Brazen Altar - Christ Our Justification Pt.2

By Charles Feinberg

Now what was the value of this order? Ah, my dear friends, we talked about the sacrifices that were there, but the sacrifices were made in order that the blood might be spilt. Why the blood as the forfeiture of life? Remember with regard to the altar a burnt offering the bronze altar. Ever and always remember Leviticus 17, verse 11, the life of the flesh: "The flesh is life, the life of the flesh is in the blood. And I've given it to you upon the altar, upon the altar, to make an atonement for your soul; for it's the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.” Leviticus 8:15, we read, "And he slew it and Moses took the blood and put it upon the horns of the altar roundabout with his finger and purified the altar and poured the blood at the bottom of the altar.” Yes, poured out at the bottom of the altar. The life of Christ was poured out for us at the bottom of Heaven's sacrificial altar—Calvary—poured out the blood at the bottom of the altar and sanctified it to make reconciliation upon it.

Hebrews 9:22 tells us that he, for the sacrifice of himself, he has put away sin for the sacrifice of himself. He, the end of the age, has done that very thing. No wonder John the Baptist, looking at our Lord Jesus in that wonderful day of his earthly ministry, said, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." And you know, it's not just a thing that will pass away with time. In eternity, there will still be the wonderful, wonderful consideration of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, because when we get a little bit of an insight, a little glimpse into the Glory land beyond, Revelation 5:6, we read, "I beheld and lo, in the midst of the throne room there
were four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders..." Revelation 5:6, what did he see?
"...stood a lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes which are the
seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth."

No wonder there is this wonderful word of Doxology in Revelation 5:12, "Saying with a loud
voice, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain,' blood spilled. 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to
receive power.' Amen. 'And riches', right, 'and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing.'

Hallelujah. He will get the glory. He is worthy. He poured out his life unto death. The incident is
told of a very fine Christian lady in New York who, in dealing with her family doctor when she
visited him or he visited her on occasion through the years, she frequently took advantage of that
time and we all should. We all should. She took time out to bring before her family doctor—he
was ministering to her in physical things, she wanted to minister to him in spiritual things—she
saw his spiritual need. So she brought for him, before his heart and mind and attention again and
again, the gospel, the claims of the Lord Jesus Christ on every life. But, as many times as she did
it, friends, she was confronted, always confronted with the argument: "God is good, God is
wonderful, God is loving, God is merciful. He doesn't need any sacrifice as a redemption for
sinners." The doctor would shrug his shoulders and say, "If I acknowledge my debt, God is good
and He will forgive." No fool could say God is good and God is loving, and this, that and the
other. Do you know they are self-deluded, if they haven't accepted Christ, just to say God is
good and God is love. If they really believed that, they would receive God's greatest
manifestation of His goodness and of His love, the gift of His son the Lord Jesus Christ on
Calvary's cross. Well, continuing this incident: The lady had a long, serious illness. She was faithfully attended by this physician. You remember, he said, "If I acknowledge my debt, God's good and He'll forgive." Well, when she recovered, she invited that doctor to dinner. After the meal, very sumptuous, meal made with loving hands, she addressed her doctor in this way. She said, "Doctor, now that we've eaten and have a quiet moment, I just want to thank you again for your great kindness, all your patience, your skill, your attendance during my long illness. I'm certain that it's to your devotion and skill that I owe my recovery." Well, the doctor said, "I've only done my duty. Didn't do anything extra." He didn't want her to magnify his work. But she says, "But excuse me, I haven't finished yet." She stopped him and went on. "I owe you a great debt; as a matter of fact, I have a large medical bill owing you now and now that I have confessed it, now that I have owned up to it, now that I have admitted it, I'm sure that you're a good man and you'll forgive the debt." Why, that doctor's answer was emphatic, he was caught off guard. Not only was his answer emphatic but it was self-condemning. He said "Madam, that kind of an arrangement may work all right in theology, but it doesn't work in medicine." It doesn't work in either one, it works in neither. The Bible says without the shedding of blood, there is no remission. Now whatever does that mean? It means unless there is the forfeiture of life, there is no forgiveness, no remitting, no releasing of the debt. There is no remission of sin without the shedding of blood. There is no remission. It's been put beautifully in a hymn.

