

2010

What Does The Bible Say About Sacrifice

In our common use of the term, sacrifice is a term of substitution. We think of one thing in order to obtain something of greater value. Parents sacrifice a fancy new car to save money for a child's education. A base ball player executes a "sacrifice bunt" to give a team mate an opportunity to score a home run. In the Old Testament a sacrifice was an act of worship by which the blood of an animal was shed to obtain forgiveness from sin. This is of far greater value.

All the sacrifices of the Old Testament anticipated God's ultimate sacrifice of Jesus on the cross for the sins of the world. So why did God require sacrifices in the Old Testament and why were they so bloody ? We read in [Leviticus 1:1-13](#) "*Lay your hand on its head so the Lord will accept it as your substitute, thus making atonement for you*"

We also read in [Exodus 24:6-8](#) -

⁶And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basons; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar.

⁷And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient.

⁸And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words.

" Then Moses sprinkled the blood from the basins over the people" Also in [Leviticus 17:11](#) - *For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.* " It is the blood, representing life that brings you atonement" The sacrificial system reminded Israel of the seriousness of sin before there holy God. The sacrifice symbolized the person's desire to be forgiven for sin and thus be restored to God and receive new life. A life had to be given up (The Animal's) so that a life could be spared (the person's) The blood of the sacrifice had to be poured out in substitute for the another.

Why does God say "I desire mercy and not sacrifice" We read in [Isaiah 1:11-13](#) "

- *¹¹To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats.*

2010

¹²When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts?

¹³Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting.

I am sick of your sacrifice [they] are all sinful and false". In [Amos 5:21-27](#) -

²¹I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies.

²²Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts.

²³Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols.

²⁴But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.

²⁵Have ye offered unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel?

²⁶But ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun your images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves.

²⁷Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus, saith the LORD, whose name is The God of hosts.

I hate the hypocrisy of your religious festivals and solemn assemblies, instead I want to see a mighty flood of justice." The sacrifice was an important part of worship for the Israelites. But when their worship became mere ritual without sincerity, it was worthless in God's eyes, He desires sincerity from us just as much.

What does it mean to say, "Jesus is the Lamb Of God"? We read in [John 1:29](#) - ***The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*** "Look there is The Lamb Of God" who takes away the sins of the world. Just as a lambs blood brought about forgiveness in the Old testament, so the blood of Jesus, through his death on the cross, takes away the sins of the world.

2010

In [Hebrews 9:11-15](#) -

¹¹But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;

¹²Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

¹³For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh:

¹⁴How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

¹⁵And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

we read "He took his own blood, and with it secured our the blood of lambs and bulls. In [1 Peter 1:18-19](#) -

¹⁸Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;

¹⁹But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

we read "He paid for you with the precious life blood of Christ the sinless, spotless Lamb of God. The death of Christ, confirmed by his shed blood was the precious price paid for our salvation.

What kinds of sacrifices are we called to make? In Geneses 13:9 we read "Take your choice of any section of the land you want". Like Abram, sometimes we need to give up something we want in order to keep peace in the family. We read in [Ruth 1:16](#) - *And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God:* "I will go wherever you go and live wherever you live". Ruth was willing to leave her home land to look after Naomi. Such a sacrifice shows her understanding of what is really important.

In [Matthew 19:29](#), - *And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.* "And everyone who has given up

2010

houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or property, for my sake, will receive a hundred times as much in return and will have eternal life". Following Jesus involves personal sacrifice.

What kind of sacrifices are dangerous for us to make? In [1 Samuel 3:13](#) - *For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.* we read "Because his sons are blaspheming God and he has'nt disciplined them". We also read in [2 Samuel 11:15](#) - *And he wrote in the letter, saying, Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die.* "Station Uriah on the front lines where the battle is the fiercest. Then pull back so he will be killed! Eli sacrificed his family life for his career, David sacrificed the life of another man to hide his lustful deceit. Sacrificing good for evil fulfills our selfish desires and leads to ruin.

The aspect of sacrifice is emphasized in [Philippians 2:6-8](#) -

⁶*Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:*

⁷*But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:*

⁸*And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*

by the words, "He humbled himself, by becoming obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross!" Surrendering to the Father's will, He emptied Himself, became man and was found in the form of a servant whereby the Lord Jesus willingly gave Himself sacrificially that God's will might be fulfilled in and through His life and death. While this involves the mystery of His incarnation and stands far beyond our comprehension, several levels of sacrifice are evident in the Savior's surrender that set the perfect example for us.

