

EXALTING **CHRIST** • EQUIPPING **BELIEVERS** • EVANGELIZING **THE WORLD**

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NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2025



ELIJAH'S CONFIDENCE

The Pilgrim's Walk

The Macedonian Call

Standing Strong in a Hostile World

...and more

...JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF BEING THE CHIEF **CORNERSTONE** • EPHESIANS 2:20

From the Editor

The Brevity of Life

“Whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.” James 4:14



by George T Ferrier

George lives in southern Ontario and fellowships at Bethel-Park Bible Chapel (Brantford, ON). Commended to the Lord's work in 2013 by Bridlewood Bible Chapel (Ottawa), he engages in an itinerant preaching and teaching ministry at North American assemblies, camps, and conferences. He is on the board of Cornerstone Magazine Inc. where he also serves as editor.

Shortly after the assassination of Turning Point USA co-founder Charlie Kirk, I watched a video showing him tossing hats to the crowd just before beginning his usual interaction with students. Unbeknownst to him, within minutes he would find himself in the presence of the Savior whom, according to those who knew him, he loved and served.


People often ask, “What would you do if you knew today was your last day on earth?” Ultimately, that is relatively unimportant. What matters is that we live each day mindful of our mortality and Christ's imminent return.

Being aware of our mortality encourages us to live with farsightedness, cultivating an eternal perspective. Randy Alcorn writes, “Our present life on earth is the dot. It begins. It ends. It's brief. However, from the dot, a line extends that goes on forever. That line is eternity, which Christians will spend in heaven. Right now we're living in the dot. But what are we living for? The shortsighted person lives for the dot. The person with perspective lives for the line.”¹

Life's fleeting nature renders time infinitesimal compared to eternity, like a single drop in an endless ocean. Each wasted second is gone forever and cannot be reclaimed. Therefore, we are called to redeem the time, wisely buying up every opportunity to invest in eternity (Eph. 5:15-16; Col. 4:5). We do this by witnessing to and praying for those who are lost, teaching and encouraging fellow believers, worshiping and praising God, helping others, and serving Christ in other Spirit-led ways. Adopting a heavenly perspective means that no time is wasted. Even if we find ourselves stuck in traffic, we can use the time to pray, listen to edifying Bible messages, or make a hands-free call to encourage someone. That long line at the store may be God's providence, providing an unexpected opportunity to share the gospel with the person behind you.

Our brief time on earth may not end with death, but with instant glorification when the Lord returns to the air for His Church. In light of Christ's imminent return, we must live expectantly, always looking for His appearing. Every believer should be “*looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ*” (Titus 2:13).

Philippians 3:20-21 says, “*For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.*” 1 John 3:2-3 adds: “*Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.*” Christ could return today. Given our position as children of God and our future glorification, the only reasonable response is to purify ourselves, allowing Christ to increasingly conform us to His image (Rom. 12:1-2).

What a difference it will make in our lives if we expectantly wait for His appearing and reckon with our own mortality. This means that we will consider every moment a gift, an opportunity to serve Christ. Our hearts will grow increasingly eager to please Him, moving us to pursue godliness and longing to be found faithful when He appears or our spirit departs to be with Him. Let us then walk with the confidence of Elijah (page 2), live with the mindset of a pilgrim (page 4), obediently serve Christ in our own Macedonian Call (page 6), and stand strong in a hostile world (page 8). Time is short! 

ENDNOTES

¹ <https://www.epm.org/resources/2014/Dec/17/live-line/>



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ELIJAH'S CONFIDENCE

You never forget a first impression. When you first meet Elijah, you notice his confidence in the Lord: “*And Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab, ‘As the LORD God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word’*” (1 Kgs. 17:1).

At this time, the nation of Israel was going from bad to worse. Each successive king led the people further away from God and deeper into sin. King Ahab was serving the idol Baal, and the Lord declared he was the worst king in Israel’s history. Yet to many people, Israel seemed to be thriving, enjoying a period of peace and security.

Then, out of nowhere, Elijah boldly appears and marches uninvited into King Ahab’s palace, makes his pronouncement, and just as quickly departs. Talk about making a first impression!

How could Elijah do this? We all wish we could possess such confidence. He seems like a remarkable man, so we might assume he was simply born confident. But notice what James says: “*Elijah was a man with a nature like ours...*” (Jam. 5:17). Elijah was just like any one of us. So where did his boldness come from? Three statements in 1 Kings 17:1 reveal the source of Elijah’s confidence.

Confidence in God’s Power *“As the LORD God of Israel lives”*

When an electric circuit has power, we say it is live. Elijah proclaims that God is alive; He is not dead. Elijah believed that God was powerful and real. God was not an abstract religious idea to him, but a living and personal God. He reminded Ahab that Israel’s God is Jehovah, not lifeless idols like Baal. Peter later affirmed the same truth about the Lord Jesus: “*Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God*” (John 6:69).

Ahab and his wife Jezebel believed God was gone and forgotten, but Elijah was confident that God was living and powerful, even during those dark days. That leads us to his second statement.

Confidence in God’s Presence *“Before whom I stand”*

Elijah was not only convinced that God was powerful, but he was also confident of God’s personal presence. He declared that he stood in the presence of God; he lived knowing God was truly with him. Paul also confidently said: “*I charge you before God,*” which means “in the face of God” (2 Tim. 4:1). As C.I. Scofield

observed, “It was a small thing for Elijah to stand in the presence of Ahab, because he was used to standing in the presence of God.”

The ruthless reputation of King Ahab didn’t intimidate Elijah, standing before God was what truly mattered to him. When Elijah entered Ahab’s palace, he wasn’t merely standing before the king; he was standing before the Lord, with Ahab simply present in the same room. Elijah’s words reveal his confidence that God was omnipresent, with him wherever he went, even into the court of the worst king in Israel’s history.

Not only did Elijah stand before God, but he also stood for God. He was God’s representative and messenger, bringing the Word of the Lord. That brings us to his third statement.

Confidence in God’s Promises

“There shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word”

Elijah took God at His word. He believed that God would fulfill His promises. But why did Elijah declare that it would not rain? Where did this conviction come from? To understand the full story, we must look at two other passages in the Bible. First, Elijah was familiar with God’s promises found in Deuteronomy 11.

I will shut off the rain

“Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them, lest the LORD’s anger be aroused against you, and He shut up the heavens so that there be no rain, and the land yield no produce, and you perish quickly from the good land which the LORD is giving you” (Deut. 11:16-17).

I will give you the rain

By contrast we read earlier in verse 13: *“And it shall be that if you earnestly obey My commandments which I command you today, to love the LORD your God and serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul, then I will give you the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the latter rain, that you may gather in your grain, your new wine, and your oil” (Deut. 11:13-14).*

If the people served other gods, God would shut off the rain, but if they obeyed His words, He would send it. Elijah knew these warnings and promises, and more importantly, he believed them. In fact, he was so confident in them that he referred to them as *“my word.”* (1 Kgs. 17:1).

The second passage is from James in the New Testament: *“... The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and*

six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit” (Jam. 5:16-18).

