

Christ at The Altar of Sacrifice

"Let Them Make Me a Sanctuary"

Introduction:

Did Jesus die to appease an angry God, or was His sacrifice meant to reveal a truth about God's character that Satan has desperately tried to conceal? Why was the sacrificial system established, and what does the altar of sacrifice teach us about sin, God's law, and His unfailing love?

What if salvation means more than having your past sins forgiven? Does Christ's sacrifice merely rescue us from the penalty of sin, or does His grace also have the power to transform our hearts and free us from sin itself? What does it truly mean to have faith in the blood of Jesus? Discover the deeper meaning of Christ's sacrifice and what the cross promises to accomplish in your life

The Study:

The sacrificial system typified the death of the Son of God, and was instituted to clear up the misrepresentations of Satan to Eve regarding:

1. The character of God
2. The nature of sin
3. The immutability of the law

When the purpose of the sacrificial system was not understood by Israel, Christ was sent in a second attempt to reveal the truths regarding God's character, the nature of sin, and the immutability of the law.

Hebrews 10:5 Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me:

At the cross, Christ refuted the accusations of Satan. Christ revealed the truth of the merciful, self-sacrificing love of God. The cross revealed the truth that the natural and irrevocable consequence of sin brings death, thereby proving that the law is immutable, unchangeable and cannot be transgressed without consequences. The law doesn't need to change, the sinner needs to change.

In this study we will be investigating three subjects:

1. The Sanctuary truth depicted at the altar of sacrifice
2. Our response to the Sanctuary truth
3. The Sanctuary truth corrupted

The Sanctuary Truth depicted at the altar of sacrifice:

The altar of sacrifice:

Exodus 27:1 And thou shalt make an altar of shittim [acacia] wood, five cubits long, and five cubits broad; the altar shall be foursquare: and the height thereof shall be three cubits. 2) And thou shalt make the horns of it upon the four corners thereof: his horns shall be of the same: and thou shalt overlay it with brass.

The atonement at the cross:

The word "atonement" is closely tied with the words, remission, propitiation, justification, and reconciliation. We cannot fully examine all these terms and their meanings in this study. All of these terms are connected to the cross, symbolized by the altar of sacrifice. It will be helpful to understand that those terms are connected to the cross as some of the verses in this study will reference them.

The word “atonement” is best understood when broken down into “at” “one” “ment.” It’s a perfect word for describing the purpose of God in instituting the sacrificial system. When the sacrificial system was misunderstood, Christ was sent to more perfectly reveal the purpose of God, to bring us into “at” “one” “ment” with Him.

Leviticus 17:11 For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.

Romans 5:11 And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

The atonement Christ finished at the cross is not to be compared with pagan beliefs that a god needed blood sacrifices to be appeased. Satan is responsible for circulating such beliefs in order to predispose such an interpretation of the cross. Attending this misapprehension is the assumption that appeasement demands payment.

When the purpose of God in the sacrifices of bulls and goats was misunderstood, it became necessary for One who was “equal to God” to be sacrificed to reveal the goodness of God, which causes one to repent of their sins.

Romans 2:4 Or despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

When the sinner has realized the goodness of God in the self-sacrificing atonement, he is led to repent of his sins, and the provision made at the cross for the forgiveness of his sins is effected. The power of the self-sacrificing love is manifested in the blood atonement. In other words, only the power of love eradicates the love of power. Love, the fullest manifestation of God’s character and goodness, as revealed at the cross draws us to Him.

John 12:32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all ~~men~~ unto me.

Hebrews 9:22 And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission [pardon, forgiveness].

Romans 5:8 But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Justification for all:

The justification or atonement accomplished at the cross by Christ was finished and was provided for all. It was a free gift and could not be earned by any righteous acts of the sinner, as if the sinner could produce any righteousness of his own.

Justification is called a propitiation in the passage below and is available to all, for all have sinned and all are in need of a propitiation.

Romans 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24) Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25) Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

Above we read of the justification or remission of past sins described as redemption provided through a “propitiation.” “Propitiation” is simply explained as, the merciful act of God in extending a remedy for the sinful nature of man through faith in the atoning blood of Christ which revealed the righteousness of God. All this, “through the forbearance of God,” revealed His unmerited favor toward us as well as His faith that His provision for saving us from sin would be accomplished in those who had faith in His blood, faith in his ability to perform in us what He had promised. In the verses below, the forbearance of God “callet those things

which be not as though they were,” because “what He had promised, He was able also to perform” for those who had faith in His blood.

