



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Lessons from the Life of David

2 Samuel 24:18-25

“Mount Moriah and Mount Calvary: Contrasting Mountains of Sacrifice”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] We're turning to 2 Samuel chapter 24, verse 18 through verse 25, for our Scripture reading. And I'd like to say this, that the message today is a continuation of the series on David and next Sunday, the Lord willing, will be our last in this series of about forty messages on the life of this great king of Israel. And today, we are in a sense finishing the message that I began two weeks ago and, dealing with the last part of the chapter. I found as is sometimes the case, it's very difficult to do everything that you had intended to do and I had intended to deal, at least somewhat briefly, with the last verses of the chapter but found time constraints so binding that I couldn't do anything more than say a few comments. And so feeling that this is something of importance for us, we are devoting the message today to 2 Samuel 24:18 through 25. So if you open your Bibles there, you may follow along as I read these verses.

“And Gad came that day to David and said to him, ‘Go up, erect an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.’ So David, according to the word of Gad, went up as the Lord commanded. Now Araunah looked, and saw the king and his

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servants coming toward him. So Araunah went out and bowed before the king with his face to the ground. Then Araunah said, ‘Why has my lord the king come to his servant?’ And David said, ‘To buy the threshing floor from you, to build an altar to the Lord, that the plague may be withdrawn from the people.’ Now Araunah said to David, ‘Let my lord, the king, take and offer up whatever seems good to him. Look, here are oxen for burnt sacrifice, and threshing implements and the yokes of the oxen for wood. All these, O king, Araunah has given to the king.’ And Araunah said to the king, ‘May the Lord your God accept you.’ Then the king said to Araunah, ‘No, but I will surely buy it from you for a price; nor will I offer burnt offerings to the Lord, my God, with that which costs me nothing.’”

A very interesting comment, we won’t pay any attention to it today, but underlining the fact that the sacrifices that we offer to the Lord, the worship that we offer to him, the things that we do that we think are for him, are most appreciated if they are things that do cost us something and that David expresses so beautifully here.

“Nor will I offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God with that which costs me nothing.” So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. And David built there an altar to the Lord, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the Lord heeded the prayers for the land, and the plague was withdrawn from Israel.”

Now, you may remember that David had numbered the nation and had come to the conviction, as Joab had already had come to the conviction, that it was not something that the Lord really took pleasure in. In fact, it would appear that if we read a little between the lines, David did it out of reasons of pride. He came to realize that it was a sin on his part and he confessed that sin. And then, God spoke to him through Gad the

prophet, and gave him three options. And the options involved a plague, the options of a famine, the option of David, himself, being cast into the hands of his enemies. And David, you remember, said something like, “Don’t let me fall into the hands of men. Let me fall into the hands of the Lord God.” And what happened was a plague came, and many thousands of the children of Israel died as a result of it.

David again confessed his sin, and then after having confessed his sin, God spoke to him again through Gad the Prophet, his own prophet, his seer, and David was called upon, as our text has set it forth, to offer offerings. And as a result of the offerings, the plague was stayed. It’s against that particular background that the message will follow after we turn to the Lord in prayer and sing another hymn. Let’s bow together in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for the ministry of the word of God to us. We thank Thee for the way the Scriptures speak to us; we thank Thee for the sufficiency of them for our lives. We know that in all of the experiences of life, we can turn to Thee as the Scriptures so marvelously underline and find mercy and grace for help in time of need. We thank Thee for the marvelous way in which Thou hast decreed and carried out the purposes that now make it possible for us to have the knowledge of our great God in Heaven and the confidence that Thou art sufficient for us.

We thank Thee for this day in which we live. We thank Thee for the greatness of the opportunities that we have as individuals and as bodies of believers to proclaim the marvelous grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We pray for the whole church today. We ask Thy blessing upon every body of believers that meets in the name of Christ and proclaims the word of God.

We pray especially for those who’ve requested our prayers, to those who are sick, not as fortunate at this time in many ways as those of us who are healthy or fortunate, who have serious problems and serious needs. And, Lord, we thank Thee for the faith

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that has led them to request that Believers Chapel pray for them. And we do. We pray Lord that Thou wilt minister to those who have requested our prayers, that Thou wilt honor and glorify Thy name in their lives and give them the confidence and strength, the consolation, the under girding to enable them to persevere in the life of trust in Thee. We commit them to Thee; we commit the families to Thee. We commit those physicians who minister to them and ask that Thou wilt undertake to glorify Thy name.