Elijah was acting on the truth of God’s Word. He stood firmly on the promises of God. His prayer to God and his words to King Ahab were the result of knowing and believing the promises found in Scripture.

Elijah prayed, even though 1 Kings 17 does not mention his prayer explicitly. To understand the full picture, we must consider all three passages together: Elijah’s proclamation (1 Kgs. 17), God’s promise (Deut. 11), and Elijah’s prayer (Jam. 5). God made the promise about stopping the rain. Elijah prayed, claiming God’s promise, and then God stopped the rain. Only after that did Elijah make his pronouncement to Ahab: *“It is not going to rain except at my word.”*

“Elijah was just like any one of us. So where did his boldness come from?”

Elijah was a devoted man of prayer, but we know nothing about his prayer life until we read about it nearly a thousand years later in the book of James. Imagine him praying in his hometown of Tishbi, watching his community change as idols were set up in that remote village in the rugged hill country of Gilead.

But you might ask, “I am not Elijah, what can I do?” *“The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much” (Jam. 5:16).* The prayer of a single righteous person is powerful and effective. One person prayed, and God answered.

The question is not only whether I know the promises of God, but whether I truly believe them. That is what faith is: believing what God has said. Elijah prayed in accordance with God’s promise that it would not rain, and when Israel returned to the Lord after Mount Carmel, Elijah prayed again, and the rain came (1 Kgs. 18). Fellow believer, the same resources are abundantly available to us through the Lord Jesus Christ. May others’ first impression of us be that we have confidence in the Lord’s power, the Lord’s presence, and the Lord’s promises. [CM](#)



by Bob Upton

Bob Upton is from St. Paul, Minnesota where he is in fellowship at Maryland Bible Chapel. He serves the Lord in assembly and conference ministry and seeks to teach the Word of God in a clear, encouraging, and practical way – full of grace and full of truth.



THE PILGRIM'S WALK

The Christian life has sometimes been compared to a spiritual pilgrimage; an onerous journey strewn with tests, trials and unforeseen obstacles encountered along the way. Scripture often uses the word “walk” in this context, which is totally understandable considering that the writers of these 66 books were all-too familiar with this practical mode of transport. The Lord Himself is estimated to have walked more than 3000 miles during His three-and-a-half-year ministry. A walk or pilgrimage, of whatever length or duration, necessitates a number of important prerequisites to ensure success.

Requirement #1: Light

But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him (John 11:10, ESV).

Walking in the dark can be a most hazardous endeavor. It can result in becoming hopelessly lost, incurring serious injuries, or both. The reality for every person, whether Christian and non-Christian, is that life is spent in a domain of spiritual darkness, an evil world ruled by Satan (Col. 1:13). The only hope for a lighted pathway in this present age is the one provided by the Lord Jesus Christ, “*the light of the world*” (John 8:12).

Remarkably, Christ makes this light available to everyone (John 1:9). However, for the majority of people, it offers little attraction: “*for men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil*” (John 3:19). For many, this light is merely the indistinct flicker of a distant candle, hardly bright enough to illuminate one’s pathway. Yet, even when seen only as a far-off glimmer, it still possesses the power to draw even the most desperately lost.

Followers of Christ have also been given the tremendous privilege of bringing light to this dark world. Jesus told His disciples, “*You are the light of the world . . . let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in Heaven*” (Matt. 5:14a, 16, ESV). Christians possess this light because, unlike unbelievers, the light of Christ is in them (John 11:10).

Scripture also makes it clear, however, that even God’s children can “*forsake the paths of uprightness to walk in the ways of darkness*” (Prov. 2:13, ESV). Jesus warned His own disciples to walk while the light was among them, lest darkness overtake them (John 12:35). He was not saying they were in danger of losing their salvation, but that by straying from the light of Christ they would no longer have Him to guide their footsteps or feel His comforting presence. “*The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?*” (Ps. 27:1a).

Requirement #2: Direction

Another essential requirement for such a journey is guidance or direction. Simply having a lighted pathway does not necessarily guarantee that one will take the correct route.

Again, Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life" (John 8:12, ESV).

Jesus Himself acts as our guide. He is a light who moves ahead of us. Although His light does not illuminate all of the steps at once to our final destination, He asks us to trust His leadership for each and every step we take (Prov. 16:9). His Word assures us that His hand will guide us even when we come to a fork in the road (Isa. 30:21). However, determining the will of God for our lives requires effort, just as physically walking requires energy and purpose. The psalmist prayed, "Teach me your way, O LORD, that I may walk in your truth" (Ps. 86:11, ESV). We know from our student days that successfully acquiring knowledge is directly related to the diligence applied. This is also true when we seek to learn the ways of God through the pages of Scripture. Such an endeavor requires discipline as does maintaining a consistent prayer life. "Lead me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation..." (Ps. 25:5).

Requirement #3: Equipped

Preparing for a successful journey also requires equipping ourselves appropriately. We know from experience that undertaking a hike through rugged terrain demands the proper clothing, shoes, supplies, and equipment. In this regard, Paul offers a clever analogy for how followers of Christ might equip themselves with the complete armor of God for success (Eph. 6:13-18). Here are the seven items he recommends:

- loins girt about with truth
- the breastplate of righteousness
- feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace
- the shield of faith
- the helmet of salvation
- the sword of the Spirit (Word of God)
- + prayer

Each of these items offers assurance and protection for the traveler, as well as guiding principles for walking in a manner that pleases our Guide. Above all, it is essential to receive salvation through faith in Christ; only then can we live a life of righteousness, grounded in trust and extending peace to everyone we encounter on the journey. The list also reminds us of two essential tools for a successful journey: the *Word of God* and *prayer*.

Throughout Scripture, we find additional practical instructions on how we are called to walk, as seen in the words of the prophet Micah:

He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? (Mic. 6:8, ESV)

Justice, kindness, and humility are three virtues the Lord loves and honors in His pilgrims. He asks that we strive to be fair and kind in our dealings with others, and to have a humble heart before God so that we might be able to hear Him when He speaks to our spirit, "for we walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor. 5:7).

Conclusion


As pilgrims, we have been abundantly blessed to have our path illuminated by the light of Christ, who guides and equips us to face every obstacle along the way for "the night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light" (Rom. 13:12, ESV).

Scripture speaks not only of walking with the Lord, but also of:

Standing for the Lord: *Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil* (Eph. 6:11).

Waiting for the Lord: *My soul, wait silently for God alone, For my expectation is from Him* (Ps. 62:5).

Being still before the Lord: *Be still and know that I am God...* (Ps. 46:10).

Running for the Lord: "let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith" (Heb. 12:1b-2a). As one's faith grows stronger, our Guide may gradually quicken the pace so that more ground can be covered, "for the coming of the Lord is at hand" (Jam. 5:8b). Paul, however, also cautions us not to run aimlessly (1 Cor. 9:24-26), but to remain mindful of staying within the Savior's will, and not getting sidelined by secondary issues. 



by Nathanael Reed

Nathanael is a retired elementary school teacher and principal. He and his wife, Joyce, presently live in St. Thomas, ON, and fellowship at Southdale Bible Chapel in London, ON. Nat has authored seven books including a new devotional, "Encounters: The Healing Miracles of the Great Physician" (John Ritchie Publishing).



