

THE END OF SACRIFICES

With the death of Christ, did God Himself bring to an end the system of animal sacrifices performed under the exclusive Aaronic Priesthood?

*compiled by Rachel Cory-Kuehl, March 2015
Edited and updated, December 2016
Scripture is from the NKJV unless otherwise noted.*

Part I: Introduction

Why is it necessary to answer this question? The end of animal sacrifice seems intuitively obvious to most Christian believers today. I believe it is necessary *because* a growing body of believers (Hebrew Roots and Messianic congregations) teach that the LORD has never given a command specifically ending animal sacrifices. “God never changes,” they say, “therefore we must follow every command given to Israel under the Sinai Covenant. When a Temple (with priests of the Aaronic order) is restored on Mount Zion *prior* to our LORD’s return, they will attempt to travel there, to present sacrifices at that Temple.

THE ACTIONS OF EARLY BELIEVERS

James along with other believing Jews at Jerusalem, continued to go up to the Temple and to offer sacrifice there. At the urging of James, Paul went to the Temple along with four other men, to complete the rites of the Nazarite Vow. Purification sacrifices were part of these rites, and Paul planned to pay for the sacrifices for all five men (*See Acts Cpt 21*). This took place at least 17 years *after* Paul’s Damascus road experience. It seems very likely that Paul *had* also taken the Nazarite Vow. He had his hair cut off some weeks before reaching Jerusalem (*Acts 18:18*). Some urge these actions as proof that believers *should* bring animals along with grain and drink offerings, for sacrifice when the Temple is restored on the Mount.

THE PROPHECY OF EZEKIEL’S TEMPLE

Those who teach a continuation of animal sacrifices, point to the vision of Ezekiel the prophet. In the vision, Ezekiel was shown a restored Temple on Mt. Zion, and ministering priests of the line of Aaron thru Zadok. Ezekiel was shown preparations for animal sacrifice, and heard commands that sacrifices be offered. Some say the vision represented in symbols what was to come through Messiah. Others say the vision predicted the restoration of the kingdom of Judah (with a prince ruling), the Temple, and the Aaronic priesthood.

A MEMORIAL SACRIFICE

Those who believe that Jesus is the Messiah, say that sin offerings should be continued simply as a memorial of His death. The “whole burnt offering” and the “peace offering” should be continued, to demonstrate the individual believer’s wholehearted devotion. They say this because the LORD has not officially *commanded* an end to those sacrifices.

NO CHANGES TO THE LAW

Deuteronomy 4:2 “You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.”

Deuteronomy 12:32 “Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it.”

Deuteronomy 11:26 “Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse: the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you today; and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside from the way which I command you today . . . ”

Deuteronomy 12:32 “Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it.”

Matthew 5:19 [Christ speaking] “Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”

Yahweh declared the man or woman “cursed” who added to or took away from His commandments. A former close friend told me that I am teaching “Antichrist doctrine” when I say that God Himself has ended the system of animal sacrifice under the exclusive Aaronic priesthood.

Matthew 5:18 “Till heaven and earth pass, not a jot or a tittle shall pass from the law, till all is fulfilled.”

How do we understand these words spoken by Yeshua? Would the law be changed *when* all was fulfilled, or *when* heaven and earth pass? Must both happen at the same time?

We know that “heaven and earth will pass away” at the return of Christ in glory. Perhaps we can then agree, that after this event something can “pass from the law”.

I believe that a Temple *will* be rebuilt on the Mount before Christ returns in glory. I believe the Evil One will use that Temple for his purpose - to deceive the very elect. Those who believe that animal sacrifice is necessary, and something required by the LORD will be taken in by this coming deception. Let me be clear. This is my personal opinion. I am sharing it with you. You must study with prayer, and then decide for yourselves.

Where is the command to discontinue the animal sacrifices? Those who teach the resumption of animal sacrifice when the Temple is rebuilt, want another glorious Mt. Sinai, and a thunderous voice from Heaven, declaring the end of sacrifices. For my part, I believe the Father *has* spoken. He has provided the Lamb. His hand tore the veil of the Temple from top to bottom. His spirit inspired the disciples and apostles with the clear message that forgiveness of sins is by faith alone, and may be found without offering the blood of an animal.

FROM THE GATES OF EDEN

Animal sacrifice is as old as the Gates of Eden. Abel - the second born to Eve, brought the “first-lings of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel’s offering” (*Gen. 4:4*). He did not respect Cain’s offering of the fruits. The implication would be that the LORD had already given instruction concerning sacrifice.

Noah’s first recorded act upon leaving the ark, was to build an altar for “burnt offerings” (*Gen. 8:20*). Abraham built altars and offered sacrifice, and “called upon the name of the LORD (*Gen. 12:7-8, Gen. 13:4, Gen. 13:13*). Isaac did the same (*Gen. 26:24-25*).

Jacob built an altar after returning to “the land” from the house of Laban (*Gen. 33:20*). The LORD actually spoke to Jacob telling him to return to Bethel (where Jacob received the dream of the ladder to heaven) “and build an altar there to God” (*Gen 35:1 NIV*). In fact, Jacob built an altar at every new place of encampment.

After the LORD brought water from the rock, “Moses built an altar and called its name, The-LORD-Is-My-Banner (*Exo 17:15*). In fact several more altars were built at the direction of Moses before the Alter of Brass was finished for the Courtyard of the Tabernacle. Once the Brass Alter was constructed and consecrated, the LORD commanded that sacrifice be offered at that place, and no other (*Deut, 12:11*).

I trace this history to point out that animal sacrifice was something commanded by the LORD. It was not the invention of man, and we should not think to declare it “obsolete” without strong evidence from the Word of God. During the entire Old Testament period, animal sacrifice was seen as the means to restore “righteousness” in the sight of God. The death of Christ has brought “the end of the law” with its sacrificial system, as the means to righteousness, to justification, to forgiveness, to reconciliation - for everyone who believes.

Romans 10:4 “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.”

Part II: Type and Shadow

Genesis 22:8 “And Abraham said, ‘My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering.’”

