

When Christ Gave Himself Up For Us

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[0 : 00] There are three things to see here, just in this passage, and to understand what's going on. Up to this point, many were saying that Jesus is a prophet.

Jesus is a prophet. In fact, after Herod killed the prophet John the Baptist, or John the Baptizer, people thought that Jesus was kind of a resurrected John the Baptizer, that he was even better.

But they weren't really sure who Jesus was. He was doing some rather remarkable things, much like Elijah and Elisha, and some of the other prophets of old. And so they were saying, you know, he's a new prophet, he's another prophet, that is coming, he will, or even the Messiah that's going to come.

They didn't recognize him as Messiah. But when he comes sitting on the donkey and he rides into town, many people understood that if they understood the Old Testament. And so they anticipated and they expected that he was not only the prophet, but he's the king.

And he's come. And he's the savior king who's going to save them from Rome. Much like many today would hope that we would elect a president who would be a savior to save, you know, the United States.

[1 : 18] But they were more than that. And they understood the Bible, the Old Testament, and you know, but Jesus comes and he's doing all this.

They're saying, here he is. He's not only a prophet, but he's a king. And they're excited. They're screaming and yelling and cheering, you know, much like a football game.

And the team is winning. And they're, you know, they're waving the palms and the branches and the cloaks and everything. You know, like the pom-poms, you know, cheerleaders. And here he comes. We've made it.

Here he is. And he does a weird thing. He gets off. He doesn't go all the way to the San... He doesn't go all the way to the place of Herod to take the throne and the crown.

He doesn't do what they expected him to do. He gets off. Now, why is that? Why is that? Well, as a prophet, by the way, prophets, one of the things that they did was not only to declare the word of God and to proclaim it, which Jesus did, but they often were like lawyers indicting the sins of the leaders or the people and threatening them that God is going to disown you as a people if you repent and turn around and come back to him.

[2 : 45] And the prophets would serve in ways as lawyers bringing God's lawsuit, so to speak. Read some of the Old Testament prophets and you'll find that the language is legal language and threatening divorce, as it were.

And so Jesus was a prophet and much like John the Baptizer, you know, he also gave warnings to repent or else. Thinking that he's a king.

And so we see this event. We see Jesus as a king. In fact, it says the Son of Man, which means Messiah or Savior King. But they understood, as I said, in the political.

King who's victorious. You know, imagine the quarterback has the ball and he's running down and the team is excited and they're helping him and it looks like he's going to make a touchdown and, you know, people are screaming and cheering and everything and he hits right up to the finish line and he stops.

Puts the ball down. Can you well imagine the disappointment that the people had? It's like, what are you doing?

[4 : 07] Get back on. Come on, you haven't finished. That great anticipation, I hope, by the people. The people. The people. Government.

By the way, in that day. Mobsters, the way they conducted business. You know, they were crony government, crony religious people in charge.

Very, very diverse and very wicked. You can well imagine people just kind of, you know, like the crowds in the stadium, you know, it's like, we could have won.

Take their things and go. Leave. Leave. So why does Jesus then go to the temple? That's where he goes right after this, in this passage, right?

Why does he go to the Sanhedrin? Why does he go to Herod's palace? Why doesn't he claim the throne? Why isn't he a king? What's wrong with you, Jesus? Well, because instead of being a prophet, which he is, and instead of fulfilling his kingly role, which people do, that's why I first become a priest.

[5 : 40] He goes to the temple. And he goes to the temple to clean it out. He goes to the temple to clean it out, to make a way, because he is going to go right into the presence of God himself like the great high priest.

And remember, the events that are happening in the surrounding this time are the events in which the high priest is going to conduct the sacrifice and, you know, atone temporarily for the people and go through all that they were to go through in order to lead, you know, and bring the people, bring the sin offerings and all the offerings up to God so that God would forgive them once again.

And that was the week in which they were preparing for that. And so now Jesus goes to the temple and he goes to clean it out. Jesus is the prophet who brings an indictment against God's people.

His actions of the temple are actions of one who is cleaning out the wickedness that was going on. Jesus is the king and in him is God's kingdom.

He is the kingdom. He brings with him the kingdom. And he says the kingdom is now but he doesn't bring it in full yet. And so in order to enter into the kingdom, Jesus has to make a way for his people to be right with God because it is God's kingdom.