THE MACEDONIAN CALL

When Paul met the Lord Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus (circa 37 AD) he asked this pivotal question: “*Lord, what do You want me to do*” (Acts 9:6)? The Lord answered in simple terms and, rather than allowing the pride of his lofty position to cloud his judgment, Paul simply obeyed what he was told. Days later, his encounter with Ananias (Acts 9:10-20) set him on a course that would define the rest of his life. At every crossroads, we find him asking and obeying the same question he asked the day he first met Christ as his Lord. Beloved reader, we can do no less, nor do any better ourselves.

Some seek a grandiose master plan for their lives, yet in reality, our Lord often asks us simply to obey Him in the small, daily things. We are prone to think that bigger is better, but it is the Lord’s prerogative to decide what is best. In secular employment, the employer sets out the job description, not the employee.

Likewise, it is always our Master’s prerogative to change the job description according to His purposes, often without explanation.

When Philip the Evangelist was seeing the Lord’s blessing in Samaria (Acts 8:5-8), he may have wondered why the Lord would ask Him to leave and travel south toward the Gaza desert (Acts 8:26). Had the Lord decided to set him aside for some reason? Was there something wrong with the work he was doing? Was he somehow being punished for something he had done wrong? Any one of us might understandably have asked such questions, but not Philip. We read that “*he arose and went*” (Acts 8:27) without having any notion of why. His Lord and Master had spoken to him, and his sole responsibility was to obey.

His encounter with the Ethiopian eunuch resulted in a saved man returning home to his own people with the life-changing message of the gospel. Imagine the potential loss if Philip had not obeyed! Others may look down on a humble servant of the Lord

Jesus for living in such an obedient way, but that does not mean that those who judge have some spiritual insight which should cause us concern. The heart of a true servant is revealed by how he or she reacts when someone treats them like the servant they really are.

We have heard the Macedonian call today:
Send the light! Send the light! ¹

This line from Charles Gabriel's hymn references another occasion when Paul acted upon his Acts 9:6 question. Having begun his plans to head toward the province of Bithynia, the Lord sent a man to visit Paul in his dreams with a simple request: "Come over to Macedonia and help us." (Acts 16:9). The next verse records Paul's obedient response with the adverb "immediately." Following several years of gospel outreach in Macedonia, Achaia, and Greece, it is clear that the Lord's plans were broader in scope than Paul may have realized. His willingness to go where the Lord was sending him was enough for Paul and it surely should be enough for us as well.

Where is your Macedonia? Where is my Macedonia? It may be a Samaritan woman by a well (John 4) or someone in the grocery store line. It may be a blind Bartimaeus by the roadside (Mark 10) or someone in a doctor's office. It may be sharing a meal with a leprous Simon in his home (Matt. 26) or visiting someone who simply longs for company. The true question is this: when we ask the Master what He would have us do, do we ask with the intention and resolve to actually obey? The Israelites of old responded to Moses' instructions from Jehovah by saying, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do" (Ex. 19:8). Should we not go a step further and say, "All that the LORD will speak, we will do?" Does it matter what the task is, as long as we are doing it unto Him?

Help me in all the work I do, to ever be sincere and true;
And know that all I'd do for you, must needs be done for others.²


There is a tendency within us to strive for greatness, to aspire to something bigger, or to seek a higher calling. The flaw is that we often measure these goals in human terms, not from our Master's perspective. His "Well done!" is bestowed upon those who are faithful, not necessarily upon those who have done great things. "And seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not..." (Jer. 45:5).

The flip side of this is that we may look down on small things, using the same flawed human standards. When the Lord's hand is in any work to which He calls us, we must never despise it (Zech. 4:10) simply because we think it is too insignificant to be bothered with. We are infinitesimally small, yet He "bothered" with us!

As we each individually ask our Master the Acts 9:6 question, it is wise to consider whom we are addressing. He was called by Jehovah to be His Servant (Isa. 42:1, 52:13) and demonstrated this continually by always doing what pleased the Father (John 8:29). His meek and lowly character consistently shone forth, confounding those who expected a majestic Messiah rather than a suffering Savior. "We will not have this Man to reign over us!" they protested (Luke 19:14). It is often said that the best followers make for the best leaders. Our Lord Jesus Christ exemplified perfect servanthood and is the perfect Master (Col. 4:1).

That Macedonian call initially opened the door for the gospel in Phillipi. There a Jewish dye merchant, a demon-possessed Greek servant girl, and a Roman prison guard all came to know the Lord Jesus as Savior. In a city of that size, it is highly unlikely that any of these three would ever have met, given their vastly different circumstances. Yet once they were united in Christ, an eternal bond was formed that cannot be broken. When we present the Lord Jesus Christ to others, we also offer them a heavenly fellowship here on earth, which has no equal among the many man-made associations.

From these humble beginnings, the message of salvation reached all of Macedonia, Achaia, and Greece. And from this seedbed, the gospel spread throughout Europe, eventually reaching us today. When the Master calls, immediate obedience is the best response. We may never know the far-reaching results of yielding to Him, but that is not our concern. With this in mind, we go to our Macedonia, wherever that may be.

Master, speak! And make me ready,
When Thy voice is truly heard,
With obedience glad and steady, still to follow every word.
I am listening, Lord, for Thee: Master, speak, O speak to me!³ 

"LORD, WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO?"

ENDNOTES

¹ "Send the Light" by Charles H. Gabriel

² "Others" by Charles D. Meigs

³ "Master, Speak! Thy Servant Hearth" by Frances R. Havergal



by Rick Morse

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Standing Strong in a Hostile World

THE CHRISTIAN'S THREE ENEMIES



The Christian life is not a playground; it is a battlefield. Scripture makes it clear that every believer faces enemies that seek to weaken, distract, and even destroy their faith. These enemies are not figments of the imagination, nor are they relics of an ancient past. They are active, subtle, and just as dangerous today as ever. The Bible identifies them as the world, the flesh, and the devil. These three powerful forces consistently oppose God's purposes in the lives of His people.

History has proven how real this battle is. Some of the most visible leaders in the Christian world have stumbled under its weight, reminding us that no one is immune to temptation. Their falls serve as a sobering warning. If men with global influence and thriving ministries can be brought down, then all believers must remain alert. Yet while the enemy is real, God has not left His people defenseless. Scripture provides both a diagnosis of the enemy and a prescription for victory.

The World: The External Enemy

When the Bible speaks of "the world," it does not refer to creation itself or even to humanity in general. Rather, it points to the values, systems, and cultural currents that resist and reject God. It is this world that glorifies materialism, promotes pride, and normalizes immorality. It exerts a constant pressure on believers to conform.

In modern life, that pressure is relentless. Media and entertainment often present lifestyles that run directly contrary

to Scripture. Television and music proclaim that happiness is found in pleasure, wealth, or unlimited self-expression. Social platforms reinforce the idea that identity and worth are tied to appearance, possessions, or popularity. Over time, these voices can grow louder than the quiet, steady voice of God.

