

Animal Sacrifices Today?

By Voy Wilks
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"Why do you not offer animal sacrifices today?"

This question is frequently asked because we teach that none of the laws of the Bible have been abolished or made void. This question is also asked because we observe the seven annual holy days which Yahweh has chosen as **His** festival days. We are asked, "If you observe part of the law of Moses, why do you not observe **all** of it, including the sacrifice of animals in rites of worship?"

Though it is not generally known, it is really true that **no portion** of the "the law" has passed away, been abolished or has become void. Yahshua said that He "**did not come to abolish** the law, but to **fulfill it**" ([Mt. 5:17-19](#)). This means to live the law perfectly. He also says that if you and I expect to be great in the Kingdom of Yahweh, we too, must **do** and **teach all** the law, even the smallest points of the law. As long as heaven and earth stand, not one law of the Bible will become void. "But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than for one dot of the law to become void" ([Lk. 16:17](#)). * If possible, the New English Bible reads more emphatically. "It is easier for heaven and earth to come to an end than for one dot or stroke of the law to lose its force." Since the law has not lost its force, this means that it is still to be observed. Planet earth is still here, so this is testimony that no law of the Bible ** has lost its force, or become void.

Paul, the great Apostle of Yahshua the Messiah agrees with the Savior about the law. He wrote, "Do we then make **void** the law through faith? Yahweh forbid: Yea, we **establish the law**" ([Rom. 3:31](#) KJV). He also testified that the law is **holy, just, good, and spiritual** ([Rom. 7:12-16](#))

Now that Yahshua Messiah and Paul the Apostle have established the law, and tell us it has never been abolished, and will never be abolished as long as the earth stands, let us carefully examine the laws concerning animal sacrifices.

Animal sacrifices were not to be offered at any place of their choosing, but only at the place where Yahweh placed His Great Name ([Deut. 16:5](#)). The Law of Yahweh required that all animal sacrifices were to be offered at the door of the tent of meeting - the tabernacle. We should also note that this Law required the assistance of the priest and the Levites ([Lev. 17:1-9](#)). These public officials were to receive their portion of the offering and the sacrifices. Any person who would not comply with these Laws was to be cut off from Israel.

In view of these findings, we see neither Jew nor Gentile can properly offer animal sacrifices today because:

1. Today the tabernacle (or temple) is not standing. It is not proper to offer animal sacrifices unless that which is offered can be brought to the door of the tent of meeting.
2. Since there is no temple, the Levites and the priest are not officiating, so it is improper to sacrifice unless these people receive their portion of that which is offered.
3. On the penalty of death, it is unlawful for anyone except but the Levites to offer sacrifices ([Lev. 12:19,26](#); [Num 3:9,10](#); [8:19](#); [18:4,7,23](#); [18:3-5](#)).

* Unless otherwise indicated, all Bible quotations are from the Revised Standard Version.

** All the Laws of the Bible are Laws of Yahweh, whether called the "Law of Yahweh" or the "Laws of Moses"

No Law Abolished

This does not mean that any of the laws of the Bible have been abolished, however. On the contrary, this means that the sacrifices are of such great importance to the Almighty that they must not be done improperly. As to the annual festivals, however, we can observe them without the assistance of the priest and the Levites. It is possible to observe the DAY to Yahweh, therefore, we are obligated to do so. Since it pleased the Supreme Being to ordain that these

days be observed FOREVER, it should be our pleasure to comply with his wishes ([Lev. 23:14,21,31,41](#)).

Now to continue with the study on animal sacrifices. Let us divide this into two parts, Gentile and Jewish.

Gentile

Yahshua the Messiah was, and is, our sacrifice for sin, and is totally adequate in every way.

"But when Messiah appeared he entered once for all into the holy place, taking... his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption" (Heb 9:11,12).

"But when Messiah had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sin, he sat down at the right hand of Yahweh,... for by a single offering he was perfected for all time those who are sanctified" (Heb. 10:12-14).

"... But as it is, he [Yahshua] has appeared once for all at the end of the age to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb. 9:26).

"... For Messiah, our paschal lamb, has been sacrificed [for sin]" (1 Cor. 5:7).

"The death he died, he died to sin, once for all" (Rom. 6:10).

This being true, there is no need for other sacrifices for sin on our behalf. For Gentiles there is a parallel between animal sacrifice and circumcision. We do not need physical circumcision, but we need the circumcision made without hands in the act of baptism (Acts 15, Col. 2:11). In the same way, Yahshua Messiah became our personal sacrifice for sin when we accept the ritual water baptism (Rom. 6:1-11). For us today, Yahshua is our totally adequate sacrifice for sin!

