

# MOSAIC SACRIFICE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

by Avram Yehoshua

[The Seed of Abraham](#)

The New Testament reveals that the practice of sacrifice is still valid. On the other hand, the Church teaches that it is done away with because of the Sacrifice of Jesus. Again we come to a fork in the road of understanding God's Word and as we'll see, 'Church Road' is not the Road to travel.

Many people take statements in the Tanach (Hebrew Bible: Old Testament) by the Prophets, out of context to mean that the sacrificial system would end. The prophet Amos is one such example:

Amos 5:21-24: 'I hate, I reject your Festivals. Nor do I delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer up to Me Burnt sacrifices and your grain sacrifices I will not accept them. I will not even look at the Peace sacrifices of your fatlings. Take away from Me the noise of your songs! I will not even listen to the sound of your harps, but let justice roll down like rivers and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.'

To use this text to say that God was going to end sacrifice, or never really wanted sacrifice to begin with, is also to accept that God is not pleased with singing praise and worship to Him, but God is not against sacrifice or singing and harps. What He is coming against are evil people who bring sacrifices, thinking that they are now acceptable to Him because they followed the mechanical procedure of the sacrifices, but had false heart's.

Others use the prophet Isaiah to tell us that God was not happy with the Mosaic sacrificial system, and therefore, with Jesus, it would cease. They point to what Isaiah said in the first chapter:

'What are your multiplied sacrifices to Me? says Yahveh. I have had enough of burnt sacrifices of rams and the fat of fed cattle. I take no pleasure in the blood of bulls, lambs or goats. When you come to appear before Me, who requires of you this trampling of My Courts? Bring your worthless offerings no longer! Incense is an abomination to Me! New Moon and Sabbath, the calling of assemblies, I cannot endure iniquity and the solemn assembly! I hate your New Moon Festivals and your appointed Feasts! They have become a burden to Me. I am weary of bearing them. So when you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide My Eyes from you. Yes, even though you multiply prayers, I will not listen. *Your hands are covered with blood.* Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean! Remove the evil of your deeds from My sight! Cease to do evil! Learn to do good! Seek justice! Reprove the ruthless! Defend the orphan! Plead for the widow! (Is. 1:11-17)

How one can think that God is condemning sacrifice, and not evil within His People, is to read something into the text that is not there. The cause of God's anger and frustration with Israel is evident in the Scripture cited, and also in verse 4:

'Alas, sinful nation! People weighed down with iniquity! Offspring of evildoers! Sons who act corruptly! They have abandoned Yahveh! They have despised the Holy One of Israel. They have turned away from Him' (Is. 1:4).

The Prophets don't seek to do away with the external form of worship, sacrifice, for that would be sinning by breaking God's commandments. They come against those who would sacrifice to Yahveh and think that they could continue to live a life of immorality and defiance of Yahveh's will. As such, Israel was abusing what Yahveh had set up for Him to be able to dwell among them. The Prophets' call was not,

‘give up your sacrifices,’ but, ‘give up your evil ways.’ There are some things written in the New Testament that many turn to, to validate their belief that sacrifice ended with Jesus being sacrificed for us. The book of Hebrews is one such place where the phrase, ‘once for all’ occurs three times:

Heb. 7:27: ‘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* when He offered up Himself.’

Heb. 9:12: ‘and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own Blood, He entered the Holy Place *once for all*, having obtained Eternal Redemption.’

Heb. 10:10: ‘By this will we have been sanctified through the sacrifice of the body of Yeshua the Messiah *once for all*.’

The three verses with *once for all* don’t mean that Jesus did away with sacrifice. It means that Yeshua does not need to come back for each generation and sacrifice Himself all over again (*once*), for each generation. This is brought out by the writer in:

Heb. 9:26: ‘Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world, but now *once*, at the consummation of the Ages, He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.’

Note well: to ‘put away sin,’ not sacrifice. One might ask, ‘If there’s no more sin, why would we need sacrifice?’ A good question that I’ll deal with as we go along. Realize, too, that there is more to sacrifice than sacrifice for sin. There is sacrifice for thanksgiving and dedication and oneness with Yahveh, but even this belies the point. Could believers offer up sin sacrifice after the one-time sacrifice of Yeshua? We’ll see that they not only could, but New Testament Scripture records that it was a common practice.

Yeshua’s one-time sacrifice is good for everyone who has ever lived (*for all*). It doesn’t say that Temple sacrifice should cease or that it was wrong or that New Testament believers couldn’t or shouldn’t sacrifice. As we will see, the Apostle Paul was willing to take upon himself the Vow of the Nazarite at the behest of James and all the Elders (of all the Jews who believed in Jesus: Acts 21:20f.). Yeshua’s Sacrifice didn’t do away with sacrifice in the New Testament, it enhanced it. It raised sacrifice to its divine Reality.

## THE NAZARITE VOW

God instituted the concept of the Nazarite for those Israelis that wanted to be specially devoted to Him for a period of time. In the days of Jesus, the standard times for the Vow were 30, 60 or 100 days (approximately one, two or three months). Of course, there are three instances in the Bible where the Vow is for life (Sampson: Judges 13:5; Samuel: 1st Sam. 1:11; and John the Baptist: Luke 1:15). The procedure for the Vow is found in Num. 6:1-21. The Nazarite (*na-zeer* in Hebrew) means, ‘one who is separated or holy to Yahveh.’ He (or she) could not eat anything from the grape vine. No wine or strong drink, no grapes, grape skins, seeds or even raisins. The grape pictures the blood sacrifice and the life of pleasure. The Nazarite Vow pictured a life of total dedication to God and His commandments:

Num. 6:1-4: “Again Yahveh spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Speak to the Sons of Israel and say to them, ‘When a man or woman makes a special vow, the vow of a Nazarite, to dedicate himself to Yahveh, he shall abstain from wine and strong drink. He shall drink no vinegar, whether made from wine or strong drink, nor shall he drink any grape juice, nor eat fresh or dried grapes. All the days of his separation he shall not eat anything that is produced

by the grape vine, from the seeds even to the skin.””

Num. 6:5-7: “All the days of his vow of separation no razor shall pass over his head. He shall be holy until the days are fulfilled for which he separated himself to Yahveh. He shall let the locks of hair on his head grow long. All the days of his separation to Yahveh he shall not go near to a dead person. He shall not make himself unclean for his father or for his mother, for his brother or for his sister, when they die, because his separation to God is on his head.”

Num. 6:8-10: “All the days of his separation he is holy to Yahveh, but if a man dies very suddenly beside him and he defiles his dedicated head of hair, then he shall shave his head on the day when he becomes clean. He shall shave it on the seventh day. Then on the eighth day he shall bring two turtle doves or two young pigeons to the priest, to the doorway of the Tent of Meeting.”

Num. 6:11-12: “The priest shall offer one for a Sin sacrifice and the other for a Burnt sacrifice and make atonement for him concerning his sin because of the dead person. And that same day he shall consecrate his head and shall dedicate to Yahveh his days as a Nazarite and shall bring a male lamb a year old for a Guilt sacrifice, but the former days will be void because his separation was defiled.”

Num. 6:13: “Now this is the law of the Nazarite when the days of his separation are fulfilled. He shall bring the offering to the doorway of the Tent of Meeting.”

Num. 6:14: “He shall present his offering to Yahveh: one male lamb a year old without defect for a Burnt sacrifice, and one ewe-lamb a year old without defect for a Sin sacrifice, and one ram without defect for a Peace sacrifice,”

Num. 6:15: “and a basket of unleavened cakes of fine flour mixed with oil and unleavened wafers spread with oil, along with their Grain sacrifice and their Wine sacrifice.”

Num. 6:16-17: “Then the priest shall present them before Yahveh and shall offer his Sin sacrifice and his Burnt sacrifice. He shall also offer the ram for a sacrifice of Peace sacrifices to Yahveh together with the basket of unleavened cakes. The priest shall likewise offer its Grain sacrifice and its Wine sacrifice.”

Num. 6:18: “The Nazarite shall then shave his dedicated head of hair at the doorway of the Tent of Meeting and take the dedicated hair of his head and put it on the fire which is under the sacrifice of Peace sacrifices.”

Num. 6:19-21: “The priest shall take the ram’s shoulder when it has been boiled and one unleavened cake out of the basket and one unleavened wafer and shall put them in the hands of the Nazarite after he has shaved his dedicated hair. Then the priest shall wave them for a wave offering before Yahveh. It is holy for the priest, together with the breast offered by waving and the thigh offered by lifting up and afterward the Nazarite may drink wine. This is the law of the Nazarite who vows his sacrifice to Yahveh according to his separation, in addition to what else he can afford, according to his vow which he takes, so he shall do according to the law of his separation.”

In Num. 6:5 we read that no razor was allowed to cut his hair during the duration of the Vow. The hair was the outward mark of holiness or consecration to Yahveh. The Hebrew word *nay-zeer* (a noun from the verb *nah-zar*, where *Nazarite* comes from) means ‘a crown’ and is used of both the crown of the High Priest (Ex. 29:6) and the king (2nd Sam. 1:10). It seems that the hair of the Nazarite was his ‘crown’ pic-

turing his holiness to Yahveh. The biblical royal crown was a symbol of the person's consecration to his office as High Priest or King of Israel. The hair symbolized his special holy life to Yahveh for the time of the Vow.

In Num. 6:6-7 we saw that the Nazarite couldn't go near a dead person and must not defile himself even for his father or mother. This places the Nazarite in a very exclusive category, that of the High Priest of Israel:

Lev. 21:10-11: "And the Priest who is the highest among his brothers, on whose head the anointing oil has been poured and who has been consecrated to wear the garments, shall not uncover his head, nor tear his clothes nor shall he approach any dead person, nor defile himself, *even for his father or his mother*".

There is a parallel between the anointing oil on the head of the High Priest, that allowed him to wear the literal crown (*holiness to Yahveh*: Ex. 28:36) upon his head, and the hair of the Nazarite. With the Nazarite not able to leave his Vow, even for the death of his mother or father, he enters a sphere of holiness that is comparable to the holiness person in Israel: the High Priest. The Nazarite Vow opened up an avenue for common Israelis to walk in the kind of holiness, dedication and purity that only the High Priest walked in. Num. 6:13-21 says that among other Grain and Wine sacrifices, the Nazarite at the end of his Vow was to bring *at least* three animals for sacrifice. They were:

1. a yearling lamb for a Burnt sacrifice (6:14),
2. a ewe lamb for a Sin sacrifice (6:14),
3. and a ram for a Peace sacrifice (6:14).