His sacrifices actually began when He emptied himself of His privileges and the prerogatives that were His as the second person of the Trinity. In becoming man, He veiled and laid aside the voluntary use and glory of His many attributes as God the Son. Then, in this life on earth, He did without wealth, position, status, and even acceptance in that He was rejected by His own ([John 1:11](#) - *He came unto his own, and his own received him not.*). Unlike the foxes that have their dens and the birds their nests, the Son of Man had no place to lay His head ([Matt. 8:20](#) - *And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.*). Ultimately, of course, He made the greatest sacrifice of all in that He who knew no sin became sin for us

2010

by dying the ugly and horrible death of the cross—a sentence reserved for the worst of criminals.

The bottom line is this: Christ voluntarily emptied Himself of anything and everything that stood in the way of the glory and gain of His Father through Him.

What about us? Although rights, privileges, pleasures, possessions, expectations, and well-formed plans may not be wrong in and of themselves, are we willing to hold them loosely and even let them go—to sacrifice them—if emptying ourselves of them will enable us to fulfill God’s agenda for our lives?...

Surrendering to God’s agenda may mean sacrificing our children—or our goods, reputation, comfort, convenience, and a whole list of other things we hold so tightly in our hands as well as those things we hope and plan for.

By sacrificing our children, this is referring to the willingness of parents to give up their children in the sense of seeing them go into some form of full-time service like foreign missions or even some other type of career ministry, something many parents would not consider “solid, stable, and a real job.”

As Jesus made so indelibly clear in the metaphors of [Matthew 6:19-24](#), -

¹⁹Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

²⁰But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

²¹For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

²²The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

²³But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

²⁴No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

a man’s heart (his aspiration, desires, pursuits) depends on his treasure, and what he treasures depends on his perspective or insight to life according to biblical and eternal values versus worldly and temporal values.

2010

Thus, holding tightly to God's kingdom values determine priorities which in turn will determine one's objectives and pursuits—what one is willing to surrender to and sacrifice for. Therefore, one who holds tightly to God's kingdom values (because of time, testimony, ability, or influence) may often have to say no to many things, even many good things, because they will get in the way of those goals that are based on biblical values and priorities. This is the issue of pursuing what is excellent or best over against what is simply good (see *Phil. 1:9 - And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment;*).

One of the obvious qualities of spiritual maturity and leadership so completely possessed by our Lord was His willingness to make sacrifices in accordance with His values, priorities, and objectives as One who was totally surrendered to the will and plan of the Father. This always included surrendering to the Father's will first, and then the blessing and well-being of others, but neither of these can exist without sacrifices, without counting the costs.

Self-sacrifice means putting the Lord first above self and even family (see *Matt. 10:37 - He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. ; 19:29 - And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.*). Without this, no one is free to follow Him and properly influence others for Christ. Sacrifice means "taking up one's cross" regardless of the cost (*Matt. 10:38 - And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. ; 16:24 - Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. ; Luke 9:23 - And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.*). Taking up one's cross, according to the culture of the day, was an act of submission, a willingness to pay the price and do whatever God asks. Historically and culturally, the analogy of "taking up one's cross" meant to cease rebelling against the King's rule and submit to His rule over one's life.⁵⁴ In practical terms for the Christian, it means dying to one's own desires and will in total submission to God to be, go, and do whatever He calls one to do.

1 Corinthians 10:23-24 -

²³*All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.*

²⁴*Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth.*

2010

“Everything is lawful,” but not everything is beneficial. “Everything is lawful,” but not everything builds others up. 24 Do not seek your own good, but the good of the other person.

For a moment, think about the statement, “Others may, but spiritually mature people who want to have an impact for Christ often cannot afford to.” Though something may not in itself be wrong, it becomes wrong for a believer if it gets in the way of his or her ability to serve and accomplish the will of God. It was not wrong for Paul to receive funds from those to whom he carried the gospel, but in order to show that his motives were pure, he willingly sacrificed that right lest receiving compensation for his work might hinder the impact of his testimony.

Principle: Paying the price through dying to self or self-sacrifice means the power or liberty to make right choices in submission as a servant to God and others.

The issue is, am I willing to deny myself or pay the price so that I am free to follow the Lord and become the person God has saved me and called me to be? Whether one is willing to accept it or not, there is another kind of price tag for those who, for whatever reason, are unwilling to give of themselves for others. No one ever said it better than C. S. Lewis:

To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything, and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly be broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one, not even to an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements; lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket—safe, dark, motionless, airless—it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable.... The only place outside Heaven where you can be perfectly safe from all the dangers of love...is the grave.