

Christianity What Cost II

(Go To Meeting)

Lyll Johnston—July 1, 2022

- What does it cost a person to become a Christian according to mainstream Christianity in the world today?
- What do they have to give up?
- What is the requirement?
- What is the requirement from the Scriptures?
- What does Jesus say?
- What do His apostles have to tell us?
- What do the saints of old, going clear back to Abraham, Noah, Enoch and those beforehand?
- What teaching is there?
- What are the requirements for mainstream Christianity, the Christianity of this world?

Well, it's just a brief prayer! I'm generalizing here, but it's just a brief prayer; the fact that you are prepared to accept Jesus and your fruits. Once saved always saved!

Is that the message of Jesus Christ Who established His Church, who built His Church? You and I know that more is required. We're not going to necessarily go into many things. The important things for us are the basics. The basic principles of Christianity!

What it is that is required of us to be a Christian. I use the word 'required'; that sounds a little negative, but it's not. That is:

- the way to eternal life
- the way to true happiness
- the true blessings

*In this world to become a **true** Christian:*

- Do you have to give up a job because of the Sabbath Day?
- Do your beliefs cause conflict with family? Friends? Workmates?

To the point where you may lose a job; where you may have family depart from you because you have chosen to become a living sacrifice for Jesus Christ! Each one of us had to give up something! In fact we had to give up many things, as we know.

- What was the cost of the Christians in the early church, the primitive church in the first century?
- What did they have to give up?

- What did the Christians down through the ages have to give up because of their hope in Jesus Christ, their living Savior?
- What did you and I give up?
- Have we given up everything?

We need to explain that, but that's what God wants from us. What does it cost:

- to be a Christian?
- to become like God Himself?
- to put on the very mind and thinking of God our Father as Jesus Christ demonstrated it?

Again, this is all basic! But basics are the foundation. It's not that we're going back to re-establishing the basics. It's just revisiting them because they are the pathway, the guide that keeps us on the path walking toward our hope.

- What is our hope? *The resurrection!*
- What lies on the other side of the resurrection? *The Kingdom of God!*

That's our hope and striving, that daily striving. Yet, there are many things that we know that want to prevent us from reaching that goal.

There are certain requirements! There's a way of life that Jesus gave us 2,000 years ago. Jesus remains the same and nothing has changed.

The same rules—the laws and commandments of Jesus Christ—still exist today, in spite of this world saying that:

You just have to give your heart to the Lord, and everything will be okay. When Jesus returns you will be wafted off into heaven.

Which, of course, is a false doctrine that is contrary to the resurrection. We know that; we've learned that!

Decades ago there was a statement made in the Church, for those who have been around for decades in the Church you may remember that it was said that 'we are living in the last generation.' Here we are, 20m, 40, 50, 60 or more years later and it seems that what we saw those many years ago was more like a Sunday afternoon picnic in the park, compared to what we see today.

Matthew 17:17: "Then Jesus answered *and* said, 'O faithless and perverse generation...'"

In his first sermon, Peter used the same terminology when He talked about being saved from this perverse generation.

Is that all past? Because the plan was to make this a wonderful world; was that going to happen or not?

2-Thessalonians 3:2—*Paul says*: “That we may be delivered from perverse and wicked men, for all are not of the faith.” *In fact, very few today are of the faith, the faith of God!*

Philippians 3:19: “...whose glory is in their shame...”

Can we think of anywhere today where the people of this world are glorying in their shame? We have so many things happening in the past week or two, such as the whole abortion situation. A whole month of ‘pride’ *glorying in their shame!* We know what God thinks about that.

Let’s see what Jesus had to say about what it costs us to be a member, or a part of the Body of Christ, which is the Church of the Living God. As people would expect,

Luke 14:25: “And great multitudes...”

Jesus was a ‘rock star’ in His own time, but so different from the perverse generation of ‘rock stars’ that we have today that people follow like they were ‘gods.’ The great multitude shows the great impact of His teaching. It also shows the impact that there was no awareness there that He could be—or maybe He was—the ‘promised Messiah.’