The danger of the world is that it reshapes values without believers even noticing. It makes compromise seem harmless, materialism seem natural, and sin seem normal while righteousness feels odd or outdated. Life becomes filled with endless distractions—news cycles, entertainment, sports, and social media—that consume attention and leave little room for prayer, worship, or reflection. Unless guarded against, the world's pull can be so subtle that Christians hardly recognize when they are drifting.

John warns bluntly in 1 John 2:15: "*Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*" This is not a call to withdraw from culture, but to live in it without being shaped by it.

The antidote is found in Paul's words in Romans 12:2: "*And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.*" Renewal means actively reshaping thought patterns with God's truth. It requires filling the heart and mind with Scripture, filtering what we watch and listen to, and surrounding ourselves with godly fellowship. The more our thinking is shaped by God's Word, the less power the world has to draw us away.

The Flesh: The Internal Enemy

If the world applies pressure from the outside, the flesh betrays us from within. Scripture uses the word “flesh” not simply to describe the body, but to speak of our fallen, sinful nature—the inward pull toward self-centeredness and rebellion against God.

Paul describes the conflict in Galatians 5:17: “*For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.*” (ESV) Every Christian knows this inner battle with its tug of pride, lust, fear, envy, or anger. It is not merely external temptation but internal weakness that often proves most dangerous.

The flesh keeps believers from speaking boldly about their faith because they fear what others might think. A student may stay silent when classmates mock Christianity, afraid of rejection. A professional may downplay their convictions at work, concerned about reputation or promotion. The flesh whispers, “Protect yourself. Don’t stand out. Don’t take risks.”

It also pushes us toward laziness when prayer or service requires effort. It feeds impure desires and whispers that personal comfort matters more than obedience. Pride rises up, demanding recognition for us rather than glory for God.

Defeating the flesh is not a matter of sheer willpower. Trying harder is never enough. True victory comes through surrender, yielding daily to the Spirit’s control. Galatians 5:16 gives the key: “*...walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.*” (ESV)

Walking by the Spirit is not mystical; it is practical. It means feeding the soul with Scripture, praying consistently, choosing obedience over impulse, and submitting to God’s will moment by moment. Over time, the Spirit strengthens believers to silence the voice of the flesh. While it always whispers, “Live for yourself,” the Spirit speaks louder: “Live for Christ.”

The Devil: The Spiritual Enemy

The third enemy is more sinister than cultural influence or inward weakness. The Bible presents the devil as a real, personal adversary. He is called “*the deceiver,*” “*the accuser,*” and “*the father of lies.*” His tactics are ancient yet effective: deception, temptation, accusation, division, distraction, and discouragement.

From the very beginning, Satan twisted God’s Word in Eden to lure humanity into sin. He unsuccessfully tempted Jesus in the wilderness by appealing to desires. He continues today, whispering lies that question God’s goodness or distort His truth. Sometimes he accuses believers of their past sins, robbing them of joy and confidence. Other times, he sows discord in churches and families or convinces Christians their efforts don’t matter.

His schemes are subtle, and his attacks often come when believers least expect them.

Yet Scripture is clear; the devil is a defeated foe. James 4:7 offers this promise: “*Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*” Resistance is not passive; it is an active, daily stand.

Jesus modeled how to resist, by countering lies with the truth of God’s Word. Prayer keeps believers dependent on God’s strength. The armor of God, described in Ephesians 6, provides protection against every attack. Fellowship with other believers offers accountability and support, while worship shifts focus from fear to God’s greatness. Above all, remembering the cross reminds us that Satan’s ultimate defeat was sealed when Christ rose victorious.

Lessons from the Fallen


The tragic stories of fallen Christian leaders highlight the reality of these enemies. Though gifted and used powerfully in ministry, each fell when temptation was left unchecked. Their downfalls devastated many and left scars on the witness of the Church. They stand as sobering reminders that spiritual warfare is real, relentless, and impartial.

Yet, their stories also make one truth unmistakable. Victory does not come from fame, gifting, or charisma; it comes from humble dependence on Christ. Strength is found not in human ability but in dependence upon the Spirit’s power.

Living in Victory

The world presses from without. The flesh wars from within. The devil schemes from the shadows. Together, these enemies wage constant war against the Christian soul. Yet God has not left His people powerless. We overcome the world by renewing our minds with Scripture. We overcome the flesh by walking in the Spirit and surrendering daily to God’s will. We overcome the devil by resisting him with truth, prayer, and the armor of God.

Ultimately, victory is not found in human effort but in abiding with Christ. Jesus said in John 15:5, “*Apart from Me you can do nothing.*” (ESV) Yet with Him, believers are not only able to stand, but they are able to triumph.

The Christian life is indeed a battle, but it is not a hopeless one. With Christ at the center, believers are not merely survivors. They are, as Paul declared in Romans 8:37, “*more than conquerors through Him who loved us.*” 

by Sid Halsband

Sid and his wife Karen were commended to Botswana in November, 1991. Later their commendation included South Africa. After 29 years they returned to their home in Hollywood, FL where they have a busy itinerant ministry.

“Yet with Him,
believers are
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FOUNDATIONS *of the* FAITH

Regeneration

Some years ago, I met a man who claimed to be a Christian but became offended when I asked if it was a wonderful thing to be saved. He told me that he did not like my referring to his conversion as *salvation*, because he did not believe he had ever been lost and therefore had no need of salvation. Instead, he considered himself simply on a spiritual journey that had led him to the principles of Christianity. He believed this journey was part of his natural development, a kind of evolution toward a higher understanding of spiritual things. I have also met other people who, while embracing Christianity, reject that regeneration is a necessary and inseparable component of salvation.

The Word of God teaches that in salvation, a person receives justification (Rom. 5:1), redemption (1 Pet. 1:18–19), a Mediator (1 Tim. 2:5), the forgiveness of sins (Eph. 1:7), reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:19), and many other blessings. The Word of God also teaches that salvation includes regeneration, or a new birth (John 3:3, 7; Titus 3:5). Regeneration is described by such terms as “*born again*,” “*born of God*,” and “*born of the Spirit*” (John 3:3–13; 1 John 3:9; 4:7; 5:1; 1 Pet. 1:23). Born into this world spiritually dead, the Holy Spirit regenerates the human spirit of all who believe in Christ (Eph. 2:1), imparting to them eternal life (John 3:5–7; 6:63). Indwelt by Christ through the Holy Spirit, Christ’s presence and fellowship become a reality in their lives (2 Pet. 1:4). Now part of God’s family, this transformation grants them the privilege and intimacy of calling God “Father” (Rom. 8:14–17).

Regeneration does not imply that God erred in His original creation of man. On the contrary, God’s own pronouncement concerning creation was that it was “*very good*” (Gen. 1:31). Man was made in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:26–27;

9:6). He was created to exercise rule and have dominion over the earth, even as God rules and has dominion over all things. Man was endowed with intelligence and created as a free moral agent, capable of thought, choice, and progress. He had the ability to employ imagination in order to design and invent. He was appointed to serve as God’s representative upon the earth, an authority granted to no other creature. Furthermore, man was created with a moral conscience, possessing the capacity to discern between good and evil. These qualities, which reflect the very character of God, are found uniquely in man. Truly, we were created in the image and likeness of God.