John 1:29 “The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, ‘Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’”

*On the mountain, the “ram caught in a thicket” was substituted for Isaac. **It was one for the other - not both.** God has provided the Lamb. What need remains for other blood?*

Galatians 3:24-25 “The Law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith [not by sacrifices]. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.”

“The law was our tutor.” What part of “the law” was a TYPE or prophecy of Christ? Was it not the law of sacrifices and offerings and Temple priests? Every animal sacrifice typified Christ - the one true sacrifice. The high priest typified Christ, who would bear our sins before His father, and the heavenly court.

The moral law of God, condensed for Israel into Ten Commands, was eternal. The Commands are repeated in the New Testament, showing that the moral law is continued, and will be the standard in the final judgment. Please see the study “The Ten Commandments - Under the New Covenant”. There is no reason to believe those commands have been abolished. Only the commands concerning the Tabernacle and the priesthood are actually said to have been “changed”.

COPY - SHADOW - PROPHECY

The Tabernacle was **a copy of the Heavenly “pattern”** (*Exo. 25:40, Heb. 8:5*). The “true Tabernacle” is “heaven itself” (*Heb. 8:2*). When Christ ascended into heaven, to minister as High Priest of the “true Tabernacle,” the earthly “tent” lost all standing as the place or means of reconciliation with God.

Hebrews 9:8 “By this arrangement, the Ruach HaKodesh [Holy Spirit] showed that so long as the first Tent had standing, the way into the Holiest Place was still closed” (CJB).

I believe the Complete Jewish Bible comes closest to expressing the true meaning of this verse. The Letter to the Hebrews was written *before* the destruction of the Temple in 70AD. Therefore the physical Temple was “still standing”. Yet believers knew “the way” was open (*not “still closed”*) into the Holiest Place - of the “true Tabernacle”.

Hebrews 10:19-20 “Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh,”

Hebrews 9:12 “Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once [for all], having obtained eternal redemption.”

Hebrews 9:24 “For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;”

NOTE: The NIV and NRS translate “holy places” as “a Sanctuary”.

IT WAS SYMBOLIC

Hebrews 9:9 “It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience--concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation.”

QUESTION: Just when is this “time of reformation”? Has it arrived? Did the death of Christ bring in this “time of reformation”? In my opinion - IT DID.

Galatians 3:19 “What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to Whom the promise was made . . .”

The Seed is Jesus the Christ - the Son of God. He has come!

The study of the Tabernacle and the sacrifices strengthens belief. Prophecy was fulfilled to the very hour. But it *was* a prophecy. To those who say “God never changes,” I say that God’s plan and purpose has never changed. He planned that the prophecy would end with the installation of His own Son as High Priest of Heaven itself.

When the Children of Israel were brought out of Egypt, that *was* a change. It was a change prophesied and fulfilled by the LORD. When the Aaronic priesthood was installed, and sacrifice was confined to the Court of the Tabernacle, *that* was a change for the people. But all those *changes* were simply growth toward the time when the Law will finally be written on the heart, by Messiah Himself.

A NEW COVENANT

Hebrews 8:13 “By calling this covenant ‘new,’ he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and outdated will soon disappear” (NIV).

If a covenant is rendered “obsolete,” then everything commanded under that covenant also becomes obsolete, including any directed remedy for violations of that covenant (sin offerings). Under the “new covenant” the Law is written on the heart - not on tablets of stone. And the remedy - is prayer for forgiveness, offered humbly in the Name of Jesus.

I have debated endlessly with a few who maintain that the “new Covenant” is not “new”, but is “renewed”, with not a single change from the Mount Sinai Covenant, except to *add* Messiah Yeshua as the High Priest in the Heavenly Tabernacle.

I will try to cover the concept of a “parallel priesthood” a little later. For now - I would refer you to a study at the ProphecyViewpoint website, titled “[Two Covenants](#)”. The Sinai Covenant was a covenant of marriage, which was rendered “obsolete” by the death of the betrothed “husband” - the Son of God. The Sinai Covenant is “obsolete” and it will “soon pass away”.

THE BOOK OF HEBREWS

By far the larger portion of the texts used in this study, will be taken from the Book of Hebrews. This first century writing has been disputed endlessly, because the author did not give his name. Some feel the Letter to the Hebrews does not belong with the other Apostolic Writings. We know it was written before the end of the first century, because Clement of Rome (©. 60-100) quotes from Hebrews twice. Clement of Alexandria (©. 155-220), was quoted by Eusebius as having said Paul wrote Hebrews originally in Hebrew, and that Luke translated it into Greek for a Hellenistic Jewish audience. Clement stated that it was this fact (Luke’s translation) that accounted for the stylistic similarities between Hebrews and Luke-Acts. He also thought that Paul did not sign the letter because the Jews were prejudiced against him. (*Reference: The New American Commentary, Vol. 35, Hebrews by David L. Allen*)

At any rate, the phrasing, word choice, and the general polish of the Greek are not Pauline. Several candidates for authorship were posited during the 2nd to the 4th centuries, including Paul, Barnabas, Apollos, Luke and Clement of Rome. There is also a very good book, published in 1997 by Ruth Hoppin, titled “Prescilla’s Letter”. Hoppin proposes that the letter to the Hebrews was not signed, because it was written by a woman. Prescilla and her husband Aquila were driven from Rome, when the Emperor Claudius banished all Jews from that city. Paul stayed with this educated couple at Corinth (*Acts Cpt 18*). They traveled with Paul when he returned to Antioch and (after Paul left there) they actually taught Apollos when he came to that city.

The oldest extant copy of the Letter to the Hebrews is found in document p46 ©. AD 200. It follows Romans in a fourteen-letter Pauline collection. This strongly suggests the one who saved that collection believed that Paul or one of his students wrote Hebrews. Up until the Emperor Constantine legalized Christianity within the Roman empire, wave after wave of persecution included the confiscation and burning of Christian documents. It is only by Divine intervention that we have *any* copies of the First Century Writings at all.

I'm going to begin the next segment by quoting Hebrews 7:18 from several different translations.