[7 : 04] You can't just come into his kingdom. He keeps telling you that, right? He keeps saying there's only one way. It's harder for someone to enter into the kingdom on their own than it is for a camel with all that's on its back to enter through the eye of a needle.

He talks about all the challenges there are with really getting into the kingdom. And they were confused. He talks constantly, especially Matthew, about the kingdom. And they're anticipating.

They're excited about that. It's so unlike the kingdom that people were wanting. They were very confused.

Even his disciples were confused. But in order to enter the kingdom, in order for you and me to enter the kingdom, we have to be made right with God.

And that's what he does as a priest. Though he's a king, he sets aside that role in order to become not just the king but the priest who will be the savior.

[8 : 09] And that is what Israel didn't understand. They didn't get it. Going to the temple shows us the obstacles that we have in coming to God, being permanently righteous before the face of God.

What were the leaders and the representatives of God's people? What did they do? They corrupted true religion. The same theme they read about in the Old Testament were the very things that they were doing and saying, this is what God wants us to do.

They were charging poor people quite a lot of money just to have a little pigeon in order to bring the pigeon, their pigeon.

You couldn't go and get any pigeon. You couldn't even go and get a pigeon that was identical to what they were selling. You had to get it from them because that was the good pigeon.

That was the good lamb. That was the good whatever it was that they were going to bring. Sometimes for these people, you know, they saved up a month.

[9 : 13] Imagine saving up two months' worth in order to buy a pigeon. But God didn't tell them they had to go to the temple to buy the pigeon in order to bring the pigeon.

The people didn't. They corrupted it. The people said, you have to do all these works in order to make it right with God. You have to do all these things to be acceptable to God.

And not only were there the Ten Commandments and the 613 additional laws in the Old Testament, they decided to add many, many more laws. I'm sure you've heard it.

Kind of law. And did you know, ladies, that if you were starting to go gray and on the Sabbath day you decided to pluck a gray hair from your head, you had committed work?

You had violated the Sabbath day because that was considered work? There were hundreds of rules like that. And now, in order to make it right, they said, you've got to do all these other things.

[10 : 15] And Jesus says, oh yeah, you do. You have to be so perfect to come to God. You have to surpass even what the Pharisees do to come to God. It's impossible.

But what they had done is essentially their actions in the temple wasn't just about being money changers and charging horrible fees for things that God had commanded his people to do.

Putting obstacles in the way. every single one of the Ten Commandments was violated by what they were doing in the temple. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind.

Were they doing that? No. Second Commandment, Third Commandment, Fourth Commandment, honor the Sabbath unto the Lord. They were doing that. They thought they were. We do?

Yeah. I have to be made right with God. So I'm going to do all these things and now God will like me. Years ago there was a military guy when I was in the Army and right before my wife and I got married and so I was staying with a bunch of guys off Fort Polk and living in a house and there was a new guy that started coming and he was a little younger than I and right after one of the, it was a new church and they're trying to start a church and right after the service he was outside and he was just weeping and I went out and I talked to him and I said what's going on?

[11 : 52] He said I'll never become a Christian. I said why? Well because Wes who was the leader at the time Wes said that I have to stop smoking before I can become a Christian.

And so show me that in the Bible. and but Wes had so convinced him that he had to be right you know this preparationism you know you have to prepare your heart to be perfect before you can be perfect before you're saved the poor guy was so distraught about that is that he ended up trying to kill himself.

He was convicted you know if I'm going to go out of hell I might as well go now. what's the point? So he was in 72 hours last I heard never saw him again but he was discharged and sent home.

That's what these people were doing and that's what you hear all the time we got to make it right before God will love us and accept us. Well yeah we have to be right but we can't do it.

They dishonored the father of the fifth commandment. They had contempt for life and the souls of God's people. They were essentially murdering people of the fifth commandment.

[13 : 11] They were committing spiritual adultery because they had fashioned a different God in their mind than the God who revealed himself as one who is just and merciful and gracious in the Old Testament.

They stole from God and from others the eighth commandment. They bore false witness to God and others and the tenth commandment. They were covetous. They were greedy.

So you see it wasn't just that they were money changers. Jesus was furious with what they were doing because they violated every single law in the name of doing the law for God.

Wow. We all do that don't we? even after becoming Christians we say I gotta do this or God won't love me.

I gotta do this or God won't hear me. I have to do this or God won't give me a good life. I have to do these things or stop doing these things before I'm blessed. That's not good news.

[14 : 14] That's religion. And that's what they had done is put a big religion religious obstacle in the way of God's people. Now we're all Pharisees at heart.

