

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Messiahs Mission

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

Code: 81-3

We are in John, chapter 20, verses 30 and 31, and we have come to a section here which we have been saying to you for the last four weeks is really the wrap-up on the gospel of John. Chapter 21 is kind of an epilogue, and we'll get into that next week.

But in chapter 20, verses 30 and 31, you'll remember we've been reading this every week: "Therefore many other signs" – or miracles – "Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written" – the miracles that John includes in his gospel – "so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ," – the Messiah – "the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name." So John gives us all these miracles so that we may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and by believing that we have eternal life in His name. So that the goal of all of this writing is that you might have eternal life. The way you have eternal life is to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God.

Now we've talked a lot about the Son of God idea, the notion that He is God's Son, the second member of the Trinity, eternal God, God the Son; but we haven't really talked a lot about what it says when it says He's the Christ. You have to believe that He is the Christ, that's the New Testament corresponding word to the Old Testament word Messiah. So in order to receive eternal life you have to believe that Jesus is the Messiah.

What does that mean? What exactly is it to be the Messiah? We know what it is to be the Son of God, because we've talked about that. But what is it to be the Messiah? Really an important thing, because way back in the 1st chapter, the first disciples, after they spent time with Jesus, came and declared, "We have found the Messiah." This was a eureka moment of all moments for them in their life and historically throughout Jewish history. "We have found the Messiah."

Later on, Peter's speaking for the rest, said, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." And so the question arises, "What is it to believe that Jesus is the Messiah? What are we saying?" It's essential for us, because it's part of believing what we need to believe to have eternal life.

Well, we looked at the Old Testament Hebrew word "Messiah." It comes from a verb: to smear with oil. It means the Anointed One." And there were certain people in the Old Testament that had oil placed on them ceremonially as a way to set them apart and identify them as special mediators between God and men. This was a way that they could be publicly identified, an anointing. That is to say symbolically God has put His hand on this individual for unique service on His behalf. That's the word Messiah, the Anointed One is what it translates.

In the New Testament it is the word "Christ" which comes from the verb *chrío*, which means to anoint. So Christ is the Anointed One; Messiah is the Anointed One. We are to believe then that Jesus is the Anointed One.

Going back to the Old Testament; who was anointed? And we saw there were three things that we learned from this idea of anointing: those who spoke for God – prophets were anointed, those who led people to God – priests were anointed, and those who ruled people for God were anointed kings. So prophets, priests and kings.

Prophets were intermediaries between men and God. They spoke for God. Priests were intermediaries between men and God. They took men to God. They provided the way to God, the means through leading worship. And kings ruled for God. They were all intermediaries. They were all mediators, as the good were. And they were all anointed. There were many messiahs in the Old Testament. Every king that was anointed, every priest that was anointed, and every prophet that was anointed and set apart to mediate between God and man was essentially a messiah, an anointed one.

They were a mix for use. They were not all faithful as intermediators for God. There were many unfaithful prophets, unfaithful priests, and unfaithful kings. Most often in the Old Testament it's kings that are anointed, and most of the kings were unfaithful kings and didn't do, the Bible says, what was right in the sight of the Lord. But nonetheless they were the messiahs of the Old Testament, and there were many, many, many of them.

But all throughout the Old Testament there is this anticipation that there would be a better prophet, and a better priest, and a better king. There would be a perfect prophet, a perfect priest, and a perfect king. There would be one complete mediator who would speak for God, bring people to God, and rule over them for God. This would be the Messiah, the Messiah, of which the others were good, bad, and indifferent replicates.

The New Testament identifies that Messiah in 1 Timothy 2:5, the one Mediator between God and man, the man Messiah Jesus. The one Mediator between God and man; the one who is the perfect Prophet, perfect Priest, and perfect King is the God/Man, the Man/Messiah Jesus. So when Jesus comes, His Word is sufficient, because He speaks for God and only for God. His sacrifice is sufficient, because it satisfies God, propitiates God. And His rule is sufficient, because He rules in perfect righteousness and justice. So when we come to the New Testament and the gospel accounts of the New Testament, of course, the rest of it we're meeting the Messiah who is Prophet, Priest, and King; the one Mediator between God and man, the man Messiah Jesus. It's not enough to think of Jesus as a teaching figure. It's not enough to think of Him as a preacher, as kind of a wandering evangelist. You must understand Him in the fullness of His role as the summation of all the anointed ones of the Old Testament in perfection as Prophet, Priest, and King.

