

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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"Once For All"

Recently, while looking for good human interest stories on the internet, I came across a site that had illustrations for preachers. I had found my pearl of great price. One of the stories that caught my eye was of a rather young girl who was in a hospital room, with her brother who was lying quietly in the bed. She was standing there, beside the bed, reached over and kissed him and said 'goodbye'.

Then she was taken by her parents into the adjacent room and the nurse began to hook her up to a blood transfusion system. The needle was inserted and the blood began to flow towards a transfusion bag. She looked at the needle and the flow and asked the remarkable question, "How long before I die?" You see, she thought that she was giving her life for her brother, and she was doing it, as a six year old, sacrificially and voluntarily. It sort of tugged on my heart strings, as it was supposed to.

Sacrifice and sacrifices that involve human beings giving themselves for others is one of the things that catches everyone's eye. The shedding of blood has an intimate relationship with the human character in every society and in every age. These special examples never cease to hold the attention of the observer and touch the heart of the readers.

What is really amazing is that we, you and I, have a personal gift of an even greater sacrifice given unto us in Jesus Christ and Him crucified. It cries into our senses and it pricks the hearts of everyman. To understand Christianity, is to understand the great and eternal nature of His sacrifice. To diminish it, or to minimize it, or even to rarely concentrate on it, is to destroy the very fundamental of our salvation, and thus to void our whole Christian relationship with God in favour of a neo-legalistic bit of pretend-Christianity centred in the practical world of the "obedience-Regina". We can not afford to take the death and sacrifice of Jesus for granted in any way. We can not afford to visit it just ever so often, like maybe one or twice every few years

The sensitivity that we have in the area of Jesus' sacrifice should be a major goal for all, open to understanding what occurred historically and what was required emotionally, as what has eventuated religiously because of His act of sacrifice. A bull or a goat is just a bull or a goat, but this was "The Son Of God", not just an option, but the only way in which mankind could have had his sin debt answered in full, **once for all**.

There have been great examples, through out history of people who were willing to share their last morsel, cup, and even their blood for the sake of others. One of those was the widow of Zarephath that we looked at last week. The greatest of all, however, was the one that affects you and me directly still, **Jesus of Nazareth**.²

Hebrews 10:1-16

Looking again at the law

10:1 For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never by the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect those who draw near. 2 Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins? 3 But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year. 4 For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. 5 Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, **"Sacrifice and offering Thou hast not desired, but a body Thou hast prepared for Me; 6 In whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast taken no pleasure.**

7 "Then I said, 'Behold, I have come
(In the roll of the book it is written of Me)
To do Thy will, O God.'"

8 After saying above, "Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast not desired, nor hast Thou taken pleasure in them" (which are offered according to the Law), 9 then He said, "Behold, I have come to do Thy will." **He takes away the first in order to establish the second.** 10 By this will **we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.** 11 And every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; 12 but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God, 13 waiting from that time onward until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet. 14 **For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.** 15 And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying,

16 "This is the covenant that I will make with them
After those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws upon their heart,
And upon their mind I will write them,"

He then says,
17 "And their sins and their lawless deeds
I will remember no more."

18 Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin.

I. Legalism And Christianity

- A. Legalism is often used as a weapon today to control the way some people, people who can be rather heavy handed in their methods, because they want to get others to back off of 'me personally' "Legalism" is always a very disagreeable term one that tends to brand a person as a semi-heretic. This should not be.
- B. Legalism can, however, be a problem in the church that we need to be clear on, before we use it.
1. **Practical Definition:** A very good definition of 'legalism' is **a dependence on my having kept all of the rules, perfectly and religiously**, so as to "obey my way into heaven." (The inveterate crosser of 't's" and dotter of "l's".)
 2. **Common Definition:** The continual harping about doing things according to the text to such a degree that **the impression that is left is one of my dependence on my having kept the rules perfectly and religiously.**
 3. **POINT:** Be it known that Christianity does have rules and lines of demarcation that set it apart from the world and all other world religions. We are not opposed to rules that tell us how to live and how to respond to God. But we should be opposed to the abuse of rules and the development of any mindset that would hold to a superiority of law over Jesus and the cross, be that as a perceived superiority or as a real superiority.
 4. The letter to the Hebrews says that the Law, at best, was only a shadow of the better things to come. **"How so ?"**
 5. The letter to the Hebrews says that the Old Law could only look forward to a better time when thing were done completely.
 6. The truth is, is that the blood of bulls and goats is no substitute for the blood of Jesus: **carnal can not replace spiritual perfection.**
 7. The letter to the Hebrews says that God has not taken pleasure in the continual giving of sacrifices, for it still left the debt unpaid and deferred until next year, just being held in anticipation of a full and permanent payment.
 8. What Jesus did, He did **once for all**, and **for all time**. It was the complete sacrifice an the total cleansing of the creature of his sin problems and the closure of the relationship once enjoyed between the man and God. Just like in Abraham and Sarah's case, **this is the covenant that was always promised.**

Galatians 4:24-26
II Corinthians 3:7-9
Ephesians 2:12
Hebrews 8:6

Hebrews 10:19-31

19 Since therefore, brethren, we have **confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus**, 20 by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 **let us draw near** with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. 23 **Let us hold fast the confession of our hope** without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; 24 and **let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds**, 25 **not forsaking our own assembling together**, as is the habit of some, but **encouraging one another**; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.