“...were going with Him; and He turned *and* said to them, ‘If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers and sisters, and, in addition, his own life also, he cannot be My disciple’” (vs 25-26).

So, there’s this counting of the cost. Must we hate everyone but ourselves? That’s not what Jesus is saying. What Jesus is saying is that we have to really put Him *first* over everything else in our lives. In other places, we are told:

- husbands are to love their wives
- we are to love our families
- we are to even love ourselves

It’s not talking about hate in the way that we would say it today! In the past we have used that term and this does fit into the text: *love less!* In other words, we are not to allow anything in our lives that comes between God the Father and Jesus Christ and ourselves. We are all to go into the Kingdom of God side by side with the mind of Jesus Christ. It’s talking about being prepared in our mind

to give up everything!

Let’s see what Paul had to say about being a living sacrifice.

Romans 12:1: “I exhort you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice...”

Here Paul is making a reference back to the sacrificial system that we talked about in part one in Lev. 1-7. When we read through all that, there’s so much detail. Let’s remind ourselves of what Paul told to Timothy:

2-Timothy 3:16_[transcriber’s correction]: “All Scripture is God-breathed...”

So, we look back at Lev. 1-7 about the sacrifices, it can look like, if we are not careful, just a lot of repetition and meaningless. But that’s not what Paul says, and lot of his teaching, particularly in the book of Hebrews, is directed back to the offerings of Lev. 1-7. Very important, because the very first offering was the burnt offering, and the represented the total sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

- Did Christ give up everything in order to be our Savior?
- Did He resist Satan every step of the way?

We read about the three temptations in Matthew and Luke. But Satan didn’t give up there. He kept coming back again and again. That was the battle where Christ shows, as He said:

John 14:30: “...the ruler of this world is coming; but he does not have a single thing in Me.”

That’s is what God wants us to accomplish. God knows that we’re not there, yet; but that’s the whole purpose of our calling now.

Romans 12:1: “...to present your bodies a living sacrifice...”

Was Jesus a living sacrifice at age 12 when He said to His mother and father, ‘Didn’t you know that I must be about My Father’s business?’ We aren’t aware of that, but His mother certainly should have been aware of that. I’m sure that His father—of the flesh: Joseph—was aware of that, but Jesus had to remind them, even as a 12-year-old doing the work of God, sitting down and talking with those elders. They were amazed of his scholarship as a young lad.

How do we describe that living sacrifice? Notice what Paul says next:

“...**Holy**...” (v 1).

God said in Lev. 11 when He was giving the law of unclean meat or food? *Be Holy, because I am*

Holy! That's a major part of our calling, because we must be Holy in order to enter into the Kingdom of God.

- we have some trials
- we have Satan
- we have the world around us, and Satan is trying to pull us into the world
- we have the sin that lies within, that we received from our mother Eve

We have to battle against those day-by-day!

God wants us to be Holy; He has called us and has died for us so that we can be Holy. He's made the pathway; Jesus said, 'I am the Way...'

What was He talking about? *The way He lived!*

"...present your bodies a living sacrifice, Holy..."—that's what Jesus did!

Back to the offerings of the Levitical system in Leviticus:

- What was the condition of the animals, whether the fowl of the air, a turtledove, a bullock or a ram or lamb?
- What condition was required? *It had to be without blemish!*
- Why? *Because it represented Jesus Christ!*

Of Him, Satan did not have one thing in Him! He was the perfect, unblemished sacrifice, and they were of the clean animal, as well; of the domestic animals. Obviously, not cats or dogs, but God specifically stated what animals.

Even if the people were to offer a bullock, sheep or turtledove, or even a grain offering, it all had to be perfect. Even with the grain offering, it had to be beaten fine. Why? *So that it was smooth, no lumps! It was perfect and ready to be offered to God!*

That even the grain offering represented the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ. What does it say about the burnt offering and also the grain offering, the peace offering? *They were a sweet smelling savor to God, acceptable to God!*

That's why Paul says, ***'Well pleasing to God, which is your spiritual service!'*** It's more than just accepting Jesus and you made it. Holiness!