At the conclusion of the Vow the shaved hair was to go into the Altar Fire, picturing his *total and complete* devotion to Yahveh *and His Law*. Why the Law? Because the Law is the literal expression of God's will in any area that God speaks on. His Words on any matter are equal to His will on the subject. If one were truly devoted to God then one would want to do His will by obeying His commandments (the Law). To take the Vow and disregard the Law would be a perversion of why one would want to take the Vow. It would be like a man coming to Jesus and saying that he loved Jesus, but that he was still going to continue living a lifestyle of murder and adultery. Also, if the Nazarite could afford it, he could present more animal sacrifices than was required (Num. 6:21), and that after his Vow was complete the Nazarite could drink wine again (Num. 6:20).

The shaving of his head at the end of the Vow (along with the Greek word for sacrifice) will confirm that the Apostle Paul took the Vow of the Nazarite in Acts 21:22f. *more than 25 years after* the one-time sacrifice of Jesus.<sup>1</sup> This will establish that among the Jews who believed in Jesus, sacrifice was still valid and had not been done away with because of the sacrifice of Yeshua. It also reveals that the Law was still being observed by all the Jewish believers in Jerusalem, including the Apostles.

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<sup>1</sup> Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Bible Dictionary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 25th printing, 1976), p. 487. Unger records that Paul was in Jerusalem in 58 AD. If that is correct, and the Resurrection took place in 30 AD, we have a period spanning 28 years. Such a long time after the death of Messiah should have been enough for the Holy Spirit to reveal to the Apostles that sacrifice was 'done away with.'

## *The Apostle Paul: A Nazarite?*

In Acts 21:17-26, Paul takes the Nazarite Vow.<sup>2</sup> This is not commonly understood in the Church today. It would have entailed that Paul sacrifice three animals for himself (Num. 6:14), and of course, one was a sin sacrifice. James, the head of all the Jews in Jerusalem that believed in Yeshua, suggested to Paul that he pay the expenses of four Jewish men (who believed in Yeshua), who were under the Nazarite Vow or were beginning to walk into it via a purification rite. This, of course, would have meant that Paul would have paid for their sacrificial animals at the end of their Vow. Obviously, the Apostle Paul didn't think that sacrifice was done away with.

In Acts 21:23-24 we see specific reference made to the Vow of the Nazarite and the sacrifices the Vow entails: 'Therefore do this that we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow' (v. 23).

Wesley Perschbacher states that the Greek word *ou-kain* is a vow and makes specific reference to the verse.<sup>3</sup> This conforms to the word for *vow* in Num. 6:2, 5, etc., where the Greek word in the Septuagint is *ou-kase*, a word almost identical with the noun *ou-kain*.<sup>4</sup> In Acts 21:23, the four Jewish men had already begun the Vow of the Nazarite, at least the preliminary purification rite, which was a prelude to the Vow. In Num. 6:2, God speaks of one who would take the Nazarite Vow, saying, 'If a man or a woman desires to vow a vow of the Nazarite, *to separate* himself to Yahveh'.

The Hebrew verb for 'to separate is *lih-hah-zeer* and means, 'to set apart.'<sup>5</sup> It's in the *Hiphal* form of the verb. The *Niphal*, which is the verb for *nah-zar* means, 'to separate, withdraw oneself'<sup>6</sup> and is where the noun for Nazarite comes from, which in Hebrew is *nah-zeer*, 'a Nazarite, one separated and consecrated to God.'<sup>7</sup> Brenton translates Num. 6:2 by giving the *meaning* of Nazarite, instead of placing the name *Nazarite* there: 'Whatsoever a man or woman shall specially vow a vow, *to separate oneself with purity* to the Lord'.

The Hebrew word for a vow is *neh-dare*. This can be used for any vow to God, not necessarily the Nazarite Vow. For instance, Father Yakov (Jacob) vowed to give Yahveh a tenth of all that Yahveh would give him (Gen. 28:10-22), but this was not the vow of the Nazarite. In Paul's case, however, there is ample evidence that it is the Vow of the Nazarite that Paul is being led to take. This places a large crack in Church theology that says that sacrifice ended with the one-time sacrifice of Jesus because the Nazarite Vow entails three different kinds of animal sacrifice. Acts 21:24 has Paul being told to pay for the shaving of the heads of the men that were under the Vow. No other vow has this, but the Nazarite Vow:

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<sup>2</sup> There are some that say that Paul didn't actually take the Vow, but was only being purified so that he could pay for the expenses (sacrifices) of those four who had taken the Vow, but there is nothing that demands that the one paying the expenses has to undergo purification. Be that as it may, the crucial point in all this is Paul's attitude toward the four Jewish believers who had taken the Nazarite Vow.

<sup>3</sup> Wesley J. Perschbacher, Editor, *The New Analytical Greek Lexicon*, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publications, 1990, p. 184.

<sup>4</sup> Sir Lancelot C. L. Brenton, *The Septuagint with Apocrypha: Greek and English*, USA: Hendrickson Publishers, sixth printing, February, 1997, p. 180. The Septuagint is a Greek version of the Old Testament that was made by Jewish men, 250 years before Jesus was born. It offers a way to compare Greek words in the New Testament.

<sup>5</sup> Benjamin Davidson, *The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1979, page 542.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

Num. 6:18: 'The Nazarite shall then shave his dedicated head of hair at the doorway of the Tent of Meeting and take the dedicated hair of his head and put it on the fire which is under the sacrifice of Peace sacrifices.'

Most commentators acknowledge that it is the Vow of the Nazarite that Paul is taking upon himself. *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary* states:

'There were four Jews who had taken a Nazarite Vow. At the end of this period, they would shave their heads and offer certain sacrifices of purification to God.'<sup>8</sup>

Of course, Paul would be the fifth Jew under the Vow. Acts 21:26 uses the Greek word *pros-pho-rah* which means, 'a sacrifice, a victim offered'.<sup>9</sup> One might not realize it from the wording of the King James Version, but the New American Standard Bible makes it very plain that Paul was involved in something that would entail sacrifice:

King James Version: Acts 21:26: 'Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the Temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them.'

New American Standard Bible: Acts 21:26: 'Then Paul took the men, and the next day, purifying himself along with them, went into the Temple, giving notice of the completion of the days of purification, until the sacrifice was offered for each one of them.'

This confirms that sacrifice was being spoken of. What is Paul doing if sacrifices were done away with by the one-time Sacrifice of Jesus? Instead of taking the Vow, why doesn't he just straighten out James by telling him that Jesus' sacrifice did away with the need for Paul to take the Vow, and especially to sacrifice, but Paul doesn't do that. The Nazarite Vow and sacrifice are still valid for the Apostle Paul. *This* is the Word of God and nowhere in Paul's letters does he say that he regretted taking it or that it was wrong of that he felt coerced. He took the Nazarite Vow specifically to confirm to all the Jews who believed in Jesus, that he, Paul, was still walking in the commandments of the Law. James said to him:

Acts 21:24: 'take them and purify yourself along with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads and *all will know* that there is nothing to the things which they have been told about you but that you yourself also walk orderly, *keeping the Law*.'

The reason why Paul took the Vow was to dispel lies that he was teaching Jewish believers living outside the Land of Judah that they should not circumcise their sons, nor keep the Law of Moses ('customs'):

Acts 21:21: 'and they have been told about you, that you are teaching all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their sons, nor to walk according to the customs.'

This stemmed from either a misunderstanding or intentional slander of what Paul was teaching about the Law of Moses and about circumcision among the Gentiles. Paul prohibited any Gentile from being circumcised (Gal. 5:1-5) and so did James in Acts 15.

In 1st Cor. 7 Paul tells those who come to Yeshua that if they came into the Kingdom circumcised, they were to remain that way. This, of course, would refer to all the Jewish believers and their sons. So, Paul didn't reject circumcision altogether. Also, we know that he had Timothy circumcised (Acts 16:3), but if

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<sup>8</sup> Charles F. Pfeiffer, Old Testament; Everett F. Harrison, New Testament, *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1977), p. 1165.

<sup>9</sup> Perschbacher, *The New Analytical Greek Lexicon*, p. 356, with specific reference to verse 26.

men came uncircumcised, meaning the Gentiles, they weren't to get circumcised:

'But as God has distributed to every man, as the Lord has called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches. Is any man called being circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? Let him not be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God (1st Cor. 7:17-19).

Those who are called in circumcision are to circumcise their sons, as this is what the Law decrees for the literal Seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Paul ends with the statement that the important thing is to keep the commandments of God. This can only be seen as the Law (along with Yeshua's commandments), but specifically, the Law of Moses.

If the traditional Nazarite Vow is in effect in Acts 21, and the New Testament tells us that it is, it means that Paul was willing to pay for the sacrifices of three animals for himself and twelve animals for the other four men. That's fifteen animals that Paul was willing to pay for, to be sacrificed for him and the four Jewish men that were under the Nazarite Vow and they all believed in Jesus. This is what the Word of God states. If what the Church says about it doesn't line up with the Word of God, what are we going to believe? We need to order our lives around what God has to say on any subject, not what Church tradition says when it nullifies the Word of God.

Some have said that God stopped the Nazarite Vow before Paul could sacrifice because it was wrong for him to do such a thing. It's true that Paul didn't get the opportunity to offer sacrifice, or to pay for those men under the Vow, as his time was cut short by Jewish non-believers in the Temple, who came against him:

Acts 21:26: 'Then Paul took the men, and the next day, purifying himself along with them, went into the Temple giving notice of the completion of the days of purification, until the sacrifice was offered for each one of them.'

Acts 21:27: "When the seven days were almost over, the Jews from Asia, upon seeing him in the Temple, began to stir up all the crowd and laid hands on him, crying out, 'Men of Israel, come to our aid! This is the man who preaches to all men everywhere against our People and the Law and this Place. And what's more, he has even brought Greeks into the Temple and has defiled this Holy Place.'"

Acts 21:29-30: 'For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with him, and they supposed that Paul had brought him into the Temple. Then all the city was provoked, and the people rushed together, and taking hold of Paul they dragged him out of the Temple and immediately the doors were shut.'

