

Allusions, Images, and Symbols: How to Study Bible Prophecy

Understanding Sacrifice

Lesson #6 for May 10, 2025

Scriptures: Isaiah 1:2-15; 6:1-5; Hebrews 10:3-10; Exodus 12:1-11; 1 Corinthians 5:7; Haggai 2:7-9; Revelation 4:7-11; 5:9.

1. Where did the idea of animal sacrifices come from? How are we to understand sacrifices and the significance of sacrifices in Bible prophecy?

[From the Bible study guide=BSG:] The ritual of sacrifice was current practice among most of the peoples of the ancient Near East (ANE). **In the ANE, sacrifice was considered to be a gift to one's god, providing food for the deity in exchange for help.**

The Bible, however, gives a radically different meaning to the ritual of sacrifice; in fact, it reversed its purpose. While in the ANE, sacrifice signified an upward movement from the human condition to the divine sphere. **In the Bible, sacrifice signified a downward movement from God to men.** In the ANE, the god created humans in order to have slaves who would serve him or her and provide him or her with food. **In contrast, the God of the Bible creates humans and gives them food.**—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 80.††

2. The children of Israel had lived in Egypt for many years and had learned to see that animal sacrifices were part of the way to worship the Egyptian “gods.” While these sacrifices were pagan, the children of Israel had come to believe that there was some truth in them. **Read Exodus 29:39-41** which lists the detailed instructions they were given to prepare for the exodus.
3. ***Were they to offer these sacrifices during their time in the wilderness? If so, where did they get the wine, the olive oil, and the flour?***
4. Did John the Baptist believe that Jesus was to be a Sacrifice for us? Do we believe He was?

[BSG:] When Jesus came toward him, **John the Baptist declared: “ ‘Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’ ”** (*John 1:29, NKJV*). This was an unmistakable reference to the idea of animal sacrifice, all of which pointed to Christ's **substitutionary death** in behalf of all humanity. [Did it really point to a “substitutionary death” by Christ?]

In the Bible, we cannot escape the **theme of animal sacrifice**; it runs like a scarlet thread throughout its pages and plays a central role in the grand scene in Revelation, where John is escorted into God's throne room (*Revelation 4 and 5*). **The fact that Jesus appears in this pivotal scene, looking like a slain [brutally slaughtered] lamb** (*Rev. 5:6*), is an important key to understanding the entire prophetic episode.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Sabbath Afternoon, May 3.††§

5. ***What did the people to whom John was writing the book of Revelation think was accomplished by offering animal sacrifices? Should we still be? It absolutely cannot be a way to change God's attitude toward us! That would be a pagan idea! Do we have any evidence that any of the disciples or apostles offered animal sacrifices?***

6. Two of the main types of offerings were: (1) Sin offerings and (2) Thank offerings. What do you think the people had in mind when they gave those offerings? It has often been supposed that offerings were taken to a temple or place of worship to appease a god that had been offended by one's sins. That is a pagan concept of God or a god! God is not like that!

John 16:25-27: ²⁵ "I have used figures of speech to tell you these things. But the time will come when **I will not use figures of speech, but will speak to you plainly about the Father.** ²⁶**When that day comes, you will ask him in my name; and I do not say that I will ask him on your behalf,** ²⁷**for the Father himself loves you.** He loves you because you love me and have believed that I came from God."—*Good News Bible*.*†

7. **If John 16:25-27 is correct, do we need any sacrifices?** What did Jesus think that His followers were going to be praying for? Protection? Progress in the spreading of the gospel?
8. About 700 years before Christ, Isaiah wrote some very challenging words.

Isaiah 1:2-20: ² The LORD said, "Earth and sky, listen to what I am saying! The children I brought up have rebelled against me. ³Cattle know who owns them, and donkeys know where their master feeds them. **But that is more than my people Israel know. They don't understand at all.**" ...