No blood, no altar now, the sacrifice is o'er. No flame, no smoke ascends on high. The land is slain no more but richer blood has flowed from nobler veins, ah yes, to purge the soul from guilt and cleanse the reddest stains. There was fire on this altar. The sacrifice was not only to be slain but, you remember, it was to be burned, especially the whole burnt offering, the olah, a
holocaust, that which went up entirely to God. So there had to be fire that was to consume it.
And in Leviticus 9: 13 we read, "The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar. It shall never go out." Verse twelve, "and the fire upon the altar shall be burning in it. It shall not be put out."
Twice over. It's very important for us to realize it was never to go out. Now whence did this fire come? See, there is to be the continuous offering before God. Where did they get this fire? Did they make it themselves? Did they utilize the means that they did in that time of human history? Leviticus 9:24 beautifully tells us where this fire came from. It's the verse that's just before the statement. The sad, tragic incident of Nadab and Abihu offering strange fire before Lord, some fire of their own making, of their own choosing. In Leviticus 9:24, we read, "And there came a fire out from before the Lord." Ah, it's a fire out from before the Lord. That's it. “And consumed upon the altar of the burnt offering and the fat, which, when all the people saw, they shouted and fell on their faces.” They saw God had begun the entire Tabernacle ceremony and service.

I'm saying that on the basis of Leviticus 9:24 without fear of contradiction: This fire came from God. God inaugurated the whole system himself. So no one can say, some may wish to say in unbelief that this was all thought up by Moses and Aaron to keep the people in sort of subjection, to get their own thoughts accepted, to get their own regime ratified, to have a hold upon the people. Not at all. They didn't inaugurate this system. God inaugurated the whole system itself. The pattern was according to the pattern shown in the Mount and all the specifications, all the details, all the many and manifold features of service, all administrations, God inaugurated the whole system Himself. And so fire, it must begin, just as today, pressing a button or pulling the switch to start a whole system going. It was God who inaugurated, who started this Himself. It was a token—this fire was—of His holiness. He was 12 29 and we already indicated our God is a
consuming fire. Now the continual fire speaks of two things. God is always ready to receive sinners through a sacrifice. Wherefore He is able even to save unto the uttermost eternally, never ending, we all those who come to God by Him, seeing, since he ever liveth to make it acsession follow, he was 725. God is ready and willing to accept sinners for a sacrifice and a continual sacrifice is made. Christ satisfied all claims once for all. It has continuing, continuous, permanent, lasting value. Yes. What a wonderful, wonderful sacrifice. We don't have to worry about another sacrifice being made. How the Book of Hebrews rings the changes once for all, this was done once for all, never to be repeated. No need to do this all over again.

God did it once and that suffices continual fire. In the Orthodox synagogue, there is what's called a Ner Tamid, a perpetual light. ‘Course it speaks of the light that was in the tabernacle and temple, the Lamp Stand that had lights that were on all the while, but this fire also was a continual fire. Must go on continually. God's service doesn't have furloughs. It doesn't have vacations. It doesn't have leaves of absence. No, always it must go on. The efficacy of the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ is as valid today, it's just as true today as it was the hour in which he died upon the cross. The purpose of the altar, then, is to meet the righteous claims of God through sacrifice. Where was it? Never forget it, it was immediately in front of the gate. Why? That's the first necessity in our approach to God. Some may think we need to get ready. We need to get fit all, we. We dare not fondly dream of fitness, all the fitness we need is to feel our need of the Lord Jesus Christ, our need for redemption. You see, among the seven annual feasts in Leviticus 23 that the people of Israel had, what was the first feast? It couldn't possibly have been the feast of first fruits or Pentecost, no, or the Feast of Unleavened Bread by itself, no. It couldn't have been the Feast of Trumpets of the Day of Atonement or the Feast of Tabernacles. It had to
be something that touched immediately, the first need of man. You remember what the first feast was, the feast of Passover.

On the night of the 14th of Nisan, the fourteenth day of the first month, why? Why the feast of Passover first? Because man's first and basic, and ever prominent need as he approaches God is his need of redemption. His need of sacrifices, need of the lamb; Him who knew no sin, God made to be sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in him. When we all like sheep had gone astray, when we had turned every one to his own way, the Lord laid upon him, with terrific impact so that it took his life away, the Lord laid upon him the iniquity of us all, old friends. He was wounded for our transgressions. That's the altar's burned offering. He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him and by his stripes we are healed. Yes, he bore our griefs, carried our sorrows. We did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted; he was, but not for himself. It was for us who among his own generation considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due. He died, the just for us, the unjust, that he might bring us to God. He bore in his own body our sins upon the tree so that now, this hour, we are not redeemed corruptible things. Like what? Like silver, and gold. From our vain manner of life handed down from our fathers, but who redeemed with Precious Blood as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ who verily was for-ordained for us from before the foundation of the world, but have in these last times been manifested for your sakes. Yes. The first need is that all the burnt offering. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ! In what area? That he was a great prophet? That he was a great man of God? That he was a great miracle worker? That he was a great ethical teacher? No, believe on the Lord
Jesus Christ as the offering on God's altar. As the great sin bearer, as the great sin offering, as the great taker-away of sin. Yes, he is both the priest and the sacrifice. By the sacrifice of himself, he has taken away sin forever. I say again, the altar, a burnt offering. The bronze altar was immediately in front of the gate. That's the first necessity in our approach to God and may I stop long enough to say that we get so many letters in our ministry and in our radio ministry and written ministry, folks saying now, "Isn't this all right? Isn't this new way all right? And that way?" Friend, always approach a new theological idea, always approach a so-called new religion on one ground and one ground alone. Ask what it does with the cross of Christ. Ask what it does about the work of Christ on Calvary, ask whether it tells men that they can get to God by bypassing the work of the Lord Jesus in redemption. If they do say that, they are just as lying and they are just as much in error as Satan could ever make anyone. Our first necessity in approach to God is to have a mediator. That's Christ Jesus who gave himself for us. The first blessing we need in the spiritual realm is forgiveness of sins. Why, to come near God and to disregard the altar means death.

