

# Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Christ's Saving Work, Session 18, 6 Pictures of Christ's Saving Works, Part 4, Sacrifice, High Priest

## Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

### 1. Abstract of Peterson, Christ's Saving Work, Session 18, 6 Pictures of Christ's Saving Works, Part 4, Sacrifice, High Priest, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This session by Dr. Robert A. Peterson explores the biblical metaphor of **Christ as both the sacrifice and high priest** for humanity's salvation. Drawing from Old Testament concepts of the sacrificial system and priesthood, the teaching explains how **Jesus' self-offering** fulfills these roles in the new covenant. The lecture examines key scriptures to illustrate the necessity of this sacrifice due to humanity's moral impurity and its **efficacy in providing eternal redemption** for believers, including those in the Old Testament. Furthermore, the session addresses the surprising concept that **Christ's sacrifice purifies even the heavenly sanctuary** from the defilement of sin, highlighting the comprehensive impact of his atoning work.

**2. 18 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of  
Dr. Peterson, Christ's Saving Work, Session 18 – Double click  
icon to play in Windows media player or go to the  
Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link  
there (Theology → Theology, Peterson → Christology).**



**Peterson\_ChristWork\_Session18.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document: Peterson, Christ's Saving Work, Session 18, 6 Pictures of Christ's Saving Works, Part 4, Sacrifice, High Priest

#### Briefing Document: Christ's Saving Work - Sacrificed and High Priest

##### Overview:

This session focuses on the sixth biblical theme explaining Christ's saving work: that of **sacrifice and priest**. Dr. Peterson argues that Jesus fulfills the Old Testament sacrificial system by being both the **great high priest** and the **ultimate sacrifice** of the new covenant. His self-offering of his body and blood provides eternal atonement and his ongoing priestly ministry includes intercession for believers. The lecture explores the necessity, initiator, mediator, work, voluntariness, and scope of Christ's sacrificial work, delving into key Old and New Testament passages, particularly Hebrews and Revelation. Two significant implications are discussed: the salvation of Old Testament saints and the purification of heavenly realities through Christ's sacrifice.

##### Main Themes and Important Ideas/Facts:

#### 1. Christ as Both Sacrifice and High Priest:

- Jesus is presented as the fulfillment of the Old Testament cultus, encompassing the priestly and sacrificial institutions.
- He is not only the sacrifice offered but also the great high priest who offers it in the new covenant.
- This dual role allows for a complete and eternal atonement.
- Quote: "The sixth biblical theme, metaphor, and picture that explains to us what Jesus did to save us is that of sacrifice and priest since he is both."

#### 2. Humanity's Need and Christ's Willing Initiation:

- Humanity's need for Christ's sacrifice stems from moral uncleanness and impurity before a holy God.
- Christ's sacrifice was not coerced but came from his own volition and according to God's plan.
- Quote: "Our Lord Jesus comes willingly to live a sinless life as a lamb without blemish or spot. 1 Peter 1:19 and to give himself in death so as to bear our sins,

quote, in his body on the tree. 1 Peter 2:24. The initiative was all of the Father and the Son."

### **3. Christ as Mediator of the New Covenant:**

- Jesus, as the Lamb of God, takes away the sin of the world.
- He is the great high priest and the mediator of the new covenant, establishing a better relationship between God and humanity.
- Quote: "The mediator, Christ our sacrifice, is, quoting John, the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. John 1:24. And our great high priest, as he's called in Hebrews 4:14."

### **4. The Work and Scope of Christ's Sacrifice:**

- Christ, through his incarnation, temptation, and ultimate self-offering, bore the sins of many.
- His sacrifice was a fragrant offering displaying his supreme love.
- Quote: "Christ displayed his love supremely when he gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. Ephesians 5:2."
- Remarkably, this one-time sacrifice made purification for sins, saving believers of the new covenant and redeeming Old Testament saints.
- Quote: "Remarkably, Christ, by offering himself once for all... made purification for sins, Hebrews 1:3, saving believers of the new covenant as well as redeeming Old Testament saints from the transgressions committed under the first covenant. Hebrews 9:15."

### **5. Substitutionary Aspect of Sacrifice:**

- The Old Testament sacrificial system involved the substitution of an animal for a human being.
- The laying of hands on the sacrificial animal symbolized identification and representation.
- Dr. Peterson notes that even scholars who might question penal substitution acknowledge the presence of substitution in biblical presentations of sacrifice.
- Quote: "He [Joel Green] says that these texts, which treat Old Testament sacrifices, portray atonement as redemption through the substitution of an

animal for a human being... Accordingly, Jesus, quote, bore our sins on the tree, close quote, 1 Peter 2, verse 14. Sacrifice seems to imply substitution."

