

Animal sacrifice again?

Previously we noted how Isaiah shows that the former enemies of Israel, will worship the God of Israel. Their active participation will include providing ritually acceptable animals from their flocks. These are to be used in the restored kingdom of David for animal sacrifices.

But how can this be when we are told that Jesus **12** *“offered one sacrifice for sins forever”* and **18** *“there is no longer an offering for sin”* - **Hebrews 10**? What purpose would there be in bringing back animal sacrifices? In actual fact, the Scriptures plainly foretell the restoration of animal sacrifices in the age to come. Since this is the case, then any other parts of Scripture which might seem to deny this, must be understood in harmony with this plain teaching.

Just before Jesus ascended from the mount of Olives, the disciples asked him, *“Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?”* - **Acts 1:6**. This expectation became a subject of their later preaching, and Peter referred to the return of Christ as *“the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began”* - **Acts 3:21**. That restoration was promised by God through **Jeremiah**, *“I will cause the captives of Judah and the captives of Israel to return, and will rebuild those places as at the first”* - **33:7**.

After His resurrection from the dead Jesus said, *“All things must needs be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms, concerning Me”* - **Luke 24:44**. One of the things concerning Him involving the restoration of animal sacrifices - *“In those days and at that time I will cause to grow up to David a Branch of righteousness. He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.”* This Branch is Jesus Christ after his return. *“For thus says the LORD: David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel; nor shall the priests, the Levites, lack a man to offer burnt offerings before Me, to kindle grain offerings, and to sacrifice continually”* - **Jeremiah 33:15-18**. This has never yet been fulfilled.

After Jesus cleansed the temple - **Mark 11:17** - he quoted God’s promise in **Isaiah 56:6-7**, *“The sons of the foreigner who join themselves to the Lord ... even them I will bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on My altar; for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.”* Nor has this been fulfilled, because it awaits the return of Jesus, which **Zechariah** speaks of, *“In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east.”* After Jesus has pacified the nations - **Psalms 2** - they will worship the God of Israel - *“And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles”* - see **Numbers 29** - which required the sacrifice of more than 200 animals - *“Yes, every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be holiness to the LORD of hosts. Everyone who sacrifices shall come and take them and cook in them”* - **Zechariah 14:4-21**.

During the Kingdom of God under the law of Moses, animal sacrifices **pointed forward** to the sacrificial Lamb of God's providing. In the Kingdom Restored, animal sacrifices will **point backward** to that same provision for taking away sin. In both cases, animal sacrifices could never in themselves *“take away sins”* - **Hebrews 10:4**. Under the law of Moses, the person offering the sacrifice must first lay his hand on the head of the animal, in this way identifying himself with it, and then slaughter it - **Leviticus 4:27-29**. In this way the worshipper is visibly and graphically reminded that *“the wages of sin is death”* - **Romans 6:23**.

And so the sacrifice of animals in the restored Kingdom of God under Jesus, will exercise a powerful deterring influence against sin, when *“the judgments of God are in the earth”* - **Isaiah 26:9**.