

# Ezekiel

## Part Ten

### Sacrifice and Offering

#### THE PRIESTHOOD HAS BEEN CHANGED

I am not a male descendant of Levi. According to the Law of Moses, I cannot be a priest. But Scripture teaches plainly that all of the redeemed from the Second Coming will become priests. The order of the priesthood MUST have been changed. The Melchizedek priesthood is NOT added to the Levite/Aaronic priesthood. It replaces that (temporary) order! We should say, “It is the fulfillment of that prophecy.”

**Hebrews 7:12-19** “For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law . . . For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life. For He testifies: ‘You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek.’ For on the one hand there is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness, 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.”

*A priest was absolutely necessary for the offering of a sacrifice! The Law mandated that sacrifice be offered thru the priesthood, in the courtyard of the Sanctuary, later the Temple at Jerusalem (Deut. 12:5-14). If you do away with the Aaronic priesthood, you **are** abolishing the system of animal sacrifices!*

*Under the Aaronic system, the animal was killed by the penitent, or at certain times, by the priest. A priest then caught the blood in a bowl and performed various ceremonial anointing. The priest prepped the whole animal (or parts of the animal) to be burned on the alter. In this role, the priests were said to “make atonement for” the penitent.*

## A CHANGE OF THE LAW

In his letter to the Galatians, Paul clearly stated that physical circumcision for any man was no longer necessary. He went much further saying that the those who became circumcised were “fallen from grace” and “estranged from Christ” (*Gal. 5:5-6*). Certainly THIS was a “change of the law.” Circumcision WAS law (*Gen. 17:10, Exo. 12:44-48, Lev. 12:3, Jos. 5:3-5*).

There were those in Paul’s day - converted Pharisees - who vehemently taught that all new converts to Christ must be physically circumcised, and must agree to keep all the law of Moses (*including the offering of animal sacrifices*). These Pharisees did not believe that the law had been changed. Paul soundly refuted them (*Acts 15:1*). The Pharisees maintained their authority over the people - teaching the Law.

If Paul had advocated no change to the old system - he would not have been persecuted!

Some do not believe that the Letter to the Hebrews belongs in the Holy Cannon. I do NOT share their view. I see the work of a new generation of Pharisees, teaching a return to every aspect of law-keeping, including the sacrifice of animals.

**Hebrews 7:12** “For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law.”

This is very serious! The LORD pronounced a curse upon “the one who does not confirm all the words of this law by observing them” (*Deut. 27:26*). No wonder there was such a conflict! No wonder Paul was persecuted.

The Pharisees of Christ’s day believed that failure to keep every word of the law, would bring upon them the curse of God. They kept the letter - but not the spirit, of the law. Of course, there was the added element of money. The Sadducees made their money exchanging Roman currency for the acceptable Temple shekel (for a fee of course), and by selling animals for sacrifice. If the system of animal sacrifices went away - so would their stream of income.

## TILL ALL IS FULFILLED

**Matthew 5:17-18** [Jesus speaking] “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. **I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.** For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.”

*He came “to fulfill” the Law, and He came “to fulfill” the Prophets. Did He fulfill the Law? Yes! “He was obedient unto death” (Phil. 2:8). He was the perfect representation of the Law, lived out in a human life. Did He fulfill the Prophets? Yes!*

**Acts 13:29** “Now when they had fulfilled all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down

from the tree and laid Him in a tomb.”

**Luke 24:44** [Speaking post resurrection] “Then He said to them, “These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms concerning me.”

**Acts 3:18** “But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.”

*Was Jesus saying that “all” would be fulfilled only when “heaven and earth pass away” ?  
When will “heaven and earth pass away” ?*

**Mark 13:31** “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away. But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.”