⁹**If the LORD Almighty had not let some of the people survive, Jerusalem would have been totally destroyed, just as Sodom and Gomorrah were.**

¹⁰ **Jerusalem, your rulers and your people are like those of Sodom and Gomorrah.** Listen to what the LORD is saying to you. Pay attention to what our God is teaching you. ¹¹He says, "**Do you think I want all these sacrifices you keep offering to me?** I have had more than enough of the sheep you burn as sacrifices and of the fat of your fine animals. **I am tired of the blood of bulls and sheep and goats.** ¹²Who asked you to bring me all this when you come to worship me? Who asked you to do all this tramping about in my Temple? ¹³**It's useless to bring your offerings. I am disgusted with the smell of the incense you burn. I cannot stand your New Moon Festivals, your Sabbaths, and your religious gatherings; they are all corrupted by your sins.** ¹⁴**I hate your New Moon Festivals and holy days; they are a burden that I am tired of bearing.** [What had happened since Leviticus?]

¹⁵ "**When you lift your hands in prayer, I will not look at you. No matter how much you pray, I will not listen, for your hands are covered with blood.** ¹⁶**Wash yourselves clean. Stop all this evil that I see you doing. Yes, stop doing evil** ¹⁷**and learn to do right. See that justice is done—help those who are oppressed, give orphans their rights, and defend widows.**"

¹⁸ The LORD says, "Now, let's settle the matter. You are stained red with sin, but I will wash you as clean as snow. Although your stains are deep red, you will be as white as wool. ¹⁹**If you will only obey me,** you will eat the good things the land produces. ²⁰**But if you defy me, you are doomed to die.** I, the LORD, have spoken."—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation** (2nd ed., Isaiah 1:2-20). New York: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible*].†‡

9. Clearly, offering sacrifices to cover one's sins was useless! To get a clear idea of what God intended to happen when sacrifices were given, consider Isaiah 56:6-7 and Psalm 51:17.

They were to realize that sin leads to death and that only humble and repentant “hearts” or minds will be accepted by God.

The Sacrifices by Cain and Abel

10. A careful study of Bible history will remind us that this was not the first time that God had rejected someone who brought what they thought was a good sacrifice. Think of the story of Cain and Abel.

11. **Adam and Eve were instructed to offer that first sacrifice to help them realize that sin will always lead to death, even the deaths of innocent victims. God’s forgiveness is extended to every single human without any sacrifices being offered. But, if our ways do not change, no sacrifice will make any difference.**

Genesis 4:3-7: ³After some time, Cain brought some of his harvest and gave it as an offering to the LORD. ⁴Then Abel brought the first lamb born to one of his sheep, killed it, and gave the best parts of it as an offering. The LORD was pleased with Abel and his offering, ⁵but **he rejected Cain** and his **offering**. Cain became furious, and he scowled in anger. ⁶Then the LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry? Why that scowl on your face? ⁷If you had done the right thing, you would be smiling; but because you have done evil, sin is crouching at your door. It wants to rule you, but you must overcome it.”—*Good News Bible*.*†

12. What kind of relationship did God have with Abel and Cain? How did God communicate with those two brothers? Did God send fire down from heaven to consume Abel’s offering while He ignored Cain’s? How did Cain know that his sacrifice was not accepted? **Cain’s problem was not his offering, but rather, his rebellion.** How did God later talk to Cain?

13. It is reasonable to assume that Abel’s offering was given following instructions that have been given to Adam and Eve, and in claiming the promise of the Messiah as in Genesis 3:15. On the other hand, Cain’s offering gives no such indication.

