

SACRIFICES DURING THE MILLENNIUM

The sacrifices described in Scripture as being offered during the millennial days (Ezek. 40-46) should not cause the modern day Christian any doctrinal concern. Those sacrifices will, of course, not be offered with the intent of atoning for sin. As Hebrews 10 explains (esp. vs. 18) and verse 29 concludes, to so do would be a blasphemous act as it would “trodden under foot the Son of God” and count “the blood of the covenant...an unholy thing” – thus outraging the Holy Spirit.

It is the purpose and intent involved in making these millennial sacrifices that makes all the difference in God’s view. Even today – as in Bible days – we slay animals for the purpose of eating them as part of our food source without the condemnation of Scripture. Conversely, ever since the Cross the act of killing an animal with the intent of atonement is soundly condemned by Hebrews 10 as a great sin. Thus, the same act may or may not be sin. With God, motive is everything.

Rather than being offered as payment for sin and/or sins, they will commemorate the sacrifice at Calvary, much as the Lord’s Supper does now.¹ The Lord’s Supper is not an efficacious sacrifice but a memorial of an all-sufficient sacrifice made for all sin for all time.

Although the Church has remembered the death of the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross for sinners in the Lord’s Supper, Israel has thus far had no such memorial of His great finished work of redemption in the centuries of their unbelief. The millennial sacrifices will perform the function of such a memorial for the redeemed nation.

Indeed, such sacrifices could not possibly be efficacious sacrifices in the millennial kingdom, for even in Old Testament times the sacrifices were never expiatory to pay the penalty of sin. They were merely temporary “coverings” for sin and had no real efficacy; rather, they were only symbolic of the forfeiture of life for sin – they never took away sin (“For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins”: Heb. 10:4). Therefore they are not meant to take away sin here. Indeed, how could these animals be invested with a power and capability at this point in time when they had no such ability inherent within them previously?

In the Old Testament economy, sacrifices were signposts which looked *forward* to the true once and for all final sacrifice of “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29; cp. Jer. 33:14–26, esp. vs. 18; also see Mal. 3:1–4). During the millennium they will be memorials looking *back* to the central event of all history – Christ Jesus’ death on Calvary and His resurrection on the third day.

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¹ Dr. Charles L. Feinberg, *The Minor Prophets*, (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1987), pp. 261-262. Also: Dr. J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1973), pp. 517-531.