

## More on Sacrifices

In the last chapter I talked about reconstructing Christianity as the apostles delivered it. The emphasis yesterday was on the role of sacrifices and that only those with a pure heart can offer sacrifices to God.

Let's touch on another example of that, one which contradicts another assumption of modern Christianity.

The first example of a rejected sacrifice in the Bible is Cain's. In today's Christianity it is usually taught that Cain's sacrifice was rejected because it was from the field, while Abel's was accepted because it was from the flock. Abel's had blood; Cain's didn't.

That wasn't the early Christian understanding, and they have some very clear Scripture on their side.

Cain went away angry when his sacrifice was rejected, and God came to him asking him why he was angry:

If you do good, will you not be accepted? If you do not do good, sin lies at the door. (Gen. 4:7)

Cain's sacrifice was rejected because he was already an evildoer, not because he sacrificed grain. The apostle John drives that home for us:

We should love one another, unlike Cain, who was of the wicked one and killed his brother. And why did he kill him? Because his own deeds were evil, and his brother's righteous. (1 Jn. 3:11b-12)

Cain was already an evildoer before he killed Abel, and it was for this reason that his sacrifice was rejected.

What we saw yesterday is true. Sacrifices are offered to God by those whose hearts are purified by repentance. All other sacrifices are rejected.

This applies to those of us who are New Testament believers. We must not think that we can live any way we please and hope to be purified by Jesus' blood. Hebrews tells us that it is possible to count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing (10:29). It remains true that "without [holiness] no one will see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14) and that "the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 6:9).

It also remains true that the only ones who are righteous, as Christ is righteous, are those who practice righteousness, says the apostle John (1 Jn. 3:7).

The first and foremost message that God gives to man is that we must repent. If we repent, then we can call on the name of Jesus and find all the benefits of his blood, including both mercy and grace (which we will define tomorrow). If we do not repent, then we are fooling ourselves, insulting the Spirit of grace, and our attempts to use grace as a license to sin will only result in our spiritual death (Rom. 8:12-13).

### A Little Help with the Confusion Tradition Brings

I've given you Scripture for everything I said today, but if you are new to reading my blog, then I understand that some of the things I say may be shocking. Yet, who can deny that it is true that the only ones who are righteous as Christ is righteous are those who practice righteousness? John tells us not to be deceived about that! (1 Jn. 3:7).

Still, "works" has become a forbidden word in modern Christianity, leading to a version of the Gospel that has dozens of difficult, barely understandable Scriptures. Some of the ways that modern Christians try to dance around James 2:24, where James says that we are justified by works, are simply embarrassing.

The early church never struggled with such issues. The Scriptures were one, uncomplicated, and easy to understand for them because they still had the apostles' words echoing in their ears.

I have a longer teaching on the subject of faith and works written especially for modern Christians, to help them get over the hump of terrifying tradition. In fact, I have several:

["Not by Faith Alone"](#) (Titled that way because it's a quote from James 2:24)

[Christian Salvation](#)