

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

THE PLAUSIBILITY OF ANIMAL SACRIFICES IN EZEKIEL 40-48  
LITERALLY OPERATING IN THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM  
UNDER THE NEW COVENANT

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The magnificent temple vision in Ezekiel 40-48 has generated a great amount of controversy among scholars who attempt to interpret the prophet's overwhelming experience. The discussion of interpretative issues in this text primarily focuses upon whether a literal or non-literal temple is in view. For many scholars, the animal sacrifices in this passage underscore the perceived difficulty of pursuing a literal interpretation of Ezekiel 40-48. The primary concern is if these sacrifices are understood to atone in the future millennial temple, then Christ's atoning work on the cross would be negated.

#### STATEMENT OF THE PURPOSE

This thesis presupposes a literal interpretation of Ezekiel 40-48, meaning that Ezekiel fully expected that this vision would be literally fulfilled in the future. The purpose of this thesis is to address the issue of animal sacrifices in the millennial temple and the ramifications and the atonement that results. The response to the problem of the presence of sacrifices and their effects in Ezekiel 40-48 has caused a division among classical dispensational<sup>1</sup> scholars that others have exploited to discredit dispensationalism as a whole. It is the desire of the author to prove that a literal understanding of the animal sacrifices is not only plausible, but also necessary.

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<sup>1</sup> Charles C. Ryrie, *Dispensationalism* (Chicago, Ill: Moody Publishers, 2007), 46-48. Dispensationalism is a system of theology based upon three "*sine qua non*" which are as follows: 1) It keeps Israel and the church distinct; 2) This distinction between Israel and the church is born out of a system of hermeneutics that is usually called literal interpretation; and 3) The purpose of God is to glorify Himself. It is recognized that one might accept that Ezekiel's temple vision refers to the millennial kingdom and not adhere to dispensationalism. "For there are those who are premillennial who definitely are not dispensational" (Ibid, 45).

## STATEMENT OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PROBLEM

It must be acknowledged that the animal sacrifices in the millennial kingdom do appear to present a major dilemma for the dispensationalist scholar. John Taylor's criticism of a literal interpretation summarizes the problem,

If it follows from this that the Old Testament festivals, blood sacrifices, priesthood and worship at a temple are to be reintroduced, after New Testament revelation of Christ and his finished, fulfilling work, it shows how completely this view misrepresents the significance of Christ's salvation and how it casts doubt on the consistency of God's dealings with humanity.<sup>2</sup>

Hullinger addresses the issue, "If the Temple is viewed as in the eschaton and the sacrifices are literal, then this seems to be at odds with the Book of Hebrews, which clearly states that Christ's sacrifice has put an end to all sacrifice."<sup>3</sup> This has led Archibald Hughes to regard the animal sacrifices as "the saddest part of the millennial scheme," and labels it "apostasy."<sup>4</sup>

Another serious charge made by those who oppose a literal rendering of the text is that the animal sacrifices reinstate the Mosaic Law. Merrill Unger has written in support of "the reestablishment of at least certain features of the Mosaic ritual," which will result in "the reinstatement of Judaism during the kingdom, purified and made more spiritual than ever."<sup>5</sup>

Oswald Allis correctly rebukes this thinking by some dispensational scholars, "Yet Paul speaks

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<sup>2</sup> John Bernard Taylor, *Ezekiel: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, Ill: Inter-Varsity Press, 1969), 247.

<sup>3</sup> Jerry M. Hullinger, "The Problem of Animal Sacrifices in Ezekiel 40-48," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol. 152, no 607 (July-September 1995), 280.

<sup>4</sup> Archibald Hughes, *A New Heaven and a New Earth* (London: Marshall, Morgan, and Scott, 1958), 157.

<sup>5</sup> Merrill F. Unger, "The Temple Vision of Ezekiel, Part 2," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol. 106, no. 421 (Jan 1949), 60.

of these things [the Mosaic Law] as ‘weak and beggarly elements.’”<sup>6</sup> Yet, one can understand the predicament that the dispensational interpreter faces.

## POTENTIAL RESPONSES TO THE PROBLEM

It is imperative that dispensationalists deal honestly with the issue of animal sacrifices, lest scholars who are less diplomatic in tone continue to call this method of interpretation “an embarrassment.”<sup>7</sup> Dispensational scholars have formulated various responses to the accusation that this hermeneutic clashes with other major portions of Scripture and the atoning work of Christ.