Jewish

It is not understood why the Jewish people need to offer animal sacrifices since the Messiah has come as the perfect sacrifice for sin. However, Scriptures tell us

that this is to be done FOREVER, an EVERLASTING STATUTE! (Ex. 29:9, 26-28; 30:8; Lev. 6:22; 7:34; 24:8,9; Nu. 15:15; 18:18,19; 19:1,10,20,21; 25:13).

Since 135 C.E. the sacrificial offerings have been suspended, but the prophet Ezekiel says that in a future time, eventually after the Messiah returns, animal sacrifices will be once more offered (Ezek. 44:9-31). The question has been asked, "Why will this be?" One answer is: this will be a convenient means of feeding the multitudes who go up to keep the annual festivals. There surely are other reasons, but those reasons are not known to this writer. Since Scripture says that this will happen, however, we are obliged to accept it, even though we do not fully understand the reason why.

As long as the Levites were officiating in the temple at Jerusalem, it was NOT IMPROPER for the Jews to worship in this fashion. - even those who believed Yahshua to be the Messiah. We learn this from the story of Paul, the great Apostle of Yahshua the Messiah. When he returned to Jerusalem from his last missionary journey, we find that thousands of Jewish saints who believed in Yahshua continued to keep the law of Moses (Acts 21:20,21). The report was that Paul no longer kept the law, so he, with four other men, set out to prove that they, too, kept the law of Moses, including the sacrificial law.

"We have four men who are under a vow; take these men and purify yourself along with them and pay their expenses, so that they may shave their heads. Then ALL WILL KNOW that there is nothing in what they have been told, but YOU yourself will LIVE IN OBEDIENCE OF THE LAW" (Acts 21:23,24).

Please notice that these men were already under a vow. The seven days, the shaving of the head, and the offering of the animals were all part of the termination of the vow, not its beginning (Nu. 6:9,18,19). It was on the last day of purification, and the last day of the vow, that the head was to be shaved and the animals offered for each person.. For these rites, the offering required were as follows:

1 male lamb, 1 year old

1 ewe lamb, 1 year old

1 ram

1 basket of unleavened bread

Cakes of fine flour
Unleavened Wafers
A cereal offering
A drink offering

Every person was to offer these eight items at the conclusion of the nazirite vow (Nu. 6:13-20). Animal sacrifices, except for the burnt offerings, were cooked as food and eaten. They were baked in the oven, boiled in the pot, and cooked as roast, so what this amounted to was a full meal for the five men and the priest who officiated. Indeed, it was a feast - a banquet! The Apostle Paul joined in this to PROVE that he, too, observed the law of Moses as did thousands of other Jewish people who believed in Yahshua as the Messiah.

It is only fair to point out that the leaders of the Jerusalem assembly had no complaint against these rites of worship. Indeed, they were the ones who suggested this be done! Nor did they have a complaint against those thousands who continued to observe the customs of the law. Non-Biblical historical accounts also say that the early "Christians", being mostly Jewish, continued to observe the Jewish traditions (Encyc. Brit., 9th Ed., Vol. 7; Page 531).

"There is ONE LAWGIVER, who is able to save and destroy..." (James 2:12).

This ONE LAWGIVER is Yahweh the Almighty, the Supreme Being who spoke from the mountain top.

"For Yahweh is our judge, Yahweh is our lawgiver, Yahweh is our king; he will save us" (Isa. 33:22 KJV).

"The law of Yahweh is perfect,..." (Ps. 19:7).

"The sum of thy word is truth and every one of thy righteous ORDINANCES ENDURES FOREVER" (Ps. 119: 160).

"... the WORD OF Yahweh abides FOREVER" (1 Pet. 1:25).

Since Yahweh's LAW is PERFECT, and his ORDINANCES ENDURE FOR EVER, why should anyone wish to change them? Since they are EVERLASTING, let us begin today and accept them as they are!

Summary

- + Yahshua is our sacrifice for sin.
 - + As long as the temple stood, it was not improper for believing Jews to offer animal sacrifices. Thousands did this very thing.
 - + It is improper for either Gentile or Jew to offer animal sacrifices when
 - (1) there is no temple standing, and
 - (2) when there are no Levites to officiate in this worship.
- "Everything that I command you, you shall be careful to do; you shall not add to it or take from it" (Deut. 12 32).