

# Outer Court



*Jesus Christ Prison Ministry*

P.O. Box 770  
Lucerne Valley, CA 92356

PUBLISHER  
Jesus Christ Prison Ministry  
P.O. Box 770  
Lucerne Valley, CA 92356

E-mail: [ministry@icpm.com](mailto:ministry@icpm.com)  
Web Page: [www.icpm.com](http://www.icpm.com)



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(JUSTIFICATION)

“If a member of the community sins unintentionally and does what is forbidden in any of the Lord’s commands, he is guilty...” Leviticus 4:27-29. In bringing the helpless, sinless, perfect lamb to the temple, the sinner recognized that he was a sinner and that he needed the perfect Messiah to take his place and pay the penalty for his **past** sins. If the Messiah did not take the sinner’s place, the sinner himself must bear the penalty and die.

Symbolically the sinner’s eyes were directed toward the time in the future when the Messiah would come, dying on the cross, offering Himself as the perfect “Lamb of God”. By faith the sinner accepted the death of the Messiah as having already taken place for him.

As the sinner brought the little lamb to the temple, he had to walk it, or carry it, past hundreds of tents. The temple was located in the middle of the camp of the Israelites. A sinner had to leave the camp, go to the flock, purchase a lamb – about 50 dollars worth - and carry it back through the community. As he takes the lamb to the temple, it may be bleating all the way. You might not be able to keep it a secret. The whole community knew that you had sinned. “You may be sure that your sin will find you out.” Numbers 32:23. (How we inmates know all too well.)

Sin is terrible. God wanted them, and us, to know the terrible cost of sin. Not only in monetary terms, about 50 dollars for the lamb, but also the life of the lamb. The whole point was to make it costly to the sinner; encouraging the sinner to turn away from

has paid the penalty for those **past sins**, we have an obligation to wash them away in the purifying life of Christ. We must not allow sin to remain in us. “Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord **must turn away from wickedness.**” 2 Timothy 2:19. “In the same way, count yourselves **dead to sin** but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore **do not let sin reign in your mortal body** so that you obey its evil desires. **Do not offer the parts of your body to sin**, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to Him as instruments of righteousness.” Romans 6:11-13.

Through the symbolism of washing and baptism, we enter a new life with God. “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live **by faith (not grace)** in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” Galatians 2:20. It is through the Divine Power of Christ that we can maintain our sinless Christian walk with Christ, our Messiah, our Sacrifice. “You were taught with regard to your former way of life, **to put off your old self** which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.” Ephesians 4:21-24.

sin and stop sinning.

In our lives, sin is terrible. Look at the terrible cost it extracts from us and those we love. Money, time and emotions that should be going into our families and God, is spent on tobacco, alcohol, drugs, sinful sex, sinful pleasure, sinful ambition, TV and etc.

But greater than all these is the cost in wasted lives. Lives broken and destroyed because of sin. Lungs and livers destroyed. Cancer and AIDS are rampant. Lives and families devastated. But the greatest sacrifice was the sacrifice of the Life of God. “For God so loved the world that He gave His One and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16.

When the sinner brought the lamb to the entrance of the temple, he placed his hands on the head of the lamb and confessed his sins. This act was symbolic of the confession and repentance the sinner was to **have already made** to God who was seated on the Mercy Seat: the seat of Grace.

Looking into the temple the sinner could see the glory of God emanating from the Most Holy Place. He was reminded of the sacredness of the Ten Commandments and the cost of breaking them. He was to humble himself and submit to the authority of God in his life and turn away from his sinful ways.

The outer court, with its Altar of Sacrifice and the Basin of Water, represented **Justification** in the life of the sinner. Since the only wage we can pay for our **past sins is death** (Romans 6:23) the sinner had to have a substitute for his own wages. If the sinner paid the price for His own sin he would never be able to repent: he would be dead. The Outer Court provided that way of escape from the wages of sin: death. By looking unto the “Lamb of God” the sinner **could repent from His past sins** and look to the



Lamb of God (Jesus) as his substitute for the wages of past sins.

Just as the lamb **did not** save the sinner, or give the sinner eternal life, neither does justification save the sinner and give him eternal life. It only allows the sinner to put away his **past sins**. Justification only cleans out the house (Luke 11:24-26), you must now fill the

house with **sanctification** in order to have eternal life. That is what the Holy Place is all about.

David understood the concept that the sacrifices were only symbolic **and did not cover or clear his sins**. He prayed, “Have mercy (grace) on me, O God, according to Your unfailing love; according to Your great compassion **blot out** my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin... Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from Your presence or take Your Holy Spirit from me... Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners will turn back to You... You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; You do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. **The sacrifices of God are a broken and contrite heart**, O God You will not despise.” Psalm 51: 1, 2, 10, 11, 13, 16, 17.

David recognized the offering of the lamb as useless, only symbolic. He understood that the blood of the **lamb did not cleanse him**, or even cover his sin. He knew that God alone can cleanse and remove sin; and only from “a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart.” It wasn’t the blood of a lamb that covered the sin, or took it away; it was God Himself. “Nathan replied, ‘the **Lord has taken away your sin**. You are not going to die.’” 2 Samuel 12:13. (Notice: The LORD, not a lamb.)

Isaiah was also aware of the mission of the Messiah. He understood the **symbolism of the lamb**. “Surely He (Jesus) took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered Him stricken by God, smitten by Him, and afflicted. But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; He was led **like a lamb** to the slaughter, and as a sheep before His shearers is silent, so He did not open His mouth.” Isaiah 53:4-7.

After the sinner slit the throat of the lamb and killed it, the fat portions of the lamb were to be removed and burned on the altar as an aroma pleasing to the Lord. Leviticus 4:31. The fat portion symbolized sin in the sinner’s life. Through the fire of the Holy Spirit, the sinner was to burn up sin in his life. He was to fall into the arms of the Almighty God and receive the power of the Holy Spirit to live the righteous, Ten Commandment keeping life. “Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, nor His ear to dull to hear.” Isaiah 59:1.

As we let the power of God into our lives to burn out sin, our lives become a living sacrifice; a life without sin, where the fat portions are burned up. “Therefore, I urge you brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God - this is your spiritual act of worship. **Do not conform any longer to the pattern of the world**, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” Romans 12:1, 2.

After sacrificing the lamb, the priest turned to enter the Holy Place. But before he could enter, he must first wash his hands and feet in the basin of water. This washing **symbolized** the washing away of sin. Once we have confessed our sins, and Jesus