We pray for our country, for our President, for others in human government, and the governments of the state and city; we ask Thy blessing them as well, under whom we live, who are, as the Scriptures say, ministers of God for us in political affairs.

We ask, Lord, Thy blessing upon the ministry of the word as we hear it today and we pray, too, as we sing together, we may sing truly from the heart to the glory of our Savior, Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

[Message] I want to give you a personal thanksgiving that your lovely forceful singing drowned out mine. Thank you very much [Laughter] for it. This morning I was standing over here, and Mr. Prier is out of town, several of our elders are out of town, too, and I burst forth into song at the first of the hymns and was startled to find out how poorly I sang. And usually, Mr. Prier is standing there too, we sing together, and he kind of makes it possible for me to think I'm singing pretty well. [More laughter] But the facts stared me in the face this morning.

The subject for today is “Mount Moriah and Mount Calvary: Contrasting Mountains of Sacrifice.” This was something, as I mentioned, that I wanted to say two weeks ago near the end of the message but found out I only had about five minutes to do it and so, I gave up, and I'd like to finish up today.

Our last study that was two weeks ago in the series on David concluded with David acting as priest and offering sacrifices and God withdrawing the plague. That's the essence of the texts that we are looking at. And on this occasion, the sacrifices were

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commanded by God and accepted by God. That’s evident from verse 25, “And David built there an altar to the Lord, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the Lord heeded the prayers for the land, and the plague was withdrawn from Israel.”

Now, I think, it’s important for us to remember, right here at the beginning, that the sacrifices and offerings of the Old Testament were sacrifices and offerings that God gave to Israel. It’s important to recognize that the sacrifices and offerings of the Old Testament were God’s gift to Israel. As Leviticus chapter 17 in verse 11 puts it, in connection with the blood of the atoning sacrifices, chapter 17 in verse 11, we read, “For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls for it is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul.”

In other words, the sacrificial system was something not that Israel devised of their own wisdom and understanding, not something that they sought at all but something that God gave to them. They are to be seen as operating within the sphere of the divine covenants and the covenanting grace of those covenants. They were not man’s expedient for his own redemption but they were the fruit of divine grace.

Divine grace is the root of the sacrificial system of the Old Testament. Now, we should remember that and while we, of course, often cite texts that say the blood of bulls and goats could never take away sin, let us remember that the sacrificial system was given by God just for that purpose, to teach us that very fact. And so the system was a gracious gift of God, even though it pointed beyond itself to the Lord Jesus Christ.

This passage in which David, on Mount Moriah, offers sacrifices is one that reminds any biblical reader of two other sacrifices that were offered; one of them centuries before David and the other centuries after David. One typical and one anti-typical, because you cannot read of David offering sacrifices on Mount Moriah without thinking of taking Isaac with him, and there to offer him up on the altar.

Now, it’s helpful also to remember this fact, that Moriah is the place upon which later the Temple was built. So what we are talking about is a sacrifice on the part of

Abraham and Isaac and the sacrifice that David offers here where the threshing floor of Araunah was, is the precise place where, for many centuries afterwards, numerous offerings were offered of animals, and all pointing, ultimately, to the one offering of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But when you think of Abraham and Abraham offering up Isaac, and offering him up on Moriah, reading this passage you cannot help but put the two together. That surely has some claim, at least, to be the greatest scene recorded by the Old Testament. And, in fact, is surpassed only by the sacrifice of the Son of God at Calvary when the greatest father offered up his Isaac, the Lord Jesus Christ, the real Lamb of God, the scene pictured in the 22nd of Genesis, found its proper climax, an anti-type.

