

Isaiah 1:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats.

Analysis

God's rhetorical question demolishes empty ritualism. The multiplication of sacrifices without heart obedience repulses rather than pleases God. The Hebrew 'hefets' (delight) indicates God's positive pleasure is absent when worship divorced from obedience continues. This anticipates Samuel's principle: 'to obey is better than sacrifice' (1 Samuel 15:22) and Jesus's critique of Pharisaic religion.

Historical Context

Despite approaching apostasy, eighth-century Judah maintained elaborate temple worship. Isaiah exposes this cognitive dissonance—correct ritual without covenant faithfulness is an abomination to God.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. Are you substituting religious activity for authentic obedience in any area of your life?
2. How does this passage challenge contemporary worship practices that emphasize form over transformed hearts?

Interlinear Text

ל	ו	לְתָה	רַב	זָבְחִיכֶם	נָאֵם	רָ	יְהִי	ה	לְתָה
To what	^{וּ}	purpose is the multitude	of your sacrifices	unto me saith	the LORD				
H4100		H7230	H2077	H559	H3068				
I am full		of the burnt offerings	of rams	and the fat	of fed beasts				
H7646		H5930	H352	H2459	H4806				
not in the blood		of bullocks	or of lambs	or of he goats	and I delight				
H1818		H6499	H3532	H6260	H3808				

Additional Cross-References

Amos 5:21 (Parallel theme): I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies.

1 Samuel 15:22 (Sacrifice): And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

Jeremiah 6:20 (Sacrifice): To what purpose cometh there to me incense from Sheba, and the sweet cane from a far country? your burnt offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices sweet unto me.

Micah 6:7 (References Lord): Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

Isaiah 66:3 (Blood): He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations.

Psalms 50:8 (Sacrifice): I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or thy burnt offerings, to have been continually before me.

Proverbs 15:8 (Sacrifice): The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD: but the prayer of the upright is his delight.

Malachi 1:10 (Sacrifice): Who is there even among you that would shut the doors for nought? neither do ye kindle fire on mine altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you, saith the LORD of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand.

Proverbs 21:27 (Sacrifice): The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination: how much more, when he bringeth it with a wicked mind?

Matthew 9:13 (Sacrifice): But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.