#### **6. Past, Present, and Future Results of Christ's Sacrifice:**

- Christ's priestly service avails for Old Testament believers, new covenant saints, and all God's people forever.
- His sacrifice produces forgiveness, redemption, purification, and enables a life of godliness and service.
- His ongoing intercession guarantees final salvation.

#### **7. Revelation 5: The Lamb Who Was Slain:**

- This passage connects the theme of Christus Victor (Christ as the conquering lion) with that of Christ as the sacrificial lamb.
- The "lamb standing as though it had been slain" signifies Christ's sacrifice as the means of his victory and redemption.
- His blood ransomed people for God, making them a kingdom and priests.
- Quote: "Worthy are you... for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation..." (referencing Revelation 5:9).
- Christ's worthiness to open the scroll stems from his sacrificial death.

#### **8. Hebrews 9: The Superior Sacrifice and Heavenly Purification:**

- Hebrews contrasts Christ's high priesthood and sacrifice with that of the Old Testament.
- Christ entered heaven itself, the true holy places, with his own blood, securing eternal redemption, unlike the earthly high priests who entered a man-made tent with the blood of animals.
- Quote: "But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent, not made with hands, that is, not of this creation, he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves, but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption." (Hebrews 9:11-12 quoted).

- The passage surprisingly teaches that the "heavenly things themselves" needed purification by Christ's better sacrifice due to the defiling effects of human sin.
- This is explained by the idea that the earthly tabernacle was a copy of heavenly realities, and sin's defilement extends beyond individuals to society and even the heavenly sanctuary where God dwells.
- Quote: "Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things... to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves... to be purified with better sacrifices than these." (Hebrews 9:23 quoted).
- Christ's entrance into heaven is to appear in God's presence on our behalf, signifying the completion and efficacy of his purifying work.

### **9. Salvation of Old Testament Saints:**

- While the Old Testament sacrificial system provided forgiveness and purification for Israel, the ultimate basis for their salvation was not the animal blood itself, but their faith in God's promises, looking forward to Christ.
- Hebrews 9:15 explicitly states that Christ's death redeemed those "from the transgressions committed under the first covenant."
- Quote: "Quote, since a death has occurred... that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant." (quoting Hebrews 9:15).
- Christ's atoning sacrifice is retrospective, valid for all who trusted God before his coming.

### **Conclusion:**

Dr. Peterson concludes that the concept of Christ as both the ultimate sacrifice and the great high priest is a crucial lens through which to understand his saving work. This framework illuminates the sufficiency and eternal efficacy of his atonement, its reach to believers of all ages, and even its impact on the heavenly realms. The session emphasizes the superiority of the new covenant established through Christ's willing and once-for-all sacrifice, securing eternal redemption and reconciliation with a holy God.

## 4. Study Guide: Peterson, Christ's Saving Work, Session 18, 6 Pictures of Christ's Saving Works, Part 4, Sacrifice, High Priest

### Christ's Saving Work: Sacrifice and High Priest - Study Guide

#### Key Concepts

- **Sacrifice:** Jesus Christ as the ultimate sacrifice, fulfilling the Old Testament sacrificial system through the offering of his own body and blood for the atonement of sins.
- **High Priest:** Jesus Christ as the great high priest of the new covenant, who intercedes for believers in heaven after offering the perfect sacrifice.
- **Old Testament Cultus:** The entire priestly and sacrificial institution and its paraphernalia in the Old Testament, including the tabernacle/temple, priests, altars, sacrifices, and the shedding of blood.
- **Atonement:** The work Christ did to reconcile humanity to God by dealing with the problem of sin. The sacrificial theme portrays Jesus as the fulfillment of Old Testament atonement practices.
- **Substitution:** The concept that Jesus took the place of sinners, bearing their sins and the penalty they deserved.
- **Redemption:** The act of buying back or freeing someone from bondage. In the context of Christ's work, it refers to the deliverance of believers from sin and its consequences through his sacrifice.
- **Purification:** The cleansing from moral uncleanness and defilement. Christ's sacrifice purifies believers' consciences and even the heavenly sanctuary from the effects of sin.
- **New Covenant:** The covenant established through Jesus Christ, replacing the old covenant. It is characterized by forgiveness of sins, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and a direct relationship with God.
- **Intercession:** Christ's ongoing work in heaven as high priest, pleading with the Father on behalf of believers.
- **Heavenly Sanctuary:** The true holy place in heaven, of which the earthly tabernacle/temple was a copy.