But then Adam sinned, and through that sin, mankind inherited a fallen nature from him. This sinful nature stands in complete contrast to God’s holiness. As a result, mankind became “*dead in trespasses and sins*” (Eph. 2:1; Col. 2:13). Man, who was crowned with glory and honor, was now wrecked by sin. Humanity became corrupt in its thinking (Rom. 1:23; Eph. 4:22). The moral compass spun out of control, and lives were overtaken by unrighteous and immoral deeds (Rom. 1:28–31; 1 Cor. 6:9,10). They became dead to God (Eph. 2:1), walking according to the course of this world (Eph. 2:2), fulfilling the cravings of the flesh and indulging the desires of both flesh and mind (Eph. 2:3). Blinded in understanding and darkened in heart (Eph. 4:18; Rom. 1:21), mankind lived in the unholy shadows of sin. They no longer knew God the Creator (Gal. 4:8) but instead were separated from Him (Isa. 59:2). Fallen man, unholy and corrupt, could no longer stand in the presence of a holy God.

The gods of Greek and Roman mythology were often portrayed as fallen deities, marked by the passions and lusts of men, and thus were fashioned into the likeness of fallen humanity. Consequently, man falsely imagined God to be like himself. When, at the birth

of Christ, the eternal God took on flesh, He revealed to us what God is truly like. In Christ, we behold both the glory of God and the likeness to which man was originally created, the image and likeness of God.

What sin has inflicted upon the human race is far more than a superficial bruise or scar that can be erased or disguised with a veneer of holiness. Sin has so deeply marred the image of man that no degree of reformation can undo its ruin or restore what has been lost. Humanity stands in desperate need of a Savior, and God has graciously provided salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ. When we cry out to Him in faith, He does not repair the old life; He transforms it, creating it anew and making us entirely new creatures (2 Cor. 5:17). For this reason, the Lord Jesus declared to Nicodemus, “*You must be born again*” (John 3:3, 7; 1 Pet. 1:23).

No mere adjustment of the old man, no moral improvement, and no outward reform can undo the corruption and devastation wrought by sin. Salvation is more than a mere return to God; it is regeneration—the new birth—and the complete conversion of the soul. Only through regeneration can man be made whole.

I recall Dr. David Gooding illustrating the concept with a memorable story. He told of a pig that delighted in wallowing in the mud, doing just what pigs naturally do. Yet each morning, as it rolled in the mire, the pig noticed the beautiful young women coming out from the city gates to draw water. How radiant they appeared! The pig longed to be as beautiful as they were.

As technology progressed, the pig heard that within the city there was a university where such a transformation was thought to be possible. With eager hope, the pig enrolled. In its first class, it learned to talk like a woman; in the next, to walk like a woman; and in later classes, to smell and dress like a woman.

Yet one problem remained—the pig’s nose. This feature betrayed its true identity. The cosmetics class proved especially difficult, but with the guidance of the instructor and the application of chemicals and paint, the transformation was declared complete. At last, graduation day arrived. The women paraded through the streets, and the now “transformed” pig joined them. Onlookers admired the beauty of the women, and the pig rejoiced in its new identity.

However, as the parade continued, the pig suddenly spotted a mud puddle. True to its nature, it dashed toward the puddle,


wallowing happily in the mud as before. Despite every outward change, the pig’s nature had never been altered.

The apostle Peter refers to an ancient proverb about a dog returning to its own vomit and a pig returning to the mire, even after washing (2 Pet. 2:22; cf. Prov. 26:11). These vivid images remind us of a solemn truth. It is possible to assume the outward appearance of a Christian—speaking the right words, walking in the right manner, dressing the part, and imitating Christian conduct—yet never truly possessing the life of Christ. Such a person remains unchanged at the core, and like the washed pig that quickly returns to the mud, they eventually reveal their true nature. Sadly, many who call themselves Christians are little more than that pig dressed as a woman, outwardly reformed but inwardly unregenerate.

Unless there is transformation—unless there is regeneration, unless there is a new creation—then all we have are sinners merely dressed in the garments of Christendom. That is neither biblical Christianity nor biblical salvation.

True salvation occurs when, in our sinful state, we cry out to God to save us from our sins, and He, by His grace, does just that. He regenerates the heart, imparting new life. Regeneration cannot take place apart from the Word of God and the Spirit of God. The Word convicts us of sin and brings us into the

knowledge of the truth (1 Pet. 1:23; Eph. 5:26; Jam. 1:18). The Spirit quickens us so that we pass from death unto life (John 5:24). In Christ we become a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17). We become the children of God (John 1:12; 1 John 3:2; Gal. 3:26).

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit” (Titus 3:5). 

“Salvation is more than a mere return to God; it is regeneration—the new birth—and the complete conversion of the soul. Only through regeneration can man be made whole.”

by Mark Swaim



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THE SIN OFFERING

LEVITICUS 4:1-35, 5:1-13, 6:24-30

Before investigating the sin offering, it is important to understand how the two non-sweet aroma offerings differ. The sin offering was demanded for the *offense of sin*, but the trespass offering was required for the *damages of sin*. The sin offering deals with the guilt of sin; Christ's blood purges the believer's conscience from that. The trespass offering deals with the damage that sin causes; through Christ's offering, full restoration of the sinner to God is made possible. Thus, Christ as pictured in the sin offering resolves *who we are* by nature, but in the trespass offering He absolves *what we have done*. Both the sin offering and the trespass offering were for sins of ignorance (e.g., weakness or neglect; Lev. 4:13, 22, 27; 5:15) and for offenses against others (Lev. 6:2-5), but not for acts of defiance against God.

Accountable to God

Leviticus 5:1-4 provides four examples of such offenses: someone who negligently withheld information in a public charge against another person, accidental defilement from touching something dead, some human uncleanness (e.g., a leper), and a rash oath (e.g., a soon-forgotten vow). Leviticus 4:1 through 5:13 groups the reasons for presenting a sin offering into two classes: First, when the conscience of the offerer was violated, no

specific sins are listed (Lev. 4). Second, when the offerer became ceremonially unclean per the stipulations of the Law (Lev. 5:1-13).

Leviticus 4 provides instructions for the wounded conscience. The sin offering reminded the Jews that everyone was personally accountable to God for sin. There were no Levitical sacrifices that an individual could sacrifice to the Lord to atone for willful sin (Num. 15:30). God is holy, and for Him to dwell among His people, they had to be holy too; as this was an impossibility, sin and trespass offerings were needed. At the national level, all sin was atoned for on the annual Day of Atonement (Lev. 16).

Everyone Can Be Forgiven

Instructions for this sacrifice were provided for six different people groups (Lev. 4:3-5:13): the high priest, the whole congregation, a ruler of the people, a common person, the poor, and the very poor. A young bull was the required sin offering for the first two groups, a male kid (goat) was the obligation of a ruler, a common person could offer either a female lamb or kid (goat), while the poor were permitted to offer two birds and the very poor, fine flour. All animals presented had to be without blemish.