### The Memorial View

“Many dispensationalists have explained the sacrifices in Ezekiel 40-48 through what is known as the ‘memorial view.’”<sup>8</sup> In doing so, proponents of this view believe they have sidestepped any critique of the animal sacrifices negating the atoning work of Christ. The basic premise of this view is the animal sacrifices in the future “will remind God’s people of what Christ has done.”<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Oswald T. Allis, *Prophecy and the Church*, 246. This quotation of Galatians 4:9 is cleaver on the part of Allis because the same accusation that Paul is making to the Galatians (that they are willingly putting themselves back under the law) is the same assertion that Allis makes of dispensationalists. Other verse that speak clearly of the discontinuation of the Mosaic Law are: Galatians 3:23-25; Hebrews 8:13; 2 Corinthians 3:4-7; Romans 7:6; 10:4. In a later chapter the argument will be made that the animal sacrifices are not a continuation of the Mosaic Law.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid, 243.

<sup>8</sup> Jerry M. Hullinger, “The Problem of Animal Sacrifices in Ezekiel 40-48,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 280-281.

<sup>9</sup> John W. Schmitt and J. Carl Laney, *Messiah’s Coming Temple* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1997), 118.

John Walvoord supports this view when he writes, “If in the wisdom and sovereign pleasure of God the detailed system of sacrifices in the Old Testament were a suitable foreshadowing of that which would be accomplished by the death of his son, and a memorial of Christ’s death is to be enacted, it would seem not unfitting that some sort of sacrificial system would be used.”<sup>10</sup> Charles Feinberg utilizes the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper to make the same point, “The celebration of the Lord’s Supper through the Christian centuries has added not one infinitesimal particle to the efficacy of the work of Christ on the cross, but who will dare deny that it has value for the believer, since it is enjoined upon us as a memorial?”<sup>11</sup> Similarly, Ralph Alexander equates the animal sacrifices with the Lord’s Supper because he believes that “the millennial worship appears to be pictorial lessons to everyone in the millennium.”<sup>12</sup>

Many support this view because it acts as a middle ground between a literal view and a symbolic view in order to uphold the atoning work of Christ. Yet, there are weaknesses in this view that creates some problems, as well. Hullinger writes,

On the surface this solution seems to solve the problem. However, a number of objections can be raised against it. First, Ezekiel nowhere stated or even hinted at the idea that these sacrifices will be memorial in nature. Second, Ezekiel

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<sup>10</sup> John F. Walvoord, *Israel in Prophecy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1962), 125-126. He concludes that the importance of the animal sacrifices in this vision illustrate “that Israel will have an ordered worship with Jerusalem once again the center of their religious as well as political life” (Ibid, 126).

<sup>11</sup> Charles Lee Feinberg, *The Prophecy of Ezekiel*, 234. Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom: An Inductive Study of the Kingdom of God As Set Free in the Scriptures* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1959), 250. “These sacrifices were simply a remembrance of sins committed and pointed forward to the one sacrifice which would take them away.” Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of the Messiah: A Study of the Sequence of Prophetic Events* (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries Press, 1981), 326. “The purpose of the sacrificial kingdom in the kingdom will be the same as the purposes of communion for the church: in remembrance of me.”

<sup>12</sup> Ralph Alexander, *Ezekiel* (Chicago, Ill: Moody Press, 1978), 132-133

specifically wrote that these offerings would make atonement (45:15, 17, 20). The word for ‘atonement’ in Ezekiel is the same as the word in Leviticus. Third, a parallel between sacrifices and the Lord’s Supper intimates that animal sacrifices had no efficacy whatsoever.<sup>13</sup>

Allis also notes that the sacrifices “were not memorial but efficacious in the days of Moses and of David.”<sup>14</sup> Although Allis is “asking worthwhile questions regarding our subject,”<sup>15</sup> his purpose is to capitalize on this inconsistency by many dispensational scholars as a way to discredit the literal understanding of Ezekiel 40-48.