#### Quiz

1. Explain the dual role of Jesus Christ in the theme of sacrifice and high priest as it relates to his saving work.
2. According to the source, what was humanity's fundamental need that necessitated Christ's sacrifice? How does the new covenant promise in Jeremiah address this need?
3. Describe the voluntariness of Christ's sacrifice, referencing at least one biblical passage mentioned in the text. What does this willingness reveal about the initiative behind his saving work?
4. How does the book of Hebrews contrast Christ's high priesthood with that of the Old Testament Levitical priests, particularly in terms of where he ministers and the means of his sacrifice?
5. What does the passage from Revelation 5 reveal about the connection between Christ's victory (Christus Victor) and his role as the sacrificial Lamb?
6. According to the source, how did Christ's sacrifice benefit Old Testament believers who lived before his earthly ministry? Which passage in Hebrews is cited to support this?
7. Explain the surprising concept discussed in the text regarding the purification of "heavenly things" (Hebrews 9:23-24). Why was this considered necessary?
8. Drawing from the Old Testament background discussed (Leviticus 16), explain how the sins of the Israelites were understood to affect not only themselves but also the Lord's sanctuary.
9. How does the source connect the earthly tabernacle and its rituals to the "heavenly realities"? What principle from Hebrews 8:4-6 is crucial for understanding this connection?
10. Summarize the lasting results of Christ's priestly service and self-sacrifice for believers, mentioning at least three benefits discussed in the text.

### **Quiz Answer Key**

1. Jesus Christ is both the great high priest and the perfect sacrifice of the new covenant. As the sacrifice, he offered his own body and blood to atone for sins. As the high priest, he presents this sacrifice to God in heaven and continually intercedes for believers.

2. Humanity's fundamental need is moral uncleanness and impurity before a holy and just God, leaving us in need of cleansing and forgiveness. The new covenant promise in Jeremiah 31:34 addresses this by promising forgiveness of iniquity and remembrance of sin no more.
3. Christ's sacrifice was voluntary, as highlighted in Hebrews 10:5-7 where he says, "Behold, I have come to do your will, O God," indicating a willing spirit. This reveals that the initiative for salvation came from both the Father's plan and the Son's willing obedience.
4. Unlike the Levitical high priests who entered an earthly tent annually with the blood of animals, Christ, the high priest of the new covenant, entered heaven itself, the true holy place, once for all with his own blood.
5. Revelation 5 initially presents Christ as the conquering Lion of Judah (Christus Victor), but John then sees him as a Lamb standing as though it had been slain. This reveals that Christ's victory was achieved through his sacrificial death, which is the means by which he redeems people for God.
6. Christ's sacrifice benefited Old Testament believers by redeeming them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant. Hebrews 9:15 explicitly states that Christ is the mediator of a new covenant so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from past transgressions.
7. The text discusses the surprising idea that the "heavenly things" themselves (heaven itself) needed purification because sin, as defilement, is infectious and its effects contaminate even the heavenly sanctuary where God dwells due to the solidarity between heaven and earth and the impact of humanity's sin.
8. According to Leviticus 16 and the commentary by Sklar, the Israelites' sins and impurities defiled not only themselves but also the Lord's sanctuary because God chose to dwell in their midst. This defilement necessitated atonement for the holy place itself to remove the threat of God's justice and ensure continued covenant fellowship.
9. The earthly tabernacle, with its priests and rituals, served as a copy and shadow of the heavenly realities, which are Christ and his heavenly liturgy. Hebrews 8:5 instructs Moses to make everything according to the pattern shown to him on the mountain, indicating that the earthly was designed to reflect the heavenly.

10. The lasting results of Christ's sacrifice and high priestly ministry include forgiveness of sins (Hebrews 10:17-18), eternal redemption (Hebrews 9:12), purification of conscience (Hebrews 9:14), the guarantee of final salvation through his ongoing intercession (Hebrews 7:25), and the provision of a life of godliness and service (1 Peter 2:24, Hebrews 9:14).

## **Essay Format Questions**

1. Analyze the relationship between the Old Testament sacrificial system and the person and work of Jesus Christ as presented in the source material. How does the author argue that Jesus fulfills and surpasses these Old Testament types and shadows?
2. Discuss the significance of Christ's dual role as both the sacrifice and the high priest for understanding the doctrine of the atonement. How does this dual role address humanity's need for reconciliation with God?
3. Explore the implications of the author's discussion on the purification of the "heavenly things" in Hebrews 9:23-24. Why might this concept be considered "shocking," and how does the author explain its theological significance based on Old Testament parallels?
4. Evaluate the author's use of specific biblical passages from both the Old and New Testaments to support the theme of Christ's saving work as sacrifice and high priest. How effectively do these scriptural references contribute to the overall argument?
5. Considering the various aspects of Christ's sacrifice discussed in the source (voluntariness, substitution, redemption, purification, past/present/future results), construct a comprehensive understanding of its scope and efficacy for believers throughout history.

