



Christ Sacrificed for Us (Ephesians 5:2)

When the season that the world calls “Easter” comes around, what does it really mean? Before this season can have any real meaning to you, my friend, you must understand just exactly what God did for you at the Cross of Calvary.

Paul wrote that “Christ ... hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God” (Ephesians 5:2). The sacrifices on God’s altar by the Israelites were given by God as a Divine picture of what the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished for you on the Cross. God used the “picture” of Israel’s sacrifices to be worth “a thousand words” as the saying goes. Dr. Ivor Powell noted four things regarding Israel’s sacrifices on God’s altar.

Carefully Chosen

The words “without blemish,” as recorded in the Pentateuch, were emphasized in forty-three places. Note the specific applications of the words. Offerings were to be without blemish (Exodus 12:5). The priests who participated in the ceremonies would be without blemish. The Lord would demand that “whatsoever man he be that hath a blemish, he shall not approach: a blind man, or a lame, or he that hath a flat nose, or any thing superfluous” (Leviticus 21:18).

When the Lord chose His Son to be the supreme sacrifice, He chose absolute perfection. Christ would not only be the Divine priest who presented blood upon the altar—that heavenly altar in Hebrews 9:11—but He would also be the Lamb of God whose blood was presented at that altar.

Officially Offered

Throughout the Old Testament, the Israelites were required to take offerings to the tabernacle or temple. God was said to dwell above the mercy seat, while the blood of the offering had to be sprinkled in His presence.

Although the tabernacle or temple was the place where animal sacrifices were officially offered, Calvary was the central place in the sacrifice application. The Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled this important part of the picture of Israel's sacrifices by being taken to Calvary, the official place of execution. He was to be put to death by crucifixion as God had appointed, which included the shedding of His blood.

Authentically Accepted

God made it clear that sacrifices had to be authentically accepted. To this end, every offering brought to the temple that was found to be imperfect was rejected. There were no exceptions. Imperfection had to be rejected.

In our case also, when the Lord Jesus offered Himself to God, either His redeeming work had been unacceptable to God, and He had remained in the grave, or else God accepted Jesus' sacrifice fully by raising Him from the dead. The Divine approval became evident when Jesus Christ was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, *by the resurrection from the dead*" (Romans 1:4).

Individually Identified

In the case of Israel, each sinner had to be identified with the offering in which he placed his trust. Identification was made when the sinner placed his hand upon the head of the animal to be slain; no man could do this for another (Leviticus 1:4).

In the case of Christ as "an offering and a sacrifice to God," His provision is for *all* those who wish to trust in Christ as personal Redeemer and Savior. But His marvelous provision will do you no good at all unless you *identify* yourself with that offering by faith in Christ. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him [this is identifying yourself with Him personally] should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

This Easter, will you identify with Christ by placing your trust in His sacrifice for your sins? All you need to do is to confess with your mouth and believe in your heart that you are a sinner and that Jesus Christ died for your sins and you will receive pardon. This is God's promise!

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