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GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Can Men Atone for the Sins of Others?

TEACHING SUMMARY

This teaching addresses the claim that the Torah never allows a man to bear guilt or make atonement for others. It distinguishes Yeshua's willing self-offering from the kind of human sacrifice used in the objection. The discussion first examines priestly responsibilities in the Torah, then considers the prohibition against putting one person to death for another's sin.

Exodus 28:36–38 describes the gold plate on Aaron's forehead and says that he bears guilt connected with Israel's holy gifts so they may be accepted before YHWH. Leviticus 6 describes the priest eating the sin offering in a holy place. In Leviticus 10, Moses asks why the priests did not eat the offering given so they could bear the congregation's iniquity and make atonement.

The teaching uses a cited explanation of these passages to connect the priest's bodily participation in the offering with the removal of the people's guilt. Part of the offering is burned, and part is eaten by the priests. The Hebrew term *chatat* is discussed as meaning sin as well as designating the offering. This priestly pattern is then connected with 1 Peter 2:24, where Yeshua bears sins in his body.

The second objection appeals to Deuteronomy 24:16, which forbids putting fathers to death for their children or children for their fathers. The teaching cautions against reading this as an absolute statement that every sinner must personally die. Ezekiel 18:21–22 says that a wicked person who turns from sin and practices righteousness will live and that past transgressions will not be remembered against that person.

The teaching understands Deuteronomy 24:16 as a prohibition against involuntarily executing someone for another person's offense. Yeshua's death is distinguished by his voluntary choice. In John 10:11–18, the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep, and Yeshua states that no one takes his life from him: he lays it down of his own accord under the Father's charge.

The conclusion joins the two parts of the argument. Torah passages assign priests a role in bearing guilt and making atonement, while Yeshua's willing offering differs from the involuntary punishment prohibited in Deuteronomy. The teaching encourages readers to examine context and the way words are used rather than allowing an isolated accusation to determine their understanding.

SUMMARY POINTS

- The teaching considers whether a man can bear guilt or make atonement for others.
- Aaron's role in Exodus 28 includes bearing guilt connected with holy gifts.
- Leviticus describes priests eating the sin offering in a holy place.
- Leviticus 10 connects eating the offering with bearing the congregation's iniquity.
- The term chatat is used in the discussion of sin and the sin offering.
- First Peter 2:24 connects Yeshua's body with bearing sins.
- Deuteronomy 24:16 is interpreted as a prohibition of involuntary execution for another's offense.
- Ezekiel 18 promises life to the wicked person who turns from sin.
- John 10 emphasizes that Yeshua willingly lays down his life.
- Context and word usage are essential to the teaching's response to the objections.

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK

Basic

1. The priest named in Exodus 28 who bears guilt from holy gifts is _____.
2. Leviticus 10 says the priests bear the iniquity of the _____.
3. The priests were instructed to _____ the sin offering in a holy place.
4. First Peter 2:24 says Yeshua bore sins in his own _____.
5. John 10 describes Yeshua as the good _____.
6. The teaching emphasizes that Yeshua offered his life _____, rather than having that choice forced on him.

Challenging

1. The plate fastened to Aaron's turban was made of pure _____.
2. The cord fastening that plate to the turban was _____.
3. The Hebrew term discussed for sin and the sin offering is _____.
4. The prohibition against executing parents for children or children for parents is Deuteronomy _____.
5. Ezekiel 18 says the wicked person who turns from sin and does what is right shall _____.
6. In John 10, the hired hand flees when he sees the _____ coming.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do the duties assigned to Aaron and the priests challenge the claim that humans cannot bear guilt for others?

2. What connection does the teaching draw between eating the sin offering and Yeshua bearing sins in his body?

3. Why does the teaching read Deuteronomy 24:16 alongside Ezekiel 18 rather than treating the verse in isolation?

4. Explain the distinction between involuntary execution for another's offense and Yeshua's willing self-offering.

5. How does the contrast between the good shepherd and the hired hand reinforce the argument from John 10?

6. What does this example show about the importance of context and word usage when testing an objection?

ANSWER KEY - GROUP GUIDE

Basic

1. Aaron — Exodus 28:36–38
2. congregation — Leviticus 10:16–17
3. eat — Leviticus 6:25–27
4. body — 1 Peter 2:24
5. shepherd — John 10:11
6. voluntarily — John 10:17–18; teaching explanation

Challenging

1. gold — Exodus 28:36
2. blue — Exodus 28:37
3. chatat — Teaching's cited explanation of chatat
4. 24:16 — Deuteronomy 24:16
5. live — Ezekiel 18:21–22
6. wolf — John 10:12

FACILITATOR DISCUSSION NOTES

Suggested responses follow the teaching. Invite discussion and personal application; these are not additional required answers.

1. Exodus 28:36–38 assigns Aaron responsibility for guilt connected with holy gifts. Leviticus 10:16–17 connects the priests' eating of the offering with bearing the congregation's iniquity and atonement. The teaching uses those assigned priestly roles to challenge an absolute claim that humans have no part in bearing guilt for others.
2. The source cites an explanation linking the priest's bodily participation in the offering with the removal of guilt, then connects it to 1 Peter 2:24. Identify the Torah's stated ritual and the commentary's explanation separately; do not present every detail of that explanation as a direct quotation from Leviticus.
3. Deuteronomy 24:16 governs putting one person to death for another's offense. Ezekiel 18:21–22 says a wicked person who turns from sin will live. The teaching uses the latter to reject a reading that makes personal death inevitable for every sinner regardless of repentance.
4. The teaching understands Deuteronomy's prohibition as involuntary punishment for another's offense and distinguishes Yeshua's willing action in John 10:17–18. Keep the discussion about that specific argument. It does not authorize a general practice of killing another person for religious purposes.
5. The hired hand abandons the sheep when the wolf comes, while the good shepherd knows and protects them and lays down his life (John 10:11–18). The contrast supports the teaching's emphasis on voluntary care. Invite reflection on self-giving concern without suggesting dangerous imitation.
6. Ask participants to identify the actual words of Deuteronomy 24:16, the interpretive significance assigned to them, and the contextual evidence from Ezekiel 18 and John 10. The exercise models testing an objection rather than dismissing a questioner or generalizing about a religious community.