

The stopping of the representative sacrifices of animals after the destruction of the temple in 70AD was only a temporary action which says more on the state of the nation of Israel than any comment on the use of animals to point to the One Great Sacrifice of all time in the crucifixion of Christ.

The institution of animal sacrifices goes right back to the garden of Eden when God provided skins of animals to cover the nakedness of the sinners, Adam and Eve after they transgressed by eating of the tree in the midst of the garden which was strictly forbidden. It is not a cruel and savage practise but was introduced by the Deity Himself as a teaching mechanism. The ending of a life, albeit an animal, by the shedding of blood should remind everyone that sin is a nasty business and the ramifications of indulging in it are never clean but always messy. Death was introduced into the garden of Eden by man's transgression and sacrifice was introduced by God as an act of mercy to counterbalance that. The sinner did not die straightaway but instead a representative sacrifice was made to reinforce the severity of what was at stake.

After the crucifixion of Jesus, animal sacrifices did not immediately stop. In Acts 21v24 the Apostle Paul purified himself at the temple in order to dismiss the false accusations that he taught the people to forsake Moses. Purification required the offering of an animal sacrifice. See Numbers 6v13-16, where burnt, sin and peace offerings were all made at the conclusion of a vow in accordance with divine decree. Such an action would have reminded him that the Lord Jesus had laid down his life and these offerings had always pointed to that unique sacrifice.

In the letter to the Hebrews, after Jesus had ascended to heaven, it was said that *"If he were on earth, he should not be a priest seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law who serve after the example and shadow of heavenly things"*

8v4,5. This fact is not widely taught in the popular notion that the very act of Jesus' sacrifice cancelled the point of any subsequent animal sacrifices, but the Bible is clear.

Jesus also explicitly taught that upon his return, he intended to use animal sacrifice again. Luke 22v15,16 it says of him that *"With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer, for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof until it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God"*. The fulfilment of the Passover did not stop its use, but it would be reinstituted after a long absence, as Jesus taught. No one can correctly keep the Passover without the use of animal sacrifices, as the Lamb or goat needs to be slain before it can be eaten, and where it was to be killed was proscribed under the Law, as being in the place which God shall choose, Jerusalem. This will not change.

Anything the Jews do in the absence of their temple is not keeping the Passover, but a paltry imitation of God's requirement. A dry shank bone is used today to represent the lamb, but it is not a true representation, nor was it specified by God, but was invented later, to counter their inability to keep that feast by divine imposition, God stopped it!

Once these points are conceded, and there is usually resistance to this clear teaching, then the numerous references to the use of animal sacrifices in the future can be seen widely distributed in prophetic scripture. The concept that all animal sacrifices in the past pointed forward to Jesus, is complemented by the simple idea that all subsequent animal sacrifices point backwards to what he accomplished through his sacrifice.

There is a misunderstanding that the animal sacrifices were made to ensure sins were forgiven. Under the Law of Moses there was no sacrifice for wilful sin. The sin offering was to atone for sins of ignorance, not wilful sins. Leviticus 4 v1-3. There has been only one sacrifice that atones for wilful sins and that is the sacrifice of Christ. Hebrews 10v26 should be understood in this way, and not as a comment that animal sacrifices have stopped.

There has not been, nor will there be, other sacrifices for this vital aspect.

In the book of Ezekiel, there are many examples of the restoration of animal sacrifices. These are listed below and do not include the use of the altar itself which is a separate subject, but which implies offerings and sacrifices. It is inescapable that the future temple is linked with the restoration of sacrifices. Anyone who reads the sections must surely agree!

