

HEBREW S



Jesus preaching the "Sermon On The Mount"

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A STUDY IN PRACTICAL CHRISTOLOGY FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

The Study prepared by
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When one sits down to read, Hebrews 9 and 10, one can not get beyond the monumentally big idea of sacrifice. It is an over powering topic in all of the letter to the Hebrews, but here it takes on the more substantial role of being the final work of Jesus' earthly ministry. He did for us what we can not do for ourselves, no matter how good we are at obeying all of the laws that are out there to guide us in living a Godly life.

Let us be clear at the outset, that we do have things that we are to do. There are things that are written down that we must obey. But even if we were to do the best job ever done in keeping the new covenants laws, we will be short. We need Jesus and what He has done for us.

Prayer --- Prayer

Sacrifices

James J Braddock was a man who loved his family dearly. He lived at a time in world history where just the idea of putting food on the table was a major concern. Jobs were day long events with no promise of a job tomorrow. You answered a 'cattle call' and worked, in his area, on the dock for one day at greatly reduced wages. You could barely call it a living and his yet he was determined to keep his family together and to do the best job possible to put some bit of food on the table and some heat in the stove. A noble heart, to say the least.

The one thing that he had going was a very strong chin and a very powerful right hand. So, he took on fights to put some extra money in the til. It all paid off. In the middle of the Great Depression, this man who became the hero of the downcast, keep on fighting to keep his family together. He keep on struggling, and he keep on winning, until he beat Max Baer to become the heavy weight champion of the world. He held this title until he was finally dethroned by Joe Louis, the greatest boxer of the last 100 years by many accounts.

James J. Braddock, fought not out of a love of boxing, but out of a necessity, a sacrifice that he was willing to make for his family. It was the only way out of the desperate situation that he and his family found themselves.

The press dubbed him the "Cinderella Man", for out of the diversity of the times came one single success that lifted the hearts of millions of others through out the depressed regions of New Jersey and New York. His sacrifice for his family, bolstered others, giving hope and focus to the people who were struggling just like he was struggling. Our actions today will touch other lives. That is a given. But it is in the sense of real sacrifice that we find the most significant gifts that mankind has ever had offered to himself.

Hebrews 9:1-10

9:1 Now even the first covenant had regulations of divine worship and the earthly sanctuary. 2 For there was a tabernacle prepared, the outer one, in which were the lamp-stand and the table and the sacred bread; this is called the holy place. 3 And behind the second veil, there was a tabernacle which is called the Holy of Holies, 4 having a golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden jar holding the manna, and Aaron's rod which budded, and the tables of the covenant. 5 And above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat; but of these things we cannot now speak in detail. 6 Now when these things have been thus prepared, the priests are continually entering the outer tabernacle, performing the divine worship, 7 but into the second only the high priest enters, once a year, not without taking blood, which he offers for himself and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance. 8 The Holy Spirit is signifying this, that the way into the holy place has not yet been disclosed, while the outer tabernacle is still standing, 9 which is a symbol for the present time. Accordingly both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make the worshiper perfect in conscience, 10 since they relate only to food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until a time of reformation.

Preliminaries

1. We live in a world that has regulations and bylaws by the boat load. It is not a new idea to have to live within the boundaries of some law. It is called “**governance**”.
2. Those that support the idea of no “governance” and absolutely no law are called **antinomianists**, or **anarchists**, -with some being called **Buddhists**. **This is still very much with us today**.
3. In the Old Testament, there were laws governing the temple and who could go where and who could do what with in it, even as Levites. There were rules upon rules, upon rules, upon rules.
4. There was one primary rule: that blood had to be shed for the sins of the people, and to cleanse the relationship with God.
5. The great question is “Why?” **Why was it necessary to have “blood” shed to cleanse the people? Why not water and soap?**
6. I personally believe it is because God had said at the beginning that if we go against Him we will die, and the price of blood was a reminder that that was so. Man did die at the Garden’s ‘Apple Eating Festival’, just not in the way that he expected.