The high priest had to officiate the offerings for himself and for the congregation, and these required him to purge the sanctuary

with the blood of the young bull. Because the blood was taken into the sanctuary, eating any part of the bull sacrifice was prohibited (Lev. 6:30). Although a sinning ruler needed to bring a male kid from the goats, and common people needed a female kid or lamb for their sins, the procedure for both was identical. Portions of the kids and lambs could be eaten by the officiating priest in the courtyard of the tabernacle because the blood of these animals was not carried into the sanctuary (Lev. 6:25-29).

When any individual or the Jewish elders (who represented the entire congregation) became aware that a sin of ignorance had been committed, a sin offering was to be presented to atone for the sin and to receive Jehovah's forgiveness. The procedure for the first four groups was similar, except for the type of animal to be presented and the application of blood within the sanctuary.

The poor could offer two turtledoves or two young pigeons, one for a sin offering, which first had to be presented by the priest, and the other for a burnt offering. If the offerer was so severely impoverished that he could not supply two birds, he could bring one tenth of an ephah of fine flour for the sin offering. The priest was then to burn a memorial of it on the altar, without oil or frankincense because it was a sin offering, to atone for sin. Although the meal offering itself did not have blood, because it was burned with the blood sacrifices, it assumed the value of a blood sacrifice for those who could not afford to offer one. This ensured that anyone wanting atonement for sin could be forgiven by God.

Ashes and Blood

The portions of the sin sacrifice, not burned on the Bronze Altar or eaten by the priests, were burnt on top of the ashes of the burnt offering located in a ceremonially clean place outside of camp (Lev. 6:11). Whether the sin offering was burnt on the altar or the ash pile, the procedure showed that the basis of its approval directly related to God's acceptance of the burnt offerings, which pictured God's immense appreciation of His Son's sacrificial devotion. The portions of the lambs and kids (but not the bullocks) that were not burnt on the altar were given to the officiating priest, who had to eat the sacrifice (which was considered holy) in the courtyard of the tabernacle.

When the priests partook of the sin offerings, this portrayed the truth that the believer's union in Christ from a positional standpoint is complete in every aspect, including the fact that we died with Him two thousand years ago (Rom. 6:6). Though Christ bore the judicial penalty of sin for us, we nonetheless experience the fellowship of His death in an ongoing way (Phil. 3:10). This truth is conveyed in eating the meat of the sin offering in the holy place.

The blood from the sweet savor offering was not sprinkled before the veil, because the burnt offering and peace offering did not purge away sin; also, the blood from these sacrifices was

sprinkled on the outside of the Bronze Altar and not applied to the horns of the altar. However, the sin offering does speak of purging from sin. In this sacrifice we see Christ suffering apart from God under the judgment for our sin and doing so in the place of total rejection "*outside the camp*" (Heb. 13:11). Anyone desiring salvation must depart from humanized religion and identify with Christ alone, for only His shed blood when applied can remove the guilt of sin (Heb. 9:12-14).

The Great Exchange


Before the sin offering was killed the offerer placed his hands upon the head of the animal, presumably confessing his sins and symbolically transferring the offense to the animal. If the whole congregation committed an offense, then the leaders of the people put their hands on the head of the bull and confessed the sin.

The sacrifice was then killed and completely burned. This indicated the sin had been fully atoned for and forgiven. The picture of the sin offering is clear; Christ identified with us by becoming a man, took our sin upon Himself at Calvary, and was judged by God in our place (Rom. 5:8; 1 Pet. 3:18).

AS GOD'S LAMB, THE LORD PRESENTED HIMSELF AS AN OFFERING FOR SIN.

The sin offering was completely consumed by fire and the Lord Jesus was completely consumed in the judgment for our sin. As God's Lamb, the Lord presented Himself as an offering for sin (John 1:29). He was both the Mediator of a New Covenant (Heb. 8:7-9) and the ransom that established it (1 Tim. 2:5-6). The priest who presided over the sin offering was innocent of the offerer's sin but yet became connected with it in order to apply the blood of the sacrifice to make atonement for the sinner. This pictures Christ as the Mediator between God and men.