The Apostle Paul had taken the Nazarite Vow upon himself and had walked in it for about six days (v. 27) and was only stopped from completing the time of purification by those violent men who hated him. To say that God allowed this to happen so that the Apostle would not be able to sacrifice is very strange as we have no Scripture that says it was wrong for Paul to do it. Their argument is from silence, or better yet, from their own theology, which is contrary to Scripture. Paul never writes that he should not have taken the Vow (nor does anyone else), and so, this was then an acceptable practice.

This is many years after the resurrection of Yeshua. Sacrifice was still very much in effect among the believing Jewish community. Of course, today, with no Temple, the sacrifices cannot be performed, but the point of all this is that when the Temple stood, the Apostles had absolutely no problem with sacrificing to God. This opens up a wider theological rift than just sacrifice because if the sacrifices were valid for Jewish New Testament believers then the Law was also still valid and it literally states it as such in Acts

21:24: ‘but that you yourself also walk orderly, *keeping the Law.*’

In relation to Gentile believers offering up sacrifice to God in the Temple at Jerusalem at that time, we’ve already seen what happened to Paul under the suspicion that he had brought a Greek believer (Trophimus) into an area of the Temple that Gentiles couldn’t come into. It’s not that God prohibited them from sacrificing. The Temple was in the hands of an anti-Messiah priesthood and wouldn’t recognize the rights of the Gentiles to offer up sacrifice in the Name of Yeshua (Lev. 22:17-19; Num. 15:14-16; Is. 56:3-9).

## *Sacrifice and the Book of Hebrews*

Many declare that the author of Hebrews does away with the Mosaic sacrificial system in light of the sacrifice of Jesus, but what the author of Hebrews is doing is comparing the two and telling us which is greater. He never degrades the Mosaic sacrifices nor does away with them for the present age. The book of Hebrews is primarily concerned with what Yeshua has done and Who He is: His sacrifice has cleansed us of our sin nature and given us eternal life, as seen in this passage:

Heb. 9:12-14: ‘and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled, sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Messiah, who through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works, to serve the Living God?’

The writer tells us that Yeshua is the Son of God, our High Priest and our King (Zech. 6:13) and the Apostle (Sent One) of God.<sup>10</sup>

Heb. 3:1: ‘Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession’.

Heb. 4:14: ‘Therefore, since we have a great High Priest who has passed through the Heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.’

Heb. 7:1-2: ‘For this Melchizedek, King of Salem, Priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham as he was returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, to whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth part of all the spoils, was first of all, by the translation of his name, King of Righteousness, and then also King of Salem, which is King of Peace.’

Heb. 7:15-17: “And this is clearer still, if another priest arises according to the likeness of Melchizedek, who has become such not on the basis of a law of physical requirement, but according to the power of an indestructible life. For it is attested of Him, ‘You are a Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.’”

By saying that Yeshua is a priest after the order of Melchizedek, the writer is presenting Yeshua as the King of Righteousness and Peace. (It doesn’t mean that this ‘order’ of priesthood cannot work within the

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<sup>10</sup> Perschbacher, *The New Analytical Greek Lexicon*, pp. 48-49: The word apostle means, ‘one sent as a messenger or agent, the bearer of a commission, messenger...an apostle’. This fits biblically with Yeshua’s title in the Tanach as The Messenger of Yahveh (commonly mistranslated as the Angel of the LORD). The Greek word for Apostle in Hebrews 3:1 is *apostolon*. The English word ‘apostle’ is only a transliteration of the Greek word for is.

framework of God's Israel.) In Heb. 4:15, 5:1-3, 7-9 the Aaronic High Priest is seen to be human and of course, has sins. Yeshua was sinless and yet identified with our suffering and sinful condition in being tempted and in being human. Who is greater? The writer of Hebrews says:

Heb. 5:1-3: 'For every High Priest taken from among men is appointed on behalf of men in things pertaining to God, in order to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins; he can deal gently with the ignorant and misguided, *since he himself also is beset with weakness* and because of it, he is obligated to offer sacrifices for sins, as for the people, *so also for himself.*'

In terms of Yeshua though he writes:

Heb. 4:15: 'For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, *yet without sin.*'

Heb. 5:7-9: 'In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death and He was heard because of His holiness. Although He was Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered and having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation.'

In Hebrews 7:23-25 the writer compares the Aaronic High Priests who die, to Yeshua who is eternal. There are many High Priests. Yeshua is alive forevermore. Who is greater?

Heb. 7:23: 'The former (High) Priests on the one hand, existed in greater numbers because they were prevented by death from continuing, but Yeshua on the other hand, because He continues forever, holds His Priesthood permanently. Therefore, He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.'

In Hebrews 9:7, 24-28 the writer compares the Aaronic High Priests who brought only the blood of animals, with Yeshua who brought His own divine blood, which not only forgives our sins, but deals with our sin nature permanently. Which is greater?

Heb. 9:7: 'but into the second, only the High Priest enters once a year, not without taking blood, which he offers for himself and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance.'

Heb. 9:24-28: 'For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a copy of the True One, but into Heaven itself, now to appear in the Presence of God for us. Nor was it that He would offer Himself often, as the High Priest enters the Holy Place year by year with blood that is not his own. Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world, but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself and inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once, and after this comes judgment, so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him.'

In all this, we have not read of the writer of Hebrews 'throwing out' the High Priests that die or the blood of bulls and goats, etc. Today, we don't understand the importance and the magnitude of the Mosaic sacrificial system in the eyes of God. It doesn't have much meaning for us. To God and to the ancients, sacrifice pictured total devotion and the only way that one could approach God. Worship, sacrifice and service are biblically synonymous terms. Of course, the way we approach God now is through the sacrifice of Yeshua, but this is taken for granted and we don't have to actually participate in the sacrifice. We

are very distanced and detached from it.

The writer of Hebrews doesn't throw out the Mosaic sacrificial system as is evident from Heb. 8:1-5. The Temple is still operative for him and he upholds it by saying that if Jesus were on Earth, He wouldn't be a priest at all. Why not? Because Jesus wasn't from the Tribe of Levi and only they are authorized by God in the Torah to perform sacrifice for Israel. So how is it that the Church says that Yeshua has replaced the Mosaic sacrificial system?

Where is the Kingdom of Yeshua? Where is His Priesthood? His Temple? Only the Levitical High Priests could attend to the earthly Temple. This is stated clearly in the Law of Moses which is still in effect.

'For Yahveh your God has chosen him (Levi) and his sons from all your Tribes to stand and serve in the Name of Yahveh forever' (Deut. 18:5).

'You shall gird them with sashes, Aaron and his sons, and bind turbans on them and they shall have the priesthood by a perpetual statute. So you shall ordain Aaron and his sons' (Ex. 29:9).

'So you shall appoint Aaron and his sons that they may keep their priesthood, but the layman who comes near shall be put to death' (Num. 3:10).

These Scriptures tell us that there is a dual reality here. The Mosaic Covenant, with its earthly Jerusalem and Aaronic High Priest, and the Yeshuic Covenant with its heavenly Jerusalem and Yeshua as High Priest. It's a mirror image albeit, the heavenly being represented by the imperfect earthly. Yet, God only dwelt in the Tabernacle and the Temple out of all the places on the Earth. There is a reality here that we miss if we treat the earthly as 'second-rate.'

The commandments are still intact for the priests in the Kingdom of Yeshua. The law of the new High Priest, Yeshua, was made to run parallel with the law for the Mosaic High Priest. Actually, it was the other way around. It just so happened that we saw the Mosaic first before we knew of the Yeshuic, but the Mosaic is the reflection of the heavenly:

Heb. 8:1-3: 'Now the main point in what has been said is this: we have such a High Priest who has taken His seat at the right hand of the Throne of the Majesty in the Heavens, a Minister in the Sanctuary and in the True Tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man. For every High Priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices so it is necessary that this High Priest also have something to offer.'

Heb. 8:4-5: "Now if He were on Earth, He would not be a Priest at all since there are those who offer the gifts according to the Law who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned by God when he was about to erect the Tabernacle, for 'See', He says, 'that you make all things according to the pattern which was shown you on the Mountain.'"

By saying that there are those who still offer the gifts (sacrifices) in the Temple in Jerusalem he shows us that he has no problem with earthly sacrifice in relation to the sacrifice of Jesus. If he took the position of the Church today, this would have been an excellent place to say to us that because of Yeshua's sacrifice there was no longer any need for sacrifice in the Temple at Jerusalem, or that as far as he was concerned, it wasn't for him, but we don't read of anything like that.

He is not doing away with sacrifice or the Aaronic Priesthood, as is very evident from this passage where he says that Yeshua wouldn't be a priest if He were on Earth. The writer is *comparing* the sacrifices of the earthly with the sacrifice of the heavenly; the High Priest of the earthly with the High Priest of the heavenly; the work of the blood of the earthly with the work of the blood of the heavenly. They are on two

parallel tracks because the earthly is a reflection of the heavenly. This is evident from the last verse where he says that when Moses was being instructed about making the Tabernacle and instituting the priesthood (Ex. 25:8-10ff.), he was explicitly told to ‘make all things according to the pattern which was shown’ to him ‘on the Mountain.’ Moses was able to look into Heaven itself. That’s what the Tabernacle and the Priesthood were modeled after.

## *Impossible!*

Many people, upon reading their English translations of Hebrews 10:1-4 and 10:11 come to the false conclusion that the Mosaic sacrifices couldn’t forgive sin. Taken at face value, it seems to be saying that forgiveness of sin under the Mosaic sacrifices was impossible:

Heb. 10:1: ‘For the Law, since it has a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near.’

Heb. 10:2-3: ‘Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshippers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins? But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year.’

Heb. 10:4: ‘For it is *impossible* for the blood of bulls and goats *to take away sins*.’

Heb. 10:11: ‘Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, *which can never take away sins*’.

It would seem from this that the Mosaic sacrificial system was just a waste of time and effort, but we know that God Himself instituted it and said that those who came and sacrificed for sin *would be* divinely forgiven of their sin:

Lev. 4:20: ‘And he shall do with the bullock as he did with the bullock for a Sin sacrifice, so shall he do with this and the priest *shall make an atonement* for them and it *shall be forgiven them*.’