Now how do we know it's Jesus? How do we know that Jesus is the Messiah? Well, that's what the writers of the New Testament are going to show us. We have a lot of indications in the Old Testament that tell us what Messiah will be like, gives us lots of ways to recognize Him, and Jesus fits all of them. Let me remind you what we learned.

The Messiah will be the bruised – bruised by Satan – the bruised seed of the woman who crushes Satan's head, Genesis 3:15. That's exactly what Jesus did on the cross. Satan bruised Him; He crushed Satan's head. The Messiah says, the book of Genesis, will come through the line of Adam, Seth, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Judah, David. So He will be royalty coming through that line, that family line. His parents then would need to be of the line of David, and that's why you have a genealogy of Joseph in Matthew 1 and a genealogy of Mary in Luke 3, and both of them flow back to

David, through David, back to Abraham, back to Adam. Whoever the Messiah is He has to be royal blood in the line of David, and we know that is true of Jesus, we have His genealogies.

Messiah also, according to Isaiah 7:14, will be born of a virgin. That only happened once. He will be born in Bethlehem, Micah says. And then He will be born, Daniel says, and He will launch His triumphant entrance into Jerusalem 483 years after the decree of Artaxerxes to rebuilt Jerusalem and bring the Jews back from captivity. If you do the math, 483 years after that decree Jesus marched into Jerusalem and declared Himself to be the Messiah exactly on schedule.

The Old Testament also says that the Messiah will be preceded by a prophet or a herald, announcing His coming, and He'll be a lot like Elijah – that's in Isaiah 40 and Malachi 3. And, of course, that's what Jesus had, a prophet herald by the name of John the Baptist. Furthermore, the Old Testament says Messiah will be despised and rejected: Isaiah 53, Psalm 69. Messiah will enter Jerusalem on a donkey: Zechariah 9. He will speak God's word and do only God's will: Isaiah, many places. He will be empowered by the Holy Spirit: Isaiah 42 and 61. He will be betrayed by a close friend: Psalm 41. He will be sold for thirty pieces of silver: Zechariah 11. The blood money will be thrown on a temple floor and used to buy a field.

Furthermore, the Old Testament says He will remain silent during His trial. He will be executed by being lifted up. He will be with criminals in His death. His bones will not be broken. He will be buried with the rich, raised from the dead, exalted to heaven, and crowned as sovereign King. That is the story of the life of Jesus Christ. He fits all of that. So no wonder the apostle Paul says, "There is one Mediator, the man Messiah Jesus."

Now what was His mission? We looked already at His office and His person, just summing up up to this point. But what is His mission? How does Messiah fulfill His task in the world? What is His mission? How does He mediate? How does He speak for God, bring people to God, and rule over God's people? How does He make that happen?

He has to do one particular thing, and this is why He came, and we're introduced to it in Matthew, chapter 1. Matthew, chapter 1, of course, is the very beginning, "And the birth of Jesus is as follows:" – 1:18 – "when His mother Mary was betrothed" – or engaged – "to Joseph, before they came together" – physically – "she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit." This is the virgin birth, virgin conception. "Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly." He's going to divorce her. They were only betrothed, not married. They had not come together physically. She's pregnant; he's going to divorce her for that.

"But when he had considered, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who's been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Yeshua,' – or Jesus – 'for He will save His people from their sins.'" There's the mission of Messiah declared at the very beginning of the New Testament, Matthew 1:21. This is His mission: "He will save His people from their sins, and in doing so, fulfill everything that was spoken by the Lord through the prophet." He goes back to Isaiah. "He will save His people from their sins."

