

God Accepts Human Sacrifice

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God accepts human sacrifices (2Sam. 21:8-9, 14; Gen. 22:2; Jgs. 11:30-32, 34, 38-39).

God forbids human sacrifices (Dt. 12:30-31).

Human sacrifice is a hallmark of Satan's system of worship and to accuse Almighty God of encouraging this perverse practice is tantamount to blasphemy. Because some people are quite comfortable espousing this lie, it will be exposed in this study and refuted for its ignorance,

The first scripture that is misused to accuse God of this evil, and of contradicting His word, is 2Samuel 21:8-9. The context is dealing with the sin of King Saul who took it upon himself to break an oath that Joshua had made (Jos. 9:15-19). This oath pertained to a covenant between the Israelites and Gibeonites. Joshua neglected to seek counsel from God before making this treaty with the Gibeonites, but once this agreement was made it could not to be broken. It is for this reason that Jesus Christ cautioned about making a vow or swearing any oath in God's name,

Again, you have heard that it was said to the ancients (of long ago), **'You shall not swear falsely, but you shall give to the Lord your oath.'**³⁴ "And I say to you make no oath at all, neither by heaven, because it is the throne of God,³⁵ "nor by the earth, because it is the footstool of His feet, and not toward Jerusalem, for it is **'the city of the great King.'**³⁶ "Nor by your head shall you make an oath, because you are not able to make one hair white or black.³⁷ "But let your word be 'Yes, yes' or 'No, no'; and anything more than this is of evil (Mt. 5:33-37; RNT; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No,' lest you fall into judgment (hypocrisy) (Jas. 5:12; Ed. note in parenthesis; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted).

Because no human being can foresee what is going to happen in the future, making a vow or oath can create serious problems for everyone involved. This will become apparent from some of the examples later in this study.

Going back to the example of 2Samuel 21:8-9, King Saul was aware of the treaty between the Israelites and the Gibeonites, but he was not going to be bound by it. Because he was highly esteemed by the people of Israel and because of his position as king and leader of the army, Saul felt he was above the law of God. Consequently, he and his sons fought against the Gibeonites,

Now there was a famine in the days of David for three years, years after year; and David inquired of the Lord. And the Lord answered, **'It is because of Saul and his bloodthirsty house, because he killed the Gibeonites'** (2Sam. 21:1; emphasis added).

As no one is above God's law, there are always consequences for breaking it. However, it is important to note that God did not command the execution of Saul's sons. This decision was made between King David and the Gibeonites,

Therefore David said to the Gibeonites, **'What shall I do for you? And with what shall I make atonement** that you may bless the inheritance of the Lord?" And the Gibeonites said to him, 'We will have no silver or gold from Saul or from his house, nor shall you kill any man in Israel for us.' And he (David) said, **'Whatever you say, that will I do for you'** (2Sam. 21:3-4; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

This was not a wise promise for David to have made, and it left him open to any request,

So they answered the king, 'As for the man who consumed us and plotted against us, that we should be destroyed from remaining in any of the territories of Israel, let seven men of his descendants be delivered to us, and we will hang them before the Lord in Gibeah of Saul, whom the Lord chose.' And the king said, 'I will give them' (2Sam. 21:5-6).

If God is not consulted, he is not obligated to intervene, which He did not. In fact, this action of the Gibeonites fulfilled a prophecy regarding the end of Saul's rulership,

And Samuel said to Saul, 'You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of the Lord your God, which He commanded you. For now the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. **But now your kingdom shall not continue** ... (1Sam. 13:13-14a; emphasis added).

Given an opportunity, Saul's male descendants would claim rulership over the nation of Israel, but this possibility was eliminated by the action of the Gibeonites. The purpose of executing Saul's male descendants had nothing to do with sacrificing to a deity. It was plain and simple recompense for what Saul and his sons had done to the Gibeonites.

Another scripture, misused to claim that God contradicts Himself, is found in Genesis 22:2. Without understanding the context of this section, it might appear that God was expecting Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac. However, that was not the case at all. On the contrary, it was meant to accomplish a number of important issues. First and foremost, Abraham's severe trial foreshadowed the emotional anguish that Almighty God would later endure when He gave up His son, Jesus Christ, in order to provide the means through which all the sins of mankind and the fallen host of heaven could be removed, after repentance. Secondly, it was to show future generations that faith is based on obedience to God's every word, no matter how hard or inconvenient it may be (Mt. 4:4). Almighty God never intended that Abraham kill his own son and clearly this did not happen. Thirdly, this example was meant to reveal the identity of the Angel of the Lord because Almighty God is all-knowing and can see the end of all things before they occur (cf. Isa. 46:10). However, the Angel of the Lord did not know in advance whether Abraham would follow through with the command that was given to him,

But the Angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, 'Abraham, Abraham!' And he (Abraham) said, 'Here I am.' And he (the Angel of the Lord) said, 'Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him: **for now I know that you fear God** (Almighty), since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me' (the Angel of the Lord) (Gen. 22:11-12; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

During his earthly ministry, Jesus Christ confirmed that he was not all-knowing. Consequently, he was surprised when certain events occurred because he had not expected them to turn out the way they did,

But having heard these things, Jesus marveled at him (the Roman centurion), and having turned to the crowd following him, said, **"I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such faith** (Lk. 7:9; RNT; cf. Mt. 8:10; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

There was one final reason that Almighty God commanded Abraham to do the unthinkable and sacrifice his only son Isaac. It is interesting because there are similarities between what Abraham went through and what the nation of Israel would go through hundreds of years later when they came out of Egyptian slavery. In both cases, they were meant to unlearn all the pagan religious customs of the country they left and come to understand who Almighty God was. After all, the country of Ur where Abraham lived worshipped many gods and part of their worship system involved human sacrifice. So it would not seem strange to Abraham that the God who brought him out from Ur would expect human sacrifices as well.

