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Appendix 8b: The Sacrifices — Why They Cannot Be Kept Today

This page is part of a series exploring the laws of God that could be obeyed only when the Temple was present in Jerusalem.

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What the Law Actually Required

Among all the commandments given to Israel, none were described with more precision than the sacrifices. God detailed everything: the kind of animal, the age, the condition, the handling of the blood, the location of the altar, the role of the priests, and even the

garments they wore during service. Every sacrifice — burnt offerings, sin offerings, guilt offerings, fellowship offerings, and daily offerings — followed a divine pattern that left no room for personal creativity or alternative interpretations. “The priest shall do this… the altar shall be here… the blood shall be placed there…” The Law of God is a system of exact obedience, not suggestions open to adaptation.

A sacrifice was never merely “killing an animal for God.” It was a holy act performed only in the Temple courtyard (Leviticus 17:3-5; Deuteronomy 12:5-6, 12:11-14), only by consecrated priests from the line of Aaron (Exodus 28:1; 29:9; Leviticus 1:5; Numbers 18:7), and only under conditions of ritual purity (Leviticus 7:19-21; 22:2-6). The worshipper did not choose the place. The worshipper did not choose who officiated. The worshipper did not decide how the blood was handled or where it was applied. The entire system was God’s design, and obedience required respecting every detail of that design (Exodus 25:40; 26:30; Leviticus 10:1-3; Deuteronomy 12:32).

How Israel Obeyed These Commandments in the Past

When the Temple stood, Israel obeyed these laws exactly as commanded. The generations of Moses, Joshua, Samuel, Solomon, Hezekiah, Josiah, Ezra, and Nehemiah all approached God through the sacrifices that He Himself established. No one replaced the altar. No one improvised new rituals. No one offered sacrifices in their homes or in local gatherings. Even kings — with all their authority — were forbidden from performing the duties reserved for the priests.

Scripture shows repeatedly that whenever Israel tried to alter this system — by offering sacrifices in unauthorized places or by allowing non-priests to handle sacred duties — God rejected their worship and often brought judgment (1 Samuel 13:8-14; 2 Chronicles 26:16-21). Faithfulness meant doing precisely what God said, in the place He chose, through the servants He appointed.

Why These Commandments Cannot Be Obeyed Today

After the destruction of the Temple in the year 70 A.D., by the Romans, the entire sacrificial system became impossible to perform. Not because God abolished it, but because the God-given structure required to obey these commandments no longer exists. There is no Temple, no altar, no Holy of Holies, no consecrated priesthood, no established system of purity, and no authorized place on earth where the blood of a sacrifice may be presented before God.

Without these elements, there is no such thing as “doing our best” or “keeping the spirit of the law.” Obedience demands the conditions God established. When those conditions are gone, obedience becomes impossible — not because we refuse to obey, but because God Himself has removed the tools necessary to fulfill these specific commandments.

What Daniel Prophesied About the Sacrifices Ceasing

The Scriptures themselves foretold that the sacrifices would cease — not because God abolished them, but because the Temple would be destroyed. Daniel wrote that “the sacrifice and the offering will cease” (Daniel 9:27), but he explained the cause: the city and the sanctuary would be destroyed by hostile forces (Daniel 9:26). In Daniel 12:11, the prophet again states that the regular sacrifice would be “taken away,” a phrase describing removal by violence and desolation, not the cancellation of a law. Nothing in Daniel suggests that God changed His commandments. The sacrifices ceased because the Temple was made desolate, exactly as the prophet said. This confirms that the Law itself remains untouched; only the place God chose for obedience was removed.

The Error of Symbolic or Invented Sacrifices

Many Messianic groups attempt to reproduce parts of the sacrificial system symbolically. They hold Passover meals and call them “the sacrifice.” They burn incense in gatherings. They reenact rituals, wave offerings, and pretend to “honor the Torah” through dramatizations. Others create teachings such as “prophetic sacrifices,” “spiritual

sacrifices," or "rehearsals for the future Temple." These practices feel religious, but they are not obedience — they are inventions.

God never asked for symbolic sacrifices. God never accepted substitutes created by human imagination. And God is not honored when people attempt to perform outside the Temple what He commanded to be done only inside it. To imitate these commands without the Temple is not faithfulness; it is disregard for the very precision God used when He established them.

The Sacrifices Await the Temple Only God Can Restore

The sacrificial system has not disappeared, nor has it been abolished, nor has it been replaced by symbolic acts or spiritual metaphors invented by men. Nothing in the Law, the Prophets, or the words of Jesus ever declares that the commandments about sacrifices came to an end. Jesus affirmed the eternal validity of every part of the Law, saying that not even the smallest stroke of a letter would fall until heaven and earth pass away (Matthew 5:17-18). Heaven and earth remain. Therefore, the commandments remain.

Throughout the Old Testament, God repeatedly promised that His covenant with the priesthood of Aaron was "everlasting" (Exodus 29:9; Numbers 25:13). The Law calls the sacrificial ordinances "a statute forever throughout your generations" (e.g., Leviticus 16:34; 23:14, 23:21, 23:31, 23:41). Not a single prophet ever announced an end to these commandments. Instead, the prophets speak of a future in which the nations honor the God of Israel and His house becomes "a house of prayer for all nations" (Isaiah 56:7), the same verse Jesus quoted to defend the sanctity of the Temple (Mark 11:17). Jesus did not quote this verse to signal the Temple's end, but to condemn those who were corrupting it.

Because the Law never abolished these sacrifices, and because Jesus never abolished them, and because the Prophets never taught their cancellation, we conclude only what Scripture permits: these commandments remain part of the eternal Law of God, and

they cannot be obeyed today simply because the elements God Himself required — the Temple, the priesthood, the altar, and the purity system — are not available.

Until God restores what He Himself removed, the correct posture is humility — not imitation. We do not attempt to recreate what God suspended. We do not move the altar, change the place, alter the ritual, or invent symbolic versions. We acknowledge the Law, respect its perfection, and refuse to add or subtract from what God commanded (Deuteronomy 4:2). Anything less is partial obedience, and partial obedience is disobedience.