

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF VILLA RICA, PCA**Christ's Passion Our Burnt Offering**

By

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Lev. 1:1-17 (NASB)

1 Then the LORD called to Moses and spoke to him from the tent of meeting, saying, 2 "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'When any man of you brings an offering to the LORD, you shall bring your offering of animals from the herd or the flock. 3 'If his offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he shall offer it, a male without defect; he shall offer it at the doorway of the tent of meeting, that he may be accepted before the LORD. 4 'He shall lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, that it may be accepted for him to make atonement on his behalf. 5 'He shall slay the young bull before the LORD; and Aaron's sons the priests shall offer up the blood and sprinkle the blood around on the altar that is at the doorway of the tent of meeting. 6 'He shall then skin the burnt offering and cut it into its pieces. 7 'The sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire on the altar and arrange wood on the fire. 8 'Then Aaron's sons the priests shall arrange the pieces, the head and the suet over the wood which is on the fire that is on the altar. 9 'Its entrails, however, and its legs he shall wash with water. And the priest shall offer up in smoke all of it on the altar for a burnt offering, an offering by fire of a soothing aroma to the LORD.

10 'But if his offering is from the flock, of the sheep or of the goats, for a burnt offering, he shall offer it a male without defect. 11 'He shall slay it on the side of the altar northward before the LORD, and Aaron's sons the priests shall sprinkle its blood around on the altar. 12 'He shall then cut it into its pieces with its head and its suet, and the priest shall arrange them on the wood which is on the fire that is on the altar. 13 'The entrails, however, and the legs he shall wash with water. And the priest shall offer all of it, and offer it up in smoke on the altar; it is a burnt offering, an offering by fire of a soothing aroma to the LORD.

14 'But if his offering to the LORD is a burnt offering of birds, then he shall bring his offering from the turtledoves or from young pigeons. 15 'The priest shall bring it to the altar, and wring off its head and offer it up in smoke on the altar; and its blood is to be drained out on the side of the altar. 16 'He shall also take away its crop with its feathers and cast it beside the altar eastward, to the place of the ashes. 17 'Then he shall tear it by its wings, but shall not sever it. And the priest shall offer it up in smoke on the altar on the wood which is on the fire; it is a burnt offering, an offering by fire of a soothing aroma to the LORD.

The book of Hebrews tells us that the Old Testament sacrificial system was a foreshadowing of the once for all perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ. It was an economy of worship, which operated from the foundational principle of SUBSTITUTION.

In this respect the New Testament economy operates on precisely the same principle. All that has changed under the New Testament is the priesthood and the type of sacrifice to be offered as a substitute for the sinner.

Under the first economy animals and birds were the sacrificial victims. In the New Testament economy we have Jesus Christ as the sacrificial victim. In the Old economy the high priest was Aaron and his sons as successors. In the New economy we have Jesus Christ as the perpetual, ever living high Priest. In the old economy the Tabernacle and its appointments and furnishings represented heavenly things. In the new economy Jesus Christ as high priest has entered heaven itself, not with the blood of bulls and goats but with his own blood as an all-sufficient, perfect propitiation for the sins of all His people.

In this communion message today I want you to see the parallel between the infliction of the wrath of God poured out upon the animal or bird offered as a burnt offering and the infliction of the wrath of God poured out upon the Lord Jesus Christ as our burnt offering.

The worshiper under the old economy and now under the new economy is given a means whereby his sins can be atoned for by a sinless substitute. The wrath of God is represented by all that is done to the sacrifice in the burnt offering. I will speak more about that in a moment. But I want you to see that under the new economy of the New Testament the wrath of God is poured out on our God-appointed Savior Substitute the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the first two verses of our scripture in Leviticus we see God calling to Moses and speaking to him from the tent of meeting. The tent of meeting was the Tabernacle after it was erected and before Aaron and his sons were consecrated Moses would meet with the Lord there. God did not speak directly to the people. Moses would act as the mediator between God and the people.