*In context He was speaking of His glorious return.*

**2 Peter 3:10** But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.”

*Perhaps we could agree that AFTER the return of Christ in glory, the priesthood may be changed, allowing for “spiritual sacrifices” only in the coming Messianic kingdom.*

***The Law is not “destroyed” - it is “fulfilled.”***

*We still live under the sacrificial system. We just have a better sacrifice, and we have a better priest - Yeshua Messiah!*

## THE END OF THE AARONIC ORDER - WAS PROPHESED

*After Israel worshiped the golden calf image at the foot of Mt. Sinai, the LORD named the tribe of Levi to serve the Sanctuary (Exo. 32:26, Num. 1:50-53). They stood with Moses against those who had worshiped the calf image. Within that tribe, Aaron and his descendants would serve as priests.*

*This Aaronic priesthood was a temporary measure, until the death of Messiah. Jesus then became our High Priest, and all of those who come into covenant with God through Him become priests “after the order of Melchizedek.” Today we call this “the priesthood of all believers.”*

**Exodus 40:13-15** “You [Moses] shall put the holy garments on Aaron, and anoint him and

consecrate him, that he may minister to Me as priest. And you shall bring his sons and clothe them with tunics. You shall anoint them, as you anointed their father, that they may minister to Me as priests; for their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations.”

*The LORD appointed Aaron and his descendants to an everlasting priesthood, but they did not continue in righteousness. They despised the LORD and abused their role as priests. A man of God came to Eli, with a prophecy and a curse. The LORD would bring an end to their priesthood. The promise to Aaron and his descendants was a conditional promise - based upon their obedience to covenant. By their actions, they despised that covenant!*

*The LORD keeps His covenant with those who love Him, and obey His commandments (Deut. 7:9, Isa. 56:6, Dan. 9:4). “Covenant” by definition, is an agreement, understanding or obligation entered into by at least two individuals. The LORD is not obligated to honor His covenant with those who despise Him, and violate (without repentance) the terms of that covenant - His law.*

**1 Samuel 2:30-35** “Therefore the LORD God of Israel says: ‘I said indeed that your house and the house of your father would walk before Me forever.’ **But now the LORD says: ‘Far be it from Me; for those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed.** Behold, the days are coming that I will cut off your arm and the arm of your father’s house, [Aaron’s House] so that there will not be an old man in your house [a man of eligible age for the priesthood]. **And you will see an enemy in My dwelling place,** despite all the good which God does for Israel. And there shall not be an old man in your house forever. . . . Then I will raise up for Myself a faithful priest who shall do according to what is in My heart and in My mind. I will build him a sure house, and he shall walk before My anointed forever.”

*The “faithful priest” would be Jesus the Messiah. God would “build Him a sure house” and He would walk before the LORD as His anointed priest - forever (Psa. 110:4).*

*The prophet of God said “You will see an enemy in My dwelling place.” By the time of Christ, the priesthood was bought and sold. The High Priest was a Roman appointee. If you study your history - He was actually an Edomite (descended from Esau). But I believe this prophecy is pointing to Antichrist of the last days, the “man of sin” who “sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God” (2Th. 2:4). The “abomination that causes desolation” will be set up in the House of God.*

THE MELCHIZEDEK ORDER

Yeshua Messiah (Jesus Christ) became High Priest.  
God said, “He is a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek” (*Psa. 110:4, Heb. 5:6*). He will still be our High Priest AFTER He becomes King,  
just as Melchizedek was King and Priest of Salem (*Gen. 14:18, Heb. 7:1-2*).

Zechariah prophesied that Joshua (Jesus) would build the Temple of the LORD, and He will be a priest upon his throne” (*Zechariah 6:11-13*).

**The Melchizedek “order” is much older than the Aaronic “order.”** It was the original order or “type” of priesthood, on the earth after the sin of Adam. **The coming priesthood on earth is a return to this original order, not something “new.”**

Melchizedek was king and priest of Salem - “City of Peace” (*Gen. 14:18, Heb. 7:1-2*).  
Jesus will be King and High Priest of Jerusalem - “Teaching of Peace.”  
Those raised “first” will be “kings and priests” - like Melchizedek (*Rev. 5:10, 20:6*).

## THE END OF ANIMAL SACRIFICE

There has been “a change in the law,” and that “change” involved the priesthood (*Heb. 7:12, 1Sam. 2:30-36*). “The former commandment” - the one concerning the priesthood (*and therefore the animal sacrifices*) has been “annulled” (*Heb. 7:18*). WHY? Because that law was “weak and unprofitable” (*Heb. 7:18*). It could not change the heart, or the conscience. That law was not a mistake on God’s part. It was a wonderful prophecy of what Messiah would one day do for humanity, but it *was* prophecy - not the reality.

