

John # 21

“A Worthy Substitute” Part 2

John 1:29

Before the Cross and the completion of the canon of Scripture, God ordained certain rituals as expressions of worship and training aids for communicating biblical truth to people who were largely illiterate.

Among these observances, animal sacrifices were used to teach the doctrines of salvation and post-salvation sin recovery.

Beginning with the very first presentation of the Gospel, immediately after the Fall of man in Genesis 3, continuing through the patriarchal family offerings in Genesis 4; 8; 22 and finally taking the form of the Levitical offerings in Leviticus 1-5 along with the special holy day offerings in Israel in Leviticus 23, the shedding of innocent animal blood illustrates the future salvation work of the coming Savior.

These sacrifices clearly illustrated the principle of salvation: i.e., someone who was acceptable to God would have to die in place of unacceptable sinful man.

The innocent animal's blood was a great representation of a life given on behalf of others because the animal's blood is its life.

The violence and bloodshed involved in the Levical offerings was designed to shock the onlookers into recognizing the reality of God's immovable character.

The death struggle of a magnificent innocent animal ripped away all sweetness and sentimentality from the scene and cast a sobering light on the absolute standards of God.

But the animal's suffering gave the Jews only a glimpse of the vicious judgment that Jesus Christ would bear, when as our Substitute, He would pay the price that God's justice demanded of us.

Because of Jesus Christ's substitutionary spiritual death, we are now free to make an instantaneous adjustment to God by faith in His Son.

And when we believe in our Worthy Substitute, God's justice is then free to give us the blessings of eternal salvation and still be fair to His own holy righteous essence.