The Bible has a lot to say about Holiness and purity. It's another mystery that we're talking about here. Paul goes on to explain what the living sacrifice is:

Verse 2: **"Do not conform yourselves to this world..."**

Look at the 'Christian' churches of this day, and make a comparison with the Scriptures. When you make that comparison:

- What do you find?
- Do you find that they are alike?

or

- Do you find that they are in contrast?

We know that we can begin with:

- the Sabbath Day
- the Passover
- the Holy Days

They are not known; there is no knowledge of the plan of God!

They are wandering around like in blindness claiming the name of Christ, but they haven't come to the Light. Jesus Christ is the Light and He came into the world and we saw the Light (John 1). He gave us the Light, and that was opening our eyes to the Word of God so we can understand the Scriptures.

Romans 12:2: "Do not conform yourselves to this world, but **be transformed...**"

See the contrast there? Look at the world and see it's perversions, this evil, wicked generation and compare it to ***the way*** that Christ has given to us: ***the perfect sacrifice, the perfect example!***

"...by the renewing of your mind in order that you may prove..." (v 2).

It's not just a simple matter of just accepting Jesus and saying a little prayer; you have to:

"...be transformed by the renewing of your mind in order that you may prove *what is well-pleasing and good, and the perfect will of God*" (v 2).

In other words, it's that sweet smelling savor going up to God when He looks down and sees us. It's well pleasing to God, just like that burnt offering was a sweet smelling savor in God's nostrils because the aroma was pleasing to God. The same is for us when we are not conformed to this world, but we are *transformed!* Notice that contrast. It's a 180° in the opposite direction from where this world is going.

Philip. 3—here we have an example of Paul's living sacrifice. Yes, God blesses us, we want to have a look at one of the real blessings of God as we continue. We will probably never be called to live the same kind of life that Paul did, but we're going face many difficulties:

- health
- employment
- needs and wants

- anxiety

Jesus says to be anxious for nothing!

If God can feed these little sparrows, are you not more worthy. So, don't give any anxious thought to what you're going to eat, what you're going to wear, where you're going to live. *Sufficient unto the day are the evils!* Our hope and faith is really in God the Father through Jesus Christ and His sprinkled blood, by which we are transformed into the children of God. Is God not interested in us as His children?

Right now in the time that we are living, our lives are precious to God the Father. He is working with us. *He Who has done a good work in you will continue to do that work until our death or the resurrection!*

- Do you believe that with all your heart?
- Are you prepared to die for that?
- Are you prepared to be a living sacrifice for that?

Philippians 3:1: "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in *the* Lord. Indeed, for me to write the same things to you *is* not troublesome, but for you *it is* safe."

Many of just can't remember a lot of the things that we've read, so it's important that they're repeated; even the very basics! If you have the foundation right then you're going to build with wisdom:

- the wisdom that comes from God
- the love that comes from God
- the character that is going to be built based on that foundation

Verse 3: "For we are the circumcision, who serve God in *the* spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and do not trust in *the* flesh."

That was against those who were practicing all the Judaistic people coming up to the various churches trying to bring the people into Judaism.

- Book: *Judaism: Revelation of Moses or Religion of Men* by Philip Neal {truthofGod.org}
- In-Depth Study: *Scripturalism vs Judaism*
- Church at Home series: *Judaism* {churchathome.org}

Verse 4: "Though I might also have *reason* to trust in *the* flesh. If any other thinks he has *cause* to trust in *the* flesh, I have much more: Circumcised on *the* eighth day; of *the* race of Israel, from *the* tribe of Benjamin... [by religion he was a Jew; Judaizer, but God pulled him out of that] ... a Hebrew of

Hebrews with respect to law, a Pharisee; with respect to zeal, persecuting the Church; with respect to righteousness that *is* in law, blameless" (vs 4-6).

