

## God Delights In Burnt Offerings, Sacrifices, and Holy Days

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God commands, approves of, and delights in burnt offerings, sacrifices, and holy days  
(Ex. 29:18, 36; Lev. 1:9; 23:27).

God disapproves of and has no pleasure in burnt offerings, sacrifices, and holy days  
(Ps. 50:13; Isa. 1:11-13; Jer. 6:20; 7:22).

The first scripture used to claim that God contradicts Himself is Psalms 50:13. In this section of the Bible, God is not criticizing the sacrifices His people are giving. Instead, He is pointing out that these activities are for their ultimate good because they are not necessary for His sustenance,

If I (Almighty God) were hungry, I would not tell you; for the world is Mine, and all its fullness. Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats? (Ps. 50:12-13; Ed. note in parenthesis; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted).

Although the Levitical priests were able to eat portions of the animals that were sacrificed (cf. Lev. 7:32-33; Nu. 18:18), this was not the real benefit or purpose behind God commanding these offerings,

What purpose then does the law (of animal sacrifice) serve? It was added (on a national basis at Mt. Sinai; cf. Lev. 7:37-38) because of transgressions (as a temporary measure), till the Seed (Jesus Christ; cf. Gal. 3:16) should come to whom the promise (of rulership; Heb. 1:1-13) was made; and it was appointed through angels (as witnesses) by the hand of a mediator (the Angel of the Lord; see study: God's Anger Is Fierce and Endures Long) (Gal. 3:19; Ed. notes in parentheses).

While the nation of Israel was wandering in the wilderness, they could not fully enact the sacrificial system which included circumcision. Instead, it came into effect after they entered the Promised Land,

For the children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till all the people who were men of war (age 20 years; cf. Nu. 1:3, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28, 30, 32, 34, 36, 38, 40, 42, 45), who came out of Egypt, were consumed, because they did not obey the voice of the Lord – to whom the Lord swore that He would not show them the land which the Lord had sworn to their fathers that He would give us, a land flowing with milk and honey. <sup>7</sup>**So Joshua circumcised their sons whom He raised up in their place; for they were uncircumcised, because they had not been circumcised on the way** (Jos. 5:6-7; emphasis added).

For I (God) did not speak to your fathers, or command them in the day (period following Passover) that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices (Jer. 7:22; Ed. notes in parentheses).

As Almighty God knows the end of all things before they occur, He knew that ancient Israel would refuse to obey His commands. Therefore the sacrificial system was added, on a national basis, to continually remind them that sin is a very serious matter. If their sins were not forgiven, they could not maintain a relationship with God. This system had numerous tasks administered by the Levitical priesthood, including circumcision, and ended after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Christ's sacrifice fulfilled every aspect that the animal sacrificial system pictured (cf. Mt. 5:17; Rom. 10:4),

Therefore the law (of animal sacrifice) was our tutor (guardian responsible for the care and discipline of children) to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith (Gal. 3:24; Ed. notes in parentheses).

The sacrifice of someone who is sinless, instead of the actually guilty party who should die for the sins they have committed, is central to what the "tutor" was teaching during the Levitical period. For the most part, ancient Israel did not internalize this important truth.

Most of modern Christianity either dismisses, or is unaware of, what the animal sacrificial system pictured. Thus, they fail to understand the seriousness of sin and the extent to which Almighty God "sacrificed" in order to reconcile sinners. The phrase "to bring us to Christ" means to bring sinners to the point where they realize how serious their sins are. And it is only through the death of an innocent, Jesus Christ, that the death penalty hanging over their heads can be removed,

For thus God (Almighty) loved the world, so that He gave the son, the only-born, that all who trust in him (that his death provides the means of reconciliation) will not be destroyed but have age-abiding life (Jn. 3:16; RNT; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Anyone who truly understands the seriousness of sin will not want to continue living in it,

What shall we say then? Shall we (who have repented of living a sinful life) continue in sin that grace (unmerited pardon) may abound (so we can continue to sin)? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin (after repentance and baptism) live any longer in it? (Rom. 6:1-2; Ed. notes in parentheses).

By understanding these important truths, it should be obvious that God does not disapprove of the temporary system of animal sacrifice that He created to remind sinners of their life-threatening condition. Therefore it is important to examine what aspect of the sacrificial system is being addressed in the remaining scriptures that are used by some to discredit God,

To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me? says the Lord. I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed cattle. I do not delight in the blood of bulls or of lambs or goats (Isa. 1:11).

