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GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Christ's Sacrifice Once for All: Is the Levitical Priesthood Replaced?

TEACHING SUMMARY

Many believers assume that Yeshua's role as High Priest and His once-for-all sacrifice for sin means that the Levitical priesthood and sacrificial system have been abolished. This teaching examines that claim and argues that Scripture does not support it. Instead, the Levitical priesthood and sacrifices remain valid within their intended purpose and context.

The teaching begins by addressing the common belief that Yeshua replaced the Levitical priesthood and sacrificial system. While Hebrews teaches that Yeshua is our High Priest in heaven and that His sacrifice was offered once for all, this raises important questions. If the sacrificial system was abolished at the cross, why did the apostles continue participating in Temple worship and sacrifices in the book of Acts? Why do the prophets describe a future restoration of the Temple, priesthood, and sacrifices?

The teaching explains that the idea of replacing the Torah's priestly and sacrificial laws is tied to a theological framework often called Replacement Theology or supersessionism. This perspective developed after the apostolic era and teaches that the Church replaced Israel and that aspects of the Torah, including the sacrificial system, came to an end. However, the teaching argues that this position conflicts with the teachings of Yeshua, the actions of the apostles, the prophecies of the Hebrew prophets, and the book of Hebrews itself.

Yeshua explicitly taught that He did not come to abolish the Torah. He taught that nothing would pass from the Law until heaven and earth pass away. Because of this, the teaching argues that believers should not assume that the priestly and sacrificial laws were abolished at the cross.

The book of Acts shows the apostles continuing to worship at the Temple after Yeshua's resurrection and ascension. They attended Temple services, participated in prayer at the Temple, and even took part in offerings. Paul himself participated in Temple rituals and offerings to demonstrate that he was not teaching believers to abandon the Torah. These actions show that the earliest believers saw no conflict between Yeshua's sacrifice and the Temple system.

The prophets likewise describe a future restoration of the Temple and sacrificial system. Jeremiah, Isaiah, Zechariah, and especially Ezekiel all describe sacrifices taking place during the future Messianic Kingdom. If sacrifices were permanently abolished, these prophecies would be difficult to explain.

The teaching then examines Hebrews. Contrary to common assumptions, Hebrews does not teach that the Levitical priesthood was abolished. In fact, Hebrews states that if Yeshua were on earth, He would not be a priest because the Torah assigns that role to the sons of Levi. This demonstrates that the author still recognized the validity of the Torah's regulations concerning the earthly priesthood.

A major focus of the teaching is the distinction between what animal sacrifices accomplished and what Yeshua's sacrifice accomplished. Animal sacrifices functioned in relation to the earthly sanctuary. They purified the flesh and addressed the ritual consequences of sin associated with the physical sanctuary. Yeshua's sacrifice, however, purifies the conscience and provides eternal atonement before God. Hebrews teaches that animal sacrifices never removed sins in the eternal sense; they pointed forward to the Messiah's sacrifice.

The teaching explains that there are two levels of atonement. Animal sacrifices provided earthly or temporal atonement connected to the physical sanctuary. Yeshua's sacrifice provides heavenly or eternal atonement that reconciles humanity to God. These functions are complementary rather than contradictory.

Finally, the teaching concludes that the Levitical priesthood and sacrificial system remain valid for the present age, though they cannot currently function because there is no Temple. The sacrificial system does not conflict with Yeshua's once-for-all sacrifice because they serve different purposes. Understanding the distinction between temporal and eternal atonement resolves the apparent tension between Hebrews and the rest of Scripture.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Yeshua did not abolish the Torah.
- The idea that the sacrificial system was replaced comes from Replacement Theology.
- The apostles continued participating in Temple worship after Yeshua's resurrection.
- Paul participated in Temple offerings in the book of Acts.

- The prophets describe a future restoration of the Temple and sacrifices.
 - Hebrews affirms the Torah's regulations concerning the earthly priesthood.
 - Yeshua serves as High Priest in heaven.
 - The Levitical priesthood serves on earth.
 - Animal sacrifices purified the flesh and sanctuary.
 - Animal sacrifices never removed sins eternally.
 - Yeshua's sacrifice provides eternal atonement.
 - Temporal and eternal atonement serve different purposes.
 - The sacrificial system is not currently operating because there is no Temple.
 - The earthly sacrificial system will ultimately pass away when heaven and earth are renewed.
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Basic

- Yeshua taught that He did not come to abolish the _____.
 - The idea that the Church replaced Israel is often called _____ Theology.
 - The apostles continued worshipping at the _____ after Yeshua's resurrection.
 - Paul participated in Temple _____ in Jerusalem.
 - Ezekiel prophesied a future _____ with priestly service and sacrifices.
 - Hebrews teaches that Yeshua serves as High Priest in _____.
 - Animal sacrifices purified the _____.
 - Yeshua's sacrifice purifies the _____.
 - The Levitical priesthood serves in the _____ realm.
 - Yeshua's sacrifice provides _____ atonement.
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Challenging

- According to Hebrews 8:4, if Yeshua were on earth, He would not be a _____.

- Yeshua came from the tribe of _____.
- Hebrews says it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away _____.
- Animal sacrifices served as a _____ of heavenly realities.
- The Day of Atonement rituals purified the earthly _____.
- Hebrews 9:13–14 contrasts purification of the flesh with purification of the _____.
- The regulations concerning the body remain until the time of _____.
- The future restoration of sacrifices is described extensively in Ezekiel chapters _____ through _____.
- Animal sacrifices addressed the _____ consequences of sin.
- Yeshua's priesthood functions in a different _____ than the Levitical priesthood.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why do you think Yeshua emphasized that He did not come to abolish the Torah?
 - What does the apostles' continued participation in Temple worship teach us about their understanding of Yeshua's sacrifice?
 - Why are Ezekiel's prophecies important when discussing the future of the sacrificial system?
 - How does Hebrews distinguish between Yeshua's priesthood and the Levitical priesthood?
 - What is the difference between temporal atonement and eternal atonement?
 - Why is it important to understand the purpose of animal sacrifices according to Scripture?
 - How does Hebrews 9:13–14 help explain the different functions of animal sacrifices and Yeshua's sacrifice?
 - What can believers learn from the distinction between earthly and heavenly realities in Hebrews?
 - Why do you think the author of Hebrews emphasized that Yeshua serves as a priest in heaven rather than on earth?
 - How does understanding this topic help us better reconcile Hebrews with the rest of Scripture?
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ANSWER KEY – GROUP GUIDE

Basic

1. Torah
2. Replacement
3. Temple
4. Offerings
5. Temple
6. Heaven
7. Flesh
8. Conscience
9. Earthly
10. Eternal

Challenging

1. Priest
2. Judah
3. Sins
4. Shadow
5. Sanctuary
6. Conscience
7. Reformation
8. 40 / 48
9. Ritual
10. Venue