“The law [*of sacrifices*] made nothing perfect; on the other hand, there is the bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God” (*Heb. 7:18*). That “better hope” is Messiah - who died for us. That “better hope” is Jesus, who now makes atonement for us, as High Priest before God’s throne.

Christ was appointed of God to be “a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek” (*Heb. 5:10, Psa. 11:4*). We cannot imagine Him in any role other than that of High Priest. The Letter to the Hebrews is centered on this theme - that a man from the tribe of Judah could now be our High Priest in Heaven, ministering His own blood in our behalf. We now look to Him as our High Priest - not to any Levite priest of “the order of Aaron.”

Under the Law, the High Priest often killed the animal for sacrifice, especially on the Day of Atonement (*Lev. 9:8, 12, 15, 18 & Lev. 16: 6, 9, 11, 15*). Our High Priest does not need to offer up animals for sacrifice, “for this He did **once for all** when He offered up Himself” (*Heb. 7:27*).

**There can be ONLY ONE High Priest - and He is Yeshua Messiah.** He WILL NOT offer the blood of animal sacrifices to His Heavenly Father - and neither will His priesthood

of the redeemed, during the coming 8<sup>th</sup> Day!

*NOTE: In Ezekiel's vision "the prince" offered sacrifice (Eze. 45:22). I cannot imagine that Jesus Christ - our "Prince" - will slit the throat of a lamb, watch it die as it bleeds out, and then offer the blood of that dead animal to His Father in payment of sin. He has already offered "one sacrifice for sins forever" (Heb. 10:12).*

**Hebrews 9:11-12** "But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation [*Heaven itself*]. 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."

*More perfect Tabernacle - More perfect Lamb - More perfect High Priest*

**Hebrews 10:12** "But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God,"

**Hebrews 10:8-9** "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."

*He takes away the first (the system of animal sacrifices which could do nothing to change the heart) that He may establish the second (His own perfectly obedient will - offered instead).*

**Hebrews 10:10** We are sanctified

"by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

*The priests who serve under Christ (in the "order of Melchizedek") will not need to offer up more animal sacrifices, because Yeshua was the only perfect sacrifice, acceptable to God for all time.*

*Most believers today do not understand that we still live under the sacrificial system - we just have a "better sacrifice" - a perfect sacrifice, and we have a better priest - a Perfected One - Yeshua the Son of God.*

*NOTE: The design of Ezekiel's future Temple included four enormous kitchens. What food will the priests prepare? If the animals of that age are all vegetarian, including "the lion" which will "eat straw like the ox," (Isa. 65:25) why would people still be eating flesh meat?*

**EZEKIEL'S TEMPLE**

## Does it mean the restoration of animal sacrifices?

There are Bible students who believe that animals will again be offered for sacrifice when the Temple is restored in the kingdom of Messiah. Ezekiel was shown an altar in the courtyard of this Temple, and places for the preparation of sacrifices. In the vision, the priests and “the prince” offer sacrifices (*Ezek. 40:38-43; 42:13; 44:11; 46:4,12,13,15,20*). What was the purpose of that vision? More importantly - what was the message of that vision?

This is a very controversial issue. I realize that I will offend some people, but I personally DO NOT believe that animal sacrifices will be offered to the LORD during the future 8th Day. This WAS a vision.

The ancient wilderness Sanctuary (later the Temple of Solomon) was a copy or representation of “Heaven itself.” The ministration of “the blood of the Lamb” (before the Father’s throne in Heaven) was portrayed as the priest anointed the altar, and poured out the blood. **The same is true of Ezekiel’s Temple.** This Temple also is a “copy” - of “heaven itself.” The sacrifices portrayed, reveal the continuing ministry of Christ. He is the sacrifice. He is the priest.

This is the larger message! The timing is the key. Ezekiel presents the resurrection and return of the whole house of Israel to the land. THEN - in this context - he is shown a Temple with tables, and implements for sacrifice. We have been sidetracked by useless “arguments about the law” and we have failed to hear what the Law is telling us. Each animal sacrificed is Yeshua, who will offer His own blood for another man or woman, clan or village, or nation. The ministration of blood must continue until the last repentant sinner is washed and healed - to sin no more. The continuation of the ministration of blood (symbolized by priests and the sacrifices) AFTER the “return” of redeemed Israel to “the land” is the strongest argument supporting a period of probationary grace for those raised at **The 8<sup>th</sup> Day**.

