

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 (מוֹם, mum)—a defect, flaw, or physical imperfection. Leviticus 22:20-25 elaborates: lameness, blindness, broken bones all disqualify. The Hebrew **any evilfavouredness** (דָּבָר רָע, davar ra) means 'any bad thing'—even minor flaws.

Why such strictness? Because **that is an abomination** (תועבה, 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—worshippers 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

Psalms 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	תִזְבֹּחַ	יְהוָה	אֱלֹהֶיךָ	שׁוֹר	וְשֶׁה
H3808	Thou shalt not sacrifice	unto the LORD	thy God	any bullock	or sheep
	H2076	H3068	H430	H7794	H7716
אֶשֶׁר	יְהוָה	בּוֹ	מִוֹם	כָּל	דָּבָר
H834	H1961	H0	wherein is blemish	H3605	H1697
			H3971		or any evilfavouredness
					H7451
כִּי	תִזְבֹּחַ	יְהוָה	אֱלֹהֶיךָ	הוא:	
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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