I don't think it should ever have been lost upon us that at the very beginning of man's history on Earth—notice how close this is to the statement about man's temptation, Adam and Eve's temptation by Satan and their fall and the consequences of the fall—what is it that is going to be indicated in the next chapter? You'd say, "Well, it must be something of equal importance with the creation and with the fall." And, my friends, it is not far to seek. Right at the threshold, if you will, of Bible revelation of the disclosure of God's dealings with man, we read in Genesis 4:3, "And in process of time it came to pass that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstling of his flock and of the fat thereof."
Well, here is a marvelous way to test out whether this is the method or that is the method of approach to God. Which one will God accept? With which one will God be pleased? Which one will God validate? And the Lord had respect unto Abel, the man first, and to his offering, but unto Cain and to his offering, he had not respect. Now, my friends, was that because Cain was jealous? Why, he wasn't jealous until after it happened. Was it because he was venomous? He didn't show that until after his offering hadn't been accepted. That couldn't be the cause for which it wasn't accepted. Cain was very angry; his countenance fell. Now, what is it, if we didn't have anything more than just verse five of Genesis four, we might be in a quandary.

And the Lord said—and here's where God reveals, watch this—here’s where God reveals what was wrong with Cain and his offering. "And the Lord said unto Cain, ‘Why art thou angry, and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well,’” apparently he hadn't done well. Now he said, if you do well, you'll pass the exam. You'll get a good grade. You will be accepted, if you do well, shalt thou not be accepted? You think I'm capricious? You think I am arbitrary? No, it isn't that I have a pet in Abel. It isn't that I like him and don't like you. You're just as much a creature of mine as he is. If you do well, why, what ulterior motive would I have in not accepting, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well—and evidently he had not done well distinctly—so, then what does God say? Sin, sin.

And it's the same word in Hebrew, Hatah, as sin offering. The word for sin and sin offering are the same in Hebrew, showing in a, in a remarkable way the utmost identification of the sin of a believer with the sin offering and the sin of anyone with the sin offering that is provided in our Lord Jesus Christ.
That's in 2nd Corinthians 5:21: If thou doest not well, sin or sin offering lies at the door. Avail yourself of that, avail yourself of that. That's the only way you can come. To come near God disregarding the altar meant death. Oh friends, never, never seek to bypass this truth.

The case of Cain is written large in the scripture for all to see way at the beginning. It wasn't the case of his being of one nationality and Abel of another. There were no differentiations in nations, no. There were no differentiations in environment. There were no differences in heredity. They both were sons of Adam and Eve. It wasn't that one was male and the other female, they were both together. It wasn't that one came from one family and the other from another. No, they were of the same parentage. Everything was the same. It was the nature of their approach to God.

Well, how, how did Abel ever make, get it right? Hebrews 11, "By faith, Able." And faith always indicates that there is a previous revelation God has spoken in some way, and he had to Adam and Eve and they had passed it on to their children. They knew that the way to approach God is by sacrifice, because they had tried something else. He had tried to do his own tailoring, Adam had, and God said that won't do.

No. I will make, for Adam and for Eve, I will make them these garments of skin through a sacrifice that has been made, been laid down. So when that came to pass, ah, God said, "I have given you thus the way to approach." Abel took it by faith. Cain wouldn't. Now you know and I know we must tell all those round about us to know also that God, God will receive nothing less
than a forfeited life. For Adam also and for his wife, did the Lord God make coats of skins and clothe them. Here you have, in typical form, Christ made our righteousness a garment of God's provision, of God's choosing, of God's making. And coming back to this Tabernacle, imagine an Israelite, bringing a spotless lamb and refusing to have it slain while attempting to go into the tabernacle. It was courting death. There was no other authorized altar for Israel. Private altars were of no value, no God-given fire was present there. Neither is there salvation in any other, for there's none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.

Now we find that often this altar was misused. That had happened so often, folk use the provisions, the appointments of God in a wrong way. We find as we read the Old Testament that on occasions when an individual was guilty of a crime, he came to the temple and laid hold of the horns of the altar.