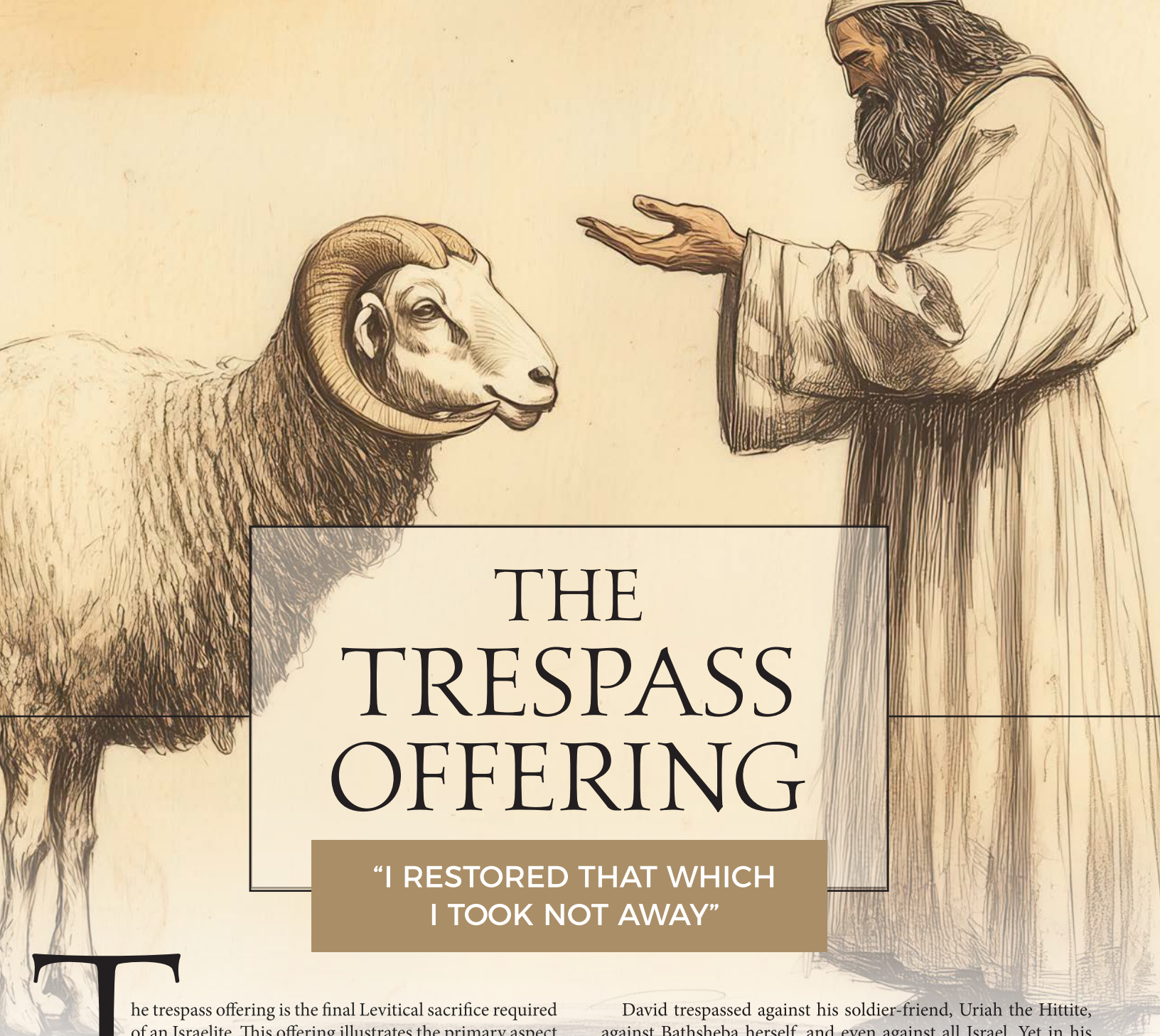
Summary

While Old Testament sacrifices atoned for sin, Christ's sacrifice was the propitiation which satisfied God's wrath concerning all of man's sin for all time (Rom. 3:24-26; 1 John 2:2). The innocent took the place of the condemned so that the guilty might have the opportunity to be redeemed and receive the righteous standing of the innocent. This is the great exchange pictured in the sin offering. Christ took our place in death that we might receive everlasting life in Him. Because God judged His Son for our offenses, He can righteously restore repentant sinners to Himself (2 Cor. 5:21). This is the wonderful message of the sin offering. 



by Warren Henderson

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THE TRESPASS OFFERING

“I RESTORED THAT WHICH
I TOOK NOT AWAY”

The trespass offering is the final Levitical sacrifice required of an Israelite. This offering illustrates the primary aspect of the work of the cross. The Hebrew word for trespass is “*asham*,” meaning guilt. It addresses the question of how a man may be forgiven for the consequences of their sins, for every sin is an offense against the God of the universe. The trespass offering occupies the section from Leviticus 5:14 through chapter 6:7.

The Trespasser’s Sins

There were two aspects in which a man might commit a trespass: it could be against God (5:14-19) or because of something done to a neighbor (although still against the Lord, 6:2). Thus, both portions of the moral law could be violated—toward God and toward one’s neighbor. A trespass may be against a fellow man; nevertheless, it is a sin primarily against God.

David trespassed against his soldier-friend, Uriah the Hittite, against Bathsheba herself, and even against all Israel. Yet in his prayer of confession (Ps. 51), he cried out from the depths of an anguished heart, “*Against Thee, and Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight...*” (v.4).

The Trespasser’s Offering

A notable difference from the sin offering is that, in the case of the trespass offering, there was only one type of animal sacrifice. Whether the trespass was against God in the holy things or against His law, or a trespass against God in their relationship with others, a ram was brought in each case. The trespass offering was an acknowledgment that they had failed to give God and man what was due to each. In this way, they had not only trespassed and “gone beyond” what they should have done, but had also fallen short of God’s standard.

The ram is closely associated with consecration, as seen in Genesis 22 and Exodus 29. Each ram offered as a trespass offering reminded the offender that they had failed to do God's will and pleasure, having satisfied their own desires in some way and thus committed a trespass. The Lord Jesus, in His complete consecration to God, never failed to give both God and man their full due. Fully yielded to the will of God, He did not sin either in the holy things, nor in matters concerning others. Lewis Sperry Chafer (1871–1953), founder of Dallas Theological Seminary, tells us of the results of being devoted to God. He writes:

“One result of the act of remembering the Lord's death in the breaking of the bread is the deepening of the personal consciousness of the meaning and value of that death. It is noticeable that those Christians who are frequently exercised in spirit towards his death in the breaking of the bread are the most awake concerning the value of the sacrifice of Christ for them. The disciples met on the first day of the week to break bread (Acts 20:7). They knew the real desire of the Lord for them in this important matter and they knew the value of this ordinance in their own lives. A child of God should always be increasing in heart appreciation of his Savior's finished work.”¹

The Trespasser's Restoration

This offering teaches us that God is vitally interested in relationships. He covets the relationship He has with His people, and He desires that we maintain right relationships with one another. Sin mars all of this. Trespasses undermine these right relationships. Nevertheless, our God is in the restoration business, and He begins by repairing the relationship between God and man. The sacrifice provided, prefigured in the ram of consecration, becomes the means of reconciliation for a right relationship with God. We are reminded of the words from Psalm 69:4: “...Then I restored that which I took not away.” The Lord Jesus had no part in the entrance of sin into our world. The soiling of that pristine and blessed relationship between God and man was marred by the awful reality of sin. Christ did not “take it away;” on the contrary, He restored it. Thus it is that we are “reconciled to God by the death of His Son” (Rom. 5:10). The trusted Bible expositor H. A. Ironside (1876-1951), concerning this work of Christ has written,

“What the sacrifices of old could not accomplish, namely, the actual putting away of sin, has been accomplished through the finished work of our Lord Jesus, that one offering, never to be repeated, which He made on our behalf upon the accursed tree. We cannot add to this finished work and thank God we cannot take away from it. It stands alone in marvelous completeness. In Christ's sacrifice God has found infinite satisfaction too.”²

Additionally, God is vitally interested in the relationships among believers. In His triune nature, He has dwelt eternally in a relationship. He created us to enjoy relationships and having been reconciled to God and brought into the family of God, we are to maintain relationships based on righteousness and love.

The Trespass Offering as a Picture of Christ

God always does “*exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think.*” Figuratively, the trespass offering pictures the “exceeding abundant” work of Christ by which He restored that which He took not away (Ps. 69:4b). Isaiah the prophet presents this same aspect of the Messiah's work when he writes, “*Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin...*” (Isa. 53:10). The word for offering is *asham* (guilt), the same word used for the trespass offering. Christ was our trespass offering when He offered himself “exceedingly” on the cross of Calvary for our sins. Our Savior provided the required sacrifice needed to satisfy God and, in so doing, to reconcile man to Himself.

Christ's substitutionary work in the New Testament is a description of the trespass offering. First, Christ came “...to give his life a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:28). The preposition “for” means Christ died in the place of, or instead of the sinner. Second, “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God...” (1 Pet. 3:18). Here, the word “for” literally means *on behalf of* or *for the benefit of*, indicating that Christ suffered and died not only in the sinner's place, but for the sinner in bringing him to God.

Conclusion

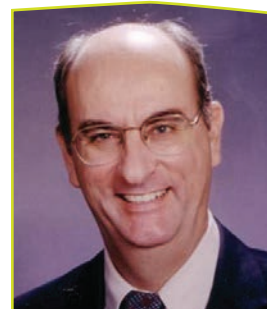
The trespass offering was to be killed at the altar and its blood sprinkled around the altar. Certain parts of the offering were burned upon the altar as an expression of divine judgment against the guilty one's sin, while other parts were eaten by the priests in the holy place. The priest of old would feed on the trespass offering.

Every believer is a priest today, and it is the holy responsibility of each of us to spiritually feed upon our Savior, the true trespass offering. We do this as we read the Word of God and meditate upon what it reveals concerning the atoning work of our Lord Jesus Christ. Through this work He put away all our sins and trespasses and made us fit for the presence of a holy God. May we diligently seek to meditate on and consider the benefits of Christ's death for each of us.