Hebrews 9:11-22

11 **But** when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; 12 **and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place **once for all**, having obtained **eternal redemption**.** 13 For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled, sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, 14 **how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, **cleanse your conscience from dead works** to serve the living God?** 15 And **for this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant**, in order that since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. 16 For where a covenant is, there must of necessity be the death of the one who made it. 17 For a covenant is valid only when men are dead, for it is never in force while the one who made it lives. 18 Therefore even the first covenant was not inaugurated without blood. 19 For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses to all the people according to the Law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, 20 saying, "This is the blood of the covenant which God commanded you." 21 And in the same way he sprinkled both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry with the blood. 22 And according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness!!" ...**and neither can there be any without blood...**"

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1. Christ's work here on earth was that of a priest who offered sacrifices. But the sacrifice that He made was one of **perfection** and not one contaminated with any element of carnality – sin. He did not use the things of this world to do the job, but **He used His own blood** which **did the job completely, in one go. (This is the perpetually effective way.)**

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2. So stop and think, if you have the opportunity to be under the old and ineffective, repetitive way or under the new and eternal, continuously effective way, which would you choose? **Why choose the old way?**
3. The blood of Jesus will totally and absolutely cleanse you of all sins and all consequences of those sins. This is the value of the new covenant, and **there is no other way to achieve the needed results**.
4. We do not know all of the whys and wherefores, but it seems that we need to have the sin debt paid for, in full, and in Jesus that is just what is accomplished. Repeating this point of fact, **there is no forgiveness ever, without the shedding of His blood.**

Hebrews 9: 23 - 28

23 Therefore **it was necessary** for the copies of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. 24 For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; 25 nor was it that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood not his own. 26 Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. 27 And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment, 28 **so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him.**

Summation

1. In order for relationships to be brought back to a **point of real purity**, there needs to be a total and absolute cleansing of all elements that reflect the relationship between a man and God.
2. The things from the physical world can not accomplish this cleansing.
3. What is needed to reconstitute a true and holy relationship with God is something beyond the physical world's capability.
4. This real and lasting "cleansing process" requires a degree of perfection that is not attainable in the human-physical world.
5. What was required was Jesus going before God, offering Himself, to purify 'holy place', thus paying the entire sin debt.
6. He did this, **once for all**.
7. His work affected all of mankind then, **for all of history**.
8. Jesus is the ultimate sacrifice, and the final and absolute answer to the sin problem that was incurred way back at the Garden through the acts of rebellion that each individual has committed to destroy his relationship with God.

**Note the universality of this passage, and the way that the return is phrased:
-it is a return for all who await Him, not a select few of those who await.**

**This passage is written with a general audience, and it is all time, not
sectored time as would be the case in a total preterist view.**

Conclusion

Sacrifices are always appreciated by those that are close to the moment of sacrifice best, to those who have indeed understood the real significance of what was done for some one else.

Today in our world, we do not often have any James J. Braddock's to turn to for a historic picture of the sacrifices on the behalf of others. Those that do have a possibility of being men who give hope and change the conditions of mankind are all too often found to be nothing more than morally deficit politicians, movie stars, and wayward sports stars. They hold a shining candle for a moment and then the reality of day dawns and we see them in another light.

These type of men, and these type of circumstances do not happen every day. Sacrifice in our world of self-indulgent, do your own thing type of thinking rarely has a place in our thoughts. We get so caught up in church with being right, with obeying the rules, that we slowly loose sight of the one who made our sacrifice possible. We need to remember Jesus, and to preach Him, and Him crucified. We can not afford to go about our preaching as if Jesus is just a topic among many topics. That kills churches! That kills the excitement of every thing Christian.

We must remember Jesus in every service, in every day, letting Him become the guiding light. This is what Hebrews has been saying all along. He is the epicentre of our thoughts, prayers, hopes, lives, families, and we must take pains to make sure that He stays as the epicentre. If we do not, the church is doomed to become nothing more that a series of rules, just like Judaism. We will know how much mint and cumin we need to give, but we will not know why, and what it took to get us to this position of a saved-cleansed soul before the awesome might of God.

Old Testament Sacrifices - Over-view 1

Sacrifices in the Old Testament are a bit of a mystery to the majority of Christians in the pews today. This is so because we do not spend a great deal of time looking at them, nor even reading the books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy. We are the less for this.

We must understand that New Testament Christianity is built on the back of the training that was accomplished in the Pentateuch. We do not use this material today as any form of a 'rule of faith', but it still teaches us a great deal about God and what constitutes the realities of holiness.