Look at Luke, and in the opening chapter of Luke we have at the end of the chapter the Benedictus, the praise of Zacharias. You remember, Zacharias was the priest who was the father of John the

Baptist; and he knew, because he had been told from heaven that the Messiah was coming and his son would be the forerunner; but Messiah was coming. And listen to what “Zacharias,” – verse 67 of Luke 1 – “filled with the Holy Spirit said, ‘Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people, and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of David His servant.’” Here we are; the Messiah has to come out of the house of David, and when He comes, God, through Him, will accomplish redemption by raising up a horn, or a powerful one, who brings salvation for us.

Verse 71: “Salvation from our enemies” – all our enemies – “and the hand of all who hate us” – then he says in verse 74 – “to grant us that we, being rescued” – that’s another word for salvation – “from the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all our days” – he is celebrating the arrival the Messiah who is the Savior, and He says it very specifically, verse 77 – “to give to His people the knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, with which the Sunrise” – another term for Messiah – “from on high will visit us, to shine upon those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace.” He sees Messiah as the Redeemer, the horn of salvation, the Savior, the one who forgives our sins. That’s a salvation song, by the way. That’s musical, in ancient terms.

In Luke 19:10, “Jesus has come” – the Scripture says – “to seek and save the lost.” That’s why He came. He didn’t come just to be a good teacher. He didn’t come to be a social reformer. He came to save lost people, to rescue them, to redeem them, buy them back, save them. He came to accomplish redemption. He came as a horn of salvation.

That then poses this question: By what means does Messiah save His people? By what means does Messiah save His people? By what means does He reconcile sinners to God? By what means does He redeem them? By what means does He rescue them from their enemies and from judgment?

That is the question that Christianity answers. And, listen; as a footnote, that is the question that all religion attempts to answer. That’s why religion is religion. Religion is not economics. Religion is not politics. Religion is not sociology. Religion is not psychology. Religion is not any kind of earthly idea, concept. Religion exists with the knowledge that there is a God out there, there is a being out there – whatever you believe Him to be, whatever you’ve concocted Him to be, or somebody else has and you’ve bought into it – and that you and He don’t have a good relationship, and you have got to do something to change that or your life is going to be very, very difficult.

So religion says, “Here is who God is and here’s how to get Him on your side.” That’s religion. It assumes God, and it assumes a God with some power, whose anger will make your life miserable, and even haunt you after death, and whose happiness or contentment will make your life a lot better. So all religions are saying, “This is who God is and here’s how you can get Him on your side.” That’s religion.

The problem is none of those gods exist, and none of those things that they offer do any good, because there’s no god. So all false religion is an exercise in stupidity and futility. There’s no one there, there’s no god there except the one god of all false religion, Satan, who has wisely decided to give people a smorgasbord of lies so everybody has something they can like.

So Christianity, which is the only true religion, says, "There is only one God, and here is how you can be saved from judgment. Here is how you can be redeemed, bought back from slavery. Here is how you can be reconciled to Him. It is through the work of the Messiah, the one Mediator between the one true God and man, the man Messiah Jesus."

The truth is this – and only Christianity is true. The truth is this: man is sinful and sentenced to divine judgment – all of us, the whole human race. The Bible's clear on this. If you need an illustration of it, all you have to do is look at death: "The wages of sin is death." Everybody dies. That's the evidence of sin.

We're all decaying. We're all in the process of dying. We die because we are corrupt. That corruption extends beyond our physical attributes to our souls. We are under God's judgment. If you need an illustration of that, you have a really graphic one in the 6th and 7th chapter of Genesis where God says all the imaginations of man was only evil continually, so He drowns the entire human race, except for eight people, eight people who had found grace because they asked for it from God. He drowns the entire human race planetwide, because the soul that sins will die, Ezekiel. We have a Holy God who will punish sin with death and eternal judgment in hell. We are sinful, and God is a holy Judge who punishes sinners.

Now if we stop there we'd have a god like Islam. We'd have a god like all kinds of other gods who had been invented by men and demons. But we don't stop there. We come to a second point about God that is not true of any other false deity. God is not just Judge, He is Savior. He is not just Judge, He is Savior. He's not merely a Judge, not only a Judge, He is a Savior. That is to say He desires to save people from Himself, from His own judgment, who have violated His laws; and He celebrates this identity.