But David's offerings also on that same Mount Moriah, or land of Moriah, have significance for us as well. All the story of Abraham comes rushing back to me, as I think of it. The old man who takes his son, travels for two days or so, finally reaches Moriah, no doubt did everything he possibly could to put off the event, tells the men that he has brought with him to take care of things to remain, that he and the lad will go up on the mount and worship and they will, he said, return again; a marvelous expression of confidence in the Lord that some how or other both Abraham and Isaac would return. And you can see the old man trudging up the hill, going as slowly as possible, finally reaching the top, gathering very slowly the rocks that would make the altar, and being very, very careful as he selected rocks, to select the ones that were farthest away, to put off this event. And, finally, binding Isaac after Isaac has said, “The wood's here and the fire is here, but where is the sacrifice?” And Abraham replying to his son, “The Lord will provide the sacrifice.” And then, with the fire and with the knife in his hand, raising his hand to strike Isaac, the voice from behind him says, “Abraham, don't do it.” And he turns around and finds a ram caught in a thicket. And the ram is offered for Isaac in substitution, a marvelous expression of the greatness of Abraham.

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The Lord Jesus, you’ll remember, said, “He who loves son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me.” And one could say Abraham was worthy, as a result of God’s grace in his heart. But the ram, of course, suggests the marvelous truth of divine substitution, striking illustration of it, the ram suffers and Isaac goes free.

Now, that’s the biblical truth, substitution that separates Calvinists from Arminians, believers in sovereign grace from believers in human ability, believers in the bondage of the will to sin, and believers in man’s free will to decide negatively or positively by God’s grace. It’s the great truth that separates particularists from Universalists; because if it is true that Jesus Christ did die a substitutionary death, and it is always presented in the New Testament as effectual, never simply potential, never conditional, always effectual. Read through the New Testament with that one thing in mind, and you’ll find that it always is presented as effectual, then it is either particularism or universalism. Either everybody is saved because Christ has died effectually for all, or Christ’s death is effectually for his people. And, of course, you know how we stand and I won’t belabor the point any more. It should be obvious to you that particularism, in my opinion, is the teaching of the word of God; that we have a God who is not frustrated in his purposes, he carries them out perfectly. Jesus Christ dies for his people and their salvation is effectually procured when Calvary and the sacrifice there is completed.

In my opinion, by the doctrine of substitution, properly understood as always effectual, Arminians and “Cal-minians,” if I may use that term, are reduced to sputtering mumbles or mumbling sputters. [Laughter] So, in this case, the ram takes the place of Isaac, and Isaac goes free. A marvelous truth.

Pascal once said, “Jesus Christ is the object of the two testaments. He is the object of the Old, its expectancy. He is the object of the New, its model; of both, the center. As in every part of the country, there is a way which leads to a city, so in the case of the Old Testament, there is a way throughout the Old Testament that leads unerringly to the Lord Jesus Christ and the sacrifice on Calvary’s Cross. And in the New Testament, the same is

true; the great doctrines of the New Testament point back unerringly, to what happened on Calvary's Cross.

Now, I do not deny at all, that this great truth was revealed in stages to men. I do not think and I do not think it is possible to think that Adam, when he offered the sacrifice that he offered, understood fully that there would come a time when Jesus of Nazareth would come and all of the things that were accomplished by him would be accomplished; and that Adam understood all of that. He did not. But as the Old Testament revelation unfolds, so as the days go by, the months and the years go by, more and more is revealed by God of the saving truth.

I do believe and I believe that there is no question about this, that so far as God is concerned, in the vastness of eternity past, He determined that these things and they have been just as true from the eternal past as they are today, and have been carried out perfectly, but, for the mind of man, that's another matter. The matters have been revealed over a period of time, and now we have the New Testament, and the Holy Spirit is still teaching us God's gift concerning the truth of the word of God.

Now, as we turn to the subject of “Mount Moriah and Mount Calvary; Contrasting Mountains of Sacrifice,” what I'd like to do, if I may, is to first make an observation and ask two questions and then, I would like to discuss very briefly, the similarities of the offerings by David and the offering by David's son. And, finally, speak for a little bit on the immeasurable superiority of the sacrifice of David's son.

But first, for clarification purposes, an observation. The sacrifices were not offered to render God merciful. Please remember that. The sacrifices were not offered to render God merciful. The love and mercy of God originated the sacrifices, the whole sacrificial system flows out of the love and mercy of God, by which he wants and desires and does accomplish our enlightenment concerning spiritual things. So we do not think that the sacrifices were offered to make God merciful. He who is merciful originated the sacrifices. They were simply conditions for the exercise of the mercy that was upon his

heart and were designed for pedagogical reasons as well, so that we might understand the nature of the salvation that he has offered to men.