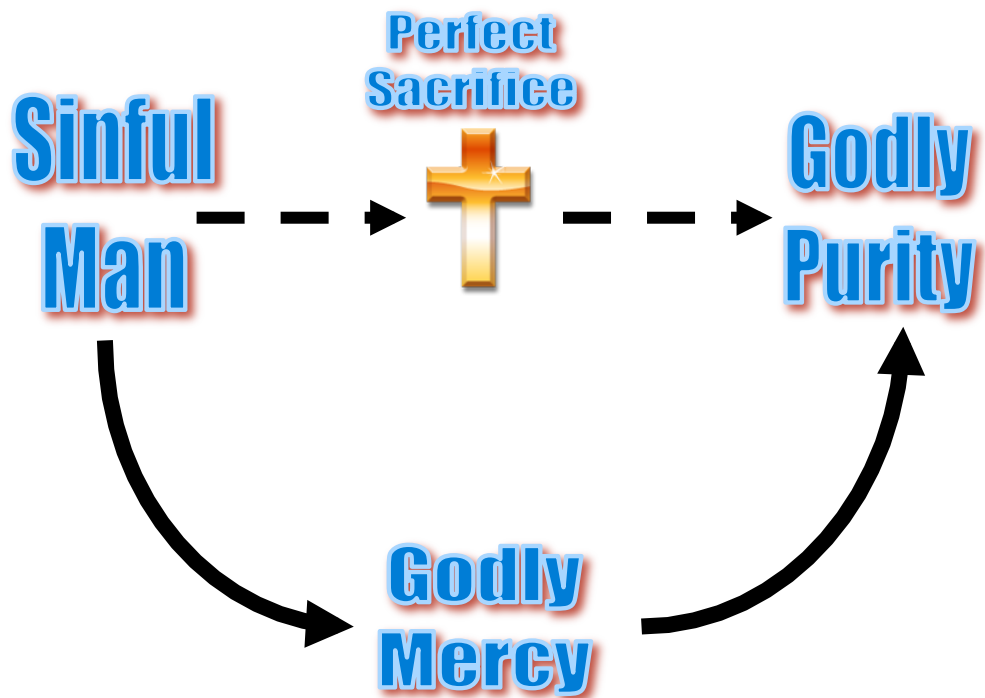
The very first thing that the sacrificial system teaches us is the awful nature of sin. Sin is so bad that it breaks relationship with God and utterly pollutes every element of that relationship. It is a corroding influence that brings someone every lower until it devours them totally.

The great question is then, "What can be done to stop the rot of sin, the devouring of the individual, and bring about a freedom from guilt and a return to the purity of the relationship with God?" This is the great pursuit of "justice, mitigated by mercy and love": the payment of the sin price and the opening up of the opportunity for God to share His love with His creature.

A sacrifice is the taking of the burden of the debt of sin, which to be just, requires execution, eternal capital punishment, by one innocent party and then for that party to pay the debt for others. As all elements of the relationship with God, absolute purity is required. It is only found in the work of Jesus. **"He paid a debt he did not owe. I owed a debt I could not pay. Christ Jesus paid the debt the debt that I could never pay."**, as the song says.

The sacrifices of the Old Testament were contingent upon the ultimate payment of the debt which was to occur latter in history when Jesus went to the cross.

Salvation is then by what Jesus did. It is not by that which we do. What of baptism, faith, repentance? Are they not essential? Yes they are! But, they are the acts of appeal that one is to make to avail themselves of God's mercy. It is like Naaman at the river: if we do what God asks, God will bless us with His mercy and forgiveness and allow the debt payment to cover our own particular sin problems. But if we do not do what He says, then we are still acting in a rebellious manner and setting ourselves up as adversarial authorities to God. Baptism is thus an act of submission to God.



Obedience to “that form of doctrine is essential”!! But, and this is very crucial, the centrality of that form of doctrine is the cross and Jesus upon that cross, sacrificially, for appellant mankind.

If we allow Jesus to become diminished, or to ignore Him for the sake for mere obedience, then we are guilty of a gross form of sin, one that changes God plan of salvation by His grace, to one of salvation by our own efforts, regardless of the cross’s involvement.

Jesus’ sacrifice upon the cross did, once for all time, what needed to be done, pay the sin debt and cleanse the relationship totally. It is open and available to everyone who will avail themselves of His mercy. One will not need amnesty, for one will have purity, through the death of Jesus for our sins.

Old Testament Sacrifices - Over-view 2

Sacrifices	OT Ref.	Elements	Purpose
Burnt Offering	Lev 1; 6:8-13; 8:18-21; 16:24	Bull, ram or male bird (dove or young pigeon for the poor); wholly consumed; no defect	Voluntary act of worship; atonement for unintentional sin in general; expression of devotion, commitment and complete surrender to God
Grain Offering	Lev 2; 6:14-23	Grain, fine flour, olive oil, incense, baked bread (cakes or wafers), salt; no yeast or honey; accompanied burnt offering and fellowship offering (along with drink offering)	Voluntary act of worship; recognition of God's goodness and provisions; devotion to God
Fellowship Offering	Lev 3; 7:11-34	Any animal without defect from herd or flock; variety of breads	Voluntary act of worship; thanksgiving and fellowship (it included a communal meal)
Sin Offering	Lev 4:1-5:13; 6:24-30; 8:14-17; 16:3-22	1. Young bull: for high priest and congregation 2. Male goat: for leader 3. Female goat or lamb: for common person 4. Dove or pigeon: for the poor 5. Tenth of an ephah of fine flour: for the very poor	Mandatory atonement for specific unintentional sin; confession of sin; forgiveness of sin; cleansing from defilement
Guilt Offering	Lev 5:14-6:7; 7:1-6	Ram or lamb	Mandatory atonement for unintentional sin requiring restitution; cleansing from defilement; make restitution; pay 20% fine