Like Job who was blameless before God in the letter of the Law, in the righteousness of the Law. Yet, he had a problem!

Verse 7: "**Yet, the things that were gain to me, these things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ.**" *Think! Count the cost!*

- Did Paul count the cost?
- Did Jesus count the cost?
- Are we counting the cost? *That's question that we have to ask ourselves!*

Verse 8: "But then truly, I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, **and count them as dung...** [Why?] ...**that I may gain Christ**, and may be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which *is derived* from law..." (vs 8-9).

Here Paul was talking about the righteousness that the Pharisees practiced, which was devoid of the Law of God.

"...**but that righteousness, which is by the faith of Christ...** [by the power of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God] ...**the righteousness of God that is based on faith**" (v 9).

These next words/verses are so helpful and encouraging. What is it that we're to gain by giving up everything?

Verse 10: "**That I may know Him...** [this was paramount in Paul's mind] ...**and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings**, being conformed to His death; if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection of the dead" (vs 10-11).

Bothers and sisters in Christ, this is such a great passage. It's one that we ought to read every day to help us keep focus as we struggle:

- against the world
- against the sin that lies within
- against the wiles of the devil

Jesus said to His disciples that 'he (Satan) has demanded to have you!' think about Job in that sense.

Did not Satan demand to have Job? *God allowed Satan for a very good reason! God wanted Job to come to repentance!* Job did as we see in Job 42.

Verse 10: "That I may know Him, and the

power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection of the dead” (vs 10-11).

Is that what we want? *Absolutely!*

Verse 12: “Not as though I have already received, or have already been perfected; but I am striving, so that I may also lay hold on that for which I also was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not count myself as having attained...” (vs 12-13).

Paul was never over-confident; he said he had no confidence in the flesh; his confidence was in Jesus Christ. Paul strove to stay close to Him!

“...but *this* one thing *I do*—forgetting the things that are behind...” (v 13).

Can we do that? *Sometimes we have a great struggle in forgetting those things that are behind!* They keep coming back and taking up our time as a distraction from our seeking first the Kingdom of God as Jesus is recorded as saying:

Matthew 6:33: “But *as for* you, **seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness...**”

- Is righteousness the same as Holiness?
- Is it the same as purity?

Yes, they will come in the same basket!

Philippians 3:17: “Brethren, be imitators together of me, and bear in mind those who walk in this way, as you have us *for* an example. (For many walk *contrary*; I have often told you *of* them, and I tell you now *with* weeping, *they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ” (vs 17-18).

They once had been of the Body of Christ, but now they’re walking as enemies, our enemies, and may even attack us!

Verse 20: “But for us, the commonwealth of *God* exists in *the* heavens...”

This is why we’re living sacrifices. *This is our goal!* What is that goal worth to us?

“...from where also we are waiting for *the* Savior, *the* Lord Jesus Christ, **Who will transform our vile bodies, that they may be conformed to His glorious body...**” (vs 20-21).

What is the contrast? It’s comparison, but also a contrast. Transform and conform (Rom. 12)

Verse 21: “**Who will transform our vile bodies, that they may be conformed to His glorious body according to the inner working of His own power...**”

It said earlier, ‘He that has done a good

work in us will continue that work right to the end of our lives, whether in death or if we remain alive until Christ’s coming and the resurrection.

“...whereby *He is able* to subdue all things to Himself” (v 21)—*and that includes the sin that lies within us!*

By looking and trusting Him, He can take that sin that lies within and He can conquer it in us.

- living sacrifice
- counting the cost

You have been bought with a price! You are not your own!

- What did we do at baptism?
- Did we give our lives over fully to Christ?
- We made that commitment, didn’t we?
- Were we fully Christ’s at that time? *No!*

We were covered by the blood of Christ so we could grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ, so that we could put on that purity of Jesus Christ. We do not belong to ourselves, we belong to God the Father just as Jesus Christ did.