14. Unfortunately, Cain was so upset by what happened that he killed his brother.

15. So how does God relate to our sins?

Jeremiah 31:31-34: ³¹ The LORD says, “The time is coming when **I will make a new covenant** with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. ³²It will not be like the old covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand and led them out of Egypt. Although I was like a husband to them, they did not keep that covenant. ³³The **new covenant** that I will make with the people of Israel will be this: **I will put my law within them and write it on their hearts.** I will be their God, and they will be my people. ³⁴None of them will have to teach his fellow-citizen to know the LORD, because all will know me, from the least to the greatest. **I will forgive their sins and I will no longer remember their wrongs.** I, the LORD, have spoken.”—*Good News Bible*.*†

16. Look at Hebrews 11 to see what it says about Abel and Cain.

Hebrews 11:4: It was faith that made Abel offer to God a better sacrifice than Cain’s. **Through his faith he won God’s approval as a righteous man,** because God himself approved of his gifts. By means of his faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead.—*Good News Bible*.*†

[From the writings of Ellen G. White=EGW:] “By faith Abel offered unto God a

more excellent sacrifice than Cain.” Hebrews 11:4. Abel grasped the great principles of redemption. He saw himself a sinner, and he saw sin and its penalty, death, standing between his soul and communion with God. He brought the slain victim, the sacrificed life, thus acknowledging the claims of the law that had been transgressed. Through the shed blood he looked to the future sacrifice, Christ dying on the cross of Calvary; and trusting in the atonement that was there to be made, he had the witness that he was righteous, and his offering accepted.—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets** 72.3.† [<https://next.egwwritings.org/read/84.262>]†

17. Clearly, we should conclude that the problem with Cain was not his sacrifice, but Cain himself.

Animal Sacrifices and Christ’s Sacrifice

18. What was the reason for animal sacrifices?

[BSG:] Some have criticized the entire concept of sacrifice, claiming that it is cruel, harsh, and, in a sense, unfair. Yet, that’s precisely the point. Christ’s death was cruel, harsh, and unfair—the innocent dying for the guilty. That’s what it took to solve the sin problem. And Christ’s death was what all these harsh, cruel, and unfair sacrifices pointed to.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Monday, May 5.†

19. ***Many people believe that Jesus died to pay the price for our sins. To whom would such a price be paid? To the Father? To Satan? Is someone demanding that a price be paid? Or, does the life and death of Christ give us a choice? (1) We can either do our best, with God’s help, to change our lives to follow the pattern that Jesus left us; or (2) We will die the way He died, separated from His Father, the only Source of life. Which would you rather do?***

[EGW:] The wrath of God against sin, the terrible manifestation of His displeasure because of iniquity, filled the soul of His Son with consternation. All His life Christ had been publishing to a fallen world the good news of the Father’s mercy and pardoning love. **Salvation for the chief of sinners was His theme. But now with the terrible weight of guilt He bears, He cannot see the Father’s reconciling face. The withdrawal of the divine countenance from the Saviour [sic-Br] in this hour of supreme anguish pierced His heart with a sorrow that can never be fully understood by man. So great was this agony that His physical pain was hardly felt.**

Satan with his fierce temptations wrung the heart of Jesus. **The Saviour [sic-Br] could not see through the portals of the tomb. Hope did not present to Him His coming forth from the grave a conqueror, or tell Him of the Father’s acceptance of the sacrifice. He feared that sin was so offensive to God that Their separation was to be eternal. Christ felt the anguish which the sinner will feel when mercy shall no longer plead for the guilty race. It was the sense of sin, bringing the Father’s wrath [His separation] upon Him as man’s substitute, that made the cup He drank so bitter, and broke the heart of the Son of God.**—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 753.1-2.†† [<https://next.egwwritings.org/read/130.3718>]††

20. ***We do not fully understand how this separation from God works. We know that God was right there, beside the cross. However, Jesus could not perceive His presence.***

Thus, from Jesus's perception, His Father was gone. He felt like He had been abandoned. That is what led to His dying cry, "Why have you forsaken me?"

21. **Apparently, this same perception will affect the wicked in the end. While God will be there, they will not be able to perceive His presence.**
22. The book of Hebrews gives the clearest explanation from a New Testament writer about the meaning and purpose of the Old Testament and sacrifices. **Read Hebrews 10:1-11.** The sacrifices were offered **not only to remind them of their sins and the fact that sins lead to death, but also to encourage them to turn to God for assistance in changing their lives** by allowing Him to change them. Without any change, the sacrifices were useless!

