical context. And Zion is an interesting mountain, but it's not especially prominent. There's a ridge, and there's valleys, and there are other mountains, and if somebody took everything away and just showed you the raw land, I don't think you could pick it out and say, well obviously God's going to put His temple right there, because look at that mountain, it's so special, it blends.

Now, it's a very high mountain. What do we know happens at the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ? At the rapture, we meet the Lord in the air, He takes us off, and seven years later, we come back with Him on the second coming, and what does He do? He descends, and His feet come down where? On the Mount of Olives. At which point, what happens? It splits.

There is a huge geographical redistribution of everything. This is part of what cures the problem at Armageddon. There is a way open.

There will be water coming out from perhaps the water source that feeds the spring Gihon currently on the side of Mount Zion. Now, there's going to be a river flowing out from under the throne, as you see when you go through the rest of this here. So the topography is going to be greatly changed.

We'll say that much, right? And now, Mount Zion is a very high mountain, and Ezekiel is taken

there. He doesn't even recognize it. He's from there.

He knows what it's supposed to look like, and when he's airdropped back onto it, he doesn't at first know quite where he is, and he sees the temple, and this is not like the temple that he saw in his youth. It's a different building, but it is the temple. Son of man, look with your eyes, hear with your ears, fix in your mind everything I show you are brought here that I might show them to you.

You were brought here so that I might show them to you. Now, why is Ezekiel brought and not Hananiah? Why is Ezekiel brought and not Azariah, or Mishael, or Daniel, or any other faithful believer of that time? Why is Esther, the girl that is selected for the harem of Ahasuerus, of Xerxes, there is an appointment for each of us in the plan and purpose of God? This is Ezekiel's purpose. He is brought here.

He is the guy that God wants to record this vision. He and no one else. There's not a busload of them that are taken.

You would think, well, wouldn't it be sort of symbolic if Daniel and his three friends and Ezekiel, that would make five, and five's a nice biblical, they could all come. And in the mouths of many witnesses, a thing is established. It's just Ezekiel.

And when you think about that in terms of our own daily life, wherever we are in our circumstances, that's where God has put us. So he immediately sees this, and he sees a man, and in his hand is a measuring rod, six cubits. Each, it's a cubit and a hand breadth.

This is the long cubit. So you remember how long a cubit is? Elbow to the fingertip plus a hand breadth. So let's just round it off and say it's two feet for our American minds.

So each one of these is two feet. And his measuring rod is six of these cubits, which makes it how long? Twelve feet. That's a nice manageable piece of equipment to use to measure.

So he's got a 12-foot-long stick. He measured the width of the wall structure, one rod, about 12 feet thick, and the height, one rod. So this is like a 12-by-12 block type of thing.

Then he went to the gateway, which faced east, and he went up its stairs and measured the threshold of the gateway, one rod wide and the other threshold, one rod wide. Each gate chamber, one rod long. Now, as you go through this and you just glance down through here, he measured the vestibule.

In the eastern gateway, three gate chambers, three on the other side, the gate posts. He measured the width of the entrance to the gateway, 10 cubits. The length of the gate, 13 cubits.

All the rest of this chapter, he measures the outer court. Does this sound like a vision? Or does it sound like a real place? It sounds to me like a real place. And most biblical scholars, I think, take this.

Well, I should back up. Not most. I should say all of those that agree with us, take it literally.

You cannot believe the spiritualization that goes on. And what they have to do to do that is just ignore all the details. Well, it's just a vision.

And he's just throwing language in to magnify the imagery. We have seen how important every single detail is. And if all of these details are to be given to the children of Israel, you get the idea this is the blueprint.

When they build this thing, they're going to refer to this document. The question is, well, why doesn't God wait and give it to them right before they build it? He gives it to them while they're in captivity. Having seen, remember the distance, whatever that distance in years is, it's well within their memory.

They remember the Temple of Solomon, and the thing has been knocked down. Some of them were already in captivity and heard about it. Some of them get grabbed by the hair of their head and taken back there.

But they remember Solomon's Temple in its glory, and now the thing is manifestly knocked down. So that's a fresh memory. And here is the blueprint for a new temple.

