

Sunday June 30th sermon: "Our High Priest Sacrificed Himself for Us!
Who Crucified Christ? (Pt 3)"

Preached at the Lord's Table at Grace Bible Church in Greenwood, MS,
by John Pittman Hey

Ephesians 5:2; Hebrews 9

Who sacrificed Jesus?

Christ submitted Himself to being bound, led away, and crucified.

But the Scriptures clearly teach that Jesus was murdered by an evil
people out of a rabid rage and rebellion against Him.

When Jesus raised Lazarus from the grave, that pushed Israel's wicked
rulers over the edge. So they decided it was best to kill the holy, just,
and innocent Jesus in order to "protect the nation."

God before determined everything that was to be done to Christ, and
then wicked men carried out God's purposes precisely. These wicked
men were guilty of murder, and God's plan to provide His people a
perfect Lamb of Sacrifice was accomplished by the very acts of those
wicked men, which God had before ordained would be done!

All the evil of what those men did against Jesus falls completely upon
them. All the glory and good and beauty falls upon our God, in His
mercy and love for us!

Scripture also teaches that Christ, as our High Priest, sacrificed Himself
to God for the propitiation of our crimes, which were laid on Him.

Paul declared that Christ, out of love, gave Himself for us as an offering
and sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor.

No Old Testament lamb ever "gave itself" up as a sacrifice, but God's Lamb gave Himself as a sacrifice, not to the devil, or to some ideal of cosmic justice, but rather to God, to atone for our sins.

Hebrews lays out in detail the active role Christ played in making Himself our sacrifice. He was appointed by an oath by God to be our high priest, to reconcile us to God, to represent us to God, and God to us, in His incarnate humanity, being made like us.

Christ as our high priest offers Himself as an appeasing sacrifice for our sins to God.

When first introduced, this truth shocks us. In Hebrews 7:28, Christ is said to have offered a one-time sin sacrifice for us, when He offered up Himself!

But Hebrews grows more explicit: Christ being a better High Priest, not with animal blood, but by His Own blood, entered once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us!

The Aaronic priests went often into the tabernacle with animal blood, that could never take away sin. They sprinkled it on the mercy seat before God to make an atonement.

But Jesus presented His Own blood to God to appease God's wrath and purchase our redemption! He "offered Himself without spot to God," purging our consciences from dead works to serve the living God!

Thus, Christ is the mediator of the superior New Covenant, such that by means of His death, He bought redemption for His people for the law we had broken, so that we receive the promise of an eternal inheritance.

Christ has entered into heaven itself, to appear before God on our behalf, not often, but once at the end, to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

Christ thus offered Himself as the exclusive and everlasting sacrifice for sin. We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all! When He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, He sat down on the right hand of God.

The last sacrifice for sin ever made, was the sacrifice Jesus made of His Own body on the tree.

The Lord Jesus Himself told of His sacrifice the night He was betrayed.

At the Lord's Supper, He stated that the bread was His body, broken for us, and the cup was His blood, shed for the forgiveness of our sin.

When He performed those representational acts that night, they foreshadowed His priestly work the next day, of offering Himself up on the cross as our sacrifice, to appease the wrath of God for our sins which were laid on Him there.

The disciples couldn't grasp what Jesus was doing then, nor how His death would be our everlasting salvation!

They couldn't understand that Jesus was not just submitting to His death for some unknown reason, and that wicked men would murder Him for their own wicked reasons.

But much more, they couldn't understand how Jesus was actively offering Himself up as the sacrifice for our sins, to satisfy God's justice against us forever, so that we might be set free from wrath forever!

But now, praise God, we know!

To think that there are many who call themselves Christians, who do not believe these things, who have fabricated a host of alternate "theories" about Christ's death, so that they can deny the penal substitutionary atonement of Christ's deliberate sacrifice of Himself as our high priest!

They deny that the sacrifice of Christ unto God was necessary for forgiveness of our sins by God.

But we believe and embrace Christ's sacrifice to save us, and can only wonder, why He would do all this to save poor sinners?

It is because He loves us! As the poet John Whyte put it:

Was it for me, for me alone,
The Savior left His glorious throne;
The dazzling splendors of the sky,
Was it for me He came to die?

Was it for me sweet angel strains
Came floating o'er Judea's plains?
That starlit night so long ago,
Was it for me God plann'd it so?

Was it for me the Savior said,
'Pillow thy weary, aching head,
Trustingly on thy Savior's breast?'
Was it for me, Can I thus rest?

Was it for me He wept and pray'd,
My load of sin before Him laid;
That night within Gethsemane,
Was it for me that agony?

Was it for me He bow'd His head
Upon the Cross, and freely shed
His precious blood—that crimson tide,
Was it for me the Savior died?

It was for me, yes, all for me,
O love of God, so great so free!
O wondrous love, I'll shout and sing,
He died for me, my Lord and King!