Part III

Something Changed

SOMETHING WAS ANNULLED

Hebrews 7:18 “Thus, on the one hand, the earlier rule is set aside because of its weakness and inefficacy” (CJB).

Hebrews 7:18 “For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof” (KJV).

Hebrews 7:18 “The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless” (NIV).

Hebrews 7:18 “For on the one hand there is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness” (NKJ).

Hebrews 7:18 “There is, on the one hand, the abrogation of an earlier commandment because it was weak and ineffectual” (NRS).

If you accept the Book of Hebrews as inspired writing, then *something* was “annulled”, something “weak and useless”. But what? In context the author has spent a lot of time establishing why Christ is the better priest. The Law under the Levitical priesthood was unable to bring about perfect cleansing of the conscience - the mind or heart (7:11). The “former commandment” was “weak and unprofitable”. Another priest was needed. This priest would become the “surety” or guarantee (7:22) and the “Mediator” of a “better covenant” based on “better promises” (8:6).

The problem is that the commands concerning the priesthood were from Yahweh. They were part of “the Law”. If you “change” the priesthood, you also “change” the Law.

Hebrews 7:12 “For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well” (NRS).

The writer does NOT SAY, “the high priesthood” was “changed”. He says “the priesthood” - meaning the whole priesthood - was changed. And if the Aaronic priesthood is declared “obsolete” (right along with the “first covenant”) then **there is no longer any place to take a sacrifice.**

The Law required that every sacrifice be brought to “the priest” at “the place” where the LORD would “put His name”. That place was later identified by God, as the Temple at Jerusalem. (*See Deut. 12:11-14, 1 Ki. 14:21, 2 Chr. 12:13*). It was a death penalty offense to sacrifice anywhere else!

Paul said the law was “weak” or “weakened through the flesh” (*Rom. 8:3*). Aaronic priests died. And more than that, they sinned. They had to offer sin offerings for their own sins, before they could minister for anyone else.

Hebrews 7:27 [Our new High Priest] “who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the sins of the people, because this He did once for all [time] when He offered up Himself” (NASB).

Messiah does not need to offer up sacrifices - any more. That’s the point. He did it once for all time, and He now presents His own blood in Heaven itself, to cover the sins of those who pray for forgiveness in His name. Put this together with the vision of Ezekiel’s Temple. The prince presents the sacrifice to God (*Ezek. 45:17*). If Jesus IS “the prince” and the high priest of Israel, then what sacrifice would Jesus present? Yes! His own blood. Because he is also the sacrifice and the offering.

Hebrews 9:26 “Now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself” (NASB).

HE TAKES AWAY THE FIRST - THAT HE MAY ESTABLISH THE SECOND

QUESTIONS: What was “the first”? And what is “the second”?

Hebrews 10:4-10 “For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.

Therefore, when He [Jesus] came into the world, He said: ‘Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure.’

Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come-- In the volume of the book it is written of Me-- To do Your will, O God.’

Previously saying, ‘Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them’ (which are offered according to the law),

then He said, ‘Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.’ He takes away the first that He may establish the second. By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once [for all].”

QUESTIONS: What is “the first”? And what is “the second”?

ANSWER: “**The first**” would be “burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin”.

Those are taken away.

“**The second**” would be the perfect will of Christ who was “obedient unto death”.

That offering has been “established” as the only one, by which we are reconciled to God.

WHAT ABOUT THE ARGUMENT FOR A PARALLEL PRIESTHOOD?

Hebrews 8:4 “For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law;”

NOTE: This verse tells us that the Letter to the Hebrews was written before the Temple at Jerusalem, with its Aaronic priesthood, was destroyed.

Those who argue for a “parallel priesthood” say that Yeshua (Jesus) ministers as High Priest in Heaven, while the Aaronic priests continue to officiate in the Jerusalem Temple “according to the law.” They say that the word “change” in Hebrews 7:12, implies a “change of location”. Here are the definitions from the “Strong’s Concordance”.

3331 μεταθεσις metathesis {met-ath'-es-is}

Meaning: 1) transfer: from one place to another 2) to change 2a) of things instituted or established

I have no problem with their argument that the priesthood was moved from earth to Heaven. But to me, this would mean that whatever priesthood remained on the earth - at the Temple in Jerusalem, was “obsolete,” without “standing,” and would soon pass away completely. And this is exactly what happened. The Roman general Titus destroyed the City and the Temple. He leveled the City to the ground some 1945 years ago. The LORD allowed that destruction! Since that day, no sacrifices have been offered to God on Mount Zion.

From the wilderness Tabernacle in about 1440 BC, to the final destruction in 70 AD, subtracting the 70 years captivity in Babylon, (and ignoring the destruction by the Philistines at the time of Samuel), the earthly “House of God” stood for some 1440 years. It has been gone for some 1946 years. During all those years, only ONE priest has ministered on behalf of Israel - Jesus the Christ.

Hebrews 8:13 “By calling this covenant ‘new,’ he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and outdated will soon disappear” (NIV).

1 Corinthians 13:10 “but when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be [or is] done away.”

Christ was the “perfect” offering! Christ is the perfect High Priest!

If the argument is that Melchizedek priests cannot be priests on the earth, then how do we understand the twenty-four Elders, who sing that Christ has “made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth”? These are NOT all Aaronic priests. They are “out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation.” So here we have “priests” who are NOT of the Aaronic order and perhaps not even of Hebrew descent, who *will* reign (as priests and kings) on the earth. They are more likely of the Melchizedek order - under High Priest Jesus.

Only kings and priests were anointed with the holy oil, which represented the Holy Spirit. The fact that all disciples of Christ are anointed with the Spirit, should tell us something. We will be “priests of God and of Christ” (*Rev. 20:6*) and “will reign with him” on the earth (*2Tim. 2:12*). (Please see the study titled “A Kingdom of Priests” at this website.)

Some who argue for a *parallel priesthood*, say that the Son of God has always been our High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek (just taking time out during His incarnation, I guess). But if that is so, then there has been no change concerning the priesthood. And Hebrews says that the priesthood *has* been changed (*Heb. 7:12*).