Would this not generate hope in those that heard the message from Ezekiel? God says there's going to be another temple, and He's pretty specific about it. But it's not going to be a temple in my mind. It's not going to be a mind temple.

It's not going to be a visionary place that I visit in my imagination. The thing is made of matter. It's structural.

It's got dimensions. Well, that's the background here to, first of all, establish, if we're going to look at Christ and the millennial sacrifices, it would be helpful to know if these are real sacrifices or if they are visionary, spiritualized sacrifices. And I'm going to contend without further ado that this is a literal temple.

It is a physical building that will exist in the literal thousand-year reign of Christ and the sons of David in Israel. We're going to take that for granted. If you don't want to take that for granted, go be warm, be fed.

God bless you. But you can still actually, even when that view is taken, derive some benefit from looking at what the sacrifices mean. But these are for real.

It's a real thousand-year reign. It's a real temple in a real city. It's got these real dimensions, and they're going to be real Levites.

So that's the first hurdle here. Secondly, in that temple, as you page through here, and just look at the big ideas, if you've got a New King James like mine, you've got some section headings. Chapter 40 says a new city and a new temple.

Then at verse 6 it says the eastern gateway. At verse 17 it says the outer court. At verse 20 it says the northern gateway.

Verse 24, the southern gateway. Verse 28, gateways of the inner court. Very detailed, very specific.

Then look at verse 38. Do you have a heading there on verse 38? Where sacrifices were prepared. Sacrifices.

All right, we're back on solid ground here. We're back to Christ and the sacrifices. Verse 38, Ezekiel 40.

There was a chamber and its entrance by the gateposts of the gateway where they washed the burnt offering. Okay, so we know at a minimum, without going any further, in the millennial kingdom, at the millennial temple, they are going to offer the olah. This is olah.

Leviticus chapter 1, this thing is coming back. Do they offer an olah now? No. Are they going to offer it again? Yes.

Ew. More bullocks having their artery in the neck slashed, bleeding profusely. A bull has got a lot of blood.

And this bloody ritual is going to be revived, reinstituted, and enhanced in the millennial kingdom. They will wash the burnt offering. These animals are washed.

They are cleansed for sacrifice. In the vestibule, there's verse 39. Two tables on this side, two tables on that side, which is to slay the burnt offering and the sin offering and the trespass offering.

Aha! Having studied Leviticus, we know what this is now, right? So they're going to slay the burnt offering. Leviticus chapter 1. They're going to slay the sin offering and the trespass offering. Remember chapters 4 and 5 into 6. So those blood sacrifices, at a minimum now, three of the five that we studied are going to be offered.

We're still waiting to see if they do the menka and the peace offering, right? Outer side of the vestibule, verse 40. As one goes up to the entrance of the northern gate, two tables on the other side, two tables. Four tables on this side, four tables on that side.

And on the gateway, eight tables where they slaughter. Four tables of hewn stone for the burnt offering. One cubit and a half long, cubit and a half wide, cubit and a half high.

The lady instruments with which they slaughtered the burnt offering and the sacrifice. Are they going to be washing and slaughtering sacrifices here? Is there any doubt? I think we've pretty well got that nailed down. So, flip forward a few pages because you're going to see, just looking at these headings now, dimensions of the inner court and vestibule at verse 47.

The dimensions of the sanctuary at chapter 41. There's side chambers at 41.5. There's buildings at the western end at 41.12. You've got dimensions and design of the temple area in 41.13. And you've got cherubim and you've got palm trees in verse 18. You've got down in verse 22, the altar is of wood, three cubits high.

Its length is two cubits, three cubits high. How high is it in feet? Six feet high. As high as me.

I, at one time, was 6'1". I've probably mashed down, but roughly my height. That's how high this thing's going to be.

Three cubits high. Its length is two cubits, four feet, four by six. Its corners, its length and its sides are of wood.

He said, this is the table that is before the Lord. The altar is the table. Remember the concept of the shared meal, that the sacrificial animal is called food, in the sense that it is set before God? Then you talk about the doors and beveled window frames and so on.

Chapter 42, chambers for the priest. Chapter 43, the temple, the Lord's dwelling place. Afterward, He brought me to the gate, the gate that faces toward the east.