Lev. 4:26: ‘And he shall burn all his fat upon the Altar, as the fat of the sacrifice of Peace sacrifices and the priest *shall make an atonement for him as concerning his sin*, and it shall be forgiven him.’

Lev. 4:35: ‘And he shall take away all the fat thereof, as the fat of the lamb is taken away from the sacrifice of the Peace sacrifices and the priest shall burn them upon the Altar according to the sacrifices made by fire unto Yahveh. And the priest shall make *an atonement for his sin* that he has committed and *it shall be forgiven him*.’

Lev. 5:10: ‘And he shall offer the second for a Burnt sacrifice, according to the manner and the priest *shall make an atonement for him for his sin* which he has sinned and *it shall be forgiven him*.’

Lev. 5:13: ‘And the priest shall make an atonement for him as touching his sin that he has sinned in one of these and it shall be forgiven him.’

Lev. 19:22: ‘And the priest shall make an atonement for him with the ram of the Trespass sacrifice before Yahveh for his sin which he has done. And the sin which he has done *shall be forgiven him*.’

These are just a few of the passages where forgiveness for sin was ordained by God after the appropriate Mosaic sacrifice was made. It is one thing to think that sacrifice was done away with by the New Testament. It's quite another to think that the Mosaic sacrifices didn't forgive sin. This is what caused me to question the English text for Heb. 10:4 and 10:11. When I come to a place where the New Testament *seems to be* contradicting the Old, I have come to realize that it's not the New Testament that is at fault, but the English translators of the Greek New Testament. Many times they are 'helping' us to see their theology, but many times their theology runs contrary to the Word of God.<sup>11</sup>

First, just using the English translation itself, to say that the sacrifices of Moses didn't forgive sin doesn't seem to make any sense at all, as we saw from the book of Leviticus, and also, from the writer of Hebrews just a few verses before 10:4 ('impossible...to take away sins'), we're told that the blood of the animals *did* cleanse their flesh (forgive their sin):

Heb. 9:11-12: 'But when Christ appeared as a High Priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect Tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.'

Heb. 9:13-14: 'For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled, *sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh*, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?'

The writer of Hebrews says that the blood of bulls and goats *did* forgive sin ('cleansing of the flesh') for all Israel that was defiled (sinful). Again, the writer is comparing the two: the blood of animals for the forgiveness of sin and the blood of Yeshua for forgiveness of sin. So what is he speaking of in 10:4 and 10:11? It's our sin *nature* that the blood of the animals could not touch. Only the blood of God the Son could transform our nature into His.

This is what is meant when it states that the sacrifice of Yeshua was greater than animal sacrifice. Only His blood could forgive us our sin nature *and* birth within us a new Nature; His. It's our old, carnal, Adamic nature that the writer of Hebrews is speaking of when he says that the blood of bulls and goats couldn't effect it. The blood of bulls and goats could forgive sins, but could not give Israel a nature like Yeshua's. Only His blood (and Spirit) can do that.

This should be brought out in the English translations by changing 'sins' to 'sin nature.' Hebrews 9:13, of the blood of animals being able to forgive sin, is just a few verses before the translators tell us that the blood of animals cannot forgive sin (10:4). The translators have grossly distorted the Word of God by placing the Mosaic sacrifices in a totally contrary position with Heb. 10:4 and 10:11, declaring them ineffective for forgiveness of sin and the translators also contradict what the Word of God says in Hebrews 9:13.

The Greek word for 'sins' used in Heb. 10:4 and 10:11 is *amartias* and means, 'a principle or cause of sin, Rom. 7:7; proneness to sin, sinful propensity.'<sup>12</sup> This is our sin nature, the Adamic nature, the condition of

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<sup>11</sup> It's important to know who your translators are (for your Bible) and if it's a translation or a paraphrase. Do the translators believe in the deity of Messiah Yeshua? Do they understand the Baptism in the Holy Spirit? Do they acknowledge the 7th day Sabbath or are they assembling on Sunday, Easter and Christmas? These are some of the concepts that will seriously effect their work of translating the Word of God from the Hebrew and the Greek into English.

<sup>12</sup> Perschbacher, *The New Analytical Greek Lexicon*, p. 17.

sinful man.

What the writer of Hebrews declares is that the blood of bulls and goats could never touch or take away our carnal nature. The blood of the animals was never intended to do this. That would have to wait for the sacrifice of Jesus, but it did offer the Israeli forgiveness and pointed to the ultimate sacrifice in Messiah Yeshua. To say that the Mosaic sacrifices were not able to forgive sin is to grossly distort the Word of God. The English translators of the book of Hebrews would have accurately translated the Word of God if they would have printed something like this:

Heb. 10:4: 'For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away the sin nature.'

Heb. 10:11: 'Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away the sin nature.'

What the writer of Hebrews is saying is that the blood of bulls and goats could never touch or take away the carnal nature of Man. It's our carnal nature that's been the problem, not the holy Law of God (Rom. 7:7, 12, 14) or His sacrificial system. The writer of Hebrews does not come against the Mosaic structure, but compares the earthly Tabernacle with the heavenly reality. Nowhere does he do away sacrifices in the earthly Temple at Jerusalem.

## *Greek Words for Sin*

In the book of Hebrews (as in the rest of the New Testament) there are various shades of meanings for the word 'sin.' If this is not understood it makes it impossible for one to fully comprehend what God is saying to us through His Word. The task of a translator

'is not to put the words of one language into another: it is to express the meaning of the words in another language.'<sup>13</sup>

As we've seen, the translators failed in at Hebrews 10:4 and 10:11. Presented next are four Greek words for 'sin' that will help us to better understand what the New Testament is saying:

1. The Greek word 'ἁμαρτιᾶν (*hamarti'on*) can mean sins or sinful acts, offenses or sin.<sup>14</sup> The base word is 'ἁμαρτία (*hamarti'ah*).<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> John H. Dobson, *Learn New Testament Greek* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1993), p. 5. Dobson states that 'it is sometimes the careful attention to the Greek text...that makes us more sharply aware of what it actually says' (pp. 276-277). Context gives us the meaning of the Greek or Hebrew word. For instance, if one were asked what the English word 'box' meant, 'a carton' might be an answer. Without the word in a sentence, though, we might not know that the word was meant to mean, 'to fight.' Or, if asked what 'ring' meant, one might speak of jewelry, but it might be the sound a bell makes when rung. Context and a correct biblical theology of the Law determines what a word means and also provides different shades of meaning for the same word, as evidenced by the Greek words for *sin*. One has to understand the idea behind the literal words in order to properly translate them.

<sup>14</sup> Perschbacher, *The New Analytical Greek Lexicon*, p. 17, also, 'error, offense, sin...sinful propensity.'

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. It can also mean the Adamic nature. Walter Bauer, augmented by William F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich and Frederick Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 43, section 1; 'to commit a sin,' section 3; conceptually, the Adamic nature; sin 'reigns' in men, 'men serve it...are its slaves...are sold into its service...dwells in man...in the flesh.'

2. The Greek word ‘αμαρτιασ (*hamarti’ahs*) or ‘αμαρτια (*hamarti’ah*) can mean ‘a principle or cause of sin...prone to sin, sinful propensity.’<sup>16</sup> This speaks of the sin nature, the Adamic nature, the condition of sinful man.<sup>17</sup> The base word is again ‘αμαρτια (*hamarti’ah*).<sup>18</sup>
  - a. “an integral element of someone’s *nature*,”<sup>19</sup> “the nature of man...of human nature in hostility to God”<sup>20</sup>...the whole sinful nature of man<sup>21</sup>...a state which embraces all humanity”<sup>22</sup> ...the “carnal reality of man,”<sup>23</sup> which “characterizes the NT concept of sin...in the sense of distance from God and opposition to Him.”<sup>24</sup>
3. The word ‘αμαρτανει (*hamarta’nay*) or ‘αμαρτανειν (*hamarta’nain*) can mean to direct a sin against someone, especially ‘against God.’<sup>25</sup> The base word is ‘αμαρτανω (*hamarta’no*).<sup>26</sup>
4. The Greek word ‘αμαρτανω (*hamarta’no*) can mean a great sin that leads to death.<sup>27</sup> It’s the base word for number three.

These are not the only meanings or shades of meaning for these Greek words,<sup>28</sup> but when these meanings are placed in the context of the following Scriptures we’ll see how they shed much light on what the Word of God is actually saying. Looking at some of the places in Hebrews where #2, ‘sin nature’ is used, we

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<sup>16</sup> Perschbacher, *The New Analytical Greek Lexicon*, p. 17.

<sup>17</sup> Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. 43. Section 2: In John’s writings it’s man’s ‘condition or characteristic quality’ or ‘sinfulness.’ Section 3: In Paul’s letters, ‘everything was subject to it (Gal. 3:22); men serve it (Rom. 6:6), are its slaves (v. 17, 20)’ and ‘it dwells in man (Romans 7:17, 20).’ This is the Adamic nature, the essential problem with Man, and what Yeshua came to address. All sinful acts stem from a sin nature. Section 4: ‘In Hebrews (as in OT), sin appears as the power that deceives men and leads them to destruction, whose influence and activity can be ended only by sacrifices.’

<sup>18</sup> Perschbacher, *The New Analytical Greek Lexicon*, p. 17. This can also mean, ‘error; offence, sin.’

<sup>19</sup> Johannes Louw and Eugene A. Nida, editors, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament based on Semantic Domains*, vol. 1 (New York: United Bible Societies, 1989), p. 755.

<sup>20</sup> Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, editors; Geoffrey W. Bromiley, translator and editor, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. I (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), p. 295.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 296.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 309.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 310.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 295.

<sup>25</sup> Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. 42, sections 4a and 4b.

<sup>26</sup> Perschbacher, *The New Analytical Greek Lexicon*, p. 16. It can also mean, ‘to miss a mark, to be in error...to sin...to be guilty of wrong.’ Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. 42: to ‘transgress, sin against divinity, custom or law...miss the mark...do wrong, sin of offenses against the relig. and moral law of God.’

<sup>27</sup> Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. 43, section 5: ‘special sins...that leads to death’, 1st John 5:16 ‘a great sin.’ Bauer also states (p. 42, section 5) that it means to ‘commit a sin that does not lead to death’ and he writes immediately after it ‘(like מוֹתָ לְמָוֶת) Num 18:22.’ The Hebrew means ‘a sin unto death,’ literally, ‘sin to death.’ Num. 18:22 reads, ‘The Sons of Israel shall not come near the Tent of Meeting again or they will bear sin and die.’ Bauer’s use of *like* in ‘like...Num. 18:22’ may only be a way of his calling attention to the phrase. Be that as it may, he does use 1st John 5:16 as a reference that ‘αμαρτανω (*hamarta’no*) can mean ‘a great sin...that leads to death.’

