

## Living Sacrifice

I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable act of worship. (Rom 12:1) And coming to Him (Jesus) as to a living stone, rejected by men, but chosen and precious in the sight of God, you also as, living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (1 Pet. 2:4,5)

What does it look like to offer our bodies as living sacrifices? How do we present this spiritual sacrifice to God? To answer these questions we'll look at how a sacrifice was to be offered in the Old Testament. Through this example we can see what the Lord requires of our sacrifice.

Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to Aaron and to his sons and to all the sons of Israel and say to them, 'Any man of the house of Israel or of the aliens in Israel who presents his offering, whether it is any of their votive or any of their freewill offerings, which they *present* to the LORD for a *burnt offering*—for you to be *accepted*—it must be a male *without defect* from the cattle, the sheep, or the goats. 'Whatever has a defect, you shall not offer, for it will not be accepted for you. 'When a man offers a sacrifice of peace offerings to the LORD to fulfill a special vow or for a freewill offering, of the herd or of the flock, it must be *perfect* to be *accepted*; there shall be no defect in it. (Lev 22:17-21)

If we look at this sacrifice as a type and shadow of the perfect to come then we can obtain a clearer understanding what the Lord is looking from us. Just as they were required to present their offering to the Lord for a *burnt offering*, so we are to present our bodies for a burnt offering. This offering would give off an aroma of burnt flesh through the heat of the fire. (Lev 1:13) When we give our bodies to Jesus on the altar, our flesh will be burnt up. He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and will gather His wheat into the barn, but will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. (Matt 3:12) We are to be crucified with Christ so that it will be no longer be us who live, but Christ who lives in us. (Gal 2:20) And those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. (Gal 5:24) We are a fragrance of Christ to God: to those who are being saved an aroma from death to death, and to those who are perishing an aroma of life to life. (2 Cor 2:15,16) Therefore, brethren, be imitators of God as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. (Eph 5:1, 2)

For Israel's offering to be *accepted* it must have been without *defect*. The word 'defect' in the Hebrew is *tâmîym* (taw-meem'), H8549. It means without blemish, perfect, upright, undefiled, and blameless. God is coming for a pure and spotless bride without spot or wrinkle, holy and blameless. (Eph 5:27) We are to be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless. (2 Pet 3:14) He is looking for a sacrifice that is undefiled by the world (2 Pet 2:20) and cleansed from all defilement of the flesh and spirit. (2 Cor 7:1) This is what is pleasing to the Lord. The word of God instructs us to not be conformed to this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds, that

we may—not only know—but prove, what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable (well-pleasing) and perfect. (Rom 12:2) By not conforming to the pattern of this world and having our minds renewed to the mind of Christ, our living sacrifice will be sweet to the Lord.

God also required that Israel's sacrifice be *perfect*. In the New Testament Jesus tells us we are to be perfect, as our heavenly Father is perfect. (Matt 5:48) What does it mean to be perfect in God's view? The word perfect in the Greek is the word *teleios* (*tel'-i-os*), G5046. It means to be *complete* (in various applications of labor, growth, mental and moral character, etc.) and mature. We are to attain to the unity of the faith and of the true knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature (perfect) man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. (Eph 4:13) In Christ we are complete; for in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and *in Him* you have been made complete (full), and He is the head over all rule and authority. (Col 2:9,10) One of the clearest explanations of what it looks like to be perfect in God's sight is found in 1 Chronicles chapter twenty-nine and verse nineteen where David is praying for his son Solomon. He says, "Give to my son Solomon a *perfect* heart to *keep* Thy commandments, Thy testimonies, and Thy statutes, and *to do* them *all*, and to build the temple, for which I have made provision." Christ did not come to abolish the Law but to fulfill it. His commandments are not too difficult, nor is it out of reach. "But the word is very near you, in your mouth, and in your heart, that you may observe it." (Deut 20:14) This perfect heart is a promise that we receive based on the new Covenant. God says He will put His laws upon our hearts and upon our minds. (Heb 10:16) Also in Ezekiel, "I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Moreover, I will give you a new (perfect) heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances." (Eze 36:45-17) His Spirit will cause us to walk in His word. It is only by the Spirit that we put to death the works of the flesh. (Rom 8:13) And if we walk by the Spirit, we *will not* carry out the desires of the flesh. (Gal 5:16. These are precious and magnificent promises that are given to us through His divine power. (2 Pet 1:3,4)

Brethren, let us not forget that by the one offering, He, (Jesus) has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. (Heb 10:14) May we all come to the revelation that Christ had when He said, "Sacrifice and offering Thou has not desired, but a body Thou hast prepared for Me; in whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast taken no pleasure. Then I said, "Behold, I have come (in the roll of the book it is written of Me) to do Thy will O God." (Heb 10:5-7) Praise the Lord that He has appeared to put away our sin by the sacrifice of Himself. (Heb 9:26) "Behold, the Lamb of God who comes to take away the sins of the world." (John 1:29) Just as Jesus came to offer up His body as a sacrifice for many, let us lay down our lives and pick up our crosses and die with Him. It was His love for us that led Him to Calvary and purchased our souls. May we give Him what He is worthy of; our all, and present to Him our bodies as an offering of thanksgiving. (Psa 116:17; 50:14,23)

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“Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams.” (1 Sam 15:22)

“Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and trust in the Lord.” (Psa 4:5)

“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.” (Psa 51:17)

“For I delight in faithfulness rather than sacrifice, and in the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.” (Hos 6:6)

“Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.” (Heb 13:15)

“And do not neglect doing good and sharing; for with such sacrifices God is pleased.” (Heb 13:16)