In Psalm 3 – we're looking still at the Old Testament – Psalm 3, verse 8: "Salvation belongs to the Lord." It's part of who He is. Isaiah 43:3, "For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior." Isaiah 45:21 and 22, "Turn to Me and be saved. There is no other God besides Me" – He says – "a righteous God" – yes, just and righteous and holy – "and a Savior. Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other." Since there is no other God, aren't you glad that He is a Savior?

Isaiah 60:16, "You will know that I the Lord are your Savior and your Redeemer, the Mighty One." Well that is good news, wow, to know that God is not only Judge, just and holy, but He is a Savior. That's really good, which means maybe we can have a good relationship with Him. Maybe He's willing to accept us on some terms. But just saying that doesn't give me a lot of hope, because what I'm going to imagine is that I've got to reach some kind of, I don't know, righteous level, or I've got to accomplish some religious achievement for Him to go ahead and save me. He's a Savior, but on what terms?

Well that brings us to the third wonderful reality about the true God: He is gracious. God is gracious – I love it. Exodus 22:27 He said this: "I am gracious, it's My nature. I am gracious." Exodus 33:19, I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the Lord before you. I will be gracious, and will show compassion." Second Chronicles 30, verse 9: "The Lord your God is gracious and compassionate." Psalm 86:15 and 16, listen to this: "But You, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness and truth. Turn to me, and be gracious to me."

Okay, gracious means He gives me what I don't deserve. So He's a Judge, He's holy and just. He's a Savior, that's wonderful. He rescues people from Himself, from His own judgment. He's gracious, which means He overlooks certain things, and He doesn't give us all that we deserve. He's compassionate, that's good. But maybe that's not enough, because maybe I don't qualify for His grace. Maybe I haven't gained enough merit to access His grace.

But then the fourth statement is so critical: God graciously forgives sinners. We read that in Romans 5: "While we were enemies, when we hated Him, He forgave us." Listen to Exodus 34:7, "The Lord, the Lord God who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin," – just sum up all the words: iniquity, transgression and sin. He forgives it all, He forgives it all. No qualifiers, no limits.

Listen to Psalm 103: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget none of His benefits; who pardons" – you know the next word? – "all your iniquities." Now we're seeing that His grace is limitless. His grace is extensive. It's as big as our iniquities.

Psalm 32: "How blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." Psalm 51: "Be gracious to me, O God, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity. Cleanse me from my sin." Do we have a God who forgives, who covers, who blots out, who washes, who cleanses us from sin? This is grace unlimited.

Listen to what Isaiah 1:18 and 19 says, "Come now, let us reason together," says the Lord, "though your sins are as scarlet, they'll be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they will be like wool." No matter how profound your sins are, no matter how far-reaching your sins are – and earlier in Isaiah 1 He said, "Your whole life is sinful. You're spiritually sick from head to toe. You're nothing but wretchedness. But I'll take that wretchedness no matter how foul it is, no matter how dirty it is, and I'll make it pure."

Listen to what Micah 7:18 said, "Who is a God like You?" Well, there are no false gods like Him, because Satan doesn't invent gods like the true God; they're reflections of his personality. But, "Who is a God like You, who pardons iniquity, passes over the rebellious act, doesn't retain His anger forever, delights in unchanging love. He will have compassion on us; He will tread our iniquities under foot. He will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea," – and elsewhere it says – "remove them as far as the east is from the west" – and that's an infinite line – "and remember them no more." Wow. This is the God of the Old Testament; that's all Old Testament.

We have a God who is just and holy, but He is a Savior. He's a gracious Savior. His grace is a massive kind of grace. It's an extensive kind of grace that goes all the way to the end of our sin and is not exhausted.

You say, "How do we access that? So how do we get to that grace?" That's Number Five in my little outline: Repent. But, first, divine forgiveness calls for repentance. It doesn't call for you to be better than you are, it calls for you to admit that you're worse than you probably think you are.

Do you remember 2 Chronicles 7:14, "If My people turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin." By the way, that's not a promise to America. Some people like to

use it for that. That's a promise to anybody who turns from his wicked ways, the Lord will forgive; that's repentance.