- What does that mean about our body, heart, thinking and feelings? *They belong to God!*
- He now possess us, but what has He done? *He’s given us ourselves back!*
- Why? *Because He wants us to:*
 - ✓ agree with Him
 - ✓ work with Him
 - ✓ become perfect, Holy and pure as He is pure

As Paul wrote to one of his helpers, ‘*To the pure all things are pure!* Does that mean sin is pure? *No! Of course not!* But to the pure, *all things that are pure*, are pure.

What do you have as an opposition to that? *To those who are impure, perverted and perverse*, everything that is pure to them is perverse! *The Law of God is perverse to them!*

Dancing through the streets naked, celebrating their shame, naked in front of everyone. How far we have fallen as human beings.

But God has reached out and touched you and me and He’s drawing us closer and closer day-by-day by the blood of Christ covers us. The propitiation of our sins is there daily. Jesus Christ is our advocate so that when we go before God’s Throne and say, ‘Father, forgive us our trespasses...’ and we name those that we’re aware of. We ask God to forgive even for those that we are unaware of. God continually keeps us in that purified situation where we are, as Paul says, ‘We are no longer under

any condemnation.' Satan would like you and me to feel condemned. 'Well, look at what you did, you wretched puny human being.' Yes, those are his tactics.

Therefore come out from them and be separate. Why? *Because:*

'You belong to Me,' says the Lord, 'and touch not the unclean thing and I will receive you! I shall be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters,' says the Lord Almighty!'

God shows that because we are His sons and daughters, He's going to correct us. If we don't receive correction from God when we go astray... it's good that we can make the changes so that God doesn't have to correct us. But He corrects us because He loves us and He doesn't want us to miss out on the goal that He's called us for.

Heb. 1 talks about Jesus Christ and what God is doing through Him!

Heb. 2 goes over to what God's plan is for mankind!

Hebrews 1:1: "God Who spoke to the fathers at different times in the past and in many ways by the Prophets..." *In fact, what Adam and Eve:*

- Did He not speak to them personally and instruct them?
- Did He not give them all the information that they needed before He allowed Satan to approach them? *Yes, He did!*
- How much experience did Adam and Eve have? *Not a lot!*

They had the instruction and God wanted them to exercise faith and follow Him. We know the rest of that story.

Did God speak personally to Cain? *Read Gen. 4!* God spoke personally, directly as it says:

Hebrews 1:1: "God Who spoke to the fathers at different times in the past and in many ways by the Prophets has spoken to us in these last days by *His Son*, Whom He has appointed heir of all things, by Whom also He made the ages; Who, being *the brightness of His glory and the exact image of His person*... [Christ is identical, exactly the same as God the Father] ...and upholding all things by the word of His own power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at *the right hand of the Majesty on high*" (vs 2-3). ***And we thank God that that is where He is as our Advocate!***

Verse 4: "Having been made so much greater than *any* of the angels..." think here of Satan

who was an angel.

- Satan hates this; detests it
- he is constantly fighting against us
- he can no longer tempt Christ
- he can no longer try to get to Christ or the saints that are dead

But O boy, he is coming after us!

"...inasmuch as He has inherited a name exceedingly superior to them" (v 4). *Even those wonderful angelic beings in heaven!*

Verse 5: "For to which of the angels did He... [God the Father] ...ever say, '**You are My Son; this day I have begotten You**'? And again, '**I will be a Father to Him, and He will be a Son to Me**'? And again, when He brought the Firstborn into the world, He said, '**Let all the angels of God worship Him.**' Now, on the one hand, of the angels He says, '**Who makes His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire.**' But on the other hand, of the Son *He says*, '**Your Throne, O God, is into the ages of eternity; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your Kingdom**'" (vs 5-8).

As a human being, this is talking about Jesus:

Verse 9: "**You loved righteousness and hated lawlessness**; because of this, God, *even* Your God, has anointed You with *the* oil of gladness above Your companions.' And, 'You, Lord, in the beginning did lay the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are *the* works of Your hands'" (vs 9-10).