In verse 2 God told Moses: {2}"Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'When any of you brings an offering to the LORD, bring as your offering an animal from either the herd or the flock.

Notice that the bringing of an offering to the Lord is voluntary. It is not commanded that he bring an offering. What is commanded is what he may bring as an offering and how he is identify himself with his offering as he brings it. But the primary principle preceding the bringing of one's offering is that his coming is completely voluntary. No one is coerced or required to come. But if you desire to seek the Lord's forgiveness and favor you must come with an acceptable offering. However, once a person comes voluntarily he has definite guidelines as to what his substitute sacrifice is to be and how he may come acceptably.

This is just as true in the new economy of the New Testament as it was in the old economy before the coming of Christ. Whosoever will may come. Let him come and take and drink of the water of life freely.

You and I come out of a felt need. We come because God invites us to come and because we know that we are unfulfilled and incomplete outside of our Creator/Redeemer God. But no one comes to God against his will. He comes willingly and voluntarily.

I. We Can Come Only In The God-Prescribed Way

Please notice that under the old economy any person who came had to come with an appropriate substitute victim to be sacrificed in his place in the precise manner prescribed. The burnt offering was brought for an atonement on behalf of the one bringing it. It had to be a male sheep, goat or a bull, or it

could be in the case of a poor Israelite a turtle dove or a young pigeon. God made it affordable for all who wanted to come with a substitute burnt-offering.

Notice that the burnt offering had to be a perfect specimen. The animal or bird had to be a sacrifice which would be in stead of the sinner. The soul life of the sacrifice was represented in the blood of the substitute. The sinner bringing the offering would symbolically place his hands on the head of the substitute and press down or lean upon the head of the burnt offering, {4}He is to lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him. {5}He is to slaughter the young bull before the LORD, and then Aaron's sons the priests shall bring the blood and sprinkle it against the altar on all sides at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. {6}He is to skin the burnt offering and cut it into pieces. {7}The sons of Aaron the priest are to put fire on the altar and arrange wood on the fire. {8}Then Aaron's sons the priests shall arrange the pieces, including the head and the fat, on the burning wood that is on the altar. {9}He is to wash the inner parts and the legs with water, and the priest is to burn all of it on the altar. It is a burnt offering, an offering made by fire, an aroma pleasing to the LORD.

Have you ever wondered what the meaning of all this is? Why is the substitute skinned and dismembered and then completely devoured by the flames of the altar? In the answer to that question we see God's wrath against sin. It was intended to show the terrible judgment of God upon sinners. What is done to the offering is done as to a substitute so that it would not have to be done to the sinner. It is done to the substitute so that the sinner can justly be forgiven by God, his guilt and sinfulness having been passed on to the approved substitute in his place. And think about this -- the soul is symbolized in this transaction.

An animal or bird does not have an immortal soul such as you and I do so it cannot suffer in the same way that a human can and would suffer. Mercifully, the animal or bird substitute is killed as efficiently and quickly as possible. But what happened after the substitute was killed is actually what happened to Christ before he died and is what will be the fate of all men who stand guilty before God without the Lamb of God as their substitute on the day of judgment.

In the skinning or the flaying of the animal we see a complete exposure of the substitute. The skin is symbolically a covering for the soul. In the removing of the skin the soul is laid bare and is exposed for all to see. God could see the guilty souls of Adam and Eve and in mercy he provided them with animal skins to wear to cover their nakedness. The animals slain were killed for that purpose and in that sense they stood as substitute sacrifices.

After the skinning the animal was cut into pieces in an orderly manner. Every joint and piece was severed in this procedure. The head was cut off from the body already before this was done.