Romans 4:17b and calleth those things which be not as though they were. ... 21) And being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform.

What does “faith in His blood” mean? Below we read that the saints keep the faith of Jesus. What was the faith of Jesus?

Revelation 14:12 Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

Christ had faith that His atoning blood sacrifice would save those who put their faith in Him. To have faith in His blood is to have faith that His death would accomplish salvation to all who would receive His forgiving grace and believe that grace would fulfill the purpose of the cross. Christ not only saved us from the penalty of death, but promises to save us from sin itself which produces death.

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.

It is through the merciful forbearance of God that He promises to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1) John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

It's not by “works of righteousness,” but faith in Christ's promises to forgive and to cleanse us from all sin that the provided justification is appropriated to us. Forgiveness and cleansing of sins are gifts but must be received by faith.

Titus 3:5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; 6) Which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; 7) That being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

It was for the whole world that the provision of salvation was given. Not all will be saved for not all will accept salvation.

John 3:16 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. 17) For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved.

Paul teaches that Christ died for every man.

Hebrews 2:9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

Christ was once offered:

The Scriptures teach that Christ was crucified once and for all. It teaches that one of the purposes of the cross was to put away sin. To save us from the wages of sin without saving us from sin makes no sense.

Hebrews 9:26 For then must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

Hebrews 10:12 But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;

Hebrews 7:27 Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this He did once, when He offered up Himself.

Hebrews 9:28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

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.

Christ is our passover:

1Corinthians 5:7 Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:

The ordinance of communion:

The ordinance of communion was given to us to replace the passover sacrifice and to help us keep in remembrance the purpose of the cross.

1Corinthians 11:24 And when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. 25) After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

Christ is still sacrificing for us in that He has promised not to partake of the fruit of the vine, until He can drink it with us. Notice that it is fresh wine and not fermented wine.

Matthew 26:29 But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new [fresh] with you in my Father's kingdom.

Christ is the only way of salvation:

John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

John 10:1 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. 2) But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

John 10:7 Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. ... 9) I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

Our Response to The Sanctuary Truth:

God would have all men to be saved.

1Timothy 2:4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

We must confess our sins:

1John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

We must repent and believe:

Mark 1:15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

To repent is to be sorry for sin to the extent that you actually stop the sin. Repentance is empowered by knowing and appreciating what God has done for you.

Romans 2:4 Or despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

What does it mean to “believe the gospel?” Is it simply to believe that God exists and has saved the world through Christ’s sacrifice?

James 2:19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

The Scriptures warn us that Satan has deceived us regarding the gospel, the glorious image of God in the face of Christ.

2Corinthians 4:4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

Why is Satan so intent on corrupting the gospel which reveals the truth of the mercy of God? He knows that people are destroyed because they misunderstand God.

Hosea 4:1 Hear the word of the LORD, ye children of Israel: for the LORD hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. ... 6) My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: ...

To have a lack of knowledge regarding the truth of the mercy of God destroys men. The opposite truth is found in the following verse which tells us that eternal life comes from having a right understanding of God.

John 17:3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

Let’s explore a deeper meaning of what it means to believe the gospel. The following verses figuratively describe the inner workings of the gospel. Because the blind men believed Christ could make them whole, the healing power was released and they received their sight. It was according to their faith that the healing power was released.

Matthew 9:27 And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed Him, crying, and saying, Thou Son of David, have mercy on us. 28) And when He was come into the house, the blind men came to Him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto Him, Yea, Lord. 29) Then touched He their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you.

Could those blind men ever be able to restore their sight? Never.

Luke 18:26 And they that heard it said, Who then can be saved? 27) And He said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.

We must truly believe we will receive what we pray for if we are to receive.

Mark 11:24 Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

It is through His name [character] that we might have life. To have that life, we must believe in His character. Not only to believe that He loves us enough to save us, but that He has the power to save us.

John 20:31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name.

We must receive Him into our hearts and believe in His character if we are to be adopted and become the sons of God.

John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name:

If we are to be saved, we must believe in both, the unmerited gift of God and His power to save from sin. In other words, we are not saved by grace unless we are changed by grace.

