

## Discussion Questions

1. Introduce yourself again (just in case). How big is your dining room table? What's the largest dinner party you've ever hosted?
2. What makes something a sacrifice? Have you ever sacrificed something?
3. This is a weird question: What's the heaviest object you own (excluding houses and cars)?
4. Review your homework from last week. What from last week stuck out to you?

## Review and Homework

### Sacrifice: At God's Table

*"To feast sixteen gods he has sacrificed only a cock, and a wheezy old cock at that, and four little cakes of frankincense that were thoroughly well mildewed... and yet he had promised whole herds of cattle while the ship was drifting on the rock and was inside the ledges." -- Zeus reflecting on the decline of sacrifice, Lucian, Iupp.*

## Sin Offerings

*Jacob stayed where he was for the night. Then he selected these gifts from his possessions to present to his brother, Esau: 200 female goats, 20 male goats, 200 ewes, 20 rams, 30 female camels with their young, 40 cows, 10 bulls, 20 female donkeys, and 10 male donkeys. He divided these animals into herds and assigned each to different servants. Then he told his servants, "Go ahead of me with the animals, but keep some distance between the herds."*

*He gave these instructions to the men leading the first group: "When my brother, Esau, meets you, he will ask, 'Whose servants are you? Where are you going? Who owns these animals?' You must reply, 'They belong to your servant Jacob, but they are a gift for his master Esau. Look, he is coming right behind us.' "*

*Jacob gave the same instructions to the second and third herdsmen and to all who followed behind the herds: "You must say the same thing to Esau when you meet him. And be sure to say, 'Look, your servant Jacob is right behind us.' "*

*Jacob thought, "I will try to appease him by sending gifts ahead of me. When I see him in person, perhaps he will be friendly to me." So the gifts were sent on ahead, while Jacob himself spent that night in the camp. -- Genesis 32: 13-21*

## Peace offerings



## Feeding God?

*When Marduk hears the words of the gods, His heart prompts (him) to fashion artful works... "Blood I will mass and cause boned to be. I will establish a savage, 'man' shall be his name. Verily, savage man I will create. He shall be charged with the service of the gods that they might be at ease! The ways of the gods I will artfully alter...*

Marduk decides that one of the gods who opposed him should be sacrificed to create this new race of slaves, so the council of gods identifies one of the traitors:

*"It was Kingu who contrived the uprising, and made Tiamat rebel, and joined battle." The bound him holding him before Ea. They imposed on him his guilt and severed his blood (vessels). Out of his blood they fashioned mankind. He imposed the service and let free the gods. – Enuma Elish*

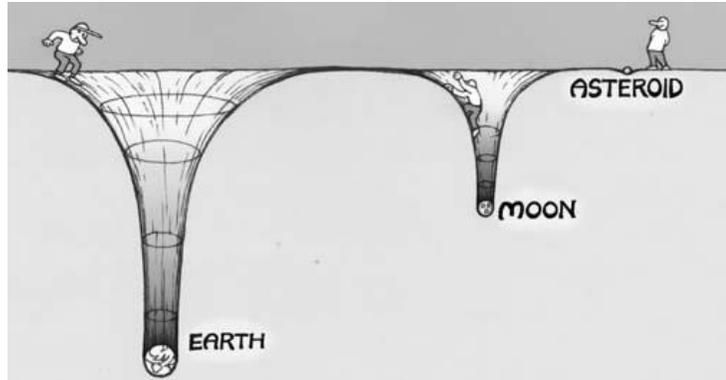
*"O my people, listen as I speak. Here are my charges against you, O Israel: I am God, your God! I have no complaint about your sacrifices or the burnt offerings you constantly offer.*

*But I do not need the bulls from your barns or the goats from your pens. For all the animals of the forest are mine, and I own the cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird on the mountains, and all the animals of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for all the world is mine and everything in it.*

*Do I eat the meat of bulls? Do I drink the blood of goats?*

*Make thankfulness your sacrifice to God, and keep the vows you made to the Most High. Then call on me when you are in trouble, and I will rescue you, and you will give me glory." -- Psalm 50:7-15*