Let's see what Paul had to write about mankind:

Hebrews 2:5: "For *it is* not to *the* angels that He has placed in subjection the world that is to come, of which we are speaking. But in a certain place... [reference to a statement of King David] ...one fully testified, saying, 'What is man, that You are mindful of him, or *the* son of man, that You visit him? You did make him... [man, not Jesus] ...a little lower than *the* angels; You did crown him with glory and honor, and You [Jesus Christ] did set him over the works of Your hands'" (vs 5-7).

- Who is the god of this world?
- Who is the ruler of this world (John 6)?
- Why did God set man and bless him while Satan is still the ruler of the world?

Read the book: *God's Plan for Mankind Revealed by His Sabbath and Holy Days* {truthofGod.org}

Verse 8: "'You did put **all things** in subjection under his feet.'..." ***All things means the entire creation!***

God's plan for us is so grand that it's beyond anything that we can conceive in our own mind. Think of God's power! He set His glory above the heavens. So, before the heaven and the Earth existed, there was God on His Throne in the spiritual heaven, His realm! As far as we know there was nothing. Everything he created by His own hand was out in front of Him.

"...For in subjecting all things to him, He left nothing *that was* not subjected to him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him" (v 8).

We read earlier that God did not give this promise to the angels. What did that do to Lucifer, the one who became Satan? He got all proud, puffed up and vain and said:

Look at me! I'm as good as God. In fact I'm much better than God. Look what He did to me! Yet, look how beautiful I am.

Forgetting the fact that everything he had came from God!

Yet, God placed man on this earth and gave him all things. But what Paul goes on to say here:

"...For in subjecting all things to him, He left nothing *that was* not subjected to him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him" (v 8). *We know the reason for that!*

Verse 9: "But we see Jesus, Who *was* made a little lower than *the* angels, crowned with glory and honor on account of suffering the death, in order that by *the* grace of God He Himself might taste death for everyone; because it was fitting for Him, for Whom all things *were created*, and by Whom all things *exist*, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Author of their salvation perfect through sufferings" (vs 9-10).

We are perfected through suffering! That's why we're counting the cost. That's why we are prepared to be living sacrifices before God our Father in heaven.

In closing I would like to recommend that you read through Rom. 8 beginning in v 19 where it shows that God subjected the whole world to vanity—which is the mind and the attitude of Satan^[transcriber's correction]—not willingly but in hope.

What was that hope? *The hope that we as the sons and daughters of God would humble ourselves*, and would realize that we have been purchased with the blood of Jesus Christ. That we no longer belong to ourselves, and yet, we have to keep that in mind:

- every thought
- every action

- every deed
- every emotion

needs to be brought into the captivity of Jesus Christ.

- that's how we become pure
- that's how we become Holy

By walking in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. Then to Him and the Father may be all glory and power into the ages of eternity, and may all Sovereignty be His!

Thank You, Father, for Your Word and for the things that we learn from it!

Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 17:17
- 2) 2 Thessalonians 3:2
- 3) Philippians 3:19
- 4) Luke 14:25-26
- 5) Romans 12:1
- 6) 2 Timothy 3:16
- 7) John 14:30
- 8) Romans 12:1-2
- 9) Philippians 3:1, 3-13
- 10) Matthew 6:33
- 11) Philippians 3:17-18, 20-21
- 12) Hebrews 1:1-10
- 13) Hebrews 2:5-10

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 2 Thessalonians 3:2
- Leviticus 1-7; 11
- John 1
- Job 42
- Genesis 4
- John 6
- Romans 8

Also referenced: (found at truthofGod.org)

Books:

- *Judaism: Revelation of Moses or Religion of Men* by Philip Neal
- *God's Plan for Mankind Revealed by His Sabbath and Holy Days* by Fred R. Coulter

In-Depth Study: *Scripturalism vs Judaism*

Church at Home series: *Judaism*
{churchathome.org}

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