

Heb. 13:15-16 “New Covenant Sacrifices”

For the Children: OT believers had to make many sacrifices to God – of animals and their blood, for the removal of sin; and of grain and bread, as a way to say “Thank You” to God; or to show that they wanted to serve Him. Today, we do not make animal sacrifices. The Lord Jesus has taken away all our sins, so we don’t need to offer any more blood. But we do need to say “Thank You” to God – especially for sending His Son. We can show that we are thankful by praising Him; by saying “Thank You” as we worship Him; by obeying Him and doing good works with His help; and showing that we love our neighbour, by sharing with him. **Questions:** Can we earn favour with God by expressing our gratitude? If we cannot earn favour with Him, then why bother doing these things? What are some of the things we can share with others?

Introduction:

First Point: The Sacrifice of Praise

- 1) OT Thank-Offerings: The “sacrifice of praise” (v. 15) is defined as the “fruit of lips that give thanks to His Name.” This alludes to Lev. 7:12, which describes non-bloody grain offerings as an expression of thanks to God. In Lev. 7, this thank-offering was connected to a guilt-offering that involved animal sacrifice.
- 2) Sin-Offerings Ended: However, Jesus’ blood has now paid for the sins of the elect once and for all. See 13:12. We do not need, and should not offer, any further sin/guilt offerings. Now, only the thank-offerings remain. Hence the words, “through Him” in v. 15. Thanksgiving is also emphasized in our Lord’s Supper services, with the “cup of thanksgiving” and the use of Ps. 103. A similar point is made by Hos. 14:2, also alluded to in v. 15; and in Ps. 50:14. Even in the OT, the Lord preferred sincere gratitude over a mechanical offering of animal sacrifices.
- 3) The Sacrifice of Confession: “Give thanks to His Name” (v. 15) literally translates “confess His Name.” Praise, thanks and confession are closely related, because when we praise and thank Him, we are confessing His Person and works – which have led us to offer praise and thanks. This combination of “offerings” to God is even more important than the formal offerings of grain, bread etc. in the OT.

Second Point: The Sacrifice of Good Deeds

- 1) Doing Good: V. 16 exhorts us to do good as well as to offer praise and thanks to the Lord. Empty formality in offering words of praise or thanks is displeasing to the Lord. He would rather have a heart that is turned toward Him. Such a heart strives to do that which is good in His sight (Hos. 6:6; Mic. 6:6-8). Obedience from the heart is also an important part of expressing gratitude.
- 2) Sharing: “Sharing” (v. 16), the “fellowship of showing charity and generosity, is singled out as an important part of “doing good.” By this, the Lord shows that a sincere love of God leads to a love of neighbour as well. This is not a minor matter. See Jam. 2:8, 1:27, Acts 2:43f, 4:32f. This is another expression of gratitude to God, when we imitate His generosity. We can share our resources, our gifts, our time and energy in helping others; we can share the Word with unbelievers and for the encouragement of fellow-believers.

Conclusion:

