

How Did Jesus Serve as Both Priest and Sacrifice?

*The Old and New Covenants

Leviticus 9; Hebrews 7:22–8:7

Animal Sacrifice

“Help! Help!” yelled nine-year-old Ryan Rambo as he swept down the icy waters of the Roaring Fork River in Colorado. Just minutes before, Ryan had been kayaking with his mom and a family friend. Now, he feared for his life.

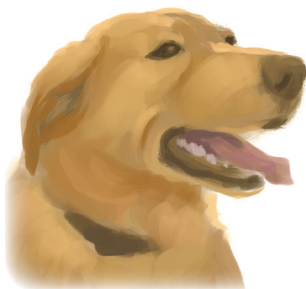
Thirteen-year-old Chelsea Bennett stood on the shore with Zion, her two-year-old yellow Labrador Retriever. As Ryan bobbed by, Zion jumped into the river. The untrained dog swam out and returned with Ryan clinging to his collar.

Onshore, Chelsea covered the shivering Ryan with warm sand. In a short time, Ryan’s mom and family friend arrived to help. Later,

Zion won the American Humane Association’s Golden Paw Award for his amazing rescue of Ryan.

Zion might have drowned attempting to save Ryan. Zion’s sacrifice rescued Ryan

from certain death. In this lesson, we will learn about animal sacrifices of another kind—the Old Testament kind that pointed to Jesus and the sacrifice He would make of Himself to rescue us from sin and death.



Old and New Covenant Comparisons

In the Old Testament, God’s people received the forgiveness of sins through a system of priests and sacrifices. In this system, priests would select healthy animals and offer them to God to pay for the sins of the people. This practice was known as the old covenant. In the New Testament, God’s people receive forgiveness from Jesus, the great High Priest whose once-for-all sacrifice on the cross ended the sacrificial system. We remember Jesus’ sacrifice as we receive forgiveness and the assurance of salvation in the Lord’s Supper. Explain the meaning of the words of the following Communion hymn.

Draw near and take the body of the Lord.
And drink the holy blood for you outpoured;
Offered was He for greatest and for least,
Himself the victim and Himself the priest.



Himself the Victim and Himself the Priest

Jesus served and continues to serve as our great High Priest in three ways. Match the description of each with the number of the Bible verse on the right that most closely explains it.

_____ Active Obedience (Jesus placed Himself under the Law and obeyed God in our place without sin.)

_____ Passive Obedience (Jesus sacrificed Himself to pay the penalty for all human sin.)

_____ Intercession (Jesus pleads for us at the right hand of God the Father.)

1. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2).
2. But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons (Galatians 4:4–5).
3. My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous (1 John 2:1).

A Sacrifice Recognized

Two friends visited a cathedral in Italy to see its artwork. One was Christian; the other was not.

Looking at a large figure of Jesus hanging on the cross, the Christian said, “Isn’t that beautiful?” The other man looked at Jesus and replied, “I don’t see anything beautiful about it.”

The Christian asked, “If you knew that Jesus was up there to save your wife and children, would it be beautiful then?” Surprised, the man replied, “Yes, yes, then it would be beautiful to me.”

Jesus lifted up on the cross is not a pretty sight, but He is beautiful to those He saved. Jesus’ sacrifice paid the price for the sins of the world. God freely gives the benefits of this sacrifice to everyone who believes in Jesus: forgiveness of sin, eternal life, and a life of

purpose and contentment as a child of God. What difference has Jesus’ sacrifice made in your life? What difference might it make?



REVIEW

Use the glossary to define these words.

propitiation— _____

intercede— _____

advocate— _____

sacrifice— _____

REMEMBER

[Christ] is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. Romans 8:34