[BSG:] The lambs and other sacrificial animals were mere symbols pointing forward to the atoning sacrifice of the Lamb of God. They were acts of faith, giving sinners a tangible way to express faith in the work of the coming Messiah. We often refer to these kinds of symbols as types, which are fulfilled by an *antitype*, or the appearance of the thing or event they foreshadowed. Some have even described the sacrifices as "mini-prophecies" of the death of Jesus on the cross.

The rituals associated with sacrifice were a little like paying for a trip. When you purchase a train, bus, or airplane ticket, you do not immediately receive the journey you paid for. Instead, you are given a ticket or boarding pass, a symbol or promise of the journey to come. You can sit on that piece of paper all you want, but it will not convey you to any destination. Once you have boarded and the journey begins, however, you have received what you paid for, and the paper ticket becomes unnecessary.

So it was with the sacrificial animals. They had an important role to play, but once the real sacrifice was made, they became meaningless—a reality depicted when the veil between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place in the earthly sanctuary was rent asunder at the death of Jesus. "Then the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom" (*Mark 15:38, NKJV*). **The whole sacrificial system, temple and all, pointed forward to the death of Jesus on the cross.** Once Jesus fulfilled His promise at the cross and rose victorious over death, the types became unnecessary.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Sunday, May 4.^{†‡§}

23. All through the Bible, lambs were used in connection with sacrifice. Even the book of Revelation refers to Jesus as *the Lamb* nearly 30 times. **What did the people think those lambs were accomplishing?** They were instructed to use lambs even to redeem firstborn people or animals. See Genesis 4:4; Exodus 12:1-11.
24. So, what is the idea in Revelation of Jesus being *the Lamb* supposed to mean for us? One of the most critical passages in the book of Revelation is:

Revelation 5:1-14: ¹ I saw a **scroll** in the right-hand of the one who sits on the throne; it was covered with writing on both sides and was sealed with **seven seals**. ²And I saw a mighty angel, who announced in a loud voice, "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?" ³But there was no one in heaven or on earth or in the world below who could open the scroll and look inside it. ⁴I cried bitterly because no one could be found who was worthy to open the scroll or

look inside it. ⁵Then one of the elders said to me, “Don’t cry. Look! The Lion from Judah’s tribe, the great descendant of David, has won the victory, and he can break the seven seals and open the scroll.”

⁶ Then I saw a **Lamb** standing in the centre [*sic-Br*] of the throne, surrounded by the four living creatures and the elders. The Lamb appeared to have been killed.... ⁷The Lamb went and took the scroll from the right hand of the one who sits on the throne. ⁸As he did so, the four living creatures and the 24 elders fell down before the Lamb. Each had a harp and gold bowls filled with incense, which are the prayers of God’s people....

¹³And I heard every creature in heaven, on earth, in the world below, and in the sea — all living beings in the universe — and they were singing:

“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb,
be praise and honour [*sic-Br*], glory and might,
for ever [*sic-Br*] and ever!”

¹⁴The four living creatures answered, “Amen!” And the elders fell down and worshipped [*sic-Br*].—*Good News Bible*.*††

25. Consider some other statements made about the same time:

1 Peter 1:18-19: ¹⁸For you know what was paid to set you free from the worthless manner of life handed down by your ancestors. It was not something that can be destroyed, such as silver or gold; ¹⁹it was the costly sacrifice of Christ, who was like a lamb without defect or flaw.—*Good News Bible*.*

26. ***The whole point of the sacrifices, even in Peter’s day, was to remind the people of their sins and convince them to take the necessary steps to stop committing them.***

27. Satan had claimed that it was impossible for a human being to live on this earth without sinning. Jesus proved him wrong. Thus, the perfect one-year-old lamb without defect or fault symbolized the Jesus who was coming.