Additionally, the issue of animal sacrifices in a future millennial kingdom is larger than this passage alone. One “has to deal not only with the references in Ezekiel but with other references to sacrifices within eschatological contexts (see, for example, Isaiah 56:6-7; 60:20-21; Jeremiah 33:18; Zechariah 14:16-21; Haggai 2:7; Malachi 1:11).”<sup>16</sup> Price writes, “Surveys of the works of those holding to a literal interpretation of Ezekiel 40-48 have revealed an inconsistent tendency to spiritualize the sacrifices.”<sup>17</sup> Thus, there is a tendency of many dispensationalists to move away from a literal interpretation on a significant aspect of the future temple. These objections illustrate that the memorial view does not adequately address the issue of how the animal sacrifices atone in the millennial temple.

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<sup>13</sup> Jerry M. Hullinger, “The Problem of Animal Sacrifices in Ezekiel 40-48,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 280.

<sup>14</sup> Oswald T. Allis, *Prophecy and the Church*, 247. He concludes, “In the millennium they must be equally efficacious if the dispensational system of interpretation is a true one.”

<sup>15</sup> John L. Mitchell, “The Question of Millennial Sacrifices, Part 2,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* Vol. 110, no 440 (Oct 1953), 342. Mitchell asserts that Allis is more interested “in throwing darts” at dispensationalists who hold a different view of the kingdom than he does.

<sup>16</sup> Randall Price, *The Temple and Bible Prophecy: A Definitive Look At Its Past, Present, And Future* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2005), 544.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, n. 22, 719.



## The Atonement View

Price, an ardent supporter of the atonement view, writes, “This view argues that it is insufficient to say that the animal sacrifices of the Old Testament were only symbolic of the final sacrifice of Christ.”<sup>18</sup> Hullinger has written extensively in support of this view as he has vigorously argued that the function of “atonement” in Ezekiel is “to cleanse or purify objects contaminated by sin or uncleanness... thus enabling Him [Yahweh] to dwell among His people.”<sup>19</sup> It will be shown that this view is to be preferred due to the contextual factors in the book of Ezekiel.

### STATEMENT OF POSITION

The author’s position is that the sacrifices in Ezekiel 40-48 will literally be fulfilled in the millennial kingdom and does not accept the premise that these sacrifices equate to a restoration the Mosaic Law at a future time. Nor does the memorial view adequately represent the purpose of atonement that Ezekiel foresees. This thesis will show that the animal sacrifices in Ezekiel 40-48 will take place in a literal future temple for outward purification purposes in the presence of Christ Jesus glorified who resides over His theocratic kingdom operating under the New Covenant in the Millennial temple. Therefore, Ezekiel 40-48 is best interpreted literally.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 550.

<sup>19</sup> Jerry M. Hullinger, “The Problem of Animal Sacrifices in Ezekiel 40-48,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 284. He bases the function of כָּפַר (“to atone”), which he calls the “Erase/Wipe Away/Purge View,” on the Akkadian root for כָּר.

## STATEMENT OF LIMITATION

This thesis will be limited to the function of the animal sacrifices in Ezekiel 40-48. As a result, issues relating to the priesthood, identification of the “prince,” topological details (the size of the city; the stream proceeding from the throne) fall outside of the purview of this study.

## SCOPE OF RESEARCH

Much of the research for this was conducted on the campus of Liberty University. This includes the library within the Center for Judaic Studies. A portion of the research was completed through Liberty University’s Internet research portal. Databases accessed were ATLA, ProQuest, Ebscohost, WorldCat, and Theological Journal Library. Additionally, gratitude and appreciation must be extended to the staff of the East Morgan County Library in Brush, Colorado, for obtaining resources when requested.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE FUNCTION OF ANIMAL SACRIFICES IN EZEKIEL 40-48 PERTAINING TO A LITERAL FUTURE MILLENNIAL TEMPLE

#### INTRODUCTION

There is perhaps no greater issue that scholars must address in Ezekiel 40-48 than the nature and purpose of the temple in which Ezekiel details. Scholars have debated whether Ezekiel's Temple portrayal was intended to be a literal future temple or a non-literal allegorical picture of the restoration of Israel. In order to ascertain Ezekiel's message, scholars have divided into two interpretative poles. Many scholars hold to a non-literal interpretation, while other scholars insist that a literal interpretation of Ezekiel 40-48 is the most accurate. In this chapter will be argued that a literal view of the Temple in Ezekiel 40-48 best represents the context of the book as a whole.