ENDNOTES

¹Lewis Sperry Chafer *He That Is Spiritual*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1918), p.119

²H. A. Ironside, *Lectures on the Levitical Offering*, (New York: Loizeaux Brothers, 1979), p.77



by David Dunlap

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ISSUES & ANSWERS

“SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES...”

JOHN 5:39



In Acts 8, Why Did the Samaritan Believers Not Immediately Receive the Holy Spirit Upon Believing in Christ?

Since Pentecost (Acts 2), one of the defining characteristics of this present age of grace has been the immediate and permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of believers.

Before His ascension back to heaven, the Lord had promised His disciples that they would be His witnesses *“in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth”* (Acts 1:8). In fulfillment, the Church began in Jerusalem and spread outward through the known world. The sealing of the Holy Spirit testified that each believer belonged to Christ and was a member of the universal Church (2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13; 4:30). Though the gospel was preached *“to the Jew first and also to the Greek”* (Rom. 1:16), every believer—whether Jew or Gentile—was permanently indwelt by the Spirit and made an equal member of the body of Christ (Eph. 2:11–22; Gal. 3:26–29).


On the Day of Pentecost, as Christ had promised (Luke 24:49; John 15:26; 16:7), the Holy Spirit was sent (Acts 2:1–11), and the Church was born when the Spirit baptized about 120 Jewish believers (Acts 1:15) into the body of Christ. Soon afterward, about 3,000 more souls were added through the Spirit-empowered preaching of Peter (Acts 2:14–41). Thus, a divine pattern was established. Through faith in Christ, believers were immediately indwelt by the Holy Spirit and placed into the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12–13).

This same pattern is seen when the gospel was first preached to the Gentiles. God directed a Roman centurion named Cornelius—a devout man who feared God—to send for Peter to hear the message of salvation (Acts 10). While Peter was preaching the gospel, Cornelius and all who believed received the Holy Spirit (v. 44). Later Peter testified, *“The Holy Spirit fell on them [Gentiles], just as on us [Jews] at the beginning [Pentecost]”* (Acts 11:15).

The same occurred at Ephesus when Paul encountered some of John the Baptist’s disciples (Acts 19:1–7). He asked whether

they had received the Holy Spirit when they believed, but they replied that they had not even heard the Spirit had come. Paul then pointed them to Jesus, the One whom John had foretold, and upon believing in Christ, they too received the Holy Spirit. The laying on of hands by Paul was only necessary to underscore his apostolic authority.

This being said, why was there a Samaritan exception? During the Assyrian invasion (722 B.C.), the ten northern tribes of Israel were led into captivity following the capture of Samaria (2 Kings. 17:6–41). Easton notes that the Samaritans was “the name given to the new and mixed inhabitants whom Esarhaddon (B.C. 677), the king of Assyria, brought from Babylon and other places and settled in the cities of Samaria, instead of the original inhabitants whom Sargon (B.C. 721) had removed into captivity (2 Kings 17:24; comp. Ezra 4:2, 9, 10). These strangers (comp. Luke 17:18) amalgamated with the Jews still remaining in the land, and gradually abandoned their old idolatry and adopted partly the Jewish religion. After the return from the Captivity, the Jews in Jerusalem refused to allow them to take part with them in rebuilding the temple and hence sprang up an open enmity between them...The bitter enmity between the Jews and Samaritans continued in the time of our Lord: the Jews had “no dealings with the Samaritans” (John 4:9; comp. Luke 9:52, 53). Our Lord was in contempt called “a Samaritan” (John 8:48).”¹

When Philip preached the gospel in Samaria, many believed (Acts 8:4–8, 14–17). However, they did not immediately receive the Holy Spirit. God withheld the Spirit until apostolic representatives, Peter and John, came from the Jerusalem church. After praying and laying hands on the new Samaritan believers, they received the Spirit. The change in John’s attitude here compared to before Calvary is striking (Luke 9:52–54). This event was necessary to demonstrate, by apostolic authority, God’s wholehearted welcome of Samaritans into the one body of Christ. As a result, many more Samaritans later trusted Christ as their Savior (Acts 8:25; 9:31; 15:3). The Book of Acts marks a transitional period from law to grace. In the earliest, most formative days of the Church, it was necessary to show that the gospel crosses ethnic and cultural lines, revealing the unity of the body of Christ. 

ENDNOTES

¹ Easton, Easton’s Dictionary of the Bible, 1987, Olive Tree electronic version

by **George T Ferrier**

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Camp Hope Fall Family Conference

► November 7-9, 2025

7011 Pony Lake Rd Dahlonga, GA

The Fall Family Conference begins Friday at 5:00 pm ending Sunday 1:00 pm. The speakers this year are Sam Thorpe (adults) and David Hollingsworth (children). Sam will be speaking on meditations from the book of Job. For more information and to register, please contact Steve Roys at admin@camphopega.org or (770) 536-4787 or visit <https://camphopega.org/fall-family-conference/>.

HISTORIC TABERNACLE MODEL STILL IN CIRCULATION

In the early 1930's a group of men in Grand Rapids, Michigan met together to design a tabernacle model for the use of Laurence Chambers in his itinerant ministry. After several decades of use by others, the model was passed on to William Gustafson. Now it has been passed on to Mike Moody (NC) for use in ministry as the Lord directs. Bro. Moody can be contacted by email: mcjmoody@yahoo.com or cell: 336-953-4246.

Note on Tax-deductible Receipts

A 2025 tax-deductible receipt will be issued for gifts received or postmarked on or before December 31, 2025. A 2026 tax-deductible receipt will be issued for gifts received or postmarked after December 31, 2025. The Cornerstone Magazine committee wishes to express their heart-felt appreciation to all who have had a part in prayer or have financially participated in the work of this ministry. God is able.

In the Next Issue of Cornerstone Magazine:

- His Name Shall Be Called Wonderful
- Out of Egypt I Called My Son
- The Ancient Promise

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MY DAILY WALK

Lord, help me in walking with You through the day—
Obeying Your Word that says, “Walk in My ways”;
Quick to confess sin, then resume walking anew,
Seeking to please You in what I say, think, and do.

May I “walk in the Spirit” as I’m making each choice—
Denying selfish desires, alert to Your voice;
Knowing just when to speak, when to keep my words few,
Showing compassion for others in what they’re going through.

Remind me each day, “Walk by faith, not by sight,”
For You’re in control—things will work out all right;
Not conformed to this world, but transformed through Your Word,
By recalling and applying the truths I have heard.

You tell me it’s required to “walk humbly” with You,
So make me aware when my pride’s showing through.
Help me not to rely on what seems good in my eyes,
But to walk in the counsel of the godly and wise.

You’ve said, “Walk in love,” as a reflection of You—
That’s a love unconditional, selfless, and true.
So help me to love those who aren’t kind to me,
To be gracious to others though we might disagree.

As I’m “walking in wisdom” and Your light shines through,
Let others be encouraged Your truth to pursue.
And though often I fail while walking Your path,
May I keep learning Your ways till I reach heaven at last.