## Glossary of Key Terms

- **Atonement:** The reconciliation of God and humanity through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ, making amends for sin.
- **Cultus:** The system of religious worship and ritual practices of a particular group, specifically referring to the Old Testament priestly and sacrificial system in this context.
- **Exegesis:** The critical interpretation and explanation of a text, especially of scripture.
- **Intercession:** The act of pleading or mediating on behalf of another; in Christian theology, Christ's ongoing work in heaven as advocate for believers.
- **Mediator:** One who stands between two parties to reconcile them; Jesus Christ is the mediator between God and humanity in the new covenant.
- **Penal Substitution:** A theory of atonement asserting that Christ vicariously suffered the penalty of sin (God's wrath) in place of sinners.
- **Redemption:** The act of buying back or securing release by payment of a ransom; Christ's death is the ransom that frees believers from sin and its consequences.
- **Sacrifice:** An offering made to God as an act of worship or to appease divine wrath; Jesus Christ is the ultimate sacrifice for sin.
- **Sanctify:** To set apart as holy; to purify or consecrate.
- **Substitution:** The act of taking the place of another; Jesus Christ substituted himself for sinners, bearing their punishment.

## **5. FAQs on Peterson, Christ's Saving Work, Session 18, 6 Pictures of Christ's Saving Works, Part 4, Sacrifice, High Priest, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)**

### **Frequently Asked Questions: Christ's Saving Work as Sacrifice and High Priest**

#### **1. What is the central idea behind the biblical theme of Christ as both sacrifice and high priest?**

This theme, rooted in the Old Testament sacrificial system, portrays Jesus as the ultimate fulfillment of that system. He is both the perfect sacrifice, offering himself to atone for humanity's sins, and the great high priest of the new covenant, who presents this sacrifice to God on our behalf and continuously intercedes for believers.

#### **2. What was the human need that necessitated Christ's sacrifice according to this perspective?**

Humanity's fundamental need is to address our moral uncleanness and impurity before a holy and just God. Sin defiles us, creating a barrier between us and God, and we are in need of cleansing and forgiveness, a promise fulfilled in the new covenant through Christ's sacrifice.

#### **3. How did Christ willingly initiate his role as sacrifice?**

Christ's sacrifice was not forced upon him but was a voluntary act in accordance with God's plan. He willingly came into the world, prepared with a body for this purpose, and offered himself as a spotless lamb to bear our sins. This initiative highlights the love of both the Father and the Son in our redemption.

#### **4. In what ways is Christ presented as the mediator within this sacrificial framework?**

Christ serves as the mediator of the new covenant in his roles as both the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world and as our great high priest who intercedes for us in heaven. He bridges the gap between a holy God and sinful humanity through his sacrificial offering.

### **5. What was the scope and effectiveness of Christ's once-for-all sacrifice?**

Christ's single, perfect sacrifice has a remarkably broad scope and everlasting effectiveness. It not only secures salvation for believers of the new covenant but also redeems Old Testament saints from the transgressions committed under the first covenant. His sacrifice provided purification for sins once and for all, guaranteeing final salvation for all God's people.

### **6. How does the concept of substitution relate to Christ's sacrifice?**

The sacrificial theme strongly implies substitution. Just as Old Testament animal sacrifices involved the substitution of an animal for a human, Jesus bore our sins in his body, acting as our substitute. This is further emphasized by the laying of hands in Old Testament sacrifices, signifying identification and representation, mirroring how Jesus represented sinners and bore the consequences of their sin.

### **7. How does the book of Hebrews contrast Christ's high priesthood and sacrifice with that of the Old Testament?**

Hebrews emphasizes the superiority of Christ's priesthood and sacrifice. Unlike the Levitical high priests who repeatedly offered imperfect animal sacrifices in an earthly tabernacle, Christ entered the true holy places in heaven once for all through his own blood, securing an eternal redemption. His priesthood is permanent and his sacrifice is uniquely efficacious.

### **8. Why does the text suggest that even "heavenly things" needed purification through Christ's sacrifice?**

Drawing from Old Testament concepts where the sins of the Israelites defiled even the Lord's earthly sanctuary, the writer of Hebrews posits that our sins also defiled the most holy place in God's heavenly sanctuary. Therefore, Christ's better sacrifice was necessary to purify these heavenly realities, highlighting the pervasive impact of sin and the comprehensive cleansing achieved through Christ's atoning work.