

God's Building 11: The Only Acceptable Sacrifices

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1 Peter 1.23-2.3

²³ For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God... ² Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, ³ now that you have tasted that the Lord is good

1 Peter 2.4-5

⁴ As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him— ⁵ you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 2.4-5

1. Come to Him
2. Become like Him
3. Be built by Him
4. Sacrifice through Him

Recap

1. 'Come to Him' (2.4) means:
 - being 'born again...' is a spiritual birth (1.23)
2. Become like Him ('living stones') means:
 - 'As newborn babies, crave pure spiritual ('true to real nature') milk, so that by it you may grow up into your salvation' (2.2)
 - Newborn 'search and suck'...
3. Being built into a 'spiritual house' (2.5)
4. Offering acceptable, 'spiritual sacrifices'

Spiritual House

- 'are being built into a spiritual house' (2.5)
- Two building projects: Divine (2.6) **vs.** human 'builders' (2.7)
- The 'cornerstone': laid by God (2.6) and precious to Him (2.4) **vs.** 'rejected by men' (2.4, 7).
- 'a spiritual house' **vs.** a physical building.
- 'scattered throughout' the world (1 Pet 1.1) **vs.** centred in Jerusalem.

Spiritual House

- 'are being built into a spiritual house' (2.5)
 - 'being build' (2.5 = present process) vs. 'builders rejected' (2.7 = past event).
 - 'living stones' (2.5) vs. dead bricks.
 - God/Self-built (2.5, double nom.) vs. other-built (2.6) – we're not passive in the building project!
- Eph 4:**¹⁵...speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Holy Priesthood

- 'holy priesthood' (2.5) 'of all believers'
 = 'a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God' (2.9).
 Exodus 19: ³... "This is what you are to say to the house of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Israel: ⁴'...I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. ⁵Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, ⁶you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.'
- Israel's problem is solved for us in Christ.

Spiritual Sacrifices

- 'spiritual sacrifices' can only be made in a 'spiritual house' (1 Pet 2.5) → there are no acceptable sacrifices outside Church!
- 'acceptable, spiritual sacrifices' can only be offered by a 'holy' priesthood:
 Rev 8: ³...He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar before the throne. ⁴The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints, went up before God from the angel's hand.

Spiritual Sacrifices

- It is 'spiritual sacrifices' (1 Pet 2.5) rather than mere physical sacrifices (Ps 50.7-13) that are 'acceptable to God':

Ps 50:¹⁴Sacrifice thank offerings to God, fulfill your vows to the Most High,
¹⁵and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me.

Spiritual Sacrifices

- Not all sacrifices are 'acceptable' (1 Pet 2.5; Gen 4.3-7; Mal 1.8-10)
- 'acceptable, spiritual sacrifices' can only be offered in faith:

Phil 2.17: the sacrifice and service coming from your faith...

Heb 11.4: By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks.

Spiritual Sacrifices

- 'acceptable, spiritual sacrifices' can be willing gifts:

2 Cor 8.12: For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have.

Phil 4.18: I have received full payment and even more; I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.

Spiritual Sacrifices

- 'acceptable, spiritual sacrifices' can be Spirit-sanctified converts:
- Rom 15.16:** ...the grace given me by God to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

Spiritual Sacrifices

- 'acceptable, spiritual sacrifices' includes our whole lives:
- Rom 12.1-2:** ¹I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ²Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Spiritual Sacrifices

- 'acceptable, spiritual sacrifices' must be 'through Jesus Christ':
- Heb 13.15-16:** ¹⁵Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess his name. ¹⁶And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

Spiritual Sacrifices

• 'acceptable, spiritual sacrifices' must be in word and deed (cf. 1 Pet 4.10-11):

1 Pet 2.12: ¹²Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

1 Pet 2.9: ⁹But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

Spiritual Sacrifices

The power to make such sacrifices comes from the sacrifice Jesus made and the mercy He showed us (1 Pet 2.10), just like Hosea to Gomer (Hosea 2.23).

Conclusion

Acceptable, 'spiritual sacrifices' can only be made by a 'holy priesthood' and in a 'spiritual house', so we must

1. Come to Him
2. Become like Him
3. Be built by Him
4. Offer through Him
