

Year Of The Ox



In the Bible, the ox is known for its strength, its usefulness on the farm, and its value as property. Together with the sheep, the goat, the pigeon, and the dove, it was used as sacrifice in the burnt offering to God.¹ This ancient system of worship was instituted by God when the first pair of human beings — Adam and Eve — sinned against Him.² As it passed down the human race, the sacrifice became distorted. Many cultures in the world practise the offering of animal sacrifices to appease the spirits or deities, and fail to worship the one, true, God in the right way.³

What did the original burnt offering indicate? First, it showed that we have sinned against God and, therefore, need a way to pay for our sins.⁴ We sin in our thoughts, words, and deeds. We have failed to do what God requires from us — e.g. to act justly, to show mercy, to worship the true God alone, etc. We have also failed to avoid what God forbids us to do, e.g. not to lie, not to hate, not to steal, not to worship idols, etc. These sinful actions flow from a sinful nature which we have inherited from our parents. We have the twin problems of a sinful nature which we cannot change, and the debt of sins which we cannot pay.

Second, the burnt offering showed that only a perfect sacrifice could make up for our sins. The animal had to be a male that was without blemish.⁵ It was killed and the blood was sprinkled on the altar while the body was burnt to God. This pointed to the coming of the Son of God who took for Himself sinless human nature. He is Jesus Christ, “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world”.⁶ When Jesus Christ died on the cross, His blood was shed for the cleansing of our sin. His life was laid down as the perfect payment of our sins.

The ox is still the measure of prosperity in some agrarian communities. In the cities, people seek prosperity through betting on a bullish market. Others pursue prosperity in other ways while neglecting the welfare of their souls. Are you one of those? “What profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?”⁷ Seek peace with God today, through faith in Jesus Christ!

1 Lev. 1:2, 14, 15; 2 Gen. 3:21; 4:3-4; 3 Acts 17:26-27; 4 Rom. 1:18-23; 5 Lev. 22:18-20; 6 John 1:29; 7 Matt.16:26

牛年



在圣经中，牛以其力量、在农场上的用处以及当成资产的价值而闻名。它与绵羊、山羊和鸽子一起被用作燔祭祭物以献给上帝。¹这种古老的敬拜制度是上帝在第一对人类——亚当和夏娃，得罪上帝时建立的。²这献祭制度随着代代相传，被扭曲了。世界上许多文化都通过献动物祭来安抚神灵，却没有以正确的方式敬拜那唯一的真神。³

原有的燔祭表明什么？首先，它表明我们得罪上帝，因此需要某种方式来偿还我们的罪孽。⁴我们在思想，言语和行为上都犯了罪。我们没有完成上帝对我们的要求——例如行公义、有怜悯、只敬拜真神等。我们也未能避免上帝禁止我们做的事情，例如不撒谎、不恨、不偷窃、不崇拜偶像等。这些犯罪行为源于我们从父母那里继承的罪性。我们面临着双重问题，那就是无法改变的罪性，以及无法偿还的罪债。

其次，献燔祭显示唯有一个完美的祭物才能弥补我们的罪。该动物必须是没有瑕疵的雄性。⁵它被杀死，其血被洒在坛上，而身体被献给上帝。这表明了神子的降临，他取了无罪的人性。他是耶稣基督，“神的羔羊，除去世人罪孽的。”⁶当耶稣基督死在十字架上时，他的血就为洁净我们的罪孽而流。他的生命为完美偿还我们罪孽而献上。

牛仍然是某些农业社会繁荣的标准。在城市中，人们通过押注牛市（看涨的市场）来寻求繁荣。其他人则以其他方式追求繁荣，却忽略了自己心灵的福祉。你是其中之一吗？“人若赚得全世界，赔上自己的生命，有什么益处呢？”⁷今天就通过信靠耶稣基督，寻求与上帝和好！

1 利1:2, 14, 15; 2 创 3:21; 4:3-4; 3 徒 17:26-27; 4 罗1:18-23; 5 利22:18-20; 6 约 1:29; 7 太16:26