He felt it served him as a refuge from judgment. Adonijah in 1st Kings 1:50, and then the case of Joab. Ah, the reason God would not honor that, the reason that was of no avail is because Israel had learned this kind of a procedure from the heathen.

They thought there was some kind of a sanctity, some kind of a holiness somehow rubbed off or gave them immunity, or gave them protection, no matter how wrong they were.

If they could just come within the shadow, if they could seek asylum and sanctuary and refuge, it at the horns of the altar. Well, Adonijah, it didn't him; in the case of Joab, it didn't help him.
But ah, there's a higher truth. The reason this was not availing is because it was not God's appointed provision or arrangement.

He did arrange, though, that if one laid hold upon the altar in true spiritual fashion, if one realized that that animal sacrifice was dying for him in his place and his stead, ah, it was an altogether different thing.

Definitely so. You see, it's God does not like the perversion of his appointments. He wants what he has given to be used and not abused, to be used in the way that will bring glory and honor to his name, not to magnify these things in their own way or to be used in man's own devising. Scripture tells us in Exodus 21:14, "If a man come presumptuous upon his neighbor, to slay him with guile. Thou shall take him from mine altar that he may die." Yes, it was of no avail for one to speak of trusting in the blood of the sacrifice. Then presumptuously to continue in sin or by hypocrisy to profess repentance. So for today, for anyone to confess salvation through the blood of Christ and remission through that blessed way, yet to continue you to go on blithely, unthinkingly, unfeelingly, indifferently, to continue presumptuously with a high hand in sin and hypocrisy; that will not answer in the day of judgment.

No, just to lay hold of the altar, in a mechanical outward way, out of fear, out of dread, that would not avail. What does avail is to lay hold of the meaning of the altar, to come in God's way with a heart penitent, with a heart submissive, with a heart devout. God then will bless, and he has, he's accepted them in the Old Testament time, he accepted them all the way through until the coming of Christ. Now that is no longer needed. Now the bronze altar then, which speaks of
Christ our justification, we are justified through the death of Christ. This first piece of furniture then, the bronze altar, speaks of Christ our justification, through the work he did on Calvary's cross. This bronze altar thinks of sacrifice, for sin, atonement, redemption made through blood, the thing that is so abominable and so hateful, despicable in God's sight, sin, that was taken care of at the bronze altar. That is man's first altogether important need in his first step of approach to God. There was a dear woman, an aged woman who knew the Lord oh, so well. She was rapidly approaching the hour of her departure from this life going on to be with the Lord, and she was visited by a friend. After a while, her visitor thought, "Well, we'd better not just spend the time on things of secondary importance; here's a dear lady who's known the Lord and is going on to meet the Savior. I better just speak to her directly of some things that are on my heart." So this visitor of this aged woman asked her: on what are you resting for your soul's salvation? Good question to ask. On what are you putting your trust? On what is your soul resting this moment for eternal salvation? You know what her dear and calm reply was? She said, "Are you asking me what I'm resting for my soul's salvation? On the solitary dignity of the blood of Christ."

Hallelujah. She was right. That dear soul entered the moment she went on from this life, she entered into glory. That's the way to get into the presence of God, through the solitary, dignity of the blood of Christ. Not the blood of Christ and something else, not the blood of Christ and some deeds, not the blood of Christ in some church ordinance or church membership. They are all proper in their places but not one of them is the way of approach to God. Not some ordinance, not some right, not some ordinance or ritual. No, it must be, first, last and always, thank God for this word in the Old Testament. Ah, if the rest of the tabernacle is going to speak as eloquently of the Lord Jesus's personal work as the altar, it'll be a, an exercise eminently worthwhile, eminently satisfying to spiritual life where we find that all the other features as we go on in these
studies, which will be continued, each piece of furniture in a study of its own will find that all of
them speak eloquently of the Lord Jesus Christ. But the first, again, we cannot emphasize it too
strong. The first is, Christ in the bronze altar, Christ our justification. That's what we need.
Friend, if you know Christ, that's what you need to tell others. Listening friend, if you are
listening to this study and you have never trusted Christ, if you trusted something else-- how
easy it is for us to delude ourselves if you're trusting something else--oh, have done with it. Stop
right now. You don't have to go through a lot of preparations and rigamaroles, throw all of it
aside and just now, in childlike faith, say, "Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to thy cross I
claim, I'm coming on the work that Christ did alone. That pleases God. I will rest there. Our
Father in heaven, make real and precious to every heart the wonderful truth that's in this bronze
altar in the tabernacle: Christ our justification. He justified us from all things which the law of
Moses or any other method could never justify us.

Blessed be His name, our Blessed Savior, our Redeemer, our great gift of life. We thank you for
Him in Jesus' name. Amen.