Listen to it in the words of Joel 2: "Return to Me with all your heart, and with fasting, weeping and mourning," – that's like the beatitude – "and rend your heart and not your garments." The Jews had a habit of tearing their clothes; it's kind of an external thing. But He wants them to tear their hearts.

"Now return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness." This is repentance: "Return to Me. Return with a broken heart – fasting, weeping, mourning – and I'll be gracious."

And then those wonderful words of Isaiah 55 tell us how to access this forgiveness. Isaiah 55:6 and 7, "Seek the Lord while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near." How? "Let the wicked forsake his way, the unrighteous man his thoughts. Let him return to the Lord. He will have compassion on him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. Turn from your wicked ways, turn from your iniquities, turn to the Lord and He will abundantly pardon."

This God who is a Savior, who is a gracious Savior, whose grace extends to the limits of our sin, is available to anyone who repents. And then there's a second thing and the sixth point: Divine forgiveness is received by faith. It is approached by repentance, it is received by faith.

What does it say about Abraham in Genesis 15:6? He believed God, and God accounted that to him as righteousness. He received the very righteousness of God on his behalf covering him, because he believed God. Habakkuk 2:4 puts it this way: "The just shall live by faith," not works.

So there is the Old Testament promise, the promise that our just and Holy God is also a Savior. He is not just a Savior, He is a gracious Savior. His grace extends to the extremity of all sins, and is offered to those who turn from their sins and receive His grace through faith and faith alone. And when that happens it's not just a sort of superficial transaction, because the Old Testament defines it as something that is stunning.

Listen to the words of Ezekiel 36:25, "I will sprinkle clean water on you, you'll be clean. I'll cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I'll give you a new heart, put a new spirit within you; remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I'll put My Spirit within you, cause you to walk in My statutes, you'll be careful to observe My ordinances."

That's conversion. That's transformation. All of a sudden you go from somebody captive to sin to somebody who has a new heart, the Spirit is in you, and you walk in the law of God that you once broke, and you are careful to observe His ordinances. That's the new birth, that's regeneration, that's transformation.

And then an equally wonderful new covenant promise of Jeremiah 31, we hear similar words. Listen, this is what the Lord will do: "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they will be My people. They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the Lord, "for I'll forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

That's salvation. You repent, you believe, and you are forgiven, and your sin is blotted out, trampled down, forgotten, removed as far as the east is from the west. And in the place of that sinful disposition, all of a sudden you have a new heart, a new spirit, a new love for the Word of God, a new power for obedience, and God's Holy Spirit takes up residence in your life. That's salvation.

Now here's the key question: if God offered all of that in the Old Testament, then what role did the Messiah play in providing it since He wasn't here? And, oh, by the way, how can God do that and just overlook our sin? How can God justify sinners who repent and believe and still be just if He just excuses their sin? Compelling questions. How can God forgive and grant reconciliation, redemption, justification to sinners in the Old Testament or now, or anytime, and still be just and holy? And that leads to the seventh and most important point of all: God does it by substitution. God does it by substitution. He provides redemption, reconciliation, justification by substitution.

Somewhere in redemptive history there had to be someone punished for all the forgiven people. Somebody had to be punished, because way back in Exodus 33, the guilty cannot go unpunished. And the Old Testament kept screaming this truth: "God will accept a substitute." How did the Old Testament say that?

From the first offering ever given in the book of Genesis all the way through the entire Old Testament – goats, sheep, bulls, animals, Day of Atonement, Passover, morning sacrifice, evening sacrifice, millions of animals slaughtered through the millennia of the Old Testament, they were all symbols of the fact that God would accept a substitute. You lay your hands on the sacrifice as if sort of symbolically transferring your guilt and your sin to the animal, the animal is killed. The Jews were well aware. They should have been well aware. God will accept a substitute. Messiah came to be the substitute. And in the Old Testament they were told that. Go to Isaiah 53. That was not going to be left as a mystery.

In this section of Isaiah, the Messiah has a name. He is my servant, or the servant of Jehovah; and throughout this very latter section of Isaiah, the servant of Jehovah the Messiah appears again and again. And He appears in chapter 52, verse 13, and then into 53, and this is what it says about Him, verse 4: "Surely our griefs He Himself bore. Our sorrows He carried." Verse 5: "He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell on Him, and by His scourging we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray. Each one of us has turned to his own way. The Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him."

