

WORSHIP AND SACRIFICE

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Worship is recognizing God's worth, rejoicing in His presence, and serving in His kingdom building work. Today, we can express our worship through singing songs to God, reflecting Christ in our workplace, sharing the gospel to non-believers, giving our offerings to God, and more. As long as we do things all for the glory of God, it can be our act of worship. It's so convenient! But if we would have a chance to ask an Old Testament Israelite how they expressed their worship, we would certainly hear a different story.

Worship of God in Old Testament times was not easy. It involved offering animal sacrifices. When Pharaoh allowed the Israelites to leave Egypt without their livestock, Moses insisted because they needed to offer animal sacrifices to worship God in the wilderness. But why did they need to offer sacrifices to worship God? And what is the significance of the Israelites' way of worship before to our way of worship today?

First, we must recognize the holiness of God. In His holy presence, there is no room for sin. Adam and Eve lost their privilege to be in the presence of God and were banished from the Garden of Eden because of sin. Sin led to their separation

from God. For every sin, there is the consequence of death. But because of God's mercy for His people, He introduced a way for the Israelites to worship Him in His sanctuary.

Instead of paying the price of death, a sinner needed to offer an animal sacrifice as a substitute. A person can be ritually clean as long as an animal sacrifice is to be made. God dealt with sin through sacrifice. And whenever they committed a sin, the Israelites could still maintain their right relationship with God through the offering of sacrifices.

The animal sacrifices during the Old Testament was an expression of God's justice and grace at the same time. It is also an expression of God's unconditional love, for despite all the wickedness of the Israelites, He still provided a way for people to worship. And the ultimate expression of God's love for His people was shown when He sent His only begotten Son Jesus Christ, that we might live through Him. Jesus died in our place, and His blood was the payment for all the sins of the world, including our own. Since then, the old way of worship through animal sacrifice has ceased. We were made clean because of Jesus' sacrifice. We don't have to offer sacrifices

anymore because Jesus' death has fulfilled the sacrifice needed.

So, as we celebrate communion today, may we be reminded of the reason why we can still sing songs, serve in church, share the gospel, and worship God. May our celebration of the communion be a remembrance of Jesus' blood covenant, which is poured out for us, for the forgiveness of our sins.

Only through Jesus' **sacrifice** we can fully express our **worship** to God! ✝

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