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GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Is the Temple Sacrifice Animal Abuse?

TEACHING SUMMARY

This teaching responds to the claim that temple sacrifice portrays God as cruel to animals. It begins with commandments and wisdom passages concerning animal care, arguing that the sacrificial system must be considered alongside the Torah's wider concern for living creatures.

Deuteronomy 25:4 permits a working ox to eat rather than be muzzled. Proverbs 12:10 connects righteousness with care for an animal's needs. The teaching presents these passages as evidence that compassion for animals belongs within faithful obedience.

The Sabbath command includes livestock in its rest. The teaching also considers Yeshua's example of rescuing a sheep from a pit on the Sabbath. It uses this example to emphasize life and mercy as weightier concerns and to affirm doing good on the Sabbath.

Leviticus 17:11 supplies the connection between blood, life, and atonement. The teaching argues that the traditional slaughter process for clean sacrificial animals was designed to minimize suffering, and it cites sources in support of that claim about the method.

The teaching also emphasizes the usefulness of the offerings, describing meat as nourishment for the Levites and skins as material for other needs. It connects this theme with God clothing Adam and Eve and with Yeshua's words about the Father feeding the birds.

The conclusion points to the harmony portrayed in Isaiah's description of the coming kingdom. The teaching places present suffering within the consequences of sin and argues that care for animals reflects God's righteous character and the purposes expressed in His commandments.

SUMMARY POINTS

- The teaching reads sacrifice alongside the Torah's instructions about animal care.
- A working ox is not to be muzzled while treading grain.
- Proverbs connects righteousness with care for animals.
- Livestock are included in Sabbath rest.
- Yeshua's example permits rescuing a sheep on the Sabbath.
- The teaching emphasizes life and mercy as weightier concerns.
- Leviticus connects blood with life and atonement.
- The teaching argues that the slaughter method sought to minimize suffering.
- It describes the use of meat and skins as provision rather than waste.
- Isaiah's kingdom imagery provides the closing picture of restored harmony.

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK

Basic

1. Deuteronomy says not to muzzle an _____ while it treads grain.
2. Proverbs says the righteous care for the needs of their _____.
3. The Sabbath command includes rest for _____.
4. Yeshua's example concerns a sheep that falls into a _____.
5. Leviticus 17:11 says the life of a creature is in its _____.
6. The Father feeds the _____ of the air in Matthew 6:26.

Challenging

1. Leviticus 17:11 connects blood on the altar with _____.
2. The chapter cited for the distinction between clean and unclean animals is Leviticus _____.
3. The teaching says the meat provided nourishment for the _____.
4. Genesis 3:21 describes garments made from _____.
5. The future kingdom passage says the wolf will dwell with the _____.
6. The teaching describes life and _____ as weightier than the weekly requirement to rest.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do the commands about a working ox and Sabbath rest contribute to the teaching's response?
2. What connection does Proverbs 12:10 make between righteousness and animal care?
3. How does Yeshua's example of the sheep in a pit illustrate the teaching's emphasis on mercy?
4. How does the teaching connect Leviticus 17:11 with its explanation of the sacrificial process?
5. Why does the teaching emphasize nourishment and the use of skins when discussing the offerings?
6. How does the description of the coming kingdom contribute to the teaching's conclusion about God's purposes for animals?

ANSWER KEY – GROUP GUIDE

Basic

1. ox
2. animals
3. livestock
4. pit
5. blood
6. birds

Challenging

1. atonement
2. 11
3. Levites
4. skins
5. lamb
6. mercy