Now, two questions arise as a result of that. Why should the merciful God have required the death of innocent victims? The Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals might have been troubled over this. Why should, literally, millions of animals be destroyed in God’s way of teaching men spiritual truth? Why is that necessary? Well, of course, we could say right at the beginning it was a solemn statement of the nature of sin; sin is an offense against a Holy God. David said that he had sinned and sinned only against the Lord God. So he recognized that sin is an offense against God. And so, consequently, it’s not surprising from that standpoint that the merciful God should require the death of innocent victims. It was his pedagogical way of teaching us that the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. But that’s only a partial explanation.

Why should not, we might offer in response, why should not sincere repentance and confession be acceptable without the death of the innocent animals? Well, the only satisfying answer, if I may short cut the answer to this because it is not the primary purpose of the message today, is that God desired to make very plain that divine justice as well as divine mercy requires consideration in any doctrine of atonement. And so, consequently, as a result of the truth that is set forth in the word of God, we need more than confession and repentance. As a matter of fact, confession and repentance themselves are gifts of God. The only satisfying answer, I think, to the question is simply that divine justice requires consideration. As Paul put it in Romans chapter 3, “The sacrificial work of the Lord Jesus,” his propitiatory sacrifice, has been offered that God may be just and the justifier of the one who is of the faith of Jesus. It’s not simply sufficient that he be the justifier, but that he be demonstrated to be absolutely righteous and just; and he is that in the death of the Son of God, but he is the justifier in that

through his death, bearing the penalty of our sins, makes it possible for the merciful God to exercise his mercy to guilty individuals.

Liberals often make an objection that goes something like this, if justification by faith is a legal doctrine, in which the Lord Jesus dies as our substitute who bears our penalty, and as a result of that, God conveys eternal life to us, then where is the mercy? If he has satisfied in a just way, an absolutely righteous way, the claims of God against him, where is the love and mercy of God in this arrangement? Well, I'd like to say, I know there's a whole lot more that could be said about that. Penal satisfaction, so to speak, would seem to rule out in God's mind, in some people's mind, God's love and mercy. Would it not? It would have seemed to be only a legal transaction. But it is a legal transaction. But there is more to it than that and to my mind, it's because so many people think so shallowly about the way of salvation. Listen! There is mercy in God permitting another person to do for the sinner what the sinner cannot do for himself. It was the merciful God who permitted our Lord to be the sacrificial savior of men, who determined that.

So mercy is manifested there. But further it's a still greater mercy in that God is the one who gives the one who will accomplish the saving sacrifice. So he not only determines that another person do for the sinner what the sinner cannot do for himself, but he provides the person who accomplishes what the sinner cannot do for himself but must do for himself. And then further, if I may underline it a bit more, he is still greater in mercy by becoming that person, himself, because the second person of the divine Trinity, the eternal second person, the eternal God, the Lord Jesus Christ, is the one who becomes the sacrifice that the righteous God requires.

Now, if I know what mercy is, that is mercy for us! He has determined that that is possible as a way of deliverance from our sin and its penalty. He has provided the person, he has become the person. How is it possible for an individual to say, “There is no mercy in the doctrine of justification by grace through faith?”

Now, let me say just a word or two about the similarities of the offerings by David and David's son. And one could speak of Abraham's offerings as well. These offerings, the offering that David offered here in 2 Samuel chapter 24, are offerings that, in their origin, are divine; that is, they come from God. It's God who sent Gad the prophet to him. It's God who directed him to build an altar. It's God who directed him to offer the burnt offerings and peace offerings, which David did, and God then heeded the prayers for the land and the plague was withdrawn from Israel. So in origin, David's offerings were from God.

And so in the case of the Lord Jesus Christ, the offering in accomplishing this great purpose, to make final leader of their salvation perfect through sufferings. And so, in our Lord's case, his sacrifice was from the Lord God just as David's offerings were in the Old Testament. In their nature, they were the same. The mercy of God is rendered consistent with his justice in the sacrifice that David offered, typically. But in the case of the Lord Jesus, his mercy and divine justice are rendered consistent with each other in the sacrifice that he underwent on Calvary's Cross.