<sup>28</sup> These meanings and shades of meanings may not always ‘fit’ for every cite in the New Testament where they are found, but obviously, in places like Heb. 10:4, the traditional translation cannot stand and must yield. Translations should be determined by the possible meanings of the word and the context.

can begin to see just what the sacrifice of Yeshua did that the Mosaic sacrifices couldn't do, but pointed to, and what the author meant:

Heb. 2:16-17: 'For assuredly He does not give help to angels but He gives help to the Seed of Abraham. Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things so that He might become a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins (#2, sin nature) of the people.'

It was not just the actual sins of the people that Yeshua died for, as the Mosaic sacrifices took care of that. Yeshua's propitiation eradicates the sin nature of the believer. Of course, this will only fully come into effect when we are glorified. For there is no one on Earth who does not continue to sin in some way, even ignorantly, but the process begins when one comes to Messiah Yeshua and much gain can be made against the carnal nature. This is the struggle that Paul spoke of (Rom. 7-8).

Some other places where 'sin nature' would be an accurate English translation for the book of Hebrews are:

Heb. 3:12-15: 'Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the Living God, but encourage one another day after day as long as it is still called 'Today' so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin' (#2, the sin nature) 'for we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin' (#2, sin nature).<sup>29</sup>

Heb. 9:23-25: 'Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the things in the Heavens to be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Messiah did not enter a Holy Place made with hands, a copy of the True One, but into Heaven itself, now to appear in the Presence of God for us. Nor was it that He would sacrifice Himself often as the High Priest enters the Holy Place year by year with blood that is not his own.'

Heb. 9:26-28: 'Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world, but now once, at the consummation of the ages, He has been manifested to put away sin (#2, sin nature) by the sacrifice of Himself. And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment, so Messiah also, having been sacrificed once to bear the sins (#2, sin nature and/or actual sins) of many, will appear a second time for salvation, not to deal with our sin (#2, sin nature) to those who eagerly await Him.'

It was the sin nature that the Law of Moses couldn't transform, either with its laws or with its sacrifices, but God never intended for His holy Law to atone for Israel's sin nature. That would have to wait for the Messiah to come and be the sacrifice for our sin nature as well as our individual acts of sin that spring from our sinful Adamic nature. Looking at some places where the word for #1, 'sinful acts' or 'sins' is used in Hebrews, we see that the Mosaic sacrifices *did* forgive sins or sinful acts:

Heb. 5:1: 'For every High Priest taken from among men is appointed on behalf of men in things pertaining to God, in order to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins' (#1, sinful acts)

Heb. 5:3: 'and because of it he is obligated to offer sacrifices for sins (#1, sinful acts), as for the people, so also for himself.'

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<sup>29</sup> The last word for sin could also mean that Messiah didn't actually sin.

Heb. 10:2-3: 'Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered because the worshippers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins?' (#1, sinful acts) 'But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins (#1, sinful acts) year by year.'

Heb. 10:12: 'but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins (#1, sinful acts) for all time, sat down at the right hand of God'.

Heb. 10:17: 'And their sins (#1, sinful acts) and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.'

Heb. 12:1: 'Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin (#1, sinful acts) which so easily entangles us and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us'.

Heb. 12:4: 'You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin' (#1, sinful acts).

Looking at the word for #4, a great sin that 'leads to death,' we see the sin of apostasy:

Heb. 10:26: 'For if we go on sinning willfully (#4, a great sin that 'leads to death') after receiving the knowledge of the Truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins' (#1, sinful acts).

Understanding the different shades of meaning for the word 'sin' begins to unravel some of the mystery behind what God wants to say to us. As we'll see with John first letter, specifically the first ten verses in the third chapter, understanding the different shades of meaning for the English word 'sin' helps us to better comprehend God's Word.

## *The Apostle John and Sin*

In 1st John 3:1-10 the Apostle uses different shades of meaning for 'sin.' To not understand this is cause for much confusion. Many people have been tripped up because of the translation given and have suffered because of it. By understanding the Greek words and their meanings we'll see what the Holy Spirit is saying through the Apostle:

1st Jn. 3:1-3: 'See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called Sons of God and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are Sons of God and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him because we will see Him just as He is and everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.'

1st Jn. 3:4: 'Everyone who practices sin (#1, sins or sinful acts) also practices lawlessness, and sin (#2, sin nature) is lawlessness.'

1st Jn. 3:5: 'You know that He appeared in order to take away sins (#2, sin nature) and in Him there is no sin' (#2, sin nature).

1st Jn. 3:6: 'No one who abides in Him sins (#3, sins against Him; a special condition or offense directed toward Yeshua). No one who sins (#4, a great sin that 'leads to death') has seen Him or knows Him.'

1st Jn. 3:7: ‘Little children, make sure no one deceives you. The one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous’.

1st Jn. 3:8: ‘the one who practices sin (#1, sins or sinful acts) is of the Devil. For the Devil has sinned (#3, intentionally sinned ‘against God’) from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose; to destroy the works of the Devil.’

1st Jn. 3:9-10: ‘No one who is born of God practices sin (#1, sins or sinful acts) because His Seed abides in him and he cannot sin (#3, to intentionally sin ‘against God’) because he is born of God. By this the Sons of God and the Sons of the Devil are obvious: anyone who does not *practice* righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.’

The word ‘practicing’ (3:8-9) means that a person is living a lifestyle of sinning or a lifestyle of righteousness. Also, when a person does sin, he doesn’t do it with the intention of ‘slapping God in His Face’ (active rebellion). It doesn’t mean that we never sin (#1, sinful acts), but that we don’t sin (#3, to sin ‘against God,’ or #4, a great sin that ‘leads to death’). Cullen Story confirms this in his book on the ancient Greek language. Writing of 1st John 3:6, he states:

‘everyone in him abiding does not sin (present and continuous). With the use of the present tense John does not say that a Christian never sins (cf. I John 1:8, 10). Rather by the present tense, he describes the life-style of one who abides in Christ. He does not *practice* sin.’<sup>30</sup>

The words of the Apostle John come alive with much meaning when the various shades of understanding for ‘sin’ are applied to the passages. Without the nuances for the different words for ‘sin,’ some have been left wondering if they were even believers any longer, when they sinned. Thank You Lord for proper interpretation of Your Word because what we understand and believe, we walk out.

## *The Apostle Paul and Sin*

The Law of Moses was still valid for the Apostles. This is evident from Paul’s reason for accepting the Nazarite Vow (so all would know that there wasn’t any truth to the lie that Paul told Jews not to circumcise their sons, and that he still kept the Law of Moses; Acts 21:24).

In dealing with the Law and salvation, the Apostle Paul criticizes anyone who thinks that they can keep it for salvation. In his day, many Jews thought that keeping the Law earned them eternal life, but this was not written in the Law itself; it was a perverse rabbinic teaching. Paul rightly comes against it. It’s not the Law that’s at fault. The Law was never intended by God to be used as a vehicle for salvation. The Law declares onto the House of Israel what is sin and what is not. It tells us what is pleasing to God and what His will is concerning His holy days and what to eat and what not to eat, etc. It’s our sinful, carnal nature that wars against the Law, the Word of God, but as an instrument that declares onto us the will of God for our practical, everyday lives, it is essential:

Rom. 8:3: ‘For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh (#2, sin nature) and as a sacrifice for sin (#2, sin nature), He condemned sin (#1, sin or sinful acts) in the flesh, that the *right-*

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<sup>30</sup> Cullen Story and J. Lyle Story, *Greek To Me* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1979), p. 16.

*eous requirements* of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.’

It’s our carnal nature that’s been the problem, not the holy Law of God. Now we are able to walk out the righteous requirements of the Law without the condemnation that comes from sinning because of the blood of Jesus:

‘Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Messiah Yeshua. For the law of the Spirit of life in Messiah Yeshua has set you free from the law of sin and of death’ (Rom. 8:1-2).

The law of sin and death is not the Law of Moses, but our Adamic nature. When faced with the righteous Law of Moses we bolt from it. Yeshua has taken away the condemnation that the Law accused us of, for we failed to keep it. Now though, in Messiah, we are slaves no longer to that condemnation that comes from the Law pointing out our sins. Condemnation has been nullified, not the Law:

Rom. 7:7: :What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? (#2, sin nature or a departure from the way of righteousness) May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin (#1, sins or sinful acts) except through the Law for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, ‘You shall not covet.’”

Rom. 7:12: ‘So, then, the Law is holy and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.’

Rom. 7:14: ‘For we know that *the Law is spiritual*, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin’ (#1, sins or sinful acts).

Rom. 7:16: ‘But if I do the very thing I do not want to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that the Law is good.’

Yeshua came to cover and to forgive our acts of sin and to cleanse us of our carnal Adamic nature. This is the cause of sinful acts and would keep us permanently out of God’s holy Presence. That’s why the writer of Hebrews says that when we see Him again, it won’t be to deal with our sin nature (Heb. 9:27-28) because we shall be like Him on that Day (1st Jn. 3:2).

## ***The New Covenant and the Old Covenant***

To understand that sacrifice is still valid for today, as would be practiced by the Aaronic Priests in a Temple at Jerusalem, we have to realize that the Old Covenant has not yet disappeared. A brief discussion on that will help us to see the truth of the matter.

The New Covenant overlaps and will one day replace the Old Covenant, but for now they both are still in effect. In Heb. 8:13, we read that the First Covenant is still viable, even though Yeshua gives us a better Covenant:

Heb. 8:13: “When He said, ‘A New Covenant,’ He has made the first obsolete, but whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.’

Please notice that Hebrews states that the first Covenant is, ‘*becoming* obsolete’ and is ‘growing old’ and ‘is ready to disappear.’ If the Old had been thrown out, it should have read, ‘But whatever is obsolete has grown old and has disappeared,’ but it doesn’t say that. When he states, ‘He has made the first obsolete,’ he means in the sense that one day, because of His sacrifice, the First will vanish. He has made it obsolete,

but it's still here. He has made it obsolete in that His sacrifice takes care of both sinful acts and our sin nature.