Work hard. If I do this God will try that I'll get more of the spirit.

You see what Jesus is doing when it says he made a whip. I don't know have you all made a whip? No I haven't. Have you? How long does that take?

Yeah. That's a fly. Well he fashioned a whip out of leather. And probably the kind of whip you know the cat of nine tails you know with the little rocks on the end you know slash you up.

He probably did that. And so you can well see Jesus sitting there as he's watching all this going on. it's like the mall on a weekend right? There's a lot of people time of year.

[15 : 26] And he's sitting there watching and observing and you know this righteous anger is building up within him. Because he is angry about the things that angers God.

That's righteous anger. So he's making a whip. And when he's done making the whip that's when he takes the whip and starts lashing it about. Nobody wants to be whipped with that kind of whip.

But then he turns over the tables. And what's amazing to me is the kind of power that he had that not even the police officers who were there to guard what was going on interfered.

That's the kind of power he had. And he turned it all over. Can't you see somebody you know someone just takes it and throws it. Money goes all over the place.

The commotion that took place. Because what Jesus was saying is how dare you turn a house of prayer which is what they called the temple someplace sometimes you know and what they called sacrifices they called prayers as well offering it up before God.

[16 : 30] The desecration of God's holy place of worship putting obstacles in the way of coming to God was not merely their problem that he cleans out it's our problem. It's what we call sin.

But Jesus is the one who has the right to clear it out. We can't do it and we won't do it. But the third thing to see here is Jesus becomes the priest to open the way to God.

He becomes the priest. He is the high priest. They don't know it at the time. They don't get it at the time. But everything shows and demonstrates that he acts like the high priest.

Better than the high priest himself. And as the high priest he is going to forge a way for those who want to come to God because God is calling them to himself.

Imagine desiring the love of God, the mercy of God, and the forgiveness of God, and you want to go and these religious people say, oh no, you can't do that.

[17 : 36] We're going to keep you back. Hold my people back. no. He's the high priest, but he's also the sacrificial lamb.

Because the essence of scripture is first the cross, and then the crown. Well, turn with me to Ephesians 5, and then we'll wrap up with this passage. Ephesians 5.

Ephesians 5, verses 1 and 2. Therefore, be imitators of God.

He's talking to those who know and love the Lord Jesus Christ and are saved by Christ. As beloved children, walk in love, how? As Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and a sacrifice to God.

I don't know if Paul was specifically thinking about the event on Palm Sunday leading that week to the point of the cross.

[18 : 52] He probably was, because the words here that he uses are words that speak of the atonement of the great atonement. He's the high priest.

His work as a priest is both as a mediator, one who comes and goes between God and man or people in the presence of God. He makes intercession for his people.

And he was also the sacrificial offering. He was the lamb. The priest brings himself as the lamb. And that's the nature of his work.

It's called the atonement. What is the atonement? It's that sovereignly exercised love of God that was predicted in the Old Testament.

In the sacrificial work of Jesus Christ to bring sinners to be at one. Atonement. God accomplished through Jesus his son for us that we would be at one with him.

[19 : 58] What a privilege. What an awesome thing. Now why was it even necessary? He says, well, I'm good enough. I'm not as bad as so and so and such and such.

Well, Psalm 5 says, for you are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness, nor shall evil dwell with you. The boastful shall not stand in your sight.

You hate all workers of iniquity. Romans 1.18 and 3.25 is because of God's divine and righteous, holy, person who he is, he cannot even wink at any kind of sin.

He can't be, can come into the presence of God. You have to pass through the fire before you can make it to God and none of us could ever survive.

But Jesus did because not only was he man, but he was God. Deuteronomy 27, 26 says, cursed is the one who does not confirm all the words of the law by living them out, by observing.

[21 : 09] You see, God's unchangeable nature, his divine law made it necessary. He demands perfection and he demands satisfaction. Romans 6.23, you all know this one, the wages of sin is death.

The payment that we get for sin is death. But the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ, our Lord. God demands some kind of satisfaction.

1 John 3, verse 4, whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. So the nature of sin is one of guilt, not merely moral weakness.

You know, he has a standard. His standard is extremely high. The standard is so high, you might as well attempt to jump to the moon on your own.

That's how hard it is to get to the standard of God himself. But Jesus, the high priest, it says, was an offering.