And then in their results; in the case of the children of Israel and David, as a result of the burnt offerings and the peace offerings, there was a reconciliation of the sinners with the Lord God, with Yahweh, there was the forgiveness of sin and the penalties, there was renewed favor with God and boldness to approach him, all expressed in the style of the Old Testament, a temporary revelation. And in the New Testament, we have the ultimate completed picture.

But now, I'd like to come to the final thing; the immeasurable superiority of the sacrifice of David's son. The writer of the Epistle of the Hebrews makes a marvelous statement in the 13th chapter of his book, and in the 10th verse of it. He states this in that verse, “We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat.” “We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat.” He's thinking about the Day of Atonement. He's thinking about the offerings that were offered

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on the Day of Atonement; they were offered and those who served the tabernacle were not allowed to eat those offerings. So the writer of the Epistle of the Hebrews said, “We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat.” Now, when he says, “We have an altar” he doesn’t mean we really do have an altar. Some churches have altars in them. But there is one thing the New Testament teaches us, if it teaches us anything, that we do not have an altar. That is, our altar is Calvary’s Cross. We do not have any local altar; any kind of altar put in a church is contrary to the word of God.

Do you not know that in the earlier days of the Christian Church, when they worshiped very simply and did not have what we have today with the choirs and the robes and the altar and the other things that have intruded into our church, derived, ultimately, from, in many cases, the Old Testament, that the early individuals who saw the Christians often accused them of being atheists.

Do you know why? Well, because they did not have any of the signs of religion. They just met, simply, as believers, observed the Lord’s Supper, and preached the word of God. And so they were historically regarded as people who were not even followers of God, himself. And so, in this case, in Hebrews chapter 13, in verse 10, what our individual is saying about the altar is, we have a sacrifice, and we have a sacrifice from which those who serve the tabernacle do not have part. Our sacrifice is our Lord, Jesus Christ.

And when he uses the term “altar” incidentally, he uses it by motonymy for sacrifice; just as I might say, “Well, today we have been invited out to eat at the home of the Weavers.” [That’s no hint, Merle.] “We have been invited out to eat at the home of the Weavers. And they really do set a lovely table.” Now, you would understand that I’m not talking about the kind of wood on which the food is placed. But, I am using the term table by motonymy for the food on it. And so we have an altar; we have a sacrifice, is what our author is trying to say.

Now, coming to the immeasurable superiority of the sacrifices. First of all, David's sacrifices were instituted by God. It is God who told Gad the seer to go to David and order him to offer sacrifices that he might be delivered from the plague. In the case of Christ's sacrifice, it too, was instituted by God. In the fullness of time, God sent forth his son. But there is more than just that. When we say that David's sacrifice was instituted by God, Christ's sacrifice was instituted by God, too, but furthermore, Christ's sacrifice was the sacrifice of one who is God; the immeasurable superiority of the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.

David offered animals. Our Lord offered himself. David offered sentient beings, they have feelings, they are fleshly, they are creaturely. The offerings were involuntary offerings. So far as I know, in the whole of the word of God, there is no animal who came forward and said, “I'd like to be a sacrifice. I'd like for my name to go down in the word of God as the one who understood enough to offer willingly a sacrifice that might represent the Son of God who is to come.” No! They were all involuntary sacrifices. They had to be dragged to their deaths. Anyone who has ever been in places like meat packing plants knows there are no animals that want to be slaughtered. And they are sentient enough to know that after awhile that that's their destiny.

I remember, as a young kid, when I was passing through Chicago going to camp in Wisconsin for a couple of months when I was thirteen years of age, one of the things that they took us to visit in Chicago was the stockyards. And there we saw the animals slain. We saw one man who stood all day long with the big knife in his hand and the animals would come with their feet tied, is this too bloody? Their feet tied to a conveyor and as they would come their necks were exposed and he would just all day long slit. And they would squeal. And the bigger animals, they were given some kind of thing that the people do in the hospitals when they want to do a little operation upon you. And then there was an individual with a great sledgehammer, who would stand and bang, bang, bang. Not a single one ever said, so far as I can tell, “Let me be next.” So the

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sacrifices were that way. Furthermore, in the case of our Lord Jesus Christ, his sacrifice was a rational sacrifice. It was a spiritual sacrifice. And it represented voluntary obedience. “I come to do Thy will, O God.” And, it was done by the will of God in divine dignity.