In an article entitled, 'At Ur, Ritual Deaths That Were Anything but Serene,' published in the science section of the New York Times on October 27, 2009, it is clear that human sacrifices were part of religious life during Abraham's time,

The recovery of about 2,000 burials attested to the practice of human sacrifice on a large scale. At, or even before, the demise of a king or queen, members of the court – handmaidens, warriors and others – were put to death. Researchers led by Janet M. Monge, a physical anthropologist at Penn State University surmised that the holes found in the skulls of some of these victims were caused by a sharp instrument and that death, by blunt force, was almost immediate.

So Abraham learned by experience that Almighty God is not like the gods of Ur who required human sacrifice. In Ur, the purpose of human sacrifice was to appease the anger of one of these gods, or to persuade one of the gods to perform some miracle on behalf of the people. In either case, no reprieve from death would be granted to the victim. On the other hand, the command given to Abraham was a test of his faith, or trust, in Almighty God. There was never any intention on the part of the Angel of God, or Almighty God, to have Isaac sacrificed. Abraham learned through this harrowing experience that God always works to the ultimate benefit of His people, no matter how hard the trial may be,

No temptation (SGD 3986 - test) has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted (SGD 3985 – tested) beyond what you are able (to bear), but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear (endure) it (1Cor. 10:13; cf. Gal. 4:14 – Paul's health trial served as a test of the Galatian's love and concern for him; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Abraham became known as “the father of the faithful” because of his obedience to God’s command. Sadly today, many who claim to know God believe they can break His law and commandments with impunity while still claiming to have faith in Him,

Therefore know that only those who are of faith (i.e. trust and obey God’s every word; Mt.4:4) are sons of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the nations by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, ‘In you all the nations shall be blessed.’ So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham (Gal. 3:7-9; Ed. note in parenthesis).

In the case of Jesus Christ’s sacrifice, it had nothing to do with human sacrifice. Instead, it had everything to do with the fulfillment of the animal sacrificial system (cf. Mt. 5:17; Lk. 24:44; Heb. 10:5-10; see study: God Delights in Burnt Offerings, Sacrifices, and Holy Days). Christ stated plainly that he willingly offered his life in order to show mankind and the fallen host how serious sin is (Heb. 9:22). Because Christ was sinless, his death in our place provided the means through which all sinners could be reconciled to Almighty God, and eventually inherit everlasting life,

For this the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again.¹⁸ “No one takes it away from me, but I lay it down myself. I have the authority to lay it down and I have the authority to take it up again (which is not the case with human sacrifices). This commandment I received from my Father (Jn. 10:17-18; RNT; Ed. note in parenthesis).

The final section of scripture, used by some to state that God contradicts Himself, is Judges 11:30-31, 34, 38-39. This is another example of a rash vow being made with serious consequences. However, there was no human sacrifice involved even though some people claim otherwise,

And Jephthah made a vow to the Lord, and said, ‘If You will indeed deliver the people of Ammon into my hands, then it will be that whatever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the people of Ammon, (it/he) shall surely be the Lord’s, (or) I will offer it up as a burnt offering’ (Jgs. 11:30-31; Ed. note in parenthesis).

According to the law regarding burnt offerings, whatever was offered to God had to be a male and it could not be an unclean animal (cf. Lev. 1:3, 10). Therefore, if the first being that came out of Jephthah’s house was his dog or cat, it could not have been offered as a burnt offering. Instead, Jephthah would have to bring it to the priest for valuation and the money would then be dedicated for use in the temple,

If it is an unclean beast which they do not offer as a sacrifice to the Lord, then he shall present the beast before the priest; and the priest shall set a value for it, whether it is good or bad; as you, the priest value it, so it shall be. But if he wants at all to redeem it (buy it back), then he must add one-fifth to your valuation (Lev. 27:11-13; Ed. note in parenthesis).

As Jephthah’s daughter did not fit any of these criteria, she would have been dedicated to serve God in some capacity; perhaps similar to those who took the vow of a Nazarite (cf. Nu. 6:2, 21). In her separation for God’s service, she would remain a virgin. In society at that time, this would have carried a very negative stigma. In some ways, she may have wished that she had died instead,

Then she said to her father (Jephthah), 'Let this thing be done for me: let me alone for two months, that I may go and wander on the mountains and **bewail** (lament) **my virginity**, my friends (companions) and I.' So he said, 'Go.' And he sent her away for two months; and **she went with her friends, and bewailed her virginity** on the mountains. And it was so at the end of two months that she returned to her father, and he carried out his vow with her which he had vowed. **She knew no man** (remained a virgin)... (Jgs. 11:37-39a; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

If Jephthah's daughter was about to die, she would not have bewailed her virginity. Instead, she would have bewailed her pending death. Also, God commanded that His people never offer their children as sacrifices, and no foolish vow could ever override this,

And you shall not let any of your descendants pass through the fire to Molech, nor shall you profane the name of your God (by doing this evil deed): I am the Lord (Lev. 18:21; cf. 20:2-5; Dt. 12:30-31; Ed. note in parenthesis).

As stated previously, human sacrifice is associated with the religious systems of Satan. Almighty God does not want to be worshipped in this manner. His plan is to restore all who have sinned so that they can inherit everlasting life. He takes no pleasure in sin or the suffering that accompanies it (2Pet. 3:9).

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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