In the New Jerusalem, the Old won't be needed. We will all be glorified, but until then, the Instruction (Teaching or Law) from Yahveh that we find in the Mosaic Covenant is essential for our understanding of what is sin and what is not; what He desires for us to walk in and what He doesn't is found in the Law. If we truly have 'the Law on our heart' which was the reason why the New would come (Jer. 31:31-33), then we won't break the Law of Moses in ignorance thinking that it has been done away with. The writer of Hebrews tells us that the New Covenant is better than the Old, but as seen above, does not say the Old has vanished:

Heb. 7:22: 'so much the more also Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.'

Heb. 8:6: 'But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the Mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises.'

The following are the reasons why the New Covenant is greater or greater than the Mosaic Covenant:

1. The High Priesthood of Yeshua is better than the High Priesthood of the Sons of Aaron as they all sinned and died. Yeshua never sinned and is alive forevermore, and having been in flesh like us, He is sensitive to our weaknesses or sins.
2. The blood sacrifice of Yeshua is better than that of bulls and goats. In the Mosaic Covenant, sin could be forgiven, but the sinner's nature always remained Adamic. In the Yeshuic Covenant, sin is forgiven and the sinner receives Yeshua's Nature.
3. The gift that Yeshua our High Priest gives to us is better. We are given His Spirit and eternal life. In the Mosaic, only certain priests, prophets, kings (and others; Ex. 31:3; Num. 11:17, 25; Deut. 34:9; Judges 6:34, etc.) received the Holy Spirit.
  - a. In the Mosaic, Israel got the Promised Land and a life of abundance. In the New, we get the Promised One and abundant life (John 10:10).

These are the significant differences between the Old and the New Covenants, but it doesn't do away with sacrifice or the Law of Moses (Mt. 5:17-19). What Hebrews is saying is that the Mosaic Covenant, which could only 'cover' sin and give a good life in the Promised Land, is bettered by the Yeshuic Covenant, which forgives sin and deals with the Adamic nature and promises Glory in the New Jerusalem. This is what he means when he says in Heb. 7:12: 'For when the priesthood is changed, of necessity there takes place a change of law also.'

The change of law applies for us in that Yeshua is our High Priest in Heaven. He is our Authority, not the High Priest in the earthly Jerusalem (nor the traditional Orthodox Rabbis today). The writer of Hebrews is not saying that the Law is done away with. A 'change of law' doesn't mean that there is no Law anymore. It means that there's a change. This is easily seen when one of the laws of the United States is changed; it doesn't do away with all the other laws of the United States. It just means that there is a change in the law. The change means that the High Priesthood of Yeshua supersedes the Priesthood of Aaron and that the new High Priest comes from the Tribe of Judah, not the Tribe of Levi as the Law of Moses states.

The Hebrew word for 'new,' as in the *New Covenant* or the *New Testament* is *hadash*. It means 'to make new, to renew, restore.'<sup>31</sup> It's also used for the *new* moon (the *new* month in the Bible). This tells us that the word doesn't mean something that has never been. The picture given is of a dull sword being resharpened. The New Covenant actually renews or resharpenes the Mosaic. It does not throw it out; at least not

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<sup>31</sup> Perschbacher, *The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon*, p. 249.

while Man is still on Earth. It means that now, with His Spirit and His blood, we can walk in the Commandments of Yahveh as Yeshua did; from the inside out, with a heart that desires to please God and walk in His Ways; His Law:

Ezekiel 36:26: ‘Moreover, I will give you a *new* heart and put a new Spirit within you and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.’

Ezekiel 36:27: ‘I will put My Spirit within you *and cause you to walk in My Statutes*, and you will be careful to observe My Ordinances.’

To suggest that Yahveh had ‘other’ statutes and Ordinances in mind (e.g. only ‘love’), and not the Mosaic, is to overlay God’s Word with a meaning or interpretation that cannot be supported from Scripture. Yahveh is speaking about His Torah, the Law He gave to Moses, as is evident from what Hebrews tells us in quoting Jeremiah 31:31f:

Heb. 8:10: ‘For this is the Covenant that I will make with the House of Israel after those days, says the Lord. I will put *my laws* into their mind and write them in their hearts and I will be to them a God and they shall be to me a people’.

This is a different concept of what many believe how the word *new* is to be understood, yet Heb. 8:8-13, in quoting Jer. 31:31-34, uses the Greek word for *new* that corresponds with the meaning of the Hebrew word. It should because the writer of Hebrews is literally quoting Jeremiah. The Greek word is *kay-nain*. This is the exact word that is used in the Septuagint<sup>32</sup> for New Covenant in Jer. 31:31.

*Kay-nain* has several meanings, one of which is, ‘in contrast to something old, with no criticism of the old implied.’<sup>33</sup> It can also mean, ‘renovated,’<sup>34</sup> and of course, something totally different.

What the Mosaic Sacrifices could not do was ‘perfect’ the Israeli. The word ‘perfect’ in this case means to restore to the original Adamic nature, or rather, to give us the nature God-Man nature of Yeshua. It’s this pure human nature of Adam’s infused with the nature of Yeshua that is promised us in Glory. Yeshua became the God-Man that we might become like Him. This is what Heb. 10:1 is speaking of. The blood of bulls and goats could not make us like like Yeshua is now. The Greek word for ‘perfect’ is *taylay’oh* and means,

‘to consummate, place in a condition of finality, Heb. 7:19...To perfect a person, to advance a person to final completeness of character, Heb. 2:10; 5:9; 7:28...To perfect a person, advance a person to a completeness of its kind, which needs no further provision, Heb. 9:9; 10:1, 14...To be brought to the goal, to reach the end of one’s course, Heb. 12:23.’<sup>35</sup>

What we’ll see next is the comparison of the Law with its sacrifices, to the sacrifice of Yeshua. His sacrifice doesn’t do away with the Mosaic Law or sacrifices, Hebrews says that the Mosaic sacrifices could not give anyone the nature of Yeshua: it could not perfect them. It compares the two because there were some people then who believed that keeping the Law with its sacrifices would ‘perfect’ them or grant them eternal life:

Heb. 7:11: ‘Now if *perfection* was through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the people received the Law), what further need was there for another priest to arise ac-

<sup>32</sup> Brenton, *The Septuagint with Apocrypha*, p. 952.

<sup>33</sup> Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. 394.

<sup>34</sup> Perschbacher, *The New Analytical Greek Lexicon*, p. 215.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 404.

ording to the order of Melchizedek, and not be designated according to the order of Aaron?’

Heb. 7:19: ‘(for the Law made nothing *perfect*), and on the other hand there is a bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.’

Heb. 9:9: ‘which is a symbol for the present time. Accordingly, both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make the worshiper *perfect* in conscience’.

Heb. 10:1: ‘For the Law, since it has a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make *perfect* those who draw near.’

What makes us perfect, in the biblical sense of the word, is the sacrifice of Yeshua. Neither the sacrifices nor the Law could give us a new nature. We are acceptable to God eternally because we have believed in the work that He has done for us, in sending His Son to be our Sacrifice and one day, we shall be like Him: glorified, sinless and eternal, obtaining by faith in God a nature exactly like Yeshua’s. Our perfection comes from His sacrifice and not the doing of the Law, but we keep the Law because it shows us what His will is for us, pertaining to things of this life.

Yeshua, while on Earth, could have sinned, as His temptation in the Wilderness shows us. Now glorified, He cannot sin. He has been made *perfect* in His dual nature of human and divine and will be this way forever.

Heb. 7:28: ‘For the Law appoints men as High Priests who are weak, but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, appoints a Son, made *perfect* forever.’

Heb. 10:14: ‘For by one sacrifice He has *perfected* for all time those who are sanctified.’

As we persevere in Him, we too, one day, will come to perfection and will never be able to sin again:

Heb. 12:23: ‘to the General Assembly and Assembly of the Firstborn who are enrolled in Heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made *perfect*’.

The Mosaic sacrifices and the Mosaic Covenant could not make us like the first Adam, before his sin, or Yeshua in glory. Not that this was a fault of the Mosaic Covenant. That’s like debasing a car because it can’t fly like a plane. The Mosaic Covenant was perfect in what it was intended to do:

Ps. 19:7: ‘The Law of Yahveh is *perfect*, converting the soul. The testimony of Yahveh is sure, making wise the simple.’

Torah still carries that reality. Within the Law, the Word of God, is the wisdom of Yahveh for His people Israel, both Jew and Gentile. As John and Paul have shown us, sin is the breaking of this holy standard known as the Law. The slavery we have been set free from is slavery to sin, not the Law, which is God’s holy instruction to us.

It is the Law of Moses, as understood in the Light of Yeshua, that is to be written upon our hearts and minds. Yeshua amplifies the Law for us to see the Glory of it in His teaching on the Mountain. He states that if one has hate in his heart for his brother, he has already murdered him and broken the commandment of Moses to not murder (Mt. 5:21-22). Yeshua revealed the essence of the commandment not to murder. The essence of the commandment not to murder was also intertwined with the two great commandments to love God and man:

Mt. 22:35-40: “One of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, ‘Rabbi, which is the great commandment in the Law?’ And He said to him, ‘You must love Yahveh your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. This is the greatest and foremost commandment. The second

is like it, ‘You must love your neighbor as yourself.’<sup>36</sup> *On these two commandments* hang all the Law and the Prophets.’<sup>37</sup>

Yeshua was certainly resharpener the Law, revealing what was there all the time. Some Pharisees believed that because they weren’t guilty of murder, that they hadn’t broken the commandment not to murder, but Yeshua was saying that one need not actually murder someone for that commandment to be broken. In this He was placing before them an ‘impossible’ scenario for using the Law as a vehicle of salvation. Wisdom would say that one would have to look for salvation ‘outside’ the Law. In other words, one couldn’t use obedience to the Law as justification for eternal life because no one could keep the First Commandment without sinning, let alone the other commandments as explained by Yeshua. Of course, the meaning of Mt. 22:40 is that ALL the commandments of Yahveh have their *reason for being* in one of the two great Commandments. In other words, the other commandments of the Law of Moses are God’s definitions of what love is for God and Man.