Acts 15:11 But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.

We must first believe if we are to receive any gifts.

Hebrews 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.

Our faith grows as we grow in the knowledge of God's character.

Romans 1:17 For therein [the gospel] is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

As we behold the character of God, we are changed into His likeness.

2Corinthians 3:18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

We become partakers of His righteousness through faith according to our belief.

Romans 3:22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

The just [righteous] shall live by faith continuing in a faith that changes the character unto the end.

Matthew 24:13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

We must continue and not draw back from our decision to follow Christ unto the end.

Hebrews 10:39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

We may have assurance that we have eternal life should we not change our mind from following Christ. This assurance comes from knowing the character of God that He would have "all to be saved" and will continue to heal us according to our faith.

1John 5:13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

To believe is to obey:

In the following story, we find a rich young man asking Christ what he should do to have eternal life. Christ knew he thought himself obedient to the commandments, and therefore Christ gave him an opportunity to realize that he was not obedient to them as he thought.

Matthew 19:16 And, behold, one came and said unto Him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? 17) And He said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. 18) He saith unto Him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, 19) Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 20) The young man saith unto Him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? 21) Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. 22) But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.

Belief is not just a noun, it connotes active commitment to that which is believed. It is manifest in the works revealed in us. When we think about the paralytic of thirty-eight years who was healed, what would have happened had he not acted on Christ's command to pick up his bed and walk? Would he have been healed? No. It was according to his faith, which acted upon his belief, his faith that Christ had the power to heal.

We read an account of the children of Israel while in the wilderness who rebelled against God and failed to enter the promise land. We are again on the border of the promise land.

Hebrews 3:17 But with whom was He grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? 18) And to whom sware He that they should not enter into His rest, but to them that believed not? [Strong's: willfully & perversely disobedient] 19) So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief [Strong's: unfaithfulness, disobedience].

In the account above regarding the rebellious children of Israel in the wilderness, we find that the reason they did not enter into the promise land was because of their unbelief, translated by Strong's as their unfaithfulness and willful and perverse disobedience. Will we also fail to enter in because of unbelief, willful and perverse disobedience?

The Sanctuary Truth Corrupted:

The Mass—transubstantiation:

The corruption of the sanctuary truth that Christ was "once offered" is found in the mass.

The Council of Trent defined transubstantiation this way:

"By the consecration of the bread and of the wine, a conversion is made of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord, and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of His blood; which conversion is... properly called Transubstantiation."

The Catholic Church teaches that the host becomes the true, literal Body and Blood of Jesus Christ during the consecration at Mass, a doctrine known as Transubstantiation.

While the host retains the physical appearance, taste, and texture of bread (the "accidents"), its underlying substance is miraculously transformed into the actual presence of Christ. This means that Christ is fully and entirely present—body, blood, soul, and divinity—in the consecrated host.

From St. Alphonsus Liguori in *The Dignity and Duties of the Priest*:

“Thus the priest may, in a certain manner, be called the creator of his Creator, since by saying the words of consecration, he creates, as it were, Jesus in the sacrament, by giving Him a sacramental existence, and produces Him as a victim to be offered to the eternal Father.”

The Mass—the wine:

The wine used in the Mass is alcoholic. The bread and wine represent Christ's body, which was not corrupted or tainted with sin. This alcoholic symbol corrupts the truth that Christ's body and blood was untainted with sin and was originally associated with the occult Babylonian Mystery rituals. [“The Two Babylons” by Alexander Hislop]

The Sacraments:

The teaching of the Sacraments affirm that sacramental works are necessary for salvation.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states plainly in paragraph 1129:

"The Church affirms that for believers the sacraments of the New Covenant are necessary for salvation."

They're the ordinary, God-established ways grace is given to us. That said, it's not absolute for every individual in every case. Not everyone needs to receive all seven sacraments — Holy Orders and Matrimony are for specific vocations, for example. And God isn't bound by the sacraments; he can save people through what the Church calls "baptism of desire" or implicit desire when the sacraments aren't available.

For those who have access to the sacraments and know their importance, deliberately rejecting them would be a serious problem for salvation. The Church sees them as the normal path Christ gave us. Baptism is especially highlighted as necessary for those who know about it.