As previously mentioned, the people of Israel did not have a desire to obey God. Instead, they only went "through the motions" associated with animal sacrifices in a futile attempt to fulfill God's requirement, while desiring to live like the sinful pagan nations around them. Through animal sacrifices, He wanted them to learn the serious

consequences that come from breaking His law and commandments. The death of an innocent animal symbolized a substitute dying instead of the guilty human-being. This was also a lesson for those who comprise the fallen host of heaven because they are not ignorant of the significance (Eph.6:12; Jas. 2:19). When Jesus Christ came to earth as a human-being, his death as an innocent became the means through which every repentant individual could be forgiven their sins and have an opportunity to inherit everlasting life. This promise of everlasting life still requires obedience to God and His commandments, regardless of many teachings that are contrary to this truth, including those of modern Christianity (Mal. 3:6; cf. Mt. 7:21-23; 19:17). Therefore, when God said in Isaiah 1:11 that He did not delight in “the blood of bulls,” He was addressing the fact that the Israelites did not have a truly repentant attitude for the sins they committed, combined with a deep desire to obey Him. Therefore the primary lesson behind the sacrifice of animals was lost, making it a purposeless exercise. This is made clear in the following scriptures,

When you come to appear before Me, who has required this from your hand, to trample My courts? (cf. Mt. 21:12-13). Bring no more futile sacrifices; incense (which symbolized the prayers of God’s people; cf. Rev. 5:8; Isa. 1:15) is an abomination to Me. The New Moons, the Sabbaths, and the calling of assemblies – **I cannot endure iniquity and (with) the sacred meeting** (Isa. 1:12-13; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

The scripture above shows that the people had no desire to learn about the seriousness of sin as taught through the tutor, which was the animal sacrificial system,

**Your** New Moons and **your** appointed feasts My soul hates (i.e. the manner in which **they** kept these festivals); they are a trouble to me, I am weary of bearing them (putting up with Israel’s attitude of appearing pious with no intention to repent of sin and obey God) (Isa. 1:14; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

God summarized the real purpose behind the sacrifice of animals and it was to teach Israel that their sins would prevent them from being clean in a spiritual sense. They needed to have a means through which their sins could be removed once and for all and, in the ultimate sense, that could only occur through the sacrifice of the Son of God, Jesus Christ (cf. Eph. 1:7; Heb. 9:11-14),

Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; put away the evil (sin) of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, reprove the oppressor, defend the fatherless, plead for the widow (Isa. 1:16-17; Ed. note in parenthesis).

The final two scriptures used to accuse God of contradicting Himself are in the book of Jeremiah,

For what purpose to Me comes frankincense from Sheba, and sweet cane from a far country? Your burnt offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices sweet to Me (Jer. 6:20).

Because this scripture is taken in isolation and not connected to a previous verse that explains why God said what He did, it could be deceitful and misleading. As was the case in Isaiah’s proclamations, so it was during Jeremiah’s because the people still had not repented of their sinful and rebellious attitude toward God’s commands. Therefore,

the sacrificing of an animal for the sins of an individual had no meaning because they intended to continue disobeying what God said,

Hear O earth! Behold, I will certainly bring calamity on this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, because **they have not heeded My words, nor My law, but rejected it** (Jer. 6:19; emphasis added).

The sacrifice of an animal, to symbolically cover the sin of an individual, has no meaning if that person has no intention of ceasing from their sinful conduct. Although the animal sacrificial system was added as a national tutor, it was not something that God really wanted. Instead, He wanted, and still wants today, repentance and obedience to His word (cf. Psa. 51:17; Isa. 1:18; Mt. 4:4; Ac. 2:38),

For I did not speak to your fathers, or command them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices (prior to reaching Mt. Sinai) (Jer. 7:22; Ed. note in parenthesis).

**But this is what I commanded them, saying, 'Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people. And walk in all the ways that I have commanded you that it may be well with you'** (Jer. 7:23; emphasis added).

Had ancient Israel obeyed their God and leader, the animal sacrificial system may not have been necessary. However, they started complaining and rebelling shortly after departing from Egypt,

Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but walked in the counsels and the imaginations of their evil heart, and went backward and not forward (Jer. 7:24).

Ancient Israel, as a whole, did not appreciate the seriousness of their sinful conduct, and because they had no intention of learning to obey willingly from the tutor God gave them, He took no pleasure in their ingenuous conduct when they performed burnt offerings and sacrifices. This is the only reason He stated that these ceremonies were a burden (cf. Isa. 1:14). As the apostle Paul stated, the fault was not with the animal sacrificial system, or the law, but with the stubborn and rebellious attitude of the people,

**Because finding fault with them**, He says: 'Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah (Heb. 8:8; emphasis added).

This new Covenant is progressive in the sense that not everyone is included yet. This truth is explained, in an outline form, to those who observe God's Holy Days each year as opposed to the false holidays of Satan's system, which teach nothing about God's plan of salvation (see studies: God's Holy Days). The New Covenant is based on the same conditions, found in the First Covenant, related to obeying God's commands, but with better promises including everlasting life for those who choose to willingly obey every word of God (Heb. 8:6; Mt. 4:4).

This document is the collaborative work of individuals who believe God's truth should be given freely (Mt. 10:8; 1Cor. 2:12; 2Cor.11:7; Rom. 10:14-21) and the message of the one true God should be made available to all nations (Mt. 24:14) as a prerequisite to the return of Jesus Christ as King of kings (Mt. 17:10; 19:17; Mk. 9:11; Lk. 1:17; Rev. 19:11-16).

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