## SACRIFICE IN EZEKIEL’S TEMPLE

According to the prophet Ezekiel sacrifice will continue in the temple that God showed him, which I believe will coincide with the thousand year reign of Jesus on this Earth from Jerusalem. The temple Ezekiel speaks of will be an earthly temple in Jerusalem from which I see Yeshua as ‘the Prince’ that Ezekiel presents. Many Christians believe this, but some don’t. *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary* lists a number of reasons why the prophet Ezekiel cannot be trusted to be giving us a literal unfolding of his vision.<sup>38</sup>

*Wycliffe* says that sacrifice in the future Kingdom will not happen, even though it asserts that there are many Christians who believe that there will be sacrifice then. Their ‘serious objections’ have these two prominent points among them:

1. ‘The atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ nullified OT sacrifices forever (Heb 9:10-15; 10:1-4, 18).’
2. ‘The old system was of a provisional nature, to which believers in Christ are not to revert (Gal 3:23-25; 4:3-9; 5:1; Col. 2:16-17; Heb 10:11-14).’

As for their first point, we’ve already seen how that position isn’t biblical. As for the second reason, *Wycliffe* confuses the ‘old system’ that we are not to revert to, salvation by works (i.e. salvation by the keeping of the Law, symbolized in circumcision), with using the Law as God’s standard of holiness and sin. For *Wycliffe*, as for countless others, the Law with its sacrifices has been done away with by the New Covenant. Therefore, they don’t have any room in their theology for sacrifice to exist. Because of this, they call the Ezekiel’s vision of the Temple figurative or allegorical, as well as Yeshua’s thousand year reign. Yet, in Revelation we read that Messiah will reign from Jerusalem for a thousand years:

Rev. 20:4: ‘Then I saw thrones and they sat on them and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Yeshua and because of the word of God and those who had not worshiped the Beast or

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<sup>36</sup> Some churches hold up the Ten Commandments as the only commandments that Christians need to obey, not realizing that the fourth commandment speaks of the 7th day Sabbath as holy (no buying or selling, etc.), and cannot biblically be replaced by Sunday. Also, notice that the two great commandments, as defined by Jesus, do not occur in the Ten Commandments, but in other parts of the Law (Deut. 6:4-5; Lev. 19:18).

<sup>37</sup> See [Law 102](#) for further discussion of these two commandments.

<sup>38</sup> Pfeiffer, *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, p. 758.

his image and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand. And they came to life *and reigned with Messiah for a thousand years.*'

Rev. 20:5: 'The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection.'

Rev. 20:6: 'Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection. Over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Messiah and will reign with Him for a thousand years.'

One has to allegorize Rev. 20:4-6 in order for it to not compliment a literal reign of Ezekiel's Prince in the Temple in Jerusalem. These two objections are their most 'serious' that they present to prove that their analysis of Ezekiel, and the Word that Yahveh gave him, really didn't mean that actual sacrifice would take place in the 'Temple of Ezekiel.' They detour around Ezekiel's prophecy of sacrifice in the Temple at Jerusalem by saying that one doesn't have to 'insist upon a literal explanation'<sup>39</sup> of what Ezekiel said. Ezekiel, though, presents a very clear and detailed picture of sacrifice in the New Temple. Here are just a few cites of his that deal with sacrifice:

Ezek. 40:39: 'In the porch of the gate were two tables on each side on which to slaughter the Burnt sacrifice, the Sin sacrifice and the Guilt sacrifice.'

Ezek. 40:41-42: 'Four tables were on each side next to the gate or, eight tables on which they slaughter sacrifices. For the Burnt sacrifice there were four tables of hewn stone, a cubit and a half long, a cubit and a half wide and one cubit high on which they lay the instruments with which they slaughter the Burnt sacrifice and the sacrifice.'

The Temple of Ezekiel has long been recognized as a future temple. This Temple has yet to be, and that's why many call it the temple from which Yeshua will rule for one thousand years.<sup>40</sup>

Ezek. 40:47: 'He measured the court, a perfect square, a hundred cubits long and a hundred cubits wide and the *Altar* was in front of the Temple.'

Ezek. 41:22: "The *Altar* was of wood, three cubits high and its length two cubits. Its corners, its base and its sides were of wood and he said to me, 'This is the table that is before Yahveh.'"

Ezek. 42:13: "Then he said to me, 'The north chambers and the south chambers, which are opposite the separate area, they are the holy chambers where the priests who are near to Yahveh shall eat the most holy things. There they shall lay the most holy things, the Grain sacrifice, the Sin sacrifice and the Guilt sacrifice, for the place is holy.'"

Ezek. 43:18: "And He said to me, 'Son of man, thus says the Lord Yahveh, 'These are the statutes for the *Altar* on the day it is built, to offer Burnt sacrifices on it and to sprinkle blood on it.'"

Ezek. 43:19: "'You shall give to the Levitical priests who are from the offspring of Zadok, who draw near to Me to minister to Me,' declares the Lord Yahveh, 'a young bull for a Sin sacrifice.'"

Ezek. 43:21-22: 'You shall also take the bull for the Sin sacrifice and it shall be burned in

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 759.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid. *Wycliffe* describes that there are both Christian and Jewish commentators that believe in a literal temple with sacrifice.

the appointed place of the House, outside the Sanctuary. On the second day you shall offer a male goat without blemish for a Sin sacrifice and they shall cleanse the Altar as they cleansed it with the bull.'

Ezek. 43:25-27: "'For seven days you shall prepare daily a goat for a Sin sacrifice, also, a young bull and a ram from the flock, without blemish, shall be prepared. For seven days they shall make atonement for the Altar and purify it. So shall they consecrate it. When they have completed the days, it shall be that on the eighth day and onward, the priests shall offer your Burnt sacrifices on the Altar and your Peace sacrifices; and I will accept you,' declares the Lord Yahveh."

Ezek. 44:15: "'But the Levitical priests, the sons of Zadok, who kept charge of My Sanctuary when the Sons of Israel went astray from Me, shall come near to Me to minister to Me and they shall stand before Me to offer Me the fat and the blood,' declares the Lord Yahveh."

Ezek. 44:27: "'On the day that he goes into the Sanctuary, into the inner court to minister in the Sanctuary, he shall offer his Sin sacrifice,' declares the Lord Yahveh."

Ezek. 44:29: 'They shall eat the Grain sacrifice, the Sin sacrifice and the Guilt sacrifice and every devoted thing in Israel shall be theirs.'

History has not yet witnessed such a temple, but it's for us to note well that in this temple, not only will sacrifice be performed upon a very real altar, the sacrifices will include sin sacrifices, just as we saw in Acts 21:20f. where the Apostle Paul was set to pay for the sacrifices of the four Jewish believing Nazarites and himself.

## *The Prince and His Sacrifices*

Ezekiel 45:17-18, 21-25 speaks of a prince and His sacrifices for the Holy Days (the Feasts of Israel; Lev. 23). In this, too, we see sacrifice:

Ezek. 45:17-18: "'It shall be the Prince's part to provide the Burnt sacrifices, the Grain sacrifices and the Wine Offerings at the Feasts, on the New Moons and on the Sabbaths, at all the appointed Feasts of the House of Israel. He shall provide the Sin sacrifice, the Grain sacrifice, the Burnt sacrifice and the Peace sacrifices to make atonement for the House of Israel.' Thus says the Lord Yahveh, 'In the first month, on the first of the month, you shall take a young bull without blemish and cleanse the Sanctuary.'"

Ezk. 45:21-25: 'In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, you shall observe the Passover, a feast of seven days; unleavened bread shall be eaten. On that day the Prince shall provide for himself and all the people of the Land a bull for a Sin sacrifice. During the seven days of the Feast, he shall provide as a Burnt sacrifice to Yahveh, seven bulls and seven rams without blemish on every day of the seven days, and a male goat daily for a Sin sacrifice. He shall provide as a Grain sacrifice an ephah with a bull, an ephah with a ram and a hin of oil with an ephah. In the seventh month, on the fifteenth day of the month, at the Feast, He shall provide like this, seven days for the Sin sacrifice, the Burnt sacrifice, the Grain sacrifice and the oil.'

The Prince provides many sacrificial animals for the Feasts of Israel. For those that can't accept sacrifice *after* the resurrection, they can only see this in some allegorical scheme, but it doesn't seem that God is

viewing it that way. It's too detailed to be a dream.

## ***The Prince Offers Sacrifice on Sabbath and New Moon***

Next, the Prince offers sacrifice for Sabbath and New Moon, something most in the Church would surely not accept, but we must follow God when the Church deviates from His Word or we'll find ourselves in the same boat as the Pharisees, who thought they knew more about God than Yeshua:

Ezek. 46:1: “Thus says the Lord Yahveh, ‘The gate of the inner court facing east shall be shut the six working days, but it shall be opened on the Sabbath Day and opened on the day of the New Moon.’”

Ezek. 46:2: ‘The Prince shall enter by way of the porch of the gate from outside and stand by the post of the gate. Then the priests shall provide his Burnt sacrifice and his Peace sacrifices, and he shall worship at the threshold of the gate and then go out, but the gate shall not be shut until the evening.’

Ezek. 46:3-4: ‘The people of the Land shall also worship at the doorway of that gate before Yahveh on the Sabbaths and on the New Moons. The Burnt sacrifice, which the Prince shall offer to Yahveh on the Sabbath Day, shall be six lambs without blemish and a ram without blemish’.

Ezek. 46:5: ‘and the Grain sacrifice shall be an ephah with the ram, and the Grain sacrifice with the lambs as much as He is able to give, and a hin of oil with an ephah.’

Ezek. 46:6: ‘On the day of the New Moon he shall offer a young bull without blemish, also six lambs and a ram, which shall be without blemish.’

Ezek. 46:7: ‘And He shall provide a Grain sacrifice, an ephah with the bull and an ephah with the ram, and with the lambs as much as he is able, and a hin of oil with an ephah.’

Ezekiel not only portrays much sacrifice, but also recognition of Sabbath, Passover and New Moons, something many people would say were done away with by Jesus and Paul. The Prince also makes Freewill sacrifices:

Ezek. 46:12: ‘When the Prince provides a Freewill sacrifice, a Burnt sacrifice, or Peace sacrifices as a Freewill sacrifice to Yahveh, the gate facing east shall be opened for him and he shall provide his Burnt sacrifice and his Peace sacrifices as he does on the Sabbath day. Then he shall go out and the gate shall be shut after he goes out.’

