

Psalm 51:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering.

Analysis

The inadequacy of ritual: 'For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering.' David cannot simply offer an animal and be cleansed. His sin exceeds ritual remedy. God desires something sacrifice alone cannot provide. This isn't rejecting sacrifice but recognizing its limits.

Historical Context

The sacrificial system provided for sins committed unintentionally (Leviticus 4). For deliberate sins like adultery and murder, no sacrifice was prescribed--only throwing oneself on divine mercy.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. Why couldn't sacrifice alone address David's sin?
2. What does this verse teach about the limits of religious ritual?

Interlinear Text

ע וְלֹא כִּי תְחַפֵּךְ זֶבַח וְאַתְּ נָהָרֶךְ
H3588 H3808 For thou desirest not sacrifice else would I give not in burnt offering
H2654 H2077 H5414 H5930

לֹא תְחַפֵּךְ מְרַצְּךָ
H3808 it thou delightest
H7521

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 40:6 (Sacrifice): Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required.

Hosea 6:6 (Sacrifice): For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.

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.

Psalms 51:6 (Parallel theme): Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.

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

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.

Jeremiah 7:27 (Parallel theme): Therefore thou shalt speak all these words unto them; but they will not hearken to thee: thou shalt also call unto them; but they will not answer thee.