I personally believe that Yeshua the Son of God, did not become High Priest in Heaven itself, until He ascended, and completed the consecration ceremonies. He became High Priest on the Day of Pentecost, which followed 10 days after He ascended into Heaven. The outpouring of the Spirit was the sign to His followers, that He had indeed been installed in that position.

He had to suffer as a human being, BEFORE He could become our perfected High Priest. He could not be the High Priest and the “lamb of God” at the same time. He must first be “the lamb of God” and then He could become High Priest. Before His death, Christ had *no “blood” to present* within the “true Tabernacle”. How could He be a priest without an offering to present?

Hebrews 4:15 “For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin” (NKJ).

Hebrews 5:2 “He can have compassion on those who are ignorant and going astray, since he himself is also subject to weakness” (NKJ).

Hebrews 7:11 “If perfection were through the Levitical priesthood . . . what further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek” . . . (v.12). “For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law” (v.18). “For on the one hand there is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness, (v. 19) for the law made nothing perfect. On the other hand, there is the bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.”

How many words in this passage, tell us that the law concerning the priesthood has been changed - by God Himself - from the old to the new?

WHEN JESUS RETURNS TO REIGN ON THIS EARTH WILL HE REMAIN OUR HIGH PRIEST?

Psalms 110:4 “The LORD has sworn and will not relent, ‘You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.”

This verse from Psalms is quoted four times in the Book of Hebrews (*Hebrews 5:6, 6:20, 7:17, 7:21*). It is repeated four times. This understanding is *very* important!

Forever is forever. We know that Messiah will return, and that He will reign on this earth. And if forever is forever - then is it not logical to believe that He will *remain* a priest *when* He returns to this earth?

Zechariah 6:13 “Yes, He shall build the temple of the LORD. He shall bear the glory, And shall sit and rule on His throne; So He shall be a priest on His throne, And the counsel of peace shall be between them both.”

I realize that the CJB and NRS translations read as “a priest beside His throne” with peace between the two of them. That would mean Jesus sits “beside” the Father’s throne, not ON the Father’s throne. What do the apostolic writers say?

Revelation 3:21 “To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.”

Revelation 22:3 “And there shall be no more curse, but the throne [singular] of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him.”

THEY SERVED ONLY TO CLEANSE THE FLESH

The Aaronic priesthood on earth served ONLY for “purifying of the flesh” (*Heb. 9:13*). Hebrews 7:16 calls it “the law of a fleshly commandment”. Hebrews 9:9 says the Aaronic priests were concerned “only” with “fleshly ordinances”. But in the resurrection the old “flesh” will be gone. We will receive new spiritual bodies, which will need no cleansing.

“Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God” (*1Cor. 15:50*). The animals - in the kingdom - may not even *have* “blood” to use in anointing. Now *that’s* something to think about.

The priests on earth, served only the “copy and shadow of heavenly things” (*Heb. 8:5*). Their priesthood was a prophecy - pointing forward to the priesthood of Christ, and to our future priesthood. If Yeshua had been born into the tribe of Levi, He would be serving the copy, rather than the real thing. He would be serving the Law of flesh, rather than cleansing the heart. Only when “the Tabernacle of God is with men” (on this earth) can Yeshua serve to cleanse the conscience while He is present on this earth, as high priest in the House of God.

A PRIEST OF THE OLD ORDER - COULD NOT BECOME KING

Hebrews 8:4 “For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest . . .”

Messiah would become King of Israel. Therefore he could not be born into the tribe of Levi, or be from the line of Aaron. The prophecies all pointed to Messiah being **a son of David**, and therefore from **the tribe of Judah**.

Yeshua will not become King until the dominion was taken away from Satan at the end of this age (*Daniel 7:13-14*). Until then, He serves within the true Tabernacle, which is Heaven itself. And when He returns, He will continue to serve as high priest of the Melchizedek order, because under that order, He *can* be a priest *and* a king.

THE PRIESTHOOD OF THE FIRSTBORN

The original priests were simply **the “firstborn”** of family, or of clan. Jesus *was* the firstborn of Joseph and Mary, but much more, **He is God’s firstborn** and only son. He is called **“the firstborn over all creation”** (*Colossians 1:15*). He has become high priest over the entire creation of God, BECAUSE He is God’s “firstborn”.

NOTE: Cain forfeit his birthright, when he murdered his brother. The LORD regarded Isaac as the legitimate “firstborn” of Abraham. Esau sold his “birthright” for a bowl of pottage (Gen. 25:31).

The priesthood of the firstborn, was changed by the LORD Himself. The LORD designated the tribe of Levi to serve the Tabernacle, and more specifically Aaron and his sons to be the priests. The LORD commanded this change in the priesthood, for Israel. After Christ was offered as the “once for all sacrifice”, God himself changed the priesthood - once again - back to the original order of the firstborn, His own firstborn. Under the **order of the firstborn**, we have only to consider our next verse, to confirm that Israel will become the priesthood - under Christ - in the Kingdom of Messiah.

Exodus 4:22 “Then you shall say to Pharaoh, “Thus says the LORD: **“Israel is My son, My firstborn.”**”

Israel IS the LORD’s “firstborn” !! Jesus Christ was/is God the Father’s “firstborn” and Israel is Jesus “firstborn” - because He created them. Do you see the two generations here? Therefore, Israel will become “priests of God” under Christ. This is a return to the ORIGINAL ORDER - the order of the firstborn.

Melchizedek was a king as well as a priest. Yeshua will be a king as well as a priest. He need not belong to the tribe of Levi and the family of Aaron, because the priesthood has “been changed” - *back to* the original order of the firstborn.

ANOTHER CHANGE NOTED

Ephesians 2:14 “For He Himself is our peace, who has made both [Jew and Gentile believers] one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace.”

What “law” kept uncircumcised Gentile believers out of the Temple Court? The law requiring circumcision - of course (*Ezek. 44:7-9*). The law forbade social intercourse or the establishment of any covenant with the uncircumcised. Peter understood this law. He said to the LORD, “You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation” (*Acts 10:28*). Even eating with the uncircumcised was regarded as an implied covenant - especially if someone passed the salt. Now, many say that this was only Pharisaic tradition, and that may be so. But it was understood by the Jews, as Law.

