

A The meaning of sacrifices:

❖ **Pleasant and unpleasant sacrifices.**

- God instituted animal sacrifice as a form of worship. However, He went so far as to say that He was “enough” of such sacrifices (Isa. 1:11). But soon after, He will say, “Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar” (Isa. 56:7). Were the sacrifices pleasing to God, or did they displease Him?
- We can answer this question with the example of Cain and Abel. Abel's sacrifice was pleasing to him, but Cain's was ungrateful (Gen. 4:3-5).
- The problem wasn't just the type of sacrifice. The attitude with which it was offered determined the quality of the offering.
- Cain, like the Israelites of Isaiah's time, did not wish to harmonize his life with God, nor did he see any salvific significance in his sacrifice. Abel, on the other hand, recognized himself as a sinner and acknowledged the Lamb as his substitute.

❖ **The sacrifices of the Sanctuary.**

- The punishment for sin is death (Rom. 6:23a). But is the death of an animal the punishment for my sin? No! The punishment for **MY** sin is **MY** death.
- So why sacrifice animals that cannot take away our sin (Heb. 10:3-4)?
- These animals were symbols (types) of Jesus's redemptive death (antitype). Until Jesus died cruelly and unjustly for the sins of the world, every animal sacrificed symbolized that substitutionary death. Jesus died in **MY** place as punishment for **MY** sin.
- Until the cross, these sacrifices were necessary as "mini-prophecies." Sins were forgiven by faith in the Lamb of God who was about to die.
- When the veil was rent after Jesus' death, those sacrifices became meaningless. Now, our sins are forgiven by faith in the Lamb of God who died for them.

❖ **The Passover lamb.**

- At the first Passover, the doors were painted with the sacrificed blood of the lamb, and the angel of death passed by. The firstborn in that house were spared.
- That blood symbolized the blood of Jesus (1 Pet. 1:18-19). The Passover ritual celebrated each year was, therefore, a symbol of Jesus' death (1 Cor. 5:7b).
- Jesus was the only human being whose life was acceptable to a holy God. He died without sin so that death might pass by when I cleanse my life with his blood (Rev. 7:14).

B Jesus, the Lamb of God:

❖ **The Lamb in the Temple.**

- During the dedication of the first Temple, when the ark was brought into it, the glory of God filled the Temple (1 Kings 8:5-10).
- After the return from the Babylonian exodus, a second temple was built. But there was no ark in it, and no glory filled the Temple at its dedication. Many mourned this fact (Hag. 2:3).
- But God promised that his glory would fill that Temple, and he would do so through one person: The Desired One (Hag. 2:7). Who was this “Desired One”?
- Jesus was called “God with us” (Matthew 1:21-23). As he walked, taught, and healed in the Temple, the glory of God's very presence filled the Temple. Every act performed in it depended on that glory. The Creator himself was willing to live among us... and to die for us.

❖ **The Lamb in Heaven.**

- Three prophets—Ezekiel, Isaiah, and John—were able to contemplate God's throne in vision. While Ezekiel was a mere observer, Isaiah and John interacted on the scene:
 - (1) They saw angels praising him: “Holy, holy, holy” (Is. 6:1-3; Rev. 4:8)
 - (2) Isaiah felt unworthy; and John wept because there was no one worthy (Isa. 6:5; Rev. 5:4)
 - (3) Isaiah's sin was taken away; and John beheld the Lamb slain for his sin (Isa. 6:6-7; Rev. 5:6)
- Our unworthiness enhances the dignity of the Lamb. By being slain, Jesus demonstrated two things:
 - (1) That God loves us to the point of sacrificing himself for us.
 - (2) That our condition as sinners is so grave and desperate that only through the Cross can we be saved.