LESSON #12

**THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST**

We will now consider the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ. This was the .great outstanding accomplishment associated with the Gospel message. In keeping with God’s plan of salvation as introduced in the Old Testament, Christ's death on the cross is the required sacrifice for sin. (Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 53) This opened the only way for mankind to be reconciled to God and the glorious plan He had from the beginning. It is through the cross that we see God's love for humanity. He provided His own son for the sacrifice as the means by which all men could be reconciled to God. God wants all to be save, but sin is what separated man from God. The sin had to be dealt with and Jesus did that. Christ's perfect obedience to his Father's will is clearly displayed at the cross. Jesus (the savior) dealt a fatal blow to sin. Jesus had never sinned against God and therefore the curse for sin that is common to all mankind could not be charged against Christ. This is declared by his resurrection. This also creates the hope for us as we can participate in the forgiveness of sins through the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. We see his love for his brethren as demonstrated in his willingness to die for them. It is from Christ's example here at the cross that we must pattern a new life in our selves where we too will be well-pleasing to God.

Christ said, 'Whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.' Luke 14:27. It is important therefore that we feel the personal need for Christ's sacrifice in our lives. We also need to see in it the way of our redemption and salvation. Our introduction to this Lesson is found in the Gospel of John - a verse reputed to be the best known passage in Bible.

**John 3:16** ‘God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life!’ Also, the two verses immediately preceding (verses 14 and 15) should be considered in conjunction to appreciate the true significance of this passage. In these words, Jesus confirms his role in the fulfillment of the “type” suggested by the example of the bronze serpent lifted up in the wilderness - as pointing forward to his death on the cross. (see cross reference to Numbers 21:9)

**Hebrews 9:22** The Principle is that blood had to be shed for sins to be forgiven. This principle was established in the Garden when Adam and Eve were covered with animal skins. It was reemphasized under Moses (v19) when he took the blood of calves and goats…. And (v20) declared this is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined you. It was necessary that Jesus was offered and his blood was poured out. It not only fulfilled Isaiah 53 where we read he “bore the sins of many”, but also fulfills the declaration in Hebrews 10:12 he offered one sacrifice for sins forever. This completes the requirement that God needed to reconcile man to Himself.

**Hebrews 1:1-3** The opening verses of this Epistle clearly show the vital importance of Christ's part in the Plan of God and summarize Christ's fulfillment of the first phase of his mission in the words "when he had *by himself purged our sins*, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high". This means that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ accomplished the “purging of sins”.

**I Timothy 1: 15** This statement by Paul plainly declares that the purpose of Christ's mission was to save sinners. Paul acknowledges his own personal need of this work of Jesus. Without the sacrifice, there is no possible forgiveness. It was necessary.

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**John 1:29-31** John the Baptist gives his witness that Jesus was the one who would take away sin. He also confirms the declaration by God that this was His beloved son. **(v34)** Christ’s ministry connects is connected with Israel's redemption. The lamb has been the typical sacrifice for sin from earliest times - 'the lamb slain from the foundation of the world' Revelation 13:8; 1 Peter 1:19 Lamb without blemish…foreordained before the foundation of the world. This implies the Plan of God was already established from the beginning.

**Isaiah 53** Although there were so many Old Testament prophecies and types pointing forward to Christ's sacrifice, the Jews were unable to see theme in light of the work of Jesus, even though they looked for Messiah for whom they were waiting.

This chapter of Isaiah describes in uncanny detail the circumstances and purpose of the crucifixion. It is important to read this entire short chapter to appreciate its significance. Be sure to note the pertinent identifications such as the following:

v.2 A tender plant - springing out of a dry ground - no outstanding physical characteristics to mark him as God's Son.

v.3 Instead of being hailed a savior, he is seen as a disappointment to those looking for a deliverer. People hid as if embarrassed by his presence. His own nation rejected him.

vv.4-6 Isaiah reveals that despite the obvious rejection him as Messiah, he bears the brunt of our own rejection. He explains the reason for Christ's sacrifice: to take away the sins of others. Note especially how the emphasis turns from HIS suffering to OUR involvement - our grief - our sorrows - our transgressions, our iniquities and how we are healed, or forgiven.

vv.7-9 Graphically predicted are the exact details regarding the manner of Messiah’s rejection by his own people. Even though innocent, and willing as a lamb, Isaiah reveals intricate details of his trial, judgment, death and burial. This prophetic outlook provides proof that would strike at the conscience of those who were to witness the accuracy of this scripture hundreds of years later. What a marvelous confirmation of God's precise control in the affairs of men! A willing “lamb” was included in the plan from the beginning!