If the “wall” that kept the uncircumcised *out*, was “broken down” and “abolished” by the death of Christ - that means the uncircumcised *could* enter the Temple Court. But which Court? The famous wall around the Temple at Jerusalem, was still standing when Paul wrote his letter to the Ephesians. If an uncircumcised man tried to enter *that* Temple Court, he would be killed! So Paul must NOT be talking about the Temple Court at Jerusalem. The message to the Ephesians was that all believers may enter His Court - the Court of His “true Tabernacle” - by a “new and living way” (*Heb. 10:20*). And we “enter” into more than just the Court. We come before His throne, in “the Holiest of all” in the person of the risen Christ (*Heb. 10:19*). No need to travel to Jerusalem.

Hebrews 10:19-20 “Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh,”

Physical circumcision was no longer necessary before one could be regarded as a “son of Abraham” in the eyes of God. And physical circumcision was no longer necessary, before one could enter the true Tabernacle - which is Heaven itself.

Galatians 3:29 “If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise” (NIV).

Abraham was told that anyone who remained physically uncircumcised, would be regarded as “cut off” from the Covenant people (*Gen. 17:14*). **Paul wrote just the opposite.** “If you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. . . . You have become estranged from Christ. . . . you have fallen from grace” (*Gal. 5:2-4*). “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love” (*Gal 5:5*). **Something had definitely changed!!!**

Circumcision identified a man as descended from Abraham, and therefore entitled to inherit *if* he fulfilled the terms of that covenant. But you see, no one fulfilled those terms - except Jesus. He is the promised "Seed," to whom the promise was made (*Gal. 3:16&19*). **He fulfilled the terms** of the Covenant with Abraham, **and** the terms of the Sinai Covenant. **He will therefore inherit the land**, and if we belong to Christ, then **we will share in His inheritance**. (Please see the study titled "**Circumcision - Under the New Covenant**" at this website.)

THE VEIL WAS TORN

Luke 23:45 "Then the sun was darkened, and **the veil of the temple was torn in two.**"
(*Matt. 27:51, Mk 15:38*).

Matthew 27:54 "So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, **saw** the earthquake and **the things that had happened**, they feared greatly, saying, "Truly this **was** the Son of God!"

It was the custom in the Ancient Middle East, for a man to "tear his robe" upon hearing of the death of a son - especially the first born. If the Roman centurion and those with him actually "saw" the veil rent, this would have registered with them as God Himself *tearing His "robe"*. But this would require that the entrance curtain (veil) was the one torn, so that everyone might witness this event. The veil between the first and second apartments **could not been seen**.

Any priest was expressly **forbidden to tear his robe**. To do so was a **death penalty offense** against God. To do so would **bring the wrath of God upon the whole congregation** (*Leviticus 10:6; 21:10*). During the trial of Jesus, **the High Priest Caiaphas tore his robe** in a show of anger (*Matt. 26:65, Mar. 14:63*). This man was immediately disqualified to serve, and more. He brought the wrath of God upon Israel. There would be no further atonement for Israel on the Day of Atonement.

Question: If a priest was disqualified by the tearing of his robe, would not the Temple also be disqualified at the tearing of its "robe" - the covering veil? I believe there were "signs" that the Temple (with its priesthood) lost its standing as the place or means of atonement.

During the 40 years between the death of Messiah and the destruction of the Temple in 70AD, the portion of the crimson cord from the azazel goat, traditionally tied to the Temple door on Yom Kippur, failed to turn white. The "lot for the LORD" always fell to the left hand. And the Temple doors - bolted at night, were found mysteriously open each morning. Both the Jerusalem Talmud, and the Babylonian Talmud record these "*signs*" of impending doom. Here is a link to an article giving more detail. <http://www3.telus.net/public/kstam/en/temple/details/evidence.htm>

I read several commentaries that debated whether the curtain that was torn, was the curtain **at the entrance** to the Temple, or the curtain **between the first apartment and the second** apartment. Some wrote that there were actually two curtains between the first apartment and the second (or one very long continuous curtain folded over at one end, and brought back almost across the room) with space for a man to walk between the two halves.

If a single curtain separated the two apartments, and if it was as large as the Temple entrance veil, then it would have been difficult for one man to lift that curtain, or to pull it aside to allow him entrance into the Most Holy Place, especially with burning coals or a bowl of blood. No second man was allowed to be in the Tabernacle (Temple) with the High Priest on that day. It seems more likely there really *was* a walking space between *two* curtains, for access to the Most Holy Place by the High Priest alone, on the Day of Atonement.

King Herod had provided very rich materials for embellishment of the Temple. The curtain at the entrance into the Temple proper, was said to be some 60 feet high, 30 feet wide, and 3 to 4 inches thick. It would have been more like a carpet than a curtain. ***On this curtain the “heavens and the earth” were depicted.*** If this entrance veil was torn at the moment of Christ’s death, it could be said that “heaven and earth” were “passed”, thus fulfilling Christ’s prophecy in Matthew 5:18.

The author of Hebrews begins in 4:14-16, presenting Jesus as our “great High Priest who has passed through the heavens”. Then he describes Jesus as “the forerunner” and says that our hope “enters the Presence behind the veil” (*Heb. 6:19-20*), where we also will enter one day. That Presence of course is the glory of the LORD, which left the Temple, just ahead of the Babylonian destruction (*Ezek. 10:4, 10:18, 11:23*). That glory never returned. No one knows to this day, where the Ark is hidden.

The Son of God is appointed as a better priest (*Heb. 7:11-18*). As high priest of a “New Covenant” (*Heb. 8:1-13; 9:11*) He enters the heavenly Most Holy Place (*Heb. 9:12*) with His own blood as the offering. Believers are to have “confidence” to enter the Most Holy Place “by the blood of Jesus” - the “New and living way” (*Heb. 10:19-20*). We enter through “the veil” which represented “his flesh” - which was “torn” for us.

