

Sacrifice opens the door to Worship

Vision Statement – Positively change the world through a better me and a better we in 2023.

“Worshipping God is the highest privilege and the greatest responsibility of the Christian life, because God is the highest Being in the universe and the One to whom we must one day give account. Everything we are and do flows out of our relationship with the Lord. God created us in His image so we might love Him and have fellowship with Him, not because we have to but because we want to. God is seeking people who will worship Him “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:23–24).” Warren Wiersbe

I will use the Old Testament tabernacle as a guide for our series on worship. As we look back at the Tabernacle, it can help us to look at our present worship.

Purpose of the Old Testament Tabernacle (that God may dwell among them)- **And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.** Exodus 25:8

Jesus Tabernacled among us in the New Testament - **And the Word became flesh and dwelt (tabernacled) among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.** John 1:14

skēnoō - skay-no'-o

From G4636; to tent or encamp, that is, (figuratively) to occupy (as a mansion) or (specifically) to reside (as God did in the Tabernacle of old, a symbol of protection and communion): - dwell.

Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

(John 2:19)

God seeks to dwell with us. Today the Church is the habitation of Christ, and our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit. – **in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.** (Ephesians 2:22)

God seeks in the future to permanently dwell with us in eternity.

And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

(Revelation 21:3-4)

The tabernacle was a shadow of something or someone better to come.

For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. Hebrews 10:1

Before Christ came, God established sacrifices and ceremonies as shadows of the work of Christ. These sacrifices served a twofold purpose:

1. To impress the observer, before Christ came, with the necessity of removing sin before coming into the presence of a holy God. God could only fellowship with sinners who had settled the sin problem.
2. To teach us, this side of the cross, the meaning of the death of Christ.

Tour of the Tabernacle

The tabernacle is God's picture of Jesus Christ. The acting out of His ministry in the Old Testament.

1. The Courtyard / Entrance

- a. 75' Wide X 150' long, more narrow than wide— "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. (Matthew 7:13)
- b. One gate to enter – "I am the door." (John 10:9)
- c. High Walls of fine twisted linen 7 ½' tall – Exclusion – You could only come one way. "I am the way" John 14:6

2. The Bronze Altar

- a. Approach God through sacrifice – After the priest approved the sacrifice, it was put onto a big 7 1/2' by 7 ½ ' bronze altar
- b. The innocent died for the guilty - But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)

3. The Bronze Laver

- a. Priests had to wash their hands and feet to serve God regularly.
- b. Sanctification – Holiness - Peter said to Him, "You shall never wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me." (John 13:8)

4. Table of Showbread

- a. Twelves loaves of bread representing the twelve tribes of Israel. Replaced every sabbath
- b. Christ is Bread - "And Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life.'" (John 6:35)
- c. God's Word is Bread - But He answered and said, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE BY BREAD ALONE, BUT BY EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS FROM THE MOUTH OF GOD.' " (Matthew 4:4)

5. The Lampstand

- a. There was a central shaft with three branches on each side, making seven branches. Each branch contained three sections, each section being beaten into the shape of an almond blossom and an (ornamental knob) knop. On each of these were placed the olive oil lamps
- b. "Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, '**I am the light of the world.**'" (John 8:12)

6. The altar of incense (inner altar)

- a. Made of wood, covered with gold
- b. Approach God in worship
- c. Always had to be burning - The altar of gold is, first of all a figure of Christ as our great Intercessor. Christ is in the heavens today praying for His own. The seventeenth chapter of John is a sample of the prayer that He offers for His own. (John 17)

Difference between the two Altars

- a. Outer Altar (Bronze Altar)
 - i. Made of bronze
 - ii. Approach by sacrifice
 - iii. You must pass through the first altar to get to the second - Unless your sins have been atoned for, you cannot approach God.
 - iv. Sin hinders fellowship with God.
- a. We confess our sin, and fellowship is restored "**If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**" (1 John 1:9)
- b. While we are always children of God, we don't always enjoy intimacy with Him

7. The Veil

- a. Separated the people from God; no access for the people.
- b. When Jesus died, split from top to bottom; total access.

8. The Ark of the Covenant (Holy of Holies)

- a. rested in the most holy place
- b. Only the high priest could enter one day a year (Day of Atonement)
- c. A wooden chest forty-five inches long, twenty-seven inches wide, and twenty-seven inches high, and covered in Gold. It had a mercy seat and two cherub angels
- d. The ark also teaches us about Jesus Christ. It was made of wood, which speaks of His humanity, but was completely overlaid with gold, which speaks of His deity. It represents God's presence.

