

To God (禘)

祥

Sacrificing sheep (羊)

Happiness... what is it?

*Is it to receive many red packets?
Is it to have a prosperous business?
Or is it to have health and longevity?*

Everybody seeks to be happy, and at the end of all the festivity and merriment, we must finally ask ourselves if we are truly happy. True happiness is a supreme joy given by God, a joy that is independent of one's circumstances, a joy that comes about because we have peace with God.

'Happiness' (祥)

The word 'happiness' (祥) comprises two characters, an iconographic record of the happiness of Abel preserved in the Chinese character. Happiness (祥) is found through sacrificing sheep (羊) to God (禘). Abel brought the best of his flock as an offering to God. Because God accepted Abel and his offering, Abel was happy.

Happiness Today

So the word 'happiness' (祥) teaches that happiness is found through a sacrifice. For Abel and those who walked in his likeness, that sacrifice was the offering of sheep, oxen, etc. For you and I today, it is the perfect sacrifice of Jesus, whom John the Baptist called the 'Lamb of God.'¹ Abel's blood sacrifice mirrors the grace and mercy of God who has provided a perfect offering in Jesus Christ - the Lamb of God - who shed His blood for the forgiveness of sin.

The Perfect Sacrifice

Why was the sacrifice of Christ perfect? Firstly, Christ's sacrifice saves forever. The work of Christ was eternal. Secondly, Christ's sacrifice is for all time and for all people.

Jesus offered up the final sacrifice for the sins of the people once for all when He offered up Himself.²

Thirdly, Christ's sacrifice removed sin. Christ's sacrifice was not related to the sacrifices of Abel and those who walked in his likeness, which consisted of sacrificial animals. Rather, His sacrifice was of Himself and His own blood. The blood of Christ took away sin. Abel's sacrifice was a shadow that symbolized the final work of Christ and never removed sin. It could not save because it was a shadow of the reality and not the reality itself.

Fourthly, Christ's sacrifice removes the guilt of sin. Abel's sacrifice for sin only reminded him that no forgiveness, no finality, was in sight. A remembering and a recollection of one's guilt was the only result that came from the offering made by Abel. The sacrifice of Christ, on the other hand, removes the guilt as the worshipper experiences for the first time true freedom from sin.

Lastly, Christ's sacrifice brings access. The work of Christ brings a person into freedom and access into the very holiest of God (right into His presence).³ Abel's sacrifice allowed no such access to God.

Happiness in Christ!

Do you wish to be saved forever? Do you wish to be one of those to come and receive forgiveness of sins? Do you wish to remove your guilt of sin? Do you wish access to God? Jesus is risen and alive today. All you have to do is to tell Him that you trust Him, saying, 'Thank you, Jesus, for dying for me. I am ready to accept you as my Savior.' If you will pray that prayer, He will give you eternal life with Him in heaven.⁴

Red for Happiness!

This red packet contains no money but something far more valuable - the message of salvation. The red of the packet may be likened to the crimson blood of Christ, shed to purchase the eternal happiness of sinners.

May you be a new creature, with a new life in Christ this Lunar New Year!

Blessed Lunar New Year

1. *John 1:29*

The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

2. *Hebrews 10:12*

But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;

3. *Hebrews 10:19-20*

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;

4. *John 3:16-18*

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

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