

A sacrifice, sometimes called an “offering,” is an act of giving something valuable to God. Biblically, sacrifices are mainly divided into atoning sacrifices—those that make atonement for sin—and non-atoning offerings, which express devotion, thanksgiving, or commitment.

Old Testament Sacrifices

In the Old Testament (Old Covenant), atoning sacrifices involved animals like sheep, goats, and bulls. These sacrifices were commanded by God as a temporary means to deal with sin (Leviticus 1–7). The process involved bringing an animal before the Lord at the tabernacle, where a priest would slaughter the animal, collect its blood, and sprinkle it on the altar. This blood symbolized life and was necessary for atonement because “without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness” (Hebrews 9:22).

These animal sacrifices served as a foreshadowing of the perfect, final sacrifice to come. They pointed forward to Jesus Christ, the true Lamb of God, who would take away the sins of the world (John 1:29).

There were also other offerings—such as grain, money, or

firstfruits—which were acts of worship but did not involve bloodshed and were therefore not sacrifices in the strict sense.

Modern Misunderstanding

Today, many Christians say they are offering “sacrifices” when giving money or goods to the church. While these offerings are valuable and pleasing to God (Philippians 4:18), technically, they are not sacrifices as defined in the Bible, because they do not involve atonement through blood.

Are Animal Sacrifices Still Required?

No. Under the New Covenant, which was established by Jesus Christ, the need for animal sacrifices has ended. Hebrews 10:1-10 clearly teaches that Jesus’ sacrifice was once and for all:

Hebrews 10:3-10

“But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins. It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said: ‘Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me;

with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased. Then I said, 'Here I am—it is written about me in the scroll—I have come to do your will, my God.'

First he said, 'Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them'—though they were offered in accordance with the law. Then he said, 'Here I am, I have come to do your will.' He sets aside the first to establish the second.

And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

This passage shows that the old system of sacrifices was never sufficient to remove sin completely—it was a shadow pointing to Jesus' perfect sacrifice. Jesus, as the sinless Lamb, offered Himself once and for all, making animal sacrifices unnecessary.

Is Offering Animal Sacrifices Today Wrong?

Yes. Christians should not practice animal sacrifice, as this denies the once-for-all atonement made by Jesus. Unfortunately, some who identify as Christians still engage in such rituals without realizing that this is not God's will and can be spiritually harmful (Galatians 5:1).

May we grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18), fully trusting in His perfect sacrifice.

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