If you look out that gate that faces toward the east, what do you see? What geographical feature do you see looking east off the temple mount? The Mount of Olives. Jesus used to sit there looking west, probably, perhaps, envisioning this. And there is this two-way gaze, east and west.

And behold, 43, 2, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east. Remember our study of that in Ezekiel, how the glory of God slowly departed the temple? In Ezekiel's vision, it started in the Holy of Holies and went to the doorway of the temple, and then it went through the courtyard, and then it hesitated at the gate, and then it went over the valley, over the Mount of Olives and out to the nations. Here it comes rushing back in one move, from the way of the east, voiced like the sound of many waters, or the sound of many waters, the earth shone with his glory.

It is like the appearance of the vision that I saw, like the vision which I saw when I came to destroy the city. The visions were like the visions which I saw by the river Kabar, and I fell on my face. The glory of the Lord came into the temple by way of the gate which faces toward the east.

The Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court, and behold, the glory of the Lord filled the temple. When's the last time that happened? It's back in Chronicles, when Solomon finished and offered sacrifice and dedicated the temple. The Shekinah came and filled it.

Then I heard him speaking to me from the temple, while a man stood beside me. He said to me, verse 7, Son of man, this is the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever. Le'olam.

No more shall the house of Israel defile my holy name, nor their kings by their harlotry, carcasses of their kings in their high places. When they set their threshold by my threshold, and their doorpost by my doorpost, with a wall between them and me, they defiled my holy name by the abominations which they committed. Therefore I have consumed them in my anger.

This is looking back at what happened 14 to 25 years earlier. Now let them put their harlotry and the carcasses of their kings far away from me, and I will dwell in their midst forever. Son of man, describe the temple to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities, and let them measure the pattern.

And if they are ashamed of all that they have done, make known to them the design of the temple and its arrangements, its exits and its entrances, its entire design, all its ordinances, its forms and its laws. Write it down in their sight, so that they may keep the whole design and all its ordinances, and perform them. This can't be the church in spiritual form, because this is Israel guilty and judged for defiling the previous temple, now enjoined to build and worship at this new one.

And God is going to put His presence there. This is the law of the temple. The whole area surrounding the mountaintop is most holy.

Behold, this is the law of the temple. Then look at verse 13. These are the measurements of the altar in its cubits.

The base is a cubit high and a cubit wide, a rim all around its edge of one span. This is the height of the altar. From the base on the ground to the lower edge, two cubits.

The width of the ledge, one cubit. The altar hearth and the ledge. Then in verse 18.

Son of man, thus says the Lord God. These are the ordinances of the altar on the day when it is made, for sacrificing burnt offerings on it, and for sprinkling blood on it. Literal millennial sacrifices.

Young bull, for a sin offering to the priests, who are of the seed of Zadok, who approach me to minister me, says the Lord God. I can't see why you would specify that the priests have to be sons of Zadok, in a spiritualized visionary fashion. So hopefully we've established that this is literal, that it is going to happen in the physical millennial kingdom.

Now. You shall take the bull of the sin offering, verse 21, and burn it in the appointed place of the temple outside the sanctuary. Watch now, because I'm going to ask you a question.

On the second day you shall offer a kid of the goats without blemish, for a sin offering, and they shall cleanse the altar as they cleansed it with the bull. When you have finished cleansing it, you shall offer a young bull without blemish, and a ram from the flock without blemish. When you offer them before the Lord, the priests shall throw salt on them, and they will offer them up as a burnt offering to the Lord, every day for seven days.

You shall prepare a goat for a sin offering, also a young bull and a ram from the flock, without blemish, seven days. They shall, verse 26, make atonement for the altar and purify it. Whoa, Nelly.

Isn't Jesus Christ on the cross the perfect sacrifice and atonement? He is the propitiation for our sins, not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. This is the millennium. This is a minimum of 2,000 years after the Lord Jesus died on the cross.

So what's up with making atonement with animal blood for the altar? And if we are even able to answer that question, then what is the answer to the so what question for us? Is this all for Israel? Is there any point of interpretation and application that applies to me? The answer is yes and yes. So we are going to pause here and take our break. And when we come back, we will together enter into this millennial temple precinct, look at this altar, and figure out what is going on with blood atonement from bulls and goats and rams from the flock, and why should I care.

But we'll pause here and take our break.