40v38 “the post of the gates where they washed the burnt offering”

40v41 “eight tables whereupon they slew their sacrifices”

40v42 “wherewith they slew the burnt offering and the sacrifice”

40v43 “and upon the tables were the flesh of the offering”

42v13 “there shall thy lay the most holy things, and the meat offering, and the sin offering, and the trespass offering”

43v18 “to offer burnt offerings and to sprinkle blood thereon”

43v19 “a young bullock for a sin offering”

43v20 “and thou shalt take of the blood thereof”

43v21 “the bullock also of the sin offering”

43v22 “a kid of the goats without blemish for a sin offering”

43v23 “Thou shalt offer a young bullock without blemish and a ram of the flock without blemish, and thou shalt offer them before the LORD”

43v25 “Seven days thou shalt prepare every day a goat for a sin offering: they shall also prepare a young bullock and a ram of the flock, without blemish”.

43v26 “the priests shall make your burnt offerings upon the altar and your peace offerings”

44v11 “They shall slay the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people”

44v15 “to offer unto me the fat and the blood”

44v27 “he shall offer his sin offering”

44v29 “They shall eat the meat offering and the sin offering and the trespass offering”

45v17 “And it shall be the prince’s part to give burnt offerings and meat offerings and drink offerings.....he shall prepare the sin offering and the meat offering and the burnt offering and the peace offerings”

45v18 “thou shalt take a young bullock without blemish”

45v19 “the blood of the sin offering”

45v21 “ye shall have the passover”

45v22,23 “a bullock for a sin offering.....“a burnt offering to the LORD seven bullocks and seven rams without blemish...and a kid of the goats daily for a sin offering”.

45v24,25 “a bullock...a ram....the sin offering according to the burnt offering”

46v2 “the prince shall enter....and the priests shall prepare his burnt offering and his peace offerings”

46v4 “the burnt offering that the prince shall offer.....six lambs without blemish and a ram without blemish”

46v6 “a young bullock without blemish and six lambs and a ram they shall be without blemish”

46v12 “a voluntary burnt offering or peace offerings voluntary unto the LORD.....his burnt offering and his peace offerings

46v13 “a burnt offering....a lamb of the first year without blemish”

46v15 “a lambfor a continual burnt offering”

46v20 “shall boil the trespass offering and the sin offering”

This emphasis on animal sacrifice must be for a reason. It is surely a reminder that the prince, which represents Christ, is himself subject to the Almighty, which is his God and his Father. He benefited from his own sacrifice – *first for himself then for the people*. He has been immortalised but will participate as an example of correct worship. It should also be noticed that those offerings said to be **his** are burnt and peace, **never** trespass or sin offerings!

Is it a coincidence that the Prince is said to partake of the Passover, a memorial of his own work and sacrifice, as he is the Passover Lamb? 1 Corinthians 5v7, No! It is clear that Jesus knowing of this passage could speak about something to the Apostles which they should have already known. As was often the case, they failed to read the scriptures properly but merely read them with their own prejudices and biases firmly in place. We can all be like that! The Passover requires a lamb (or goat) being slain.

Sin offerings are mentioned. These are not offerings for wilful sins but offerings for sins of ignorance and offering for sin in our flesh, our human nature. They purge and cleanse. The sin offerings and trespass offerings are offered **for** mortal inhabitants but can be offered **by** immortal priests.

Trespass offerings were to be offered to respect that mortal men and women can do things which seriously effect their fellows and for which recognition and responsibility is necessary. This public demonstration of guilt is thereby acknowledged to all present. This did not stop with the sacrifice of Christ two thousand years ago.

Peace offerings show the importance of fellowship with God which is covenanted by blood as a reminder that death is necessary, the death of the old man, which Jesus hung on the cross at calvary. It should not be dismissed or discounted as a minor issue. The prince himself partakes of these sacrifices.

Burnt offerings show a dedication to God of the New Man, begotten in Christ Jesus, this is also associated with the shedding of blood in a similar way to the other offerings. Also, the aspect of being “without blemish” grounds everything in the work of Jesus Christ the perfect sinless sacrifice to which all other true sacrifices point. The prince offers these sacrifices as he reminds everyone that he is still totally dedicated to serve his God and our God.

A Voice from the Altar

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