Bronze Altar, Altar of Burnt Offering

Exodus 27:1-8

The brazen altar was constructed of acacia wood overlaid with brass. Acacia is a hard, durable, and close-grained wood. Josephus speaks of its strength. One and one-half cubits from the ground and one and one-half cubits from the top, this grating was fastened with four brazen rings. Two staves were made to carry the altar on the wilderness march. Horns were placed on the four corners of the altar. To help keep larger animals from coming off the table, sacrifices were bound cords from the horns.

Theme: We can only worship God through Christ's sacrifice.

1. Every worshipper needs the sacrifice of Christ

When someone walked into the tabernacle courtyard, the first piece of equipment they saw was the bronze altar. This alerts everyone to the necessity of a sacrifice. A sacrifice was needed to open the door to worship.

It didn't matter who they were they all needed a sacrifice. If they were young or old, rich or poor, priest or pauper, everyone had to deal with the sin problem first.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 1 John 1:8

The Bronze Altar represents Justification – You have to be declared righteous.

A sacrifice had to be made for sin. The sin problem needed to be dealt with for fellowship with a holy God. Declared Righteous.

There were five offerings in the Levitical ritual, all of which were made on this altar. The burnt offering was made thereon:

1. **The meat (grain) offering** – This offering was given to God in thankfulness. The people brought fine flour, unleavened cakes, or roasted grain to the priests.
2. **The peace offering** – This offering symbolized fellowship and peace with God through the shed blood.
3. **The sin/guilt offering** – This offering focused on paying for sin. The sin offerings atoned for sins against God. The guilt offering addressed sins against others.
4. **The Burnt offering** – This represented complete dedication and surrender to God. The animal usually an unblemished male, bore the worshiper's sins.
5. **The Day of Atonement** – The English word atonement means at-one-ment. Where the worshipper becomes one with God. This is where reconciliation took place.

The message was clear the innocent died for the guilty.

For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. 2 Corinthians 5:21

Christ was our perfect Sacrifice for our Sin! “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

For the New Testament believer to worship God, the first thing we need to see is the Cross. There is no worship without the cross.

2. Every worshipper has access to the sacrifice of Christ

In the tabernacle courtyard, everyone had access to the bronze altar. The symbolism of access to the brazen altar is the same as the access to the Cross. It is available to everyone.

The way of access was the proper sacrifice – without that, you could not approach God.

It didn’t matter if you were young or old, rich or poor, priest or pauper everyone had access to the altar.

Today it doesn’t matter what status you have in life, good or bad. You have access to the cross of Christ.

I have heard people say, “I can’t forgive myself.” I have good news. I know someone who can forgive you.

The tabernacle was placed in the center of the camp. All twelve tribes encamped around the tabernacle in the wilderness. This symbolized priority and access.

Our lives today should be centered around God.

Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light. Matthew 11:28-30

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. John 3:16

“And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.” John 12:32

3. Every worshipper must hold on to the sacrifice of Christ

On the four corners of the altar, there were horns. This would help the priest to bind an offering down. The horns also represented security and power. At some point in Israel’s history, people that were guilty would run to the altar and hold on to the horns seeking refuge.

Now Adonijah was afraid of Solomon; so he arose, and went and took hold of the horns of the altar. And it was told Solomon, saying, "Indeed Adonijah is afraid of King Solomon; for look, he has taken hold of the horns of the altar, saying, 'Let King Solomon swear to me today that he will not put his servant to death with the sword.' " Then Solomon said, "If he proves himself a worthy man, not one hair of him shall fall to the earth; but if wickedness is found in him, he shall die." 1 Kings 1:50-52

We have to have something to hold on to when the old accuser comes around bringing up our past. We have to have something to hold on to when our thoughts run wild in our minds. When we worship God and live for God, it's not always easy.

Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.

Revelation 12:10-11

What we have to hold on to is the sacrifice of Christ. We hold it dear in our minds. When the charges are brought up, and the accuser says "guilty."

We can plead not guilty because of what Christ has done for us.

Many people are tempted to turn back to the world because they can't get over their past or present failures, but we can.

Conclusion: Before we can even consider worship, we must consider the sacrifice that was made. The sacrifice was made to deal with our sin problem before a holy God. When we have that settled, we can begin to fellowship and worship God.

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2. Every worshipper has access to the sacrifice of Christ
3. Every worshipper must hold on to the sacrifice of Christ