For a very scholarly article on the veils at the entrance to, and within the Temple, let me direct you to: http://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/49/49-1/JETS_49-1_97-114_Gurtner.pdf. This well referenced article is titled “The Veil of the Temple in History and Legend” by Daniel M. Gurtner. I paraphrased a few ideas from that article.

Part IV

Saved By Faith

WE ARE JUSTIFIED - BY FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST

Isaiah 53:11 “My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities.”

Acts 13:38-39 “Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.”

Romans 3:28-30 “Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law, since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith.”

Romans 5:1 “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ . . .”

Galatians 3:8 “And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, ‘In you all the nations shall be blessed.’”

Romans 5:18 “Therefore, as through one man's [Adam's] offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.”

WE ARE FORGIVEN - BY FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST

Ephesians 1:7 “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace . . .”

Colossians 1:13-14 “He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.”

1 John 2:1 “My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”

WE ARE SAVED - BY FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST

Hebrews 7:25 “Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.”

Ephesians 2:8 “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God” . . .”

Romans 1:16 “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.”

Romans 10:4 “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.”

Christ is the end of the sacrifices commanded in the Law, in order to be righteous before God. But even more - we no longer keep the Law of Ten Commandments in order to be justified. We keep it because we love Him - because it is written on our hearts.

Romans 10:10 “For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved” (NIV).

1 Thessalonians 5:9 “For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

WE HAVE ACCESS TO GOD - THROUGH JESUS CHRIST

Ephesians 2:18 “For through Him we both have access by one spirit to the Father.”

“Both” - meaning Jew and Gentile, circumcised and uncircumcised.

Ephesians 3:12 “in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him.”

John 14:6 “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’”

We are forgiven by faith, justified by faith, sanctified by faith, saved by faith. We also have access to God our Father - by faith. There is NO FURTHER NEED for animal sacrifice. If I am saved, and also find forgiveness *without* offering a sacrifice on the Mount, then why would I do such, until directly commanded to do so, by the Glorious Christ returned. I think I’ll just wait for Him.

Job lived about the same time as Moses. As priest of His family, he offered sacrifices regularly on behalf of his children. “It may be that my sons have sinned,” He said. I reference this to show that Job understood sacrifice to be the means of expiation for sin - the way to forgiveness before God. The priests under Aaron were said to “make atonement” for the sinner, when they burned the “sin offering,” and poured out the blood at the base of the Alter, or when they ate a portion of the meat and then entered the Tabernacle, thus carrying the record of the sin into that Tent. The Day of Atonement ceremony, especially was said to “make atonement” for the High Priest and for Israel (*Exo. 30:10, Lev. 10:17, Lev. 16:27*).

Romans 5:11 “And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement” (KJV).

The word translated as “atonement” means “reconciliation”. Whenever you read the word “atonement” - think reconciliation.

Romans 5:10 “For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”

2 Corinthians 5:18 “Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation.”

The ancient priests made atonement. But the word “atonement” means “reconciliation”, because repentant sinners were thereby reconciled with God. Jesus has given to us (to you and to me) this “ministry of reconciliation” with God. This because we have been called to be priests of the order of Melchizedek, under Jesus Christ our High Priest.

Part V

Other Arguments for Continuing the Sacrifice of Animals

WHAT ABOUT THE OTHER SACRIFICES ?

Many of those who teach the continuation of the sacrifices, say that Christ *was* our “sin offering” so we do not need to offer those sacrifices for sin, but there *were* other sacrifices which should be continued under the Law. They say that we can honor Christ as the one “sin offering” by discontinuing that particular offering. I disagree with this position. First, because I believe that Christ was represented in *every* sacrifice. Second, because the prophecy of Ezekiel’s Temple (which Hebrew Roots and others point to as the Temple of the Millennium) includes some 13 commands for “sin offerings”.

Every time an Israelite brought a sin offering, he was also to bring a second animal for a “**whole burnt offering**”. The “**sin offering**” was to effect atonement, or reconciliation - for his violation of the Covenant Law. Then the “whole burnt offering” was to rededicate himself wholly to God. The second offering was in effect, re-establishing covenant with Yahweh.

As *they* re-established covenant with Yahweh through the “whole burnt offering”, *we* enter into the New Covenant through Jesus Christ. We are to present our own bodies “as living sacrifices” to God (*Rom. 12:1*). We are to be “set apart” (“sanctified”) completely - spirit, soul and body - just as Christ our example withheld nothing, to present Himself as the true “whole burnt offering” (*1Thess. 5:23*).

Only a small portion of the “**peace offering**” was actually burned on the Alter. After the priest removed his allotted portion, what remained of this offering was shared with family, with the poor, and with the Levite (those not of the priesthood). The Passover Lamb constituted a “**peace offering**”.

Peace offerings were made at Feasts, and on other special occasions, such as a “marriage feast”. The “peace offering” also represented Jesus. “Christ our Passover was slain for us” (1Cor. 5:7). “**He is our peace**” (Eph. 2:14). We partake of Him, in the bread and the wine of the “Lord’s supper” (1Cor. 11:24). We are supposed to pray for forgiveness of sins, and rededicate ourselves to God, *before* we eat the emblems of the Lord’s supper, just as ancient Israelites offered a “sin offering” with a “whole burnt offering”, *before* they ate of the “peace offering”.

Paul wrote, “For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord, until he comes”(1Co 11:26 CJB). He did NOT SAY, “when you eat this Lamb”. We commemorate the Passover today in a “new way” - without an animal sacrifice. Because we HAVE a perfect sacrifice.

NOTE: At my home we partake of the LORD’s supper, only once each year - on Passover night.

ARGUMENT:

THE AARONIC PRIESTHOOD WAS CONFIRMED FOREVER.

Exodus 29:9 “And you shall gird them with sashes and tie headdresses on them; and the priesthood shall be theirs by a perpetual ordinance. You shall then ordain Aaron and his sons” (NRS).