vv.10-12 Despite the anguish of his crucifixion, the prophecy concludes with Christ's victory over sin and the tremendous results achieved: - to see human beings in all walks of life turning from lives of sin and ignorance to an abundant life of hope and confident assurance as a result of his consecrated life. This is what God meant when he spoke to Abram: In thee shall all nations of the earth be blessed. (Genesis 12:3)

**Romans 5:6-21** This scripture expands on how reconciliation is achieved for us through Christ's sacrificial work. V21 sin reigns unto death! IE Sin leads to death. It doesn’t end there. We must participate by associating ourselves with Christ. How are our sins forgiven? V9 by being justified by his blood. This is how our sins are forgiven and how we are made righteous: through God's grace we can receive justification (v16). This is not something earned, but is the result of God freely loving us. Once we understand the depth of this work of reconciliation by God through Jesus Christ, we too feel gratitude to God for his love, grace and compassion.

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**Hebrews 2:14-18** How could Jesus Christ accomplish reconciliation? These verses are very important because they clearly demonstrate that Jesus is born with the same human nature as those he came to save. His own experience “in the flesh” taught him about human nature. His victory over temptation came not from considering the options, but from his dependence on strength from above - and because of this he always chose to obey his Father. As a man born of a woman, his knowledge of strong human desire allowed Jesus to ‘succour’ (understand and help) v18 those who are tempted. It could never truly be said that Jesus, because he was also God's son, escaped the reality of the trials and temptations we all undergo. This is demonstrated in his trials after his baptism and again in his agony in the Garden of Gethsemane before his arrest and crucifixion. He to experienced the conflict between flesh and spirit - "0 my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." Matthew 26:39.

**Romans 8:3-8** The Old Testament rituals and requirements of sacrifice were outward and could not truly effect a change in the heart of those bound by the law. Men could not be saved by the offering of blood of animals. These verses again confirm the purpose that God had in sending His own son “in the likeness of sinful flesh” into the world. He was not sinful but had human nature. We should realize by now that to be spiritually minded is the way of life and peace. To be of “flesh” is to be carnally minded and that is enmity against God and that leads to “death” (v6).

**Matthew 16:24** Jesus teaches that if any will follow him, he must “take up his cross and follow him”. Taking up a cross implies full participation. A disciple of Jesus must be willing to give all… even if it leads to death. This is what Jesus demonstrates in his own life. We are not referring to death on a literal cross but the crucifixion (or putting to death) of those impulses we have that lead to sin. These are termed the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life in 1 John 2:16. Paul expands on this in the next reference.

**Romans 6:6** The 'old man' here referred to means our former way of life before we give our lives over to Christ. The old man lives without God and participates in worldly (carnal) pleasures and interests. This way of life is symbolically crucified or put to death when we are in Christ. This chapter teaches how baptism is symbolical of that change from the “old man” and his desire (v6) that dies in the water and when one comes out of the water he (v10) is now dead to sin. A fresh start with a new objective begins.

**Galatians 5:24,25** Paul wrote both Romans and Galatians. His message is the same in all his writings. They that are Christ’s have crucified (put to death) the flesh with the affections and lusts. We are greatly blessed to have the consistent message of how our walk must reflect our belief and the change that we have from people who walk in the flesh to those who are growing in the fruit of the spirit. (v22,23)

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**Galatians 6:14** “Crucifying the world” is to not be mindful of it. This is the ideal which all true disciples of Christ constantly strives to attain. The nearer we come to this ideal the more satisfying is our discipleship. Remember the theme of the Bible: to fill the earth with those who have the characteristics of God. (Numbers 14:21)

**Hebrews 9:28** All that we have considered in this session about the sacrifice of Jesus Christ are summarized in this one brief statement: “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.” Here we see Christ's sacrifice linked with his coming again - the true hope of all his brethren.

**Romans 6:8-11** If we believe in Jesus Christ, and understand that through his death a sacrifice which fulfilled the requirement that God insisted upon, then we can also live with him if we identify ourselves with him. Baptism of itself has no healing change to be made in us. It is a demonstration of an outward example of the change that takes place inwardly. Jesus showed this in his own baptism. By doing this, he declared his intention to be a son who would do his Fathers will. We are called to do the same. For (v10) in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

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