28. So, what did the disciples think Jesus was going to do for them and for the Jewish nation? They were sure that He was going to become the king of the Jews!

29. Jesus constantly sought to help them understand that His job was to represent the Father.

John 14:9: Jesus answered, “For a long time I have been with you all; yet you do not know me, Philip? **Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.** Why, then, do you say, ‘Show us the Father?’”—*Good News Bible*.*†

[EGW:] **Had God the Father come** to our world and dwelt among us, **veiling His glory, humbling Himself, that humanity might look upon Him**, the history that we have of the life of Christ would not have been changed in unfolding its record of His own condescending grace. In every act of Jesus, in every lesson of His instruction, we are to see and hear and recognize God. In sight, in hearing, in effect, it is the voice and movements of the Father.—Ellen G. White, *Letter 83, 1895*,* par. 25 (21MR 393.1); *That I May Know Him**€ 338.4.†† [<https://next.egwwritings.org/read/14060.5690031>]†

30. Think back to the Passover. The Israelites were to select a lamb for one family—or possibly more than one family if there were few members—and sprinkle its blood on the doorpost and eat it, roasted with bitter herbs on the night of their departure.

31. Many people have very distorted ideas about God. God wants us to be His friends! (See

John 15:15.) However, He recognizes that at the present time as sinners if we came into His immediate presence, we would be consumed by His glory.

32. What is the best example of glory in the Bible?

Haggai 2:7-9: ⁷ “I will overthrow all the nations, and their treasures will be brought here, and the Temple will be filled with wealth. ⁸All the silver and gold of the world is mine. ⁹**The new Temple will be more splendid than the old one, and there I will give my people prosperity and peace.” The LORD Almighty has spoken.**—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

[EGW:] But the second temple [Herod’s Temple] had not equaled the first in magnificence; nor was it hallowed by those visible tokens of the divine presence which pertained to the first temple [Solomon’s Temple]. There was no manifestation of supernatural power to mark its dedication. No cloud of glory was seen to fill the newly erected sanctuary. No fire from heaven descended to consume the sacrifice upon its altar. **The Shekinah no longer abode between the cherubim in the most holy place; the ark, the mercy seat, and the tables of the testimony were not to be found therein.** No voice sounded from heaven to make known to the inquiring priest the will of Jehovah.

For centuries the Jews had vainly endeavored to show wherein the promise of God given by Haggai had been fulfilled; yet pride and unbelief blinded their minds to the true meaning of the prophet’s words. The second temple was not honored with the cloud of Jehovah’s glory, but with the living presence of One in whom dwelt the fullness of the Godhead bodily—who was God Himself manifest in the flesh. The “Desire of all nations” had indeed come to His temple when the Man of Nazareth taught and healed in the sacred courts. In the presence of Christ, and in this only, did the second temple exceed the first in glory. But Israel had put from her the proffered Gift of heaven. With the humble Teacher who had that day passed out from its golden gate, the glory had forever departed from the temple. Already were the Saviour’s [*sic*-Br] words fulfilled: “Your house is left unto you desolate.” Matthew 23:38.—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy** 24.1-2.^{†‡} [<https://next.egwwritings.org/read/132.100>][‡]

33. In the days of Jeremiah, Daniel, and Ezekiel, and before Solomon’s Temple was destroyed, we have these very interesting comments about what happened:

[EGW:] Among the righteous still in Jerusalem, to whom had been made plain the divine purpose, were some who determined to place beyond the reach of ruthless hands the sacred ark containing the tables of stone on which had been traced the precepts of the Decalogue. This they did. With mourning and sadness **they secreted the ark in a cave**, where it was to be hidden from the people of Israel and Judah because of their sins, and was to be no more restored to them. That sacred ark is yet hidden. It has never been disturbed since it was secreted.—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings** 453.2.^{†‡} [<https://next.egwwritings.org/read/88.2020>][‡]

34. The second temple (Herod’s Temple) never had in it the ark of the covenant or the sacred stones with the Decalogue written on them. Inside the most holy place was only a stone.