[22 : 16] It's an offering. It's a gift offered up to another, to the king, to a god. Jesus offers himself. We can't do it, but he does it on our behalf. It's incredible that he would do that.

In fact, he says, I lay down my life. He's a sacrifice. The word here is peace offering. You slay a victim, and then you burn the carcass to appease the gods.

You know, the god would be satisfied. You know, the other gods understood that they would have to be satisfied, and oftentimes they would do something egregious, like they would offer up their own children and babies to be burned alive so that the gods would be happy.

Can you imagine that? Despicable. And yet, our father demands some kind of justice and satisfaction, but not like that.

But he did demand some kind of offering, and he was the sacrifice. sacrifice, but then it's a sweet fragrance. This is mentioned 40 different times in the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible, and it always expresses what pleases God.

[23 : 35] Jesus himself was indeed the offering, the sacrifice, who pleased God. And he did it for you and for me.

A sweet fragrance for God first. He made God happy first before he arrives to make us happy. He does it for God and does it for us.

Well, what does this atonement do? I don't want to steal the thunder. You know, I'm sure your pastor is going to speak on elements and has already in the years about, you know, what did the cross accomplish?

As the priest, he goes all the way to the cross. What's fascinating about the cross is you see the very things, the prophet, the priest, and the king.

He's there and the soldiers mock him. Well, you're a prophet, you know. Have the angels bring you down from there. What does the Roman government do?

[24 : 45] They put the sign, here is the king of the Jews. It's a prophet and king. But what does he do? He is the sacrifice as the priest. So you see him there as the prophet and the king and the priest on the cross.

And what did that accomplish? It was a sacrifice of this good theological word that we find in 1 John, expiation. It means a payment for the just demands of God.

The payment for the just demands of God. Jesus paid it all. Right? It all. All to him I owe.

How's the rest go? Remember? Yes. He washed it white as snow. Wow.

It was a sacrifice in 1 Corinthians 5, 7, 4. Indeed, Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. And when he was on the cross, he finally said, it is finished.

[25 : 48] Meaning the debt is paid in full. The deed is done. It's done in full. The atonement was a sacrifice of another big word, propitiation, which means to appease.

It satisfies God's just demands. It means it's a covering that turns away the wrath of God. The propitiation was exactly what God's hand did.

when he covered over the homes back in the Exodus. He covers them over so that the angel of death would pass right on by and not kill his special people because they acted in faith.

That was a propitiation. And it was also a sacrifice for reconciliation. We're estranged from God and we're looked upon as enemy, committed, treason, outcast.

We needed to be restored. And in order for God, for Jesus the priest to become the king, to bring his people, we have to be made right so that we can come into the kingdom in the very presence of God himself.

[27 : 01] This is Romans 5 verses 8 through 11. But God demonstrates his own love toward us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more than now, having been justified by his blood, we shall be saved from the wrath through Christ.

For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of a son. Much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

And not only that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ through whom we have received the reconciliation. We're reconciled.

We're sons and daughters of the King. We're adopted in Christ. We are friends. We are at peace. And dear ones, please, remember that that is the good news.

This is what we call the gospel. The gospel is not going out and talking about Jesus. The gospel is not works that we do. The gospel is not Jesus did enough but now we have to do the rest.

[28 : 09] The gospel is not I'll be good all the way. The gospel is Jesus did it all. Jesus paid it all.

It is finished. And he's reconciled us to himself and to the Father. Done. Forever. Finally, the atonement was a sacrifice of redemption.

The redemption means to be delivered by the power of God. And the New Testament idea of redemption is twofold. We are delivered from Satan. He has no claim on us ever, ever, ever again.

And we are also delivered from sin, from the guilt of sin, from the power of sin, and from the effects of sin. Jesus did it all.

That's why he rode, he started as a prophet, rode in as a king, got off, dismounted, so he could complete the work as a priest, so he could go back and finish his job as the king.

[29 : 14] Do you know that? Do you know him? I hope so. Have you trusted in him, in him alone, not in your works, not in religious works, and not in anything else, but in Jesus alone?

I hope so. Father, thank you for these, this is the good news, and we thank you for that. And thank you for Palm Sunday, but we also thank you for what is a horrendous, wicked day that we also call Good Friday because of what Jesus did on the cross for us.

And thank you that he is our king, that he rules not only our hearts, but he rules his kingdom, he rules his world, he rules his church, he is ruling the universe, and he's going to bring it all together to completion one day.

We praise you for that. Amen. Amen.