

Sermon #8 — *Discovering Christ in Leviticus*

Title: **THE OBLATION OF FIRSTFRUITS**
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Text: Leviticus 2:12-16

Subject: *The Meaning of the Firstfruits Sacrifices*

Date: Tuesday Evening — May 22, 2018

Readings: *Merle Hart and Mark Henson*

Introduction:

In the play written by John Mansfield called “**The Trial of Jesus**,” there is one passage in which the Roman centurion who was in charge of the soldiers at the cross comes back to Pilate to give his report. After he had given his report of the day’s barbaric work, Pilate’s wife motions for him to come over to her and asks how the prisoner called Jesus had died. Once the story was told —

- “*Father, forgive them!*”
- “*Today thou shalt be with me in Paradise.*”
- “*I thirst!*”
- “*My God, my God, Why hast thou forsaken me?*”
- “*It is finished!*”
- “*Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit.*”

Once the story was told, Pilate’s wife asks the centurion, “Do you think he is dead?” “No, Lady, I

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don't.” “Then, where is he?” To that question the centurion replies, “Let loose in the world, Lady, let loose in the world, where no man can stop his truth.”

Because the Lord Jesus Christ who died at Calvary has been raised from the dead and let loose in the world where no man can stop his truth and his kingdom or hinder his purpose we are gathered here once more in his name, celebrating his resurrection and in anticipation of our own.

The resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ is a fact which cannot be reasonably disputed.

- A Revealed Fact
- An Historical Fact¹

¹ **13 Post Resurrection Appearances**

1. Mary Magdalene (John 20:11-18)
2. Women at the Tomb (Matthew 28:8-10)
3. Peter (Luke 24:24; 1 Corinthians 15:5)
4. Emmaus Disciples (Luke 24:13-32)
5. The Eleven without Thomas (Luke 24:36-49; John 19:19-23)
6. The Eleven with Thomas (John 20:24-29)
7. More than 500 at One Time (1 Corinthians 15:6)

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• An Indispensable Fact

The Lord Jesus Christ, the God-man Mediator, he who put away our sins by the sacrifice of himself, is risen from the dead. — Rejoice! He has ascended up on high, leading captivity captive, conquering death, hell, and the grave! And he is exalted King of kings and Lord of lords.

This risen, exalted, almighty Christ has empowered and commanded his church to preach the gospel to all men, making known to all both the fact and (more importantly) the meaning of his resurrection.

You know, of course, that the resurrection of Christ was as plainly and clearly prophesied in the Old Testament Scriptures as were his

8. James (1 Corinthians 15:7)

9. Peter Again (John 21:1-23)

10.All the Apostles (1 Corinthians 15:7)

11.Great Commission Gathering (Matthew 28:16-20)

12.The Ascension)Acts 1:1-11)

13.Paul (Acts 9:1-9)

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incarnation, obedience and death as our covenant Surety (Psalm 16:9-11; Isaiah 26:19; 53:10-12).

(Psalm 16:9-11) Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. (10) For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. (11) Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence *is* fulness of joy; at thy right hand *there are* pleasures for evermore.

(Isaiah 26:19) Thy dead *men* shall live, *together with* my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew *is as* the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.

(Isaiah 53:10-12) Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

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(11) He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. (12) Therefore will I divide him *a portion* with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

That is just three of the many direct Old Testament prophecies of our Savior's resurrection. **But did you know that his resurrection was also portrayed in the typical sacrifices of the Old Testament?** — It was.

Turn with me to **Leviticus 2:12-16**. I want to show you the meaning and message of "**THE OBLATION OF THE FIRSTFRUITS.**"

(Leviticus 2:12-16) "As for the oblation of the firstfruits, ye shall offer them unto the LORD:

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but they shall not be burnt on the altar for a sweet savour. (13) And every oblation of thy meat offering shalt thou season with salt; neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat offering: with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt. (14) And if thou offer a meat offering of thy firstfruits unto the LORD, thou shalt offer for the meat offering of thy firstfruits green ears of corn dried by the fire, *even* corn beaten out of full ears. (15) And thou shalt put oil upon it, and lay frankincense thereon: *it is* a meat offering. (16) And the priest shall burn the memorial of it, *part* of the beaten corn thereof, and *part* of the oil thereof, with all the frankincense thereof: *it is* an offering made by fire unto the LORD.”

Proposition: In the oblation (offering) of the firstfruits, we are given a clear, instructive picture of our Lord’s resurrection, of our own resurrection, and of faith in and consecration to the risen Christ.

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Let me show you.

NOT BURNED

1st — **Notice, first, that this oblation was not to be burned on the altar** (v. 12).

(Leviticus 2:12) “As for the oblation of the firstfruits, ye shall offer them unto the LORD: but they shall not be burnt on the altar for a sweet savour.”

Without question, these firstfruits were offered as a voluntary acknowledgement of God’s goodness in providing his people with daily bread. They are included in the meat offerings described in this chapter because they were **freewill offerings of thanksgiving, gratitude, and praise**. They certainly speak much concerning both the worshipper and his property.