26 For if we go on sinning wilfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment, and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries. 28 Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29 How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge His people." 31 It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

“To go on sinning wilfully” really means, because of its reflexive sense of the assumed supreme self authority found in all acts of sin, to so live as if to say that “none of this means anything really”, that I will have a marginal relationship with God and God’s people, but in the mean time, I will do what I want, when I want, because I want to do so. It is the ultimate act of self centeredness and self defined religion. Non-surrendered self authority.

Recap

1. The old law could not erase the reality of sin
2. With the old law, there was still the reality of sin left behind. It needed to be done over and over, with no real forgiveness granted.
3. But with the new covenant, it did erase the marks of sin against us and thus all is restored and there is no longer a need for continued sacrifices, because our relationship with God is fully restored, by the sacrifice on the cross.
4. ***This is the section of scripture that truly tells us these facts !! This is the section of scripture that fully explains the why to the question of “Why did Jesus have to actually die !!***

Point

1. **Because we now have confidence, in and through Jesus and His sacrifice**, to enter back into a unhindered relationship with God we are open to works that will reflect that new relationship. He did the job we could not do, a job we will never be able to do. Focus should therefore go to Jesus and not to man's efforts in every study we conduct.

2. What we need to do, every day, therefore...

... as a result of what He did, we need to ...

- a. **Draw near** with a sincere heart
- b. **Hold fast** the confession of our faith
- c. **Consider** how to **stimulate one another** to love and good deeds
- d. **No longer living to sin** and **doing what ever we want to do**, but **doing what pleases Him**
- e. **Remembering the consequences of sin** all the while. This is especially true when we consider those sinful actions that demean and belittle Jesus, and also His way.
- f. **'Hang tuff'**: You have already endured a great deal in these times and acts of persecution. Do not give up and do not forsake the faith, nor your brothers and sisters in Christ.
- g. Ever mindful of what was done for us at Calvary.

We can not ever afford the luxury of a legalistic, obedience only, form of salvation. We must have the blood of Christ and our obedience working together, in harmony and in balance with one another.

Hebrews 10:32-39

Conclusion

32 But **(SO)** remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings, 33 partly, by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated. 34 For you showed sympathy to the prisoners, and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, **knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and an abiding one.**

→ → 35 **Therefore, do not throw away your confidence**, which has a great reward. 36 **For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.**

37 For yet in a very little while,

He who is coming will come, and will not delay.

38 But My righteous one shall **live by faith**;

And if he shrinks back, My soul has no pleasure in him.

39 But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.

My sacrifice is to remember Him and to follow His way all of my days. When will I die? Right now to self and to the dictates of any system that tries to justify me, before God, by my actions alone.

The Zarephath Widow's Story

Beginning in **I Kings 17:8** we find the story of a widow that lived in the small town of Zarephath. There is a drought and she is facing the very last of her provisions. Elijah comes and finds her at a well. He asks her to get him some water and to get him some bread. She explains her problem and He gives to her the promise of God in the sustaining of her flour and oil. She is a person who was willing to make the last sacrifice while bestowing some degree of hospitality. She is not Jewish, but she is an example to all of Israel that speaks of the value of compassion and the power of God to touch all peoples.

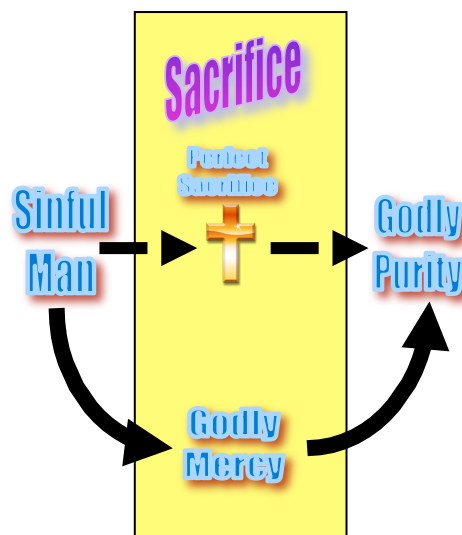
Later, in **I Kings 18** the son of this widow dies. Elijah restores the son to life. With this very early evidence of the power of God to resurrect life, the widow comes to a point of obedient faith. Elijah uses her home as a refuge from the oppression of Ahab who is seeking to rid the world of Elijah and his influence.

On the road, Elijah meets Obadiah. Between the two of them a discussion occurs where Obadiah voices his concern over being told to go to Ahab and announce the return of Elijah. This is the beginning of the great story of the contest between Elijah and the Prophets of Baal.

