

One Perfect Sacrifice

Jesus Christ was the complete sacrifice of God the Father, making possible the New Covenant promises of redemption and eternal life.

Jesus Christ offered Himself as the supreme sacrifice of God the Father for the sins of mankind. Through His one perfect sacrifice, Jesus purchased redemption from sin for all time. The New Testament reveals that His death fulfilled not only the Passover sacrifice, but all of the animal sacrifices that were required by the laws that God had given to Moses. All were fulfilled when Jesus died on the Passover day, as the apostle Paul tells us that Jesus “offered ONE SACRIFICE for sins for ever” (Heb. 10:12). That one perfect sacrifice purchased everlasting redemption: “By Whose will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ ONCE FOR ALL” (Heb. 10:10). And again, “For when He died, He died unto sin ONCE FOR ALL” (Rom. 6:10).

Jesus Was Our Sin Offering: Some of the early Hebrew Christians did not fully understand that the death of Jesus Christ had fulfilled the animal sacrifices that were commanded under the Old Covenant. They were still looking to the Temple sacrifices for sanctification from sin. The apostle Paul wrote his epistle to the Hebrews to explain to them that these sacrifices for sin were no longer required. He explained that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ had fulfilled all the requirements of the Law for the sin offerings that were made at the Temple.

He also explained that, as the Law required, Jesus died outside the gates of the city: “We have an altar from which those who are serving the *present earthly* tabernacle do not have authority to eat; for *pertaining to* those animals whose blood is brought into the holy places by the high priest for a *sin offering*, the bodies of all these are burned **outside the camp**. For this reason, **Jesus, in order that He might sanctify the people by His own blood, also suffered OUTSIDE THE GATE**” (Heb. 13:10-12).

The fact that Jesus died outside the gates of Jerusalem verifies that His body was a sin offering. The Law of God specifically commanded that all sin offerings were to be burned “outside the camp” (Lev. 4:1-2, 11-12, 21; 16:27). After the blood of the sacrificial animals was sprinkled on the altar, the bodies of the sin offerings were taken across the Kidron Valley to a place high on the Mount of Olives east of the city of Jerusalem, where there was a special altar called the Miphkad Altar. This altar was located near Golgotha, where Jesus was crucified.

“The Miphkad Altar and the sin offerings which were sacrificed on it was really a cardinal part of the Temple complex that existed in the time of Christ. This altar was not one with a ramp leading up to a square elevated area, but it is described in the Mishnah as a pit in which the animals could be burnt to ashes (*Parah* 4:2). The Miphkad Altar was located *outside* the walls of the Temple (as Ezekiel 43:21 states), but [the bridge across the Kidron Valley and] the roadway leading up to the altar (and including the altar itself) were part of the ritualistic furniture associated with the Temple services.... Christ was crucified near the Miphkad Altar...” (Ernest L. Martin, *The Secrets of Golgotha*, p. 41).

The location of this altar on the Mount of Olives offered a direct view of the entire Temple area. On the Day of Atonement, those who stood at the site of this special altar could observe the high priest as he was standing near the veil of the Temple, ready to enter the Holy Place. “Even the bullock and the goat which were sacrificed on the day of Atonement (Leviticus 16) had to be killed near the Altar of Burnt Offering within the Temple and then their carcasses were required to be taken out the eastern gate to the Miphkad Altar at the Mount of Olives and there they were burnt to ashes (Leviticus 4)” (Ibid., p. 246).

The ashes of all the animals that were burned on the altar at the Temple were taken to the same place where the sin offerings were burned (Miphkad Altar) and were mingled with the

ashes of the sin offerings “and poured out at the base of the Altar (Leviticus 4:12, 21; 6:11) (where the ashes could descend through a conduit system into the Valley of Kidron below)” (Ibid., p. 246). As the supreme sin offering of God the Father, the body of Jesus Christ was offered up when He was crucified on the Mount of Olives, near the altar where the bodies of all sin offerings from the Temple were offered up to God. Thus, Paul wrote: “But He, **after offering one sacrifice for sins for ever**, sat down at *the* right hand of God. Since that time, He is waiting until His enemies are placed *as* a footstool for His feet. For by one offering He has obtained eternal perfection *for* those who are sanctified” (Heb. 10:12-14).