Ezekiel “saw” animal sacrifices. We “see” Christ, presenting His own blood on behalf of those who will come to the Father at **The 8<sup>th</sup> Day**.

*NOTE: I find the large “quarters” for the priests most interesting. Do they mirror heavenly “quarters” for the “priests of God and of Christ”?*

IT WASN'T TIME

*The vision was given to Ezekiel during the time of the Babylonian captivity. The Israelites would indeed return to the land at the end of the 70 years. They would rebuild the city and the Temple. But this return was only a type of THE FUTURE RETURN of the “whole house of Israel.”*

*If Ezekiel had been shown the future Temple **WITHOUT** the animal sacrifices, the returning Jews would have assumed that this system was not longer necessary, and it would have been discontinued. But it was not yet time. THE True Lamb had not yet been offered. The True Priest had not yet been consecrated.*

*The Temple constructed by the returning captives did not match the vision seen by Ezekiel, but a healing stream did flow out from Jerusalem - the blood of Jesus Christ and His Holy Spirit - which brought healing of spirit to those who accept HIM.*

## WHY A PRIESTHOOD?

Our study begs the question: **What further need will there be for a priesthood, AFTER the return of Christ in glory?** The role of the priests was one of mediation. They guided and taught the one who would approach the LORD.

I believe that the priesthood will continue, with Christ as High Priest, because there will be thousands (probably millions) raised to continue their lives in the Kingdom of Messiah on the earth, during the 8<sup>th</sup> millennium (The 8<sup>th</sup> Day).

These will be human beings who lived in ignorance of God and of His Law, or died before reaching the age of consent. Raised into the Kingdom of Messiah, they will learn of God and of His Son, and many will choose to serve Christ as LORD and King. Through the work of the priesthood, there will be many won to the Kingdom, of those who are raised “last.”

*NOTE: This does NOT represent a “second chance” for those raised at the 8<sup>th</sup> millennium. During their lives they remained in ignorance. They never had a chance - to chose the LORD. The continuation of their lives in the Messianic Kingdom represents for them a first opportunity.*

## WHY A TEMPLE?

Like so many other prophecies, the vision of Ezekiel's Temple will be completely and perfectly fulfilled. The "whole house of Israel" will be returned to the land. (*This did not happen in the time of Ezra.*) The Temple of the LORD will be restored on Mt. Zion. (*This did not happen in the time of Ezra.*) At this Temple - Christ WILL BE the Lamb, and the High Priest. All Israel will serve as priests, helping those who come in faith to claim the death of Yeshua Messiah (Jesus Christ), as the One True Offering.

If the work of redemption was finished at Second Coming, there would be NO NEED for another temporary House of God, and NO NEED for a priesthood. In the New Jerusalem of the eternal kingdom, John "saw no Temple there" for "God and the Lamb are the Temple" therein (*Revelation 21:22*). This tells us that Ezekiel's Temple is temporary. It is the Temple of the Messianic 8<sup>th</sup> Day Kingdom.

The Temple of The 8<sup>th</sup> Day will be the center of learning and the center of worship. It will be the meeting place, where "all flesh will come to worship the King" (*Isaiah Chapter 2*).

*NOTE: I do believe that a third Temple will be built on the Mount, before Jesus returns. The system of animal sacrifices will be "restored" at that Temple. But the LORD is not there. Antichrist - the "abomination of desolation" will sit in that Temple. I believe the restoration of that Temple is part of Satan's plan to "deceive -if possible, the very elect."*

## REDEEMED ISRAEL - "Priests of God and of Christ"

They will rise in the "first resurrection" - at the Second Coming (*Rev. 20:1-6*).

They will prepare for the priesthood - (during the 7<sup>th</sup> millennium).

They will spend this preparation time in the "Father's House" - Heaven.

Following their preparation/consecration they will return to "the land."

They will repair and rebuild.

With Christ - they will rule over "the nations" of the last great resurrection.

Then "the Law will go forth from Zion" (*Isa 2:1-4*).

Those who have never heard the name of Christ,  
or known of the Father's love - will learn of HIM.