→ *Make a list of the points of comparison between the story of the widow and Elijah and the New Testament church of today.*

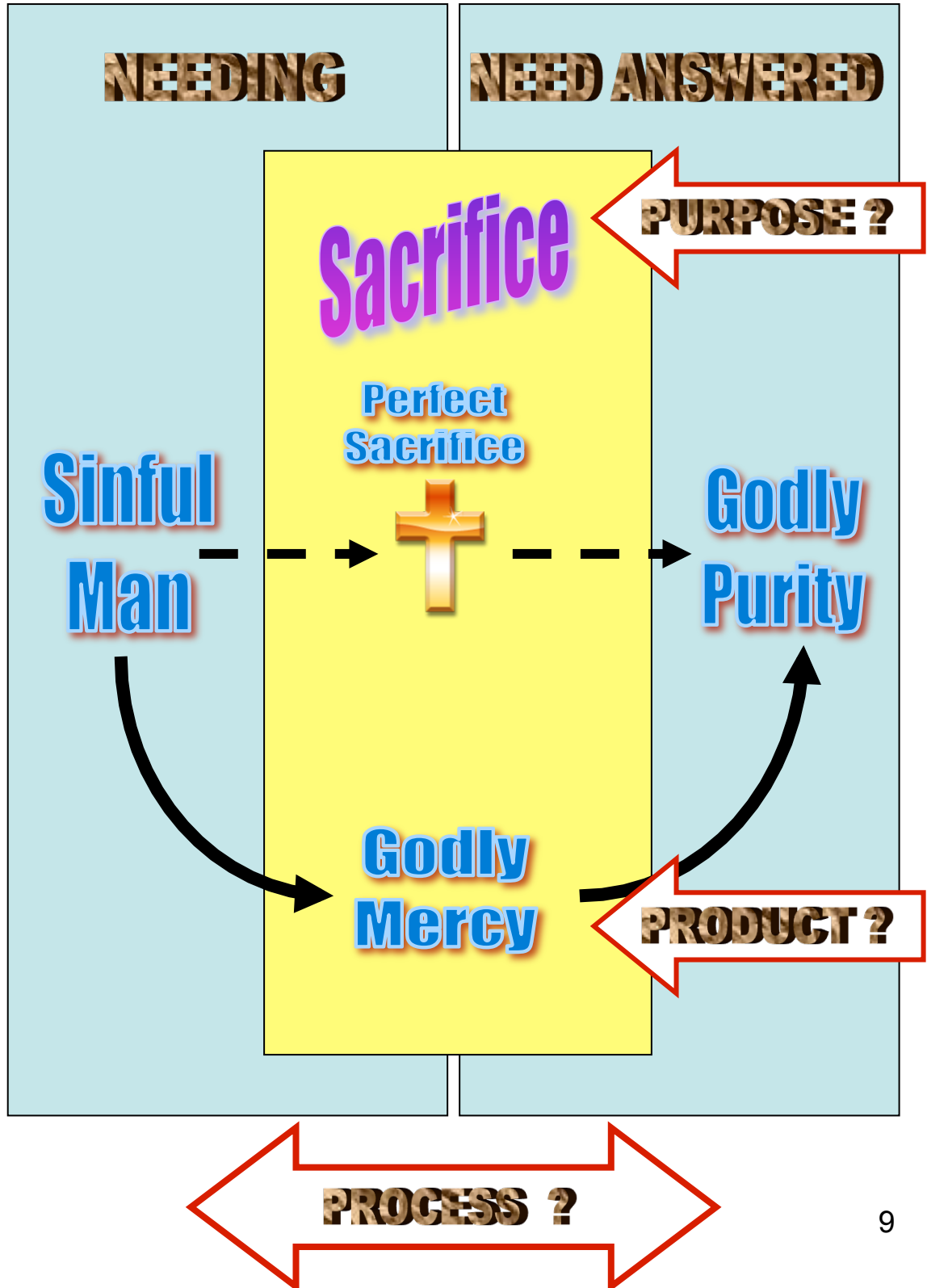
How do these two stories get reflected in the chart below?

→ *Has God always cared about mankind in general, or has He had a singular care for Israel, up unto the time of Christ? How do you know?*



The Sacrificial System And Me

As serving Christian 'missionaries' we must be able to explain the salvation 'process' at any time. We can not depend on 'inspiration', but rather it requires that we work on developing this side of our mission skills.



Question for Sunday Morning Discussion

- 1. What is actually meant by the terms ‘type’ and ‘antitype’, “shadow and substance”? Please give three examples of these in action in the biblical text.**
- 2. Why can not the blood of bulls and goats cleanse the Holy places eternally?**
- 3. What does it mean that “He will put His laws on our hearts.”, and “upon their minds I will write them”?**
- 4. What would be as totally practical way to respond to Hebrews 10:21-25 today? Is this a command we are to ‘obey’?**
- 5. What does it mean to ‘go on sinning wilfully’?**
- 6. Why would there be no longer be a sacrifice for sins for those that go on sinning wilfully?**