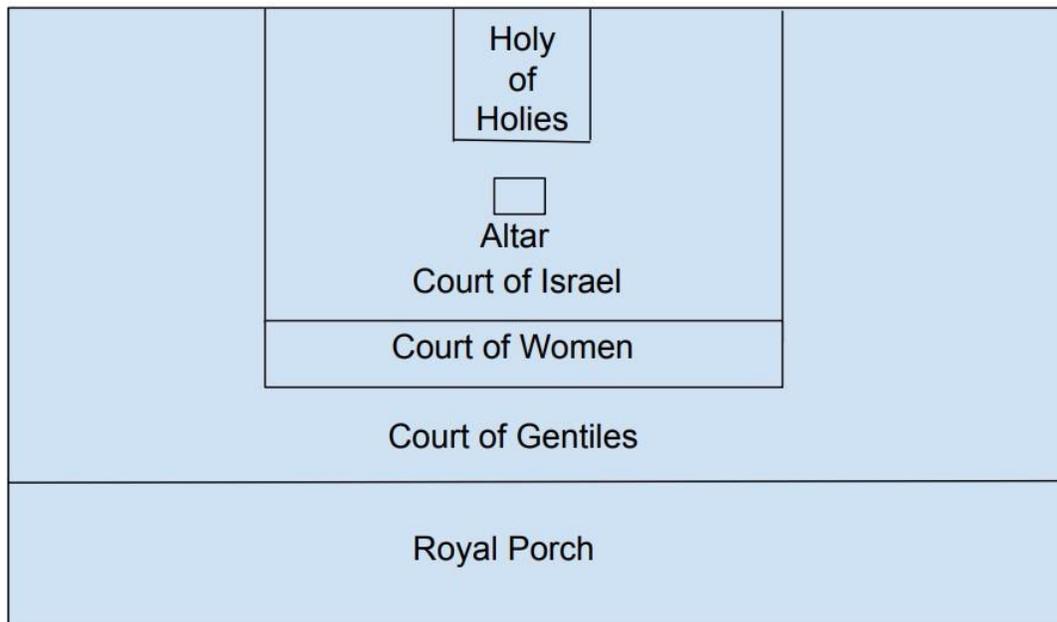


Jesus Changes Everything
Jesus Changed Religion: Sacrifice of Jesus ([Hebrews 5:7-10](#))
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WATCH/LISTEN:

Herod's Temple



The temple built by Herod began building in about 20 BC and finished in about 67 AD was an approximate visual representation of the Jewish sacrificial system that had been practiced for hundreds of years. The court of the gentiles was more than likely the place where business took place (selling of sheep, goats, calves, doves, etc.) and the place where Jesus exercised the “cleansing” of the temple. Thousands, some say millions, of Jews from all over the known world gathered for the annual Passover Festival. There they would carry out the ritual of sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins.

Why the Sacrificial System?

The sacrificial system as seen in the Bible has not been practiced according to the ordinances given by God since the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D. As a result of this practice being almost completely removed from the Jewish culture after the second century, it is oftentimes overlooked and misunderstood by both Jews and Gentiles. However, there is much to gain and learn from the ordinances God gave to the Israelites.

Once the Law was given to Moses on Mount Sinai, the sacrificial system was ordained by God and placed at the very center and heart of Jewish national life. Through the unceasing sacrifice of animals, God was burning into the heart of every man an awareness of their own sin. This was meant to be an age-long picture of the coming sacrifice of Messiah. The sacrifices pointed to Him and they were fulfilled in Him. The entirety of the Old Testament, every book, points to the Great Sacrifice that was to come, the eternal sacrifice given by God to be fulfilled by the Son, Jesus.

Let's look first at Hebrews. Hebrews 1: 1-2 "In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe." Hebrews 3:1-3 "Therefore, holy brothers and sisters, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, whom we acknowledge as our apostle and high priest. He was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all God's house. Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself." Hebrews 4:14 "Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess."

Why did it require a blood sacrifice?

"For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul." Leviticus 17:11

A "sacrifice," in its biblical context, is defined as the offering up of something precious for a cause or a reason. The word "atonement" means to cover or satisfy an offense committed, a substitutionary act. Thus, we can understand what God meant when He told Moses that the blood was to make atonement for the soul. In other words, those who are covered by the blood sacrifice are set free from the consequences of sin.

The animal sacrifices from the time of the first covenant only atoned for sin partially and for a short time, hence the need to repeat the sacrifices. Hebrews 9:12-18 confirms the symbolism of blood as life and applies Leviticus 17:11 to the sacrifice of Jesus. *"Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this reason He is the Mediator of*

the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. For where there is a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives. Therefore not even the first covenant was dedicated without blood."

What was the purpose of the sprinkling of blood?

"And [Moses] rose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes of Israel. Then he sent young men of the children of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the Lord. And Moses took half the blood and put it in basins, and half the blood he sprinkled on the altar. Then he took the Book of the Covenant (First Covenant) and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, "All that the Lord has said we will do, and be obedient." And Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people, and said, "This is the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you according to all these words." Exodus 24:4-8

Because blood represents life, sprinkling of the blood on the people represents a sealing of the covenant of God with His people. Jesus spoke of blood during the final Passover meal with His disciples. He said the wine represented His blood that would be poured out for us (Luke 22:20). His blood was the seal of the new covenant extended to all who believe. "In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood' (1 Corinthians 11:25). Those who believe in Him step into the new covenant through the blood that was poured out by Jesus at His death on the cross.

There are different ritual sacrifices: Burnt Offerings, Grain Offerings, The Peace Offerings, The Sin Offerings, The Trespass Offerings.

So, what do we do with the first covenant?

It is still very important for us to study the first covenant and things like the sacrificial system. We can grow in knowledge and understanding of the character of God and the weight of sin in our lives. As believers in Jesus as the sacrificial Lamb of God we understand that we no longer are required to perform the ritual sacrifice of animals to restore our relationship with God. The essence of the sacrificial system is creating a right relationship with God. From the beginning, God sought to be intimately connected with His creation, but unfortunately our sin was the barrier. With the ultimate and eternal sacrifice of His Son, we are free to be in relationship with Him.

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