35. By contrast, both the first tent/tabernacle in the wilderness and the temple made by Solomon had God’s glorious presence fill them when they were dedicated. See Exodus 40:34-35 and

1 Kings 8:10-11.

36. It is very important for us to recognize that in God's sight, the presence of the humble Jesus dressed like an ordinary human being, sitting down in the temple courtyard and speaking the truth about God to a large audience was the greatest kind of glory. While His divinity was veiled by His humanity, He was still God in person. See Item #30 above.
37. On a few occasions, prophets in the Old Testament and even in the New Testament were allowed to see God's throne in heaven at least in vision. For example, see Ezekiel 1:26; Isaiah 6:1; and Revelation 4-5. Read **Revelation 5:1-14** and **Isaiah 6:1-5**.
38. In Old Testament times, lambs were clearly the center of the sacrificial system, and, therefore, should have represented what Jesus came to accomplish by His life, death, and resurrection.
39. In vision, what did Isaiah and John see around God's throne? Compare those two visions.

[BSG:] In each of these **throne room visions**, the first thing that happens is that heavenly beings underscore the holiness of God. In Isaiah's vision, the scene is impressive: the temple is filled with smoke, and the "posts of the door" were shaken as seraphim proclaim the holiness of God. In John's vision, cherubim make the same announcement, "Holy, holy, holy." (See Ezekiel 10:14, 15 to find the living creatures described as *cherubim*.) Each prophet was shown a dazzling scene of God's glory.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Thursday, May 8.^{†‡§}

40. To better understand the conflict going on between Satan and God, especially Jesus, consider these accusations by Satan against God. They are taken from a variety of sources in the writings of Ellen White and the Bible. The full document is posted on www.theox.org

Satan represents God as "severe, exacting, revengeful, and arbitrary,"⁹ "One who plunges all those into hell who do not please Him."³ While sinners are thought to "suffer unutterable anguish"³ in flames, "He [God] is represented as looking down upon them with satisfaction"³ as they eternally "feel His wrath"³ (vengeance⁴⁰; 2Thessalonians 1:8) The whole field of religion is thought of as being totally irrational, even "repugnant,"⁴ because people cannot logically understand how God could be, by nature, love, and at the same time "for the sins of a brief earthly life they are to suffer torture as long as God shall live."⁴ "It would be against His character of benevolence and love, to plunge into eternal torments the beings whom He had created."^{3b}

[\[https://www.theox.org/images/uploads/bbk/KHart_BTGG_PDF_Gnrl_Final_End_Sin_and_Sinners_18.pdf\]](https://www.theox.org/images/uploads/bbk/KHart_BTGG_PDF_Gnrl_Final_End_Sin_and_Sinners_18.pdf)[‡] [See page 3 of handout on: www.Theox.org].^{‡Ω}

41. Why was it that in the throne room of heaven, no one—not even God, the Father—could be found who was qualified to open the scroll except Jesus?

Revelation 5:12: And sang in a loud voice:

"The Lamb who was killed [The word means "brutally slaughtered."] is worthy to receive power, wealth, wisdom, and strength, honour [*sic-Br*], glory, and praise!"—*Good News Bible*.^{*‡}

[BSG:] The cross, then, should show us [at least] two things: first, just how much God loves us that He would sacrifice Himself for us; second, it should show us just how sinful and fallen we are that only through the cross could we be saved.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Thursday, May 8.[‡]

42. **Probably even more important that those things: The cross shows us the final results of sin, that is, death by eternal separation from God.**