Who is Him? Him is the servant of the Lord. Who is the servant of the Lord in this part of Isaiah? The servant of the Lord is the Messiah. So what you have here is the fact that the Messiah will become the acceptable sacrifice. He will die, "He will be led to the slaughter," – verse 7. Verse 8: "He will be cut off out of the land of the living," – kind of a euphemism for death. And why? End of verse 8: "For the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke was due."

"God was pleased with this," – verse 10 – "pleased to crush Him, because He was a guilt offering. He was the one sacrifice that God accepted." Do you understand that God forgave people in the Old Testament, because Christ would, in the future, bear their punishment? He receives us in the New Testament, because Christ, in the past, has bore our punishment. It all goes to Christ who dies for the sins of all His people through all redemptive history. The servant of Jehovah, the slave of

Jehovah who is Mishea/Messiah, Yeshua/Jesus, came, and His mission was to reconcile, to bring about redemption, justification, salvation. He had to do that by becoming a sacrifice, the sacrifice God would accept.

Turn to Hebrews 9. The writer of Hebrews takes us from the Old Testament sacrifices to the person of Christ in some incredibly rich language, verse 11 in Hebrews 9: "When Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; and not through the blood of bulls and goats, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption." It's as if He went into the heavenly holy place and offered His blood on God's altar as the one perfect atonement.

"If the blood of bulls and goats" – verse 13 – "and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh," – it was only external – "how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" That's why verse 15 says, "He's the mediator of a new covenant, so that, since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant," – this covers the first covenant sins – "those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance." Where a covenant is there must of necessity be the death of the one who has made it. He, through His blood, offered the perfect sacrifice.

Go down to verse 27: "Inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment, so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him." He's coming back in His second coming. That's not going to be with reference to sin; He took care of sin the first time. He's coming back to rule next time.

While you're at chapter 10, go down to verse 4: "It is impossible for all the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins." That whole system didn't take away any sin, it simply kept screaming to the people, "God will accept a sacrifice." And do you remember that they had to make the sacrifice? They offered a lamb without what? Blemish and without spot. It was going to have to be a perfect sacrifice. None of those ever accomplished it, because they had to keep making them every day. But, "When He comes into the world," – verse 5 – "He says, 'Sacrifice and offering You have not desired, but a body You have prepared for Me.'" Great statement. "You have prepared a body for Me."

Down to verse 10: "Through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all, we have been sanctified." Verse 11: "Every priest stands daily" – daily, time after time – "offering sacrifices, never take away sin; but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God." Verse 14 says, "By one offering He perfected for all time those who are sanctified." So verse 18 sums it up: "We have forgiveness, so there's no longer any offering for sin." It's done.

So why did the Messiah come? He came to reconcile, to redeem. He came to save. By what means did He do that? He did that by the sacrifice of Himself, and by that, He mediated between us and God. He took us to God. That's Messiah.

So when you say, "I believe in Messiah," you're saying that, "I believe that God made Him who knew

no sin, sin for us,” – 2 Corinthians 5:21 – “that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

God put our sins on Jesus, an infinite being; punished Him for all the sins of all the people through all redemptive history who would ever believe; and thus was free to forgive us all. The sacrifice of Christ is so massive He literally suffered in those three hours of darkness the full, divine punishment for all the sins of all the people in human history who believe. It's incomprehensible. No wonder He sweat like drops of blood anticipating it.

He died to provide atonement for His people, pay the penalty for their sin. But before He died, He lived 33 years, and He lived to provide a righteous life that could be credited to our account. So in His death He takes on our sin, but in salvation we take on His life. God credits His death to us as if it were our death for sin; God credits His life to us as if it were our life of righteousness. The Messiah, this is who He is. Do you believe in the Messiah, the Son of God? If you do, you have life in His name.

Father, we thank You for a wonderful morning of fellowship and worship. And, again, it's just glorious to be contemplating Christ, to be looking at Him in all His majesty and wonder. We thank You in Christ's name. Amen.

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