

SACRIFICE

The idea of a “Sacrifice” seems to be a part of all religions. The heathen offer up various gifts as sacrifice to their ‘gods’ to appease them. The Old Testament required the nation of Israel to offer to Yahweh the required sacrifices of animals under the Covenant.

In the New Testament, we know that Christ’s sacrifice on the cross, His atoning death, is sufficient for bringing man back to God, redeeming the world from sin to salvation. So the Scripture teaches we no longer need the temple and animal sacrifices. This is what is so strange about the teaching of certain “dispensationalist” preachers about prophecy and a rebuilding of a temple when Jesus comes back. Such an idea negates His purpose on the cross, and the establishment of the church.

Romans 12, Paul urges us to simply offer ourselves as “living sacrifices” holy and pleasing to God. This is now our service to Him. Such sacrifice of our life and service does not atone for our sin, but is an offering of thanks because of God’s grace in sending Jesus, His son, to shed His blood for us.

If we look at the times the word *Sacrifice* is used in the New Testament in reference to the Christian life, it provides an interesting plan for us and the church. In Heb 13:15 says praising God with our lips in thanksgiving for his mercy is called an acceptable sacrifice. Therefore our hymns, prayers, and testimony are a reasonable way to offer sacrifice. It says the “fruit of our lips” is offered up to God and he is pleased.

In the next verse, it speaks of sharing our material goods with the poor as a sacrifice. This is certainly in harmony with Jesus’ teaching about charity in His name, and the picture of the judgment day as seen in Matthew 25.

Again the word sacrifice by a Christian is mentioned in Philippians 4:8 where Paul says that the support they have give to the preaching of the gospel through his mission work was a sacrifice well-pleasing to God.

As Christians who have been reconciled to God through the sacrifice of Jesus, we not longer need an alter, animals or a priest. Our lives become the sacrifice God desires, and these three Scriptures seem a perfect pattern for our life as Christians and for the work of our church.

We worship with prayer, praise, testimony, Scripture and around the table of remembrance each Lord’s day to remember Christ’s ultimate sacrifice. Then we use our time, talent, money and influence to the outward acts he is please with-----sharing with the poor and needy, and supporting the preaching of the gospel throughout the world. Worship, Benevolence, Missions..... sums it up pretty well.