Ezek. 48:35: “and the Name of the City from (that) day (will be) ‘Yahveh is there’” (Yahveh Shama).

This is, obviously, a temple yet to be built. What it shows us is that sacrifice and Holy Days will be celebrated at a future time by the People of God, both Jew and Gentile, in the earthly Jerusalem (*Yahveh Shama* is another way of saying ‘Jerusalem’). This contradicts Church theology concerning sacrifice and Holy Days, but it's God's Word. We must seek to understand what God's Word is saying to us in order to walk in a way that is pleasing to Him. He didn't come that we might continue to sin by declaring that His Word wasn't valid any longer.

## *The Prince is Yeshua the Messiah*

The title of 'prince' seems to imply that it will be Yeshua who is being described here, even though there is a problem with what is said of 'his sons:'

Ezek. 46:16: "Thus says the Lord Yahveh, 'If the Prince gives a gift out of his inheritance to any of his sons, it shall belong to his sons. It is their possession by inheritance.'"

Ezek. 46:18: 'The Prince shall not take from the people's inheritance, thrusting them out of their possession. He shall give his sons inheritance from his own possession so that My people will not be scattered, anyone from his possession.'

Perhaps the Prince will not be Yeshua at all. This does not take away from the fact that the Temple that Ezekiel speaks of will be in the future and that sacrifice and Holy Days (Lev. 23) will be observed by all those who call upon His Name. It's also conceivable that we don't understand what is meant by the expression, 'his sons.' The understanding of 'his sons' may mean those who return with Yeshua as part of the first resurrection, as opposed to those believers who survive the Tribulation.

The evidence pointing to Yeshua being the prince has the following cites, where Yeshua is seen as the Prince. In Isaiah 9:6, the Messiah of Israel is called the Prince of Peace:

'For a Child will be born to us, a Son will be given to us and the government will rest on His shoulders and His Name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, *Prince of Peace*.'

In Ezekiel 37:25 the Messiah is called the Prince, 'David My Servant:'

'They will live on the Land that I gave to Jacob My servant, in which your Fathers lived. They will live on it, they, and their sons and their sons' sons, forever and David My Servant will be their *Prince* forever.'

Continuing on with Ezekiel we find the title, 'the Prince,' again relating to Messiah Yeshua. Also, calling Messiah, 'David My Servant' is a euphemism that is well known and accepted among scholars today:

Ezek. 34:23-24: 'Then I will set over them one Shepherd, My servant David, and he will feed them. He will feed them himself and be their Shepherd and I, Yahveh, will be their God and My Servant David will be *Prince* among them. I Yahveh have spoken.'

Ezek. 37:24-25: 'My Servant David will be King over them and they will all have one Shepherd and they will walk in My ordinances and keep My statutes and observe them. They will live on the Land that I gave to Jacob My servant in which your Fathers lived and they will live on it, they, and their sons and their sons' sons, forever and David My Servant will be their *Prince* forever.'

With that last verse using *forever* it seems that it's Yeshua that Ezekiel is speaking of both here and in his use of *prince* for the new Temple, which is only a few chapters later. This is also seen in the places where Yahveh speaks of His Servant David. Note, also, that in the Temple, His Law will be in kept. It hasn't been done away with, but awaits a future time of glorious fulfillment.

Finally, in Daniel 9:25, we see a direct connection between the Messiah and the Prince when the angel Gabriel calls Him, 'Messiah the Prince.'

'So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until *Messiah the Prince*, there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks. It

will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress.’

It seems that Ezekiel’s future Temple will have Messiah Yeshua as the Prince. He will rule for a thousand years from the earthly Jerusalem, there will be sacrifice every day and the celebrating of the holy Feasts of Yahveh. The Law will very much be in effect. It’s plain to see.

## *The Altar in Heaven*

If sacrifice has ended, what is an Altar doing in Heaven? I think that the Altar in Heaven has the eternal sacrifice of the Lamb of God on it (Rev. 5:6), just as the daily holocaust was a continual sacrifice. I don’t understand it all, but it seems to point to this. This is what we, as believers in Messiah Yeshua, call upon now in our need, His body and His blood. His body feeds us. He declares it is real food and His blood cleanses us and forgives us of sin and gives us His life, for the life of the flesh is in the blood (Lev. 17:11).

The heavenly Altar will forever be an eternal reminder to all of us of the Sacrifice of the Lamb of God. From this Altar, we as priests of Messiah Yeshua, can take of His body and His blood. The writer of Hebrews alludes to the body and blood of Yeshua being on the heavenly Altar when he speaks of our eating something from it in Heb. 13:10: ‘We have an *Altar* from which those who serve the Tabernacle have no right to eat.’ In the book of Revelation the Altar of Sacrifice is mentioned a number of times:

‘When the Lamb broke the Fifth Seal, I saw underneath the Altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the Word of God and because of the testimony which they had maintained’ (Rev. 6:9).

The Altar on Earth in the Tabernacle of Moses, and in the Temple of Solomon, is a picture of the Altar in Heaven (Ex. 25:8-10). In Rev. 11:1 it speaks of the Altar in the New Jerusalem:

“‘Then there was given me a measuring rod like a staff and someone said, ‘Get up and measure the Temple of God and the Altar and those who worship in it.’”

In Revelation 14:18, the Apostle John wrote:

“‘Then another angel, the one who has power over fire, came out from the Altar and he called with a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, ‘Put in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the Earth because her grapes are ripe.’”

The Altar seems to have the body and blood of our Lord Yeshua, the Lamb of God, upon it. This is the real spiritual food and drink that Yeshua speaks of, that we are to eat and to drink (Jn. 6:53, 55). Perhaps this, too, helps explain why sin sacrifice will be in Ezekiel’s Temple. All the sacrifices pointed to the one-time sacrifice of Yeshua, and in that, they will continue to point to Him as our sacrifice for sin.

# CONCLUSION

Questioning the validity of the concept that sacrifice ended with the Sacrifice of Jesus, we found that the phrase ‘once and for all’ meant that the Lord didn’t have to come back and be sacrificed for each generation. It didn’t pertain to the ending of sacrifice in the earthly Temple.

In the New Covenant, many years after the one-time sacrifice of Jesus, we saw how Paul (Acts 21:20f.) took upon himself the Nazarite Vow. This proved that sacrifice was not seen as having been done away with by either Paul or any of the other Apostles, as they were all involved with Paul’s taking of the Vow. On the contrary, Paul takes the Nazarite Vow, which entailed a sacrifice for sin, as well as other sacrifices, to prove that he still followed the Law of Moses. This opened up a larger theological context that spoke of the place of the Law in the life of every believer. We didn’t fully flesh it out because of the nature of this study. For more on the Law, see

1. [Law 102](#)
2. [Grace, Holiness and the Pharisaic Church](#)
3. [Hebrews and the Change of the Law](#)
4. [Law and Grace](#)
5. [No Longer Under the Law?](#)
6. [Romans 14 and the Dietary Laws](#)
7. [Seven Ways Yeshua Fulfilled the Law](#)
8. [Take the Quiz! Five Quick Questions about the New Testament](#)
9. [The Feasts of Israel as Time Markers After the Resurrection](#)
10. [The Lifting of the Veil—Acts 15:20-21](#)

We saw in the book of Hebrews that the English translators gave us their theological understanding of what they wanted the Greek words for sin to say, but it contradicted the Word of God in Lev. 4-5, in that God instituted forgiveness through the Mosaic sacrifices. It also went against what the writer of Hebrews had just written a few verses before their poor translation of 10:4 and 10:11, where he says that the Mosaic sacrifices could cleanse the flesh (forgive sin), but not the conscience (meaning, to change the Adamic nature). When the translators should have given us the meaning of the word for sin nature, they failed to do so and distorted the meaning of what the writer was saying. Hebrews 10:4 and 10:11 speak of the blood of bulls and goats not being able to take away our sin nature. The blood of bulls and goats, while forgiving sin, could not effect our sin nature, and therefore, was not able to make us into the Image of Yeshua so that we could dwell in Yahveh’s Presence forever, what the writer called ‘perfection.’

Sacrifice was still going on in the Temple when Hebrews was written (Heb. 8:4) and Hebrews compares, but does not do away with, either sacrifice or the earthly high priesthood. The author compares the high priests, Yeshua versus the Aaronic, in that One lives forever and does not sin, while the other dies and is sinful. He also compares the blood of the sacrifice, in that Yeshua’s is once and more powerful, in that it deals with the core problem in Israel, the sin nature, and offers eternal life. The Mosaic sacrifice, specifically on the Day of Atonement, in offering forgiveness for sin, was not able to (or ever intended to), relieve the Israeli of sin consciousness or to address his sin nature. The different definitions for ‘sin’ also helped us to understand the Apostles John and Paul in their application of sinful acts or sin nature.

In searching out the meaning of the New Covenant we saw that it didn't do away with the Law, but that it offered better realities to us: our High Priest is sinless and eternal while the Aaronic High Priests sinned and died. The blood of Yeshua forgives our sinful acts as well as dealing with our sin nature. The blood of bulls and goats could only forgive our sinful acts. The gift that we receive from our High Priest is eternal life and the Holy Spirit within us now. The gifts of the Aaronic Priesthood were forgiveness of sin and an abundant life in the Land of Israel. With the change in the priesthood, we saw that a change in the Law meant that there was just that, a change in the Law, not that the Law was canceled because of the change of priesthood, which will fully take effect when this Earth and these Heavens are no more.

The prophet Ezekiel showed us that sacrifice, Sabbath, New Moon and Passover will continue in the thousand year reign of Yeshua, in spite of what some might say to the contrary. Also, Yeshua, as our Prince, will provide and perform some of the sacrifices.

In Revelation we saw how the Altar in Heaven is not only the reality for the Altar of Sacrifice in the Tabernacle of Moses, but is functional in Heaven for us today and into eternity. The Altar in Heaven not only points directly to an eternal sacrifice in Heaven, but also unifies the 'Old,' the 'New,' and the 'yet to be.' Sacrifice, while being done away with by the Church, is still very important to God, especially as all the various sacrifices picture the sacrifice of the Lamb of God.

Sacrifice was never seen as ending by the writers of the New Testament or 'being done away with' and will continue in the thousand year reign of Yeshua, the Prince of Israel.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Revised on 31 March 2018.