

Deuteronomy 17:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thou shalt not sacrifice unto the LORD thy God any bullock, or sheep, wherein is blemish, or any evilfavouredness: for that is an abomination unto the LORD thy God.

Analysis

Thou shalt not sacrifice unto the LORD thy God any bullock, or sheep, wherein is blemish (מַמְלֵאָה, mum)—a defect, flaw, or physical imperfection. Leviticus 22:20-25 elaborates: lameness, blindness, broken bones all disqualify. The Hebrew **any evilfavouredness** (דָּבָר רָעָה, davar ra) means 'any bad thing'—even minor flaws.

Why such strictness? Because **that is an abomination** (תֹּוֹתְבָה, to'evah) unto the LORD. Offering defective animals insults God's holiness and reveals contempt, not worship. Malachi 1:8, 13-14 condemns this exact sin: offering blind, lame, sick animals while keeping healthy ones. The principle: God deserves our best, not our leftovers. Christ fulfilled this as the spotless Lamb (1 Peter 1:19).

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern sacrificial systems often accepted blemished animals—worshipers kept the best livestock for themselves. Israel's law demanded the opposite: firstborn males, unblemished offerings. This distinguished Yahweh-worship from pagan pragmatism. Post-exilic Judah violated this (Malachi 1), contributing to spiritual decline.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. What 'blemished offerings' might you be giving God—leftover time, minimal effort, second-best resources?
2. How does Christ as the unblemished sacrifice redefine what you owe God in worship and obedience?

Interlinear Text

לֹא תִזְבְּחֵה יְהֹוָה בָּנָךְ שׂוֹר שׂה וּשׂה הַלְּבָנָה אֲלֹהָה יְהֹוָה אֱלֹהִים
H3808 Thou shalt not sacrifice unto the LORD thy God any bullock or sheep
H2076 H3068 H430 H7794 H7716

בַּזְבֻּנְתְּךָ רְאֵשׁ מִמְּלֵאָה כְּלָבָד כְּרָבָד עַבְדָּלָה
H834 H1961 H0 wherein is blemish H3605 H1697 or any evilfavouredness
H3971 H7451

כִּי תֹּעֲבֵת תְּהִלָּה יְהֹוָה בָּנָךְ אֲלֹהָה יְהֹוָה הַוָּא
H3588 for that is an abomination unto the LORD thy God H1931
H8441 H3068 H430

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 15:21 (Sacrifice): And if there be any blemish therein, as if it be lame, or blind, or have any ill blemish, thou shalt not sacrifice it unto the LORD thy God.

Deuteronomy 23:18 (References God): Thou shalt not bring the hire of a whore, or the price of a dog, into the house of the LORD thy God for any vow: for even both these are abomination unto the LORD thy God.

Malachi 1:8 (Sacrifice): And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the LORD of hosts.

Deuteronomy 24:4 (References God): Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.

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