Numbers 25:11-13 “Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, has turned back My wrath from the children of Israel, because he was zealous with My zeal among them, so that I did not consume the children of Israel in My zeal. Therefore say, ‘Behold, I give to him My covenant of peace; and it shall be to him and his descendants after him a covenant of an everlasting priesthood, because he was zealous for his God, and made atonement for the children of Israel.”

Jeremiah 33:19-22 “And the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying, “Thus says the LORD: “If you can break My covenant with the day and My covenant with the night, so that there will not be day and night in their season, then My covenant may also be broken with David My servant, so that he shall not have a son to reign on his throne, and with the Levites, the priests, My ministers. As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, nor the sand of the sea measured, so will I multiply the descendants of David My servant and the Levites who minister to Me.””

Aaron and his sons entered into a “blood covenant” with Yahweh on the day which began their consecration (Lev. 8:22). They placed their hands on the head of the second ram and pledged obedience and faithfulness to Yahweh, on pain of death. So I would be quick to point out that only faithful sons of Aaron will continue as priests, under this Aaronic priestly covenant.

Not a single one of the Aaronic priests obeyed perfectly. They *all* stand condemned to death without The One Offering that can cover their sins. The Covenant under which they ministered has been declared “obsolete”, and it will soon disappear completely. Those who sought the LORD in humility of heart will be forgiven, and will be delivered into the Kingdom of Messiah, where **they will continue as priests - under the New Melchizedek order which will include all of Israel redeemed.**

By the time of Christ, the position of high priest was occupied by a Roman appointee. Annas and his sons were imposters. They were *not* descended from Aaron. So you see, Israel really had no high priest by that time. And the Day of Atonement ceremony would therefore have been unacceptable to God - leaving the people still in their sins.

BELIEVING JEWS WERE STILL OFFERING SACRIFICES

We cannot deny it happened. The story was faithfully preserved in Acts Chapter 21, because it ended with Paul’s arrest. At the end of his third missionary journey, Paul returned to Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost. He had apparently taken a Nazarite vow. He had his hair cut off some weeks before reaching the City (*Acts 18:18*). (*See Numbers 6:2,5,9,18*.)

The LORD had given him several warnings along the route but Paul was determined (*See Acts 20:22-23, Acts 21:4, & Acts 21:11*). Upon reaching Jerusalem he met with “James and all the elders” who joyfully told him of all the converts from the Jews who had come to belief in Yeshua as Messiah. These Jewish converts were “all zealous for the Law” (*Acts 21:20*). Rather than explain to these Jews, that the law had been changed, Paul agreed to participate in the ritual of sacrifice.

Acts 21:21 [James speaking] ‘but they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs.”

Acts 21:22-24 [James continues] “What then? The assembly must certainly meet, for they will hear that you have come. Therefore do what we tell you: We have four men who have taken a vow. Take them and be purified with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads, and that all may know that those things of which they were informed concerning you are nothing, but that you yourself also walk orderly and keep the law.”

There were several sacrifices involved in this process of purification. Paul went to the Temple, and paid the money for the sacrifices, but before they could complete the process of purification some of the Jews from Asia recognized Paul - and a riot ensued, as they sought to kill him. From that day on Paul remained a prisoner.

Why did Paul do as James directed? Did he believe that the blood of animals really effected anything at all? Did he ignore the warnings sent by the LORD? Did he cross the line? Did he strike the rock twice? I believe the next verse gives the “simple answer”.

1 Corinthians 9:20 “and to the Jews **I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews**; to those who are under the law, as under the law, **that I might win those who are under the law;**”

Paul makes it very clear that he did not consider himself “under the law” (Rom. 6:15).

I think we must consider the possibility that Paul was going through the motions, in order to dispel prejudice against the Gospel, from the Jewish community. Was he right, to do this? God did allow him to be taken prisoner, which brought an end to his missionary journeys.

Acts 21:25 “But concerning the Gentiles who have believed, we wrote, having decided that they should abstain from meat sacrificed to idols and from [eating] blood and from what is strangled and from fornication” (NAU).

Are you starting to see why some in the Messianic Community are teaching that Jews are still obligated to keep the sacrificial law, and Gentiles are not. It is no wonder to me that the LORD *allowed* the Temple to be destroyed - just to end the confusion.

The problem today is that a third Temple will be restored on the Mount - before the return of Christ in glory. Many will go there to offer sacrifice, but the LORD will not be there. An imposter will “sit in the Temple of God, showing himself that he is God” (2Thess. 2:3-4). Please see the study: [“Another Temple”](#).

COLOSSIANS 2:14 and DANIEL 9:24-27
CANNOT BE USED TO PROVE THE END OF SACRIFICES.

I agree. I would never use them in that way. Daniel’s prophecy of “the prince who is to come” - who “shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering”, most probably describes the actions of a coming Antichrist. We just don’t know yet. Daniel was told to “seal up” his writings until “the time of the end”.

NOTE: The “prince” who would “bring an end to sacrifice and offering” appears to be an evil ruler who will destroy the Temple along with the entire [old] City.

Colossians 2:14, explains that the “charges against us” were nailed to His cross. God “made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us” (2Co 5:21). “The Lord has laid on Him, the iniquity of us all” (Isa. 53:4). Jesus Christ died to obtain the right to forgive any person. That is why “all judgment is committed to the Son” (John 5:22).

(See the study [“A Debt Paid”](#) and the study [“The Curse of the Law”](#).)

Paul wrote, “let no man judge you in meat (offerings) or drink (offerings), or regarding a feast, or a new moon or sabbaths which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ” (Eph. 2:16-17). Paul is definitely writing about the sacrifices and offerings which were brought to the Temple at the Feasts of the LORD.

Believers in Christ kept the Feasts in a new way, without animal sacrifices, and without the mandated journey to Jerusalem. The Feasts and offerings at the Temple were only a shadow, pointing forward to the work of Christ. At my home, we commemorate the Feasts. We do not say that we “keep” them. They were an amazing and accurate prophecy, which has still not yet been *completely* fulfilled. The Fall Feasts have yet to be fulfilled.