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However, you will notice that **the firstfruits here described were not brought to the altar because they primarily represented and typified the Lord Jesus Christ in his resurrection glory, not in his suffering and death.**

There is no burning here. The Savior's burning is over.

- His suffering is done.
- His sacrifice has been made and accepted.
- Justice is fully satisfied.
- Sin is gone!
- This offering was food for the priests. — Christ crucified is the Bread of Life for God's royal priesthood.

In all the offerings and sacrifices made to God there is always the reminder of our Savior's suffering and death as our Substitute.

SEASONED WITH SALT

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2nd — **These sacrifices were to be seasoned with salt.** The Lord gave a very plain commandment about this in verse 13.

(Leviticus 2:13) “And every oblation of thy meat offering shalt thou season with salt; neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat offering: with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt.”

1. **Salt represents preservation and security.** — Salt indicates corruption removed and corruption prevented forever
2. **Salt speaks of covenant grace** (Numbers 18:19; 2 Chronicles 13:5).

(Numbers 18:19) “All the heave offerings of the holy things, which the children of Israel offer unto the LORD, have I given thee, and thy sons and thy daughters with thee, by a statute forever: **it is a covenant of salt** forever before the LORD unto thee and to thy seed with thee.”

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(2 Chronicles 13:5) “Ought ye not to know that the LORD God of Israel gave the kingdom over Israel to David forever, *even* to him and to his sons by a **covenant of salt**?”

3. **Salt was used in ancient times as a symbol of friendship.**

I have read that among the ancient Jews each man regularly carried salt in a little pouch. When two or more of them took a liking to one another, before parting company, each one would take out a little bit of his salt. All would mix their salt together, break bread, dip it in the bowl of mixed salt, and eat it. When they were finished they would take the salt remaining in the bowl and each would put an equal portion in his pouch. Thereby indicating the permanent mixture of their lives in friendship. The only way their covenant of friendship could be broken would be by separating each grain of salt from the others and return it to the original owner.

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Since that was impossible, the established bond they made must remain forever a bond of friendship!

Children of God, get hold of this if you can. — **God almighty himself, in all his fulness, in all that he does, is ours in Christ.** Though we were once, at heart, enmity against the Almighty, he has brought us to himself in a covenant of everlasting friendship!

In Christ God sups with man and man sups with God (Revelation 3:20). **He blesses us in our souls, in our homes, in our fields, and in our store. In all things, God says,** “*Say ye to the righteous, It shall be well with him!*” — “*There shall no evil happen to the just!*” **God our Father has made even the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air to be our friends** (Job 5:23; Hosea 2:18; Romans 8:28).

By requiring that all sacrifices be offered with salt, the Lord God declared that the satisfaction he has in the sacrifice of Christ (the burnt offering) is unchanging, abiding, eternal, and

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indestructible, and that he will ever be faithful to his purpose, his promise, his covenant, and his people for Christ's sake.

Turn to Mark 9, and watch how our Lord Jesus uses this commandment in Leviticus 2:13 in reference to the preservation and unfailing protection of his elect.

(Mark 9:41-49) For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward. (42) And whosoever shall offend one of *these* little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea. (43) And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: (44) Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. (45) And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having

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two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: (46) Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. (47) And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: (48) Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. (49) **For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.**

Every one of his elect is salted with fire and salted with salt, preserved by his sacrifice and his grace from all evil!

GREEN EARS OF CORN

3rd — **In verse 14 our Savior is portrayed by a sacrifice of corn, green ears of corn.**

(Leviticus 2:14) “And if thou offer a meat offering of thy firstfruits unto the LORD, thou

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shalt offer for the meat offering of thy firstfruits green ears of corn dried by the fire, *even* corn beaten out of full ears.”

These ears of corn (barley) represent our Lord Jesus Christ. I do not doubt that he had this specific sacrifice in mind when he said in John 12:24...

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.”

1. They must be “**green ears.**” — Our Savior was cut off, like green ears of corn, in the prime of his life.
2. The words might better translated “**ears of the best kind.**” — That is our Savior. He is Alpha and Omega. He is the perfect God, the perfect Man, the perfect Sacrifice, the perfect Savior!
3. These ears of corn must be “**dried by the fire.**”

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Though there is no blood in these offerings of praise, there is always a reminder of it. Our thanksgiving and worship, our gifts and sacrifices, our firstfruits of thanksgiving are offered and accepted because of what Christ endured as our Substitute to put away our sins.

(Psalm 22:14) “I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.”

(Psalm 102:4) “My heart is smitten, and withered like grass; so that I forget to eat my bread.”

What a picture this is of the Man of Sorrows! All his life long, he was being dried in the fire. It is true, he did not make atonement but by his blood and death; but everything he endured as a Man and in anticipation of being made sin, dried up his life and withered his physical frame. — Gethsemane! At 33 he appeared to be a man 50 years old.