Old Testament Sacrifices - Over-view 3

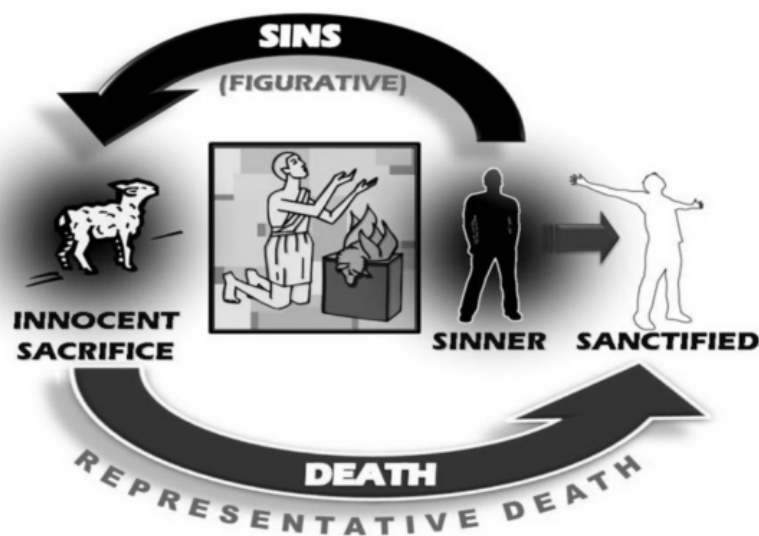
Animal Sacrifice in the Old Testament God's Love Allows the Price to be Paid by a Substitute

Fortunately, God loves His creation and decided to help pay this price even though it was undeserved, this is called *grace* (God gives us what we don't deserve – life). He showed His *mercy* (God doesn't give us what we do deserve – death) We deserved God's justice but we received God's mercy. How was His mercy shown? – by blood.

The Bible could be said to drip blood if you squeezed it. The Bible is bloody due to the problem and price of sin. God, in His love and His mercy, allowed the price of life to be paid through an innocent stand-in. This was the purpose of animal sacrifice instituted in the Old Testament. God showed His mercy by allowing the animal to pay the price of death owed by the sinner.

God made provision (or atonement) for the judicial price of sin to be paid by an animal. This is described in Leviticus 17:11 (emphasis added): *"For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement."* The life of the animal atones for (literally "covers") or cleanses the sins of the sinner. In this manner the sinner "died" representatively or through the animal as a substitute. What was the result? The removal of sin. For example, in Leviticus 16:30 this result was described as taking place on the Day of Atonement (the yearly sacrifice of animals): *"for it is on this day that atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you; you will be clean from all your sins before the LORD"* (emphasis added)."

Why an animal? The animal was innocent of sin, thereby qualifying it to be a substitute for the guilty sinner. An animal was innocent of sin, however, because it was amoral, it couldn't sin. If an animal could have sinned it would have been liable for its own sin! Sinlessness was required for it to provide a representative or substitute death for the sinner.



Question for Sunday Morning Discussion

1. Why in Hebrews 9:1-10 do we have a review of the nature of the Tabernacle and its set up?
2. What does this material in the start of this chapter tell us about the nature of the exclusive purity of God? How are we benefited by this material?
3. What is so essential about the shedding of blood? Why did God require the shedding of blood to purify and cleanse the relationship between Himself and mankind?
4. What are ten random laws that we need to uphold today to be Christians? Are there other laws that must be upheld?
5. If we are cleansed by the blood of Jesus, which was shed as a sacrifice on the cross, why do we need to “do” anything?
6. What is the value of ‘Christian laws’ if we can not repay the debt of our sins by our actions?
7. What does the text say is the reason that the new covenant is better than the old covenant? What does this really mean for us today?
8. What does it mean that “Christ will appear a second time for salvation”? Hebrews 9:28
9. What does it mean that this second appearance will be without “reference to sin”? Hebrews 9:28
10. What is the most difficult part of this chapter for you to understand? Please discuss you perplexities outside of class and then come back for some small group discussions on these issues.