WHAT IF

The destruction of the Temple and the City of Jerusalem in 70AD by the Roman General Titus, certainly brought an end to sacrifices, which has lasted some 1945 years, longer than all the Tabernacles and Temples of Yahweh stood. The LORD allowed that destruction, perhaps to wean His people away from that system.

So - let's say that a Temple of Yahweh *is* restored on the Mount at Jerusalem *before* Christ returns in glory. What then for believers in Yeshua as Messiah? Should they travel to the Mount to offer sacrifice? Should they confess their sins over the head of an animal?

The male head of household, was to place his hands on the head of the animal while confessing his own sins and those of his family. Then he was to slit the throat of the animal. This was all to be done while standing next to the Alter “before the LORD” in the Courtyard.

If the current nation of Israel were to gain control of the Mount and raise up a Temple to Yahweh, would they not *also* put up walls to KEEP OUT the uncircumcised (and women)? **How could a believer in Yeshua get into that Courtyard?** Even if he *was* physically circumcised, he would not be admitted unless his circumcision was approved by a certified Jewish Rabbi. In order to convert to Judaism one must renounce Jesus as the Christ. What if the guard at the entrance gate says you may not enter until you audibly renounce Jesus of Nazareth as Messiah, and Allah, and Mohammed as a prophet of Yahweh? What would you do then? I had one fellow tell me that he would go over to the Mount of Olives, so that he could watch. I'm sorry. Watching does not fulfill the Law.

A believer in Yeshua would enter that rebuilt Temple to offer sacrifice *for a different purpose*, than others who are Jewish. The Jew would offer sacrifice in order to obtain atonement. The Messianic believer would offer sacrifice to remember that he has already been granted atonement. I see a significant difference. I do not believe the two should offer the *same* sacrifice.

continued next page

EZEKIEL'S TEMPLE

Many site the prophecy of Ezekiel's Temple, saying that animal sacrifice will be restored in the Kingdom of Messiah. The "sin offering" or "trespass offering" is mentioned some 13 times in connection with that Temple. The "daily" is mentioned - which was also a "sin offering". The "burnt offering" and the "peace offering" are mentioned even more often in this prophecy.

In this Temple prophecy, ONLY "sons of Zadok" serve as priests (*Ezek. 40:46, Ezek. 43:19, Ezek. 44:15, Ezek. 48:11*). If ONLY "sons of Zadok" may serve as priests, that leaves out Aaron, and Phinehas, and several other faithful high priests. One wonders just who will be "high priest" of this coming Messianic Temple. If there is no "marriage or giving in marriage" in the resurrection, then there would be no further descent from Aaron, or Phinehas, or Zadok. Assuming Christ can only be a priest in the heavenly realm, one wonders just who would be High Priest of this Temple seen by Ezekiel in vision. You see why I ask the question.

NOTE: Zadok and his sons were faithful to King David, during the rebellion of Absalom (See 2 Samuel, 2 Kings, and 2 Chronicles). I personally believe the Zadok priests of Ezekiel's vision, symbolize all faithful priests - whether of Aaronic or Melchizedek.

There are some "strange" **commands concerning the priesthood**, in this Temple prophecy, assuming it will be the Messianic Kingdom Temple. They are not to touch a "dead body" - except immediate family (*Ezek. 44:25*). They are not to eat anything "torn by wild animals" or anything that "dies of itself" (*Ezek. 44:31*). Wait a minute! I thought the "lion will lie down with the calf, and the wolf with the lamb" (*Isa. 11:6*). What "wild" animals? The priests are not to marry widows or divorced women, but only virgins of Israel (*Ezek. 44:22*). Marry? I thought that "in the resurrection they "do not marry nor are given in marriage" (*Matt. 22:30*).

You see what I mean! If this is Messiah's Kingdom Temple AFTER the Second Coming, then there should be no "wild animals" or "marriage" or anything that "dies of itself". And if you read closely, you will realize that Ezekiel's Temple is empty inside, except for an "alter" made entirely "of wood". It is five-and-a-quarter feet high and three-and-a-half feet wide (*Eze 41:22 CJB*).

I personally believe that Ezekiel's Temple vision was a prophecy given in symbols. The "sons of Zadok" represent the redeemed who will become "priests of God and of Christ" (*Rev. 20:6*). They are faithful to God's anointed King Jesus, just the Sons of Zadok were faithful to King David. The "sacrifices" and "the prince" both represent Christ Jesus. The "people of the land" represent those raised at the end of the 1000 years (the 7th millennium) as "the rest of the dead". They will be taught by the LORD's priests.

Ezekiel was a captive in Babylon. The LORD confirmed Ezekiel in the eyes of the people, when other prophecies he had been given, were fulfilled. If Ezekiel had been shown the New Temple, *without* the animal sacrifices, the people would have abandoned those sacrifices when they returned to rebuild at the end of the 70 years captivity. But it was not yet time. The True Lamb had not yet been "offered". The prophecy of Ezekiel's Temple was given in symbols because it was not yet time to abandon the sacrifice of animals.

NO PLEASURE IN SACRIFICES

Hebrews 10:8 “Previously saying, ‘Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them’ (which are offered according to the law)”

Hebrews 10:5 “Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: ‘Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared for Me.’”

If the LORD had no pleasure in sacrifices or burnt offerings, *before* His own Son died in fulfillment of that prophecy, what would make us think that He would find pleasure in those things when His Son is ruling as King on this earth?

Some are teaching that animal sacrifices will be used as a “teaching tool” until everyone has learned the story of Messiah’s death, after which time they will be discontinued. I wonder - if you and I can “understand” the story of Messiah’s death, without actually killing an animal within the Temple court, why would others need this teaching tool? Perhaps the LORD can show a 3D video.

Isaiah 11:9 “They will not hurt or destroy anywhere on my holy mountain, for the earth will be as full of the knowledge of ADONAI as water covering the sea” (CJB).

I have shared with you my reasons for believing that the sacrifice of animals should now be regarded as “obsolete” - as a means to atonement or justification with God our Father.

Every person may freely receive forgiveness and justification simply by calling upon the Father to forgive, in the name of Jesus Christ, through faith in His Name with repentance.

*We pray this study will prove a blessing.
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