The Lord Jesus Christ then offered himself. And he offered himself voluntarily. Listen to the writer of the Epistle of the Hebrews as he makes the point. “For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ who, through eternal spirit.” It’s entirely possible that that’s a reference to our Lord’s own spirit, through his own eternal spirit, stress laying upon the obedience of the Son of God, “Who through eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.” So, the offering of our Lord is rational, spiritual, voluntary obedience to the Father’s will. David provided his own sacrifices. But David’s son is God’s gift, particularly, an expression of the love of God.

If I may say just a word for a moment about the love of God. Most of you who have been in Believers Chapel long, know that I do feel that the church today does not understand the doctrine of the love of God. The doctrine of the love of God today is largely the doctrine of sentimental love, romantic love, sweet love. The kind of affection that one man might have to another, which is very legitimate, but it is not fundamentally the biblical love of God. Do you know that the doctrine that God is love is a conclusion from the fact that he has provided in Christ and supremely in his sacrifice on Calvary’s cross, a propitiation for sins? We are justified in bringing that significant fact to the notice of the shallow theologians and the shallow biblical teachers today, who tell us that because God is love he does not need any propitiation. It is not so, at all.

There’s a remarkable statement made by a well-known Christian theologian of a generation ago, and I’m going to take the liberty of reading it because the point of it is to make this great truth evident; that we know that God is love because he’s offered a

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propitiatory sacrifice and we know the meaning of his sacrifice if we understand, as Scripture says, that God is love. In other words, love explains the sacrifice and the sacrifice identifies the meaning of love. Listen to what he says.

“No one would contrast what the love of God has done for us in Christ more emphatically than Saint Paul does with the utmost which men will do from love for each other.” That’s Romans 5, and the distinction that Paul makes between the love that people have for themselves but the love of Jesus Christ is entirely higher ground. He goes on to say, “But Saint John rises above all comparisons to an absolute point of view, at which propitiation and love become ideas which explain each other and which have no adequate illustration apart from each other. He not only defines the propitiation by relation to love, God himself loved us and sent his Son, a propitiation for our sins, 1 John 4:10. He defines love by relation to the propitiation. In this we have come to know what love is; that he laid down his life for us. 1 John 3:16.” The emphasis in his last sentence is on the expressly contrasted words, “That one gave his life for us.” I’m just quoting the Hebrew. He has the Greek. *Ekeinos huper hemeis*.

It’s the contrast of what he is and what we are; of the sinless Son of God and the sinful sons of men, in which the nerve of the proposition lies. So far, listen to these words, “So far from finding any contrast between love and propitiation, the apostle can convey no idea of love to anyone except by pointing to the propitiation. Love is what is manifested there and he can give no account of the propitiation but by saying, behold what manner of love. For him to say,” this is a marvelous statement, “For him to say God is love is exactly the same as to say, God has in his Son made atonement for the sin of the world. If the propitiatory death of Jesus is eliminated from the love of God, it might be unfair to say that the love of God is robbed of all meaning, but it is certainly robbed of its apostolic meaning. It has no longer that meaning which goes deeper than sin, sorrow, adoring joy, wonder and purity of the first Epistle of John.” How true that is.

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And let me say now, a further word about the transcendent efficacy of Christ's sacrifice. David's sacrifices were valuable only because they were dependent on the appointment of God; if God had not told Israel to offer those sacrifices; those sacrifices had no intrinsic merit whatsoever. But Christ's sacrifice is valuable because it is a sacrifice granted in the essential nature of the eternal God, intrinsic is the value of his sacrifice because of the value of his person. David's sacrifice was limited, for Israel, in the Old Testament.