We get a picture in this procedure of the penetrating and slashing sword of Jehovah rending asunder every joint and marrow in this exacting dismemberment. The soul is laid bare and is searched with the all seeing eye of God to expose any sinful word, thought or deed. The sinner is helpless before this judgment onslaught. Nothing is hidden or protected from this soul searching examination. The disfigured, disjointed body and dismembered flesh can scarcely be recognized as its former self. In the case of a bird substitute the crop is removed and feathers are stripped because they are a covering for the bird as the skin is for an animal. Its wings are rendered useless. It can never fly again.

Then, when all has been done to expose the inmost being of the substitute it was placed on the altar on the wood and it will be consumed and the smoke would rise up to God in this final burning judgment. And this would be a sweet smell to the Lord because at the altar His wrath is poured out but at the same time His mercy is also revealed. There at the altar justice and mercy meet each other and peace is established. Sin is atoned for and it was done in the substitute so that the sinner might be spared and forgiven.

See now in Jesus Christ our Substitute how that God let him be flayed and scourged in the skin of his body until he was a river of blood in his back and body parts. His face was more marred than any man and they singled out his head for torment with a crown of thorns pressed hard upon it.

His naked body is exposed for all to see on the cross as he became our willing and perfect substitute. He took our guilt and sin and shame there at Golgotha. See his mangled body, his helpless agony as he bore our sin.

In commenting on the procedure and exacting judgment portrayed in the Old Testament substitutionary sacrificial system which foreshadowed the vicarious sacrifice of our Savior Jesus Christ Andrew Bonar said: **The fires of hell prepared for the sinner will be according to a very orderly and systematic procedure. Every pang of pain will be weighed by perfect holiness, every stroke deliberated upon ere it is inflicted. In truth, this deliberate infliction is the most awful feature of justice. It leaves the sufferer hopeless. The stroke is awfully relentless, determined, righteous: such, too, were the Savior's sufferings. Every part and pore of his frame was thus mangled; every member of his body, every feeling of his soul.**

We are told in revelation 6 that when that day of judgment comes men will try to hide in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains from this all-penetrating judgment, but they cannot hide, and the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest day or night. ¹⁵**Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; ¹⁶and they said* to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; ¹⁷for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"** Rev. 6:15-17 (NASB)

As we come to the Lord's Table it is to remember his substitutionary, vicarious sacrifice of Christ on our behalf. The stroke that we were due he took. The judgment he bore was for our sins. We can be properly and eternally thankful that God let his wrath be poured out on him for our sakes. Unless Christ had done this we would go through our own judgment scene and face the relentless all-seeing dismemberment of every act, every thought, every intent of the heart in a judgment that would righteously sentence us to eternal punishment for our sins. Jesus Christ is our burnt offering. He is our high priest who offered up himself. We come to the Table today thankful for his mercy and lovingkindness that saved us from a terrible judgment. We come with repentance for those sins of omission and commission, pleading his shed blood for our cleansing and forgiveness.

Beloved in the Lord, hear what gracious words our Savior Jesus Christ says to all who truly turn to Him.

Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

I am the bread of life: He that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst. Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled

Truly, truly, I say unto you, he that believeth on Me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

Hear the Words of Institution as recorded for us in Paul's letter to the Corinthians. 1 Cor. 11:23 -32 (NASB)

²³For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; ²⁴and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me." ²⁵In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." ²⁶For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

²⁷Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. ²⁸But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup. ²⁹For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly. ³⁰For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep. ³¹But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged. ³²But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world. We invite all who repent of their sins and who trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation and desire to live as becometh followers of Christ; also all communicants in good standing in any evangelical church to participate. We also invite all non-communicants to remain as well.

LET US PRAY

Most gracious Father, who callest us to the Holy Table of our Savior, to show His death and to receive His gift of life: enable us to come with earnest faith and kindled devotion.

Help us to make this memorial of our Savior's sacrifice with hearts of true adoration and praise. Open our eyes to behold the vision of His love, and pour into our souls the fullness of His grace. And grant that, yielding ourselves to Thee, we may henceforth live as those who are not their own, but who are brought with a price, repenting of any and all sin and separating ourselves from all that would offend Thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

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