



New Testament Service

In a previous Artios titled, "The Cross", we concluded that the cross Jesus bore was not an actual wooden cross, rather a commitment to sacrifice himself for humanity. He chose not to open his mouth when he was accused, beaten, and abused to the extent he was unrecognizable as a man. He chose not to wish evil on his assailants, but to forgive them.

(Luke 23:34 KJV) Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

We learned of service as well.

The conclusion was that the 'cross' we carry is, 'to present our bodies as living sacrifices, holy, well pleasing unto God, which is reasonable service or rational worship to God.'

We were admonished to



love God with our entire beings—more than family, friends, belongings, even ourselves—to have the mind of Christ through love, patience, forgiveness and holiness. To bear the cross is to surrender our lives to God, the lordship of Jesus Christ, and to the furtherance of God's Word.

Finally, we learned the importance of the renewed mind.

(Rom 12:2 KJV) And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and ac-

ceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Our service to God is spiritual.

Today I'd like to begin with the word 'service,' and continue the study of Romans 12 as it applies to Christian service.

(Rom 12:1) I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

'Beseech,' parakaleo in the Greek, means, 'to invite by way of a personal plea or petition.' It's as if God personally delivered this request—present your body as a living sacrifice. Here's an expanded translation of Romans 12: 1

"I appeal with a personal plea from the God of mercy, that you yield your

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body as a living sacrifice, pure, guilt free and consecrated, totally acceptable to God by means of spiritual service.”

Let review the word ‘service,’ latreia, from verse one,—meaning, divine service or ministration or worship. In the New Testament, it appears five times.

(John 16:2 KJV) They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.

Since the day of Pentecost—the Christian Church’s beginning—this type of vengeance has been taking place. They might have thought themselves well-meaning, but they were dead wrong. For example, when Stephen was stoned and when Saul killed so many Christians. But, these gross acts weren’t service to God by any stretch of the imagination.

(Rom 9:4 KJV) Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the

covenants, and the giving of the law, and the **service of God**, and the promises;

Verse four speaks of adopted Israelites and their service to God.

‘Service’ refers to ‘formal religious veneration,’ meaning, for instance, sacrificial rituals a priest performed. Other acts were included in these divine services, which were statutes established by God for absolution. They offered animal blood to remove peoples’ sins. They used many tools, each with a specific place and purpose. Those services were brought to a close when Jesus Christ ascended on High.

He brought a new covenant to Israel, and eventually, mankind.

(Heb 8:8-13 KJV) For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: {9} Not according to the covenant that I made with their fa-

thers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. {10} For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: {11} And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. {12} For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. {13} In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.

The old covenant—the Old Testament—was made void by the new. Sacrifices are no longer

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needed; Jesus Christ died for us and his blood cleansed us from all sin, forever.

(Heb 8:12 KJV) For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

God will never remember our sins.

(Heb 1:1-4 KJV) God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, {2} Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; {3} Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; {4} Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name

than they.

Jesus Christ, son and heir of God, the brightness of God's glory and the image of God's substance, cleansed us from our sins by offering himself once and for all.

He is now seated at God's right hand.

(Heb 7:22-28 KJV) By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament. {23} And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: {24} But this *man*, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. {25} Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. {26} For such an high priest became us, *who is* holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; {27} Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and

then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. {28} For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, *maketh* the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.

Jesus Christ is the perfect priest. His immutable priesthood saves all who come to God through him—to the uttermost.

(Heb 4:14-16 KJV) Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* profession. {15} For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are*, yet without sin. {16} Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

What else need we do? Through Christ, we have received it all! Thank God

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we've never been subject to the Old Testament covenant. We are partakers of the new covenant and Christ intercedes for us.

The "rational service" to which Romans 12 refers is completely different from the 'worship' or 'service' the priests of the Old Testament performed.

(Heb 8:11 KJV) And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.

We are taught to know God and his word. Ceremonies, rituals, altars, candelabras and a thousand other artifacts serve no godly purpose.

God is not interested in manmade worship.

(John 4:24 KJV) God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth.

Our godly service is to be "rational," better said,

"spiritual," because God is spirit and they that worship him in spirit and in truth.

God bless you!

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