Incidentally, an argument for particularism, is it not? The priests did not exercise their ministry for all men; they exercised their ministry for Israel, the people of God. David's was a limited sacrifice. Christ's sacrifice is for all. Not all without exception. If I said all without exception, that would deny what I have said earlier in the message. But, all without distinction, both Jews and Gentiles may come, no one can say I am prevented from coming because I don't know if I'm one of the elect or not. You can very quickly settle that question, if you are really concerned, by coming. And, in coming, the invitation is for you and you may discover very simply and very quickly if you belong by coming. If you don't want to come, you have no reason to object, my friend.

So our Lord's is for all, at all times, everywhere. The son of man lifted up will draw all kinds of men to himself. Read the context, the Greeks had come to Jerusalem and Jesus makes the point that if the son of man be lifted up, he will draw all, all kinds of men, Jews and Gentiles, like the Greeks who have just come to him.

David's sacrifice stopped a plague. Christ's arrests eternal punishment. David's influenced some toward repentance. Christ's will bring salvation to all of God's elect. David's animals, incidentally, ceased to exist once they were slaughtered, the remains if they were not used in various ways, ultimately, found their way to the dirt and dust of this creation. Christ's sacrifice is a sacrifice that lives on because the Redeemer lives on and the sacrifice lives on by resurrection, as you well know, and it is He who speaks to John

and says that he was at one time “dead, but now he’s alive forevermore, and he has the keys of death and Hades.

The benefits of David’s came to Israel by David’s faith when he offered those sacrifices in obedience to the command of the Lord through Gad. Those of our Lord’s come through our faith also, but our faith, Scripture says, is the gift of God. As the Westminster Confession of Faith puts it, as others have also put it, “Faith is the gift of God, for by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourself, it is the gift of God,” this whole “by grace through faith salvation” the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should be.

And so when you are converted and God moves in your heart and causes you to rest for time in eternity upon the Lord Jesus Christ, you have no reason or ground for boasting at all. The relationship you have is something that God has brought about in his own marvelous way, in your heart, and brought you to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. The offerings of David were responses of homage and communion. Christ’s sacrifice calls for worship of a nobler kind, of thank offerings innumerable, unceasing and throughout eternity.

If you ever take a look at the Old Testament and think about the millions of animals that were brought to the altar in the sacrificial system in Israel, and reflect upon the fact that offerings in the morning, in the evening, throughout the day, the brazen altar was filled with animals that were slain, and the remains of the animals, and the blood that was put upon them, token of the sacrifices that were slain, and so that about the tabernacle animals were constantly being slain, evidences of response on the part of Israel to the word of God. I would suggest to you that the very idea of an altar with all of these animals, ultimately, being slain suggests to us that our altar, our sacrifice, should have the same kind of responsiveness. In other words, the sacrifice of our Lord and our Lord who accomplished the sacrifice should be the recipient of innumerable, unceasing, eternal expressions of gratitude and thanksgiving to him.

“Mount Moriah and Mount Calvary: Contrasting Mountains of Sacrifice” by S. Lewis Johnson
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So let us take up the song of the exiled apostle, “Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood;” and the anthem of the heavenly hosts from the 5th chapter of the Book of Revelation, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, riches, wisdom, strength, and honor and glory and blessing forever and ever.”

May God in his marvelous grace so touch your heart that that is your response as well, to him who shed his blood that you might be delivered from eternal condemnation.

If you are here and you have never believed in our Lord Jesus Christ, we urge you to make that decision. Turn to him, acknowledge your sin, acknowledge his sacrifice as sufficient for you, and flee to him whom to know is life eternal.

Let’s stand for the Benediction.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee and thankful to Thee for the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ and we are thankful for the many sacrifices of the Old Testament that pointed men to the accomplishment of the anti-typical work, when Jesus cried out on Calvary’s Cross, “It is finished! Father, into Thy hands I commit my spirit.” Lord, if there should be some here who have not yet turned to Christ, so move them by Thy grace that they may at this very moment turn to him and give thanks for the Lord Jesus Christ and his saving sacrifice. May their lives reflect the glory of the Son of God and the purposes of our eternal Triune God in Heaven. And, Lord, we ask that Thou wilt in Thy presence, in Thy power and Thy blessing go with us now, as we leave this meeting.

For Jesus’ sake. Amen.