43. Do we understand why it was necessary for Jesus to come and die?

[EGW:] The Son of God, heaven's glorious Commander, was touched with pity for the fallen race. His heart was moved with infinite compassion as the woes of the lost world rose up before Him. **But divine love had conceived a plan whereby man might be redeemed.** The broken law of God demanded the life of the sinner. In all the universe there was but one who could, in behalf of man, satisfy its claims. Since the divine law is as sacred as God Himself, only one equal with God could make atonement for its transgression. None but Christ could redeem fallen man from the curse of the law and bring him again into harmony with Heaven. **Christ would take upon Himself the guilt and shame of sin—sin so offensive to a holy God that it must separate the Father and His Son.** Christ would reach to the depths of misery to rescue the ruined race.—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets** 63.2.††

[\[https://next.egwwritings.org/read/84.217\]](https://next.egwwritings.org/read/84.217)‡

44. Many atheists believe that we came from some inanimate blob somewhere and believe that when we die, we will be dead a long time. However, Christians who have a clear understanding of the biblical teachings know that God: (1) Has come down to us, (2) Wants to be close to us, and (3) Wants to save us to live with Him forever.

Conclusions

45. **Coming to some conclusions** on this lesson: In God's eyes, what really matters is the condition of our hearts and not the kind of sacrifice which we might offer on an altar.

Micah 6:6-8: ⁶ What shall I bring to the LORD, the God of heaven, when I come to worship him? Shall I bring the best calves to burn as offerings to him? ⁷ Will the LORD be pleased if I bring him thousands of sheep or endless streams of olive oil? Shall I offer him my firstborn child to pay for my sins? ⁸ No, the LORD has told us what is good. **What he requires of us is this: to do what is just, to show constant love, and to live in humble fellowship with our God.**—*Good News Bible*.*†

Isaiah 1:11: He says, "Do you think I want all these sacrifices you keep offering to me? I have had more than enough of the sheep you burn as sacrifices and of the fat of your fine animals. **I am tired of the blood of bulls and sheep and goats.**"—*Good News Bible*.*†

46. We could search the Old Testament at some length without finding any hints as to what all the sacrifices were supposed to mean. However, one passage in Isaiah may help.

Isaiah 53:4-12: ⁴ "But he endured the suffering that should have been ours, the pain that we should have borne.

All the while we thought that his suffering

was punishment sent by God.... [Especially notice the last half of verse 4.]

^{6b} **But the LORD made the punishment fall on him, the punishment all of us deserved.**

⁷ **"He was treated harshly, but endured it humbly; he never said a word.**

**Like a lamb about to be slaughtered,
like a sheep about to be sheared,
he never said a word....**

¹⁰ **The LORD says,**

**“It was my will that he should suffer;
his death was a sacrifice to bring forgiveness....**

¹¹ After a life of suffering, he will again have joy;
he will know that he did not suffer in vain.

**My devoted servant, with whom I am pleased,
will bear the punishment of many**
and for his sake I will forgive them.

¹² And so I will give him a place of honour [*sic-Br*],
a place among the great and powerful.

He willingly gave his life
and shared the fate of evil men.

He took the place of many sinners
and prayed that they might be forgiven.”—*Good News Bible*.^{*†‡}

47. It is interesting to notice in this passage in Isaiah 53 that Isaiah mentioned all three Hebrew words translated as *iniquities*, *transgressions*, and *sins*. Through Jesus, God suffered the full penalty of sin.
48. So, as a Christian, how do you see that the life and death of Jesus Christ have affected you? Has your behavior changed?
49. An interesting story is told about a European visitor who went to Africa many years ago. When he was visiting one of the tribal groups, he noticed that one of the local people was reading the Bible. When he asked the African why he was bothering to read that book of fairytales and myths and asked him what difference it had made in his life, the African man simply said: “If I had not read this Bible, I would have eaten you before now!”
50. Again, we note that the life and death of Jesus give us a choice: (1) We can either live lives as close as possible to His life, the divine pattern, with the help of the Holy Spirit and the angels; or (2) We will die the death that He died, separated from God, the only Source of life.
51. Read **Philippians 2: 5-11**. What does this tell us about what Jesus was willing to do for you and me?

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