Council of Trent, Session 7, Canon 4:

"If anyone says that the sacraments of the New Law are not necessary for salvation but are superfluous, and that without them or without the desire of them men obtain from God through faith alone the grace of justification... let him be anathema."

You only need to receive the sacraments that are necessary for your state in life. Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist are the core ones for every Catholic. Penance and Anointing of the Sick become necessary when you fall into sin or serious illness. Holy Orders and Matrimony are vocational sacraments — you only need to receive them if you're called to the priesthood or to marriage. Most Catholics never receive either one, and that doesn't affect their salvation.

One must remain in the Church to be saved:

The Scripture teaches that there is only one church, only one body, which is made up of all the faithful.

Pope Eugene IV, *Cantate Domino* (1441):

"No one, whatever almsgiving he has practiced, even if he has shed blood for the name of Christ, can be saved, unless he has remained in the bosom and unity of the Catholic Church."

The Confessional:

The Scriptures declare that claiming to be able to forgive sins is blasphemy against God.

Mark 2:7 Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only?

From **St. Alphonsus Liguori** in *The Dignity and Duties of the Priest*:

"Were the Redeemer to descend into a church, and sit in a confessional to administer the sacrament of penance, and a priest to sit in another confessional, Jesus would say over each penitent, 'Ego te absolvo,' the priest would likewise say over each of his penitents, 'Ego te absolvo,' and the penitents of each would be equally absolved."

Father John A. O'Brien in his book *The Faith of Millions*:

"When the priest announces the tremendous words of consecration, he reaches up into the heavens, brings Christ down from His throne, and places Him upon our altar to be offered up again as the Victim for the sins of man. The priest speaks and lo! Christ, the eternal and omnipotent God, bows His head in humble obedience to the priest's command."

Alphonsus de Liguori, *Dignity and Duties of the Priest* or *Selva*, pp.27, 28

"With regard to the mystic body of Christ, that is, all the faithful, the priest has the power of the keys, or the power of delivering sinners from hell, of making them worthy of paradise, and of changing them from the slaves of Satan into the children of God. And God Himself is obliged to abide by the judgment of His priests, and either not to pardon or to pardon, according as they refuse or give

absolution provided the penitent is capable of it. 'Such is,' says St Maximus of Turin, 'this judiciary power ascribed to Peter that its decision carries with it the decision of God.' 'The sentence of the priest precedes, and God subscribes to it,' writes St. Peter Damian."

Quoted in Lorraine Boettner, *Roman Catholicism*, p.197.

"The priest does not have to ask God to forgive your sins. The priest himself has the power to do so in Christ's name. Your sins are forgiven by the priest the same as if you knelt before Jesus Christ and told them to Christ Himself."

Required penance:

Council of Trent, Session 14, Chapter 2:

"For those who after baptism have fallen into sins, the Sacrament of Penance is as necessary to salvation as is baptism itself for those who have not yet been regenerated."

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches:

"Raised up from sin, the sinner must still recover his full spiritual health by doing something more to make amends for the sin: he must 'make satisfaction for' or 'expiate' his sins. This satisfaction is also called 'penance.'" *My Catholic Life*

St. Thomas Aquinas:

"Even so in the spiritual life a man is sick on account of sin. For that reason he needs medicine so that he may be restored to health; and this grace is bestowed in the Sacrament of Penance."

The indulgences:

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states:

"The doctrine and practice of indulgences in the Church are closely linked to the effects of the sacrament of Penance." (CCC 1471)

Indulgences remit **temporal punishment** (the remaining consequences of already-forgiven sins), while the Sacrament of Penance forgives the guilt and eternal punishment. Personal penance helps repair the damage of sin, and indulgences draw from the "treasury of the satisfactions of Christ and the saints" to further remit that temporal debt.

From the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 1471–1479)

"Since the faithful departed now being purified are also members of the same communion of saints, one way we can help them is to obtain indulgences for them so that the temporal punishments for their sins may be remitted." (CCC 1479)

From the Council of Trent (Session 25, Decree on Indulgences, 1563)

"Since the power of conferring indulgences was granted by Christ to the Church... the sacred holy Synod teaches and enjoins that the use of indulgences, for the Christian people most salutary, and approved of by the authority of sacred Councils, is to be retained in the Church; and It condemns with anathema those who either assert that they are useless or who deny that there is in the Church the power of granting them."