## The Weight of Glory



## What's an Idol, Anyway?

*Some time later, God tested Abraham's faith. "Abraham!" God called. "Yes," he replied. "Here I am."*

*"Take your son, your only son—yes, Isaac, whom you love so much—and go to the land of Moriah. Go and sacrifice him as a burnt offering on one of the mountains, which I will show you..."*

*When they arrived at the place where God had told him to go, Abraham built an altar and arranged the wood on it. Then he tied his son, Isaac, and laid him on the altar on top of the wood. And Abraham picked up the knife to kill his son as a sacrifice. At that moment the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!"*

*"Yes," Abraham replied. "Here I am!"*

*"Don't lay a hand on the boy!" the angel said. "Do not hurt him in any way, for now I know that you truly fear God. You have not withheld from me even your son, your only son."*

*Then Abraham looked up and saw a ram caught by its horns in a thicket. So he took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering in place of his son. Abraham named the place Yahweh-Yireh (which means "the LORD will provide"). -- Genesis 22:1-14*

## Other Gods?

*“I am the LORD your God, who rescued you from the land of Egypt, the place of your slavery. “You must not have any other god but me. You must not make for yourself an idol of any kind or an image of anything in the heavens or on the earth or in the sea. You must not bow down to them or worship them, for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God who will not tolerate your affection for any other gods.” -- Exodus 20:2-5*

*When [the Moabites] came to the camp of Israel, the Israelites rose up and attacked the Moabites, who fled before them; as they entered Moab they continued the attack. The cities they overturned, and on every good piece of land everyone threw a stone, until it was covered; every spring of water they stopped up, and every good tree they felled.*

*Only at Kir-hareseth did the stone walls remain, until the slingers surrounded and attacked it. When the king of Moab saw that the battle was going against him, he took with him seven hundred swordsmen to break through, opposite the king of Edom; but they could not.*

*Then he took his firstborn son who was to succeed him, and offered him as a burnt offering on the wall. And great wrath came upon Israel, so they withdrew from him and returned to their own land. -- 2 Kings 3:24-27*

## Whose table are you sharing?

*[An idol] advances a claim about the ultimate nature of reality that is ultimately mistaken. And since the Creator God is the ultimate meaning of the world, an idol is a representation of a false god. Implicitly or explicitly, all idols represent a challenge and counterclaim to the identity and character of the true Creator God. Like the serpent in the Garden, they all raise the question of the Creator God's truthfulness and goodness, subtly or directly suggesting that the Creator God is neither true nor good. -- Andy Crouch, Playing God*

*"Come, let us return to the LORD. He has torn us to pieces; now he will heal us. He has injured us; now he will bandage our wounds. In just a short time he will restore us, so that we may live in his presence. Oh, that we might know the LORD! Let us press on to know him. He will respond to us as surely as the arrival of dawn or the coming of rains in early spring."*

*"O Israel and Judah, what should I do with you?" asks the LORD. "For your love vanishes like the morning mist and disappears like dew in the sunlight. I sent my prophets to cut you to pieces— to slaughter you with my words, with judgments as inescapable as light.*

*I want you to show love, not offer sacrifices. I want you to know me more than I want burnt offerings. But like Adam, you broke my covenant and betrayed my trust...*

*Yes, I have seen something horrible in Ephraim and Israel: My people are defiled by prostituting themselves with other gods! O Judah, a harvest of punishment is also waiting for you, though I wanted to restore the fortunes of my people.*

*-- Hosea 6:1-11*

## Homework

1. Read Matthew 9:9-13. Compare this story of Jesus sharing Table to an ancient sacrifice. Why are the Pharisees mad? What does this story teach you about God? About sacrifice?
2. Compare Isaiah 1:10-31 to Psalm 50. What is the relationship between obedience and sacrifice? What sticks out to you in these passages? If God were saying this today, what kinds of words do you imagine he'd use?
3. Review the concept of **glory**. How do we use this word in contemporary language? What are some examples of misplaced "glory" today?
4. Read Mark 12:28-31. Review Jesus' commandment in light of God's prohibition against image-making. Why does Jesus tie the two commands into one? Are they the same commandment?

## Works Cited

Crouch, Andy. *Playing God*. IVP Books, 2013.