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4. Then, these ears of corn had to be “**beaten out!**” — Andrew Bonar said, this “represents the bruises and strokes whereby he was prepared for the altar.”

(Hebrews 2:10) “For it became him, for whom *are* all things, and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.”

CHRIST THE FIRSTFRUITS

4th — **In all these things, Christ is set before us as the Firstfruits.** Firstfruits imply that many more shall follow. He is the Firstfruits. Those that follow are like the firstfruits. The full harvest conforms to the firstfruits.

(Romans 8:28-30) “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose. (29) For whom he did foreknow, he

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also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. (30) Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”

(Philippians 3:10) “That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.”

(Philippians 3:21) “Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.”

The Scriptures do not leave us in the dark about these types and pictures. Rather, the Holy Spirit has given us full instruction concerning these sacrifices, these oblations of the firstfruits.

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1. First and foremost, as I have shown you, **the firstfruits speak of our Lord Jesus Christ in his resurrection glory** (1 Corinthians 15:20-23).

(1 Corinthians 15:20-23) “But now is Christ risen from the dead, *and* become the firstfruits of them that slept. (21) For since by man *came* death, by man *came* also the resurrection of the dead. (22) For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. (23) But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.”

2. Then, **the firstfruits represent our regeneration**, our spiritual resurrection with Christ (James 1:18; Romans 8:22-23; 16:5).

(James 1:18) “Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.”

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The Apostle Paul spoke of one of his beloved friends, Epænetus, as “*the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ.*” That means, he was among the first in Achaia who were born of God and brought to Christ. But I want you to look at **Romans 8:22-23**. Being born of God the Holy Ghost, we now have the firstfruits of eternal life and heavenly glory.

(Romans 8:22-23) “For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. (23) And not only *they*, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body.”

If we have the firstfruits of the Spirit, grace, eternal life, and everlasting salvation in Christ, peace, pardon, justification, acceptance with God, what will eternal glory be? — Whatever it is, grace here is just the firstfruits. — Glory shall follow!

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3. **The oblation of the firstfruits was a picture of believers honoring God with their substance** (Proverbs 3:5-6, 9-10). — **Giving, like the offering of the firstfruits, is an act of faith.**

(Proverbs 3:5-6) “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. (6) In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”

(Proverbs 3:9-10) “Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: (10) So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.”

- God deserves and demands the firstfruits. — Only the best! (Malachi 1).
- Giving God the firstfruits is a declaration that all is his.
- Giving God the firstfruits is an act of faith. — We give the first of all (time, labor, money, and

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life), trusting our heavenly Father to provide the rest. And he has promised that he shall (Exodus 34:23-24).

(Exodus 34:23-25) “Thrice in the year shall all your menchildren appear before the Lord GOD, the God of Israel. (24) For I will cast out the nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders: neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the LORD thy God thrice in the year.”

4. **The oblation of the firstfruits was also a prophetic picture of and expressed the believing sinner’s hope of his own resurrection glory with Christ** (1 Corinthians 15:23; Revelation 14:4). — Yes, those Old Testament believers believed in and lived in hope of the resurrection (Jude 14-15).

(1 Corinthians 15:23) “But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.”

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(Revelation 14:1-5) “And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty *and* four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads. (2) And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: (3) And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred *and* forty *and* four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. (4) These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, *being* the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. (5) And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.”

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When we at last stand before God with Christ in glory, there is yet more to come!

- The Reconciliation of All Things!
- Eternity!

(Leviticus 2:15-16) “And thou shalt put oil upon it, and lay frankincense thereon: *it is* a meat offering. (16) And the priest shall burn the memorial of it, *part* of the beaten corn thereof, and *part* of the oil thereof, with all the frankincense thereof: *it is* an offering made by fire unto the LORD.”

The smoke and the frankincense ascend up to heaven. All is accepted. — First, the Lord Jesus Christ. — Then us and all that is ours! Our blessed Savior passed through the suffering, the fire, and the flame. — Only then was he received up into heaven. **Now, because we are one with him, we are treated as if we had ourselves passed through the suffering, fire, and flame of God’s holy wrath and justice, because in union with our dear Savior we**

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passed through the suffering, the vfire, and the flame of God’s holy wrath and justice with him!

— In Christ we are accepted, too.

- Accepted because he is!
- Accepted as he is!
- Accepted forever!

That is the meaning of “the oblation of the firstfruits.” That is the meaning of the resurrection (Romans 4:25-5:2).

(Romans 4:25) “Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.”

(Romans 5:1-2) “Therefore, being justified, by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: (2) By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”

And after this the resurrection!

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(1 Thessalonians 4:13-18) “But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. (14) For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. (15) For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. (16) For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: (17) Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. (18) Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”

(1 Corinthians 15:51-58) “Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all

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be changed, (52) In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. (53) For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality. (54) So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. (55) O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave, where *is* thy victory? (56) The sting of death *is* sin; and the strength of sin *is* the law. (57) But thanks *be* to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (58) Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”

Amen.