

Does Your Rabbi Teach What Moses Taught?

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Did you ever wonder if your Rabbi, or rabbis in general, were still teaching the religion of Moses? You will hear many rabbis speak of the greatness of the Torah (the writings of Moses) and of the need for all Jews to live by the Torah.

Have you ever read the books of the Torah, known in English as Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy? If you did, it would not take you long at all to see a major difference between the religion of Moses and the religion of the rabbis.

Sacrifices in the Law of Moses

Beginning in Genesis, you would read in chapter 8, “Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and . . . he offered burnt offerings on the altar” (This and all scripture quotations will be from the Jewish Publication Society’s Tanakh). Then in Genesis 22 you read, “So Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering in place of his son”. In Genesis 31 you will find that Jacob offered sacrifices to God. Then as you get into the story of the first Passover in Exodus 12, you read, “Moses then summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them, ‘Go, pick out lambs for your families, and slaughter the passover offering.’”

Just from that short reading we find that Noah, Abraham, Jacob, and the generation of Israel in Moses’ day offered sacrifices to God.

Moses Commands the Sacrifice

We see the example of the patriarchs in the Torah is one in which sacrifice was a major part of the worship of God. Yet there is more to sacrifice than a mere example. Sacrifice is a command.

Right in Exodus 20, the same chapter as the Ten Commandments, God says, “Make for Me an altar of earth and sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your sacrifices of well-being, your sheep and your oxen . . .”. The command to sacrifice and how to sacrifice is then found repeated throughout the Torah, but most explicitly in Leviticus chapters 1-7. This is no minor commandment of the Law, but a major part of the religion which Moses handed down.

But where is the sacrifice today? How is it that the religion which claims to follow Moses, leaves out a major part of what he taught? Orthodox Jews do not sacrifice. Conservative Jews do not sacrifice. Reform Jews do not sacrifice. None of the rabbis teach sacrifice. The closest thing to an exception is a little known practice by some Hasidim of kapparot, a ritual in which they swing a chicken over their head and then take it to be slaughtered. The person performing the ritual says aloud a prayer indicating that the chicken is a substitute to make atonement. It sounds like at least some Jewish people are concerned that there should be some sacrifice!

What do the Rabbis say about this?

The rabbis will point to the time in 70 CE when the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans. They will say that the first century rabbis had to find a substitute for sacrifices because there was no Temple. Therefore, these ancient rabbis decided that prayer, repentance, and good deeds were substitutes for sacrifice. To know more details, see *The Story of Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai*.

But, wait a minute! Moses didn't have a Temple. The Law said nothing about a Temple. The Law was written centuries before there ever was a Temple. Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Samuel, David, and all the children of Israel until Solomon's time offered sacrifices on altars or in the Tabernacle which Moses built. So could God really be satisfied with such neglect of Torah on the excuse that there is no Temple?

So the truth is, the rabbis have been neglecting an important commandment for 1900 years. What would Moses think if he could see the religion that calls him its Lawgiver? What must God think? Why don't Jewish leaders take the commandment to sacrifice more seriously?

A Better Answer!

There is another branch of Judaism that is often overlooked. It is known by various names and has a history of being spurned by Jewish leaders. Some call it Messianic Judaism and most call it Christianity.

This ancient religion was well-founded before the rabbis formulated their religion. The founder was a man, more than a man, named Yeshua (Jesus). He taught the Torah and showed the proper emphasis for interpreting it. He claimed to be the Messiah, sent from God not to be a conqueror, but to be the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, Jewish and Gentile. You see, Christians and Messianic Jews do not offer sacrifices either. Instead, they believe in one sacrifice offered for all time by Yeshua on a Roman execution stake. They claim to follow the teachings of Moses, just as the rabbis do (though, granted, centuries of Gentile influence have confused this issue). Their claim is just as sound, logically, as the rabbis, but has one great advantage — it was attested as true by the presence of overwhelming miracles. The rabbis of the first century claimed no miracles to support their answer. Doesn't it make sense that God would mark such a big change in his plan of worship with miracles?

To find out more, check out *Why Should Anyone Believe in Jesus?*