Jesus Was Our Passover Sacrifice: As the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ was sacrificed on the Passover day, Nisan 14/April 5, 30 AD. The apostle Paul affirms that His death fulfilled the sacrifice of the Passover lamb: “For Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us” (I Cor. 5:7).

Jesus Christ was the complete sacrifice of God the Father to fulfill the promises of the New Covenant—the only covenant that offers redemption from sin and the gift of eternal life. The promise of eternal life through the New Covenant was sealed by the beaten, scourged and crucified body of Jesus Christ and the outpouring of His blood. The ceremony that commemorates His supreme sacrifice for the sins of the world was instituted on the night that He was betrayed. That is when His disciples partook of the symbols of His body and His blood, and that is when all His followers are commanded to partake of these symbols. Paul wrote that the instructions of the Lord were to observe it “in that night” when Jesus was betrayed, which was the night of Nisan 14. Christians are to renew the New Covenant every year on that night by participating in the foot washing and by partaking of the broken, unleavened bread and the cup of wine. It is a personal, individual renewal of the New Covenant: “**This cup is the New Covenant in My blood, which is poured out for you**” (Luke 22:20). Each Christian who takes part in this ceremony is affirming his or her acceptance of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and is renewing his or her commitment to live by the words of the New Covenant.

By personally renewing the New Covenant, one is able to receive continuing forgiveness and grace from God the Father, Who applies the blood of Jesus Christ to one’s sins (I John 1:7-9). Through the grace of God and by repentance, this daily cleansing from sin is accomplished (Matt. 6:12), allowing Christians to remain in fellowship with God the Father and Jesus Christ (I John 1:3). He imparts strength and understanding to each one through His Holy Spirit. Every Christian who is led by the Holy Spirit will be growing in spiritual knowledge and godly character and will ultimately receive the gift of eternal life in the Kingdom of God when Jesus returns (II Pet. 1:4-11).

Joint Heirs With Christ: Through Jesus’ sacrifice, according to God’s great plan of reconciliation, all who repent of their sins, accept Jesus Christ as personal Savior and are baptized receive the gift of salvation, with the promise of eternal life in the Kingdom of God. “But we see Jesus, Who *was* made a little lower than *the* angels, crowned with glory and honor on account of suffering the death, in order that **by the grace of God He Himself might taste death for every-one**; because it was fitting for Him, for Whom all things *were created*, and by Whom all things *exist*, **in bringing many sons unto glory**, to make the Author of their salvation perfect through sufferings. **For both He Who is sanctifying and those who are sanctified are all of one** [one Father]; **for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren**” (Heb. 2:9-11).

Jesus Christ was the first fleshly human being to be resurrected from the dead as a glorified spirit being. At His return, an innumerable number will be granted eternal life as the spirit sons and daughters of God the Father. They will share the same eternal existence and glory as Jesus Christ, as Paul discloses: “The Spirit itself bears witness conjointly with our own spirit, *testifying* that we are *the* children of God. Now if *we are* children, *we are* also heirs—truly, **heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ**—if indeed we suffer together with Him, so that we may also be **glorified together with Him**. For I reckon that the sufferings of the present time *are* not wor-

thy *to be compared* with the glory that shall be revealed in us” (Rom. 8:16-18).

The apostle John also wrote that the children of God will be like Jesus Christ: “Behold! What *glorious* love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God! For this very reason, the world does not know us because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are the children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be; **but we know that when He is manifested, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him exactly as He is**” (I John 3:1-2).

Every true Christian shares this incredible hope—the hope of being glorified like Jesus Christ and living with Him forever in the Kingdom of God. And all of this is made possible by Jesus’ one, *perfect* sacrifice for sin.