#### NON-LITERAL INTERPRETATIONS OF THE TEMPLE

Norman Cohn writes, "Christianity has always had an eschatology, in the sense of a doctrine concerning 'the last times' or 'the last days' or 'the final state of the world'; and millenarianism was simply one variant Christian eschatology."<sup>20</sup> Yet, there has always been a tendency for the church to interpret prophecies relating to the millennium "in a liberal rather than a literal sense."<sup>21</sup> There is an inclination for modern scholarship to lean more toward the liberal

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<sup>20</sup> Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium: Revolutionary Millenarians and Mystical Anarchists of the Middle Ages* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1970), 15.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. His contention in his study is that the dire circumstances of believers throughout the periods of church history have necessitated a non-literal view as they await the Second Coming of Christ.

rather than the literal interpretation. The general scholarly view is that Ezekiel is making a vivid point regarding the temple due to the deteriorating circumstances of Israel in an effort to bring a much-needed spiritual change to the nation. Therefore, it will be beneficial to briefly survey the non-literal interpretations prior to focusing on the issues those interpreters with a literal hermeneutic face when dealing with this passage. This will allow one to understand how scholars have wrestled with this difficult passage across the interpretive spectrum. Price divides the various non-literal views into two main categories (symbolic of a spiritual ideal and symbolic of some other spiritual reality) that will serve as a template for this section.<sup>22</sup>

### Symbolic of a Spiritual Ideal

Scholars who hold to this view believe that Ezekiel's purpose in recording this temple vision is primarily theological and pastoral. Ezekiel's concern is not that this vision will be literally fulfilled in the future, but rather, that those who are in exile are encouraged. For instance, Leslie Allen believes that Ezekiel is elevating "priestly concerns" over that of the pre-exilic monarchy so as to alleviate "fears among the exiles that return to the land would mean the resumption of the bad old status quo."<sup>23</sup> He concludes, "So a pastoral concern, already seen in earlier chapters, is here shining out afresh."<sup>24</sup> Daniel Block believes that Ezekiel is presenting "a picture of a reconstituted nation finally functioning as a genuine theocracy."<sup>25</sup> As a result, it will

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<sup>22</sup> Randall Price, *The Temple and Bible Prophecy*, 511.

<sup>23</sup> Leslie C. Allen, *Ezekiel 20-48* (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1990), 213-214.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, 214.

<sup>25</sup> Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 25-48* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 504.

bring comfort to the exiles and help them understand “the theological realities” awaiting them.<sup>26</sup> Block acknowledges, “It would have been inconceivable for Ezekiel to envision a full restoration of his people without a literal fulfillment of each of these elements.”<sup>27</sup> Yet he concludes, “It seems best to interpret 40-48 as ideationally. The issue for the prophet is not physical geography, but spiritual realities.”<sup>28</sup> In a very critical study of the prophets, Robert Carroll puts forward the thesis that the prophet’s job was simply to preach in order to illicit change in the society, and “the predictive element in their preaching could be regarded as secondary.”<sup>29</sup> The prophet’s job was to reinforce the Davidic monarchy “as the appointed source of authority in the community.”<sup>30</sup>

#### A Mythic Vision

Some scholars view these chapters as cosmic symbolism or mythic storytelling in order to represent the “divine transcendence, expressed most particularly by asserting Yahweh’s heavenly nature,”<sup>31</sup> as reality on earth. G. K. Beale explains how Ezekiel’s vision is symbolism that represents heaven as he writes,

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 505.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 506. He concisely states the spiritual reality as, “Where God is, there is Zion,” which he defines as, “Where the presence of God is recognized, there is purity and holiness.” This he believes “lays the foundation for the Pauline spiritualization of the temple.”

<sup>29</sup> Robert P. Carroll, *When Prophecy Failed: Cognitive Dissonance in the Prophetic Traditions of the Old Testament* (New York, NY: The Seabury Press, 1979), 29.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 38.

<sup>31</sup> R.E. Clements, *God and Temple* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1965), 131.

Israel's temple was composed of three main parts, each of which symbolized a major part of the cosmos: (1) the outer court represented the habitable world where humanity dwelt; (2) the holy place was emblematic of the visible heavens and its light sources; (3) the holy of holies symbolized the invisible dimension of the cosmos where God and his heavenly hosts dwelt.<sup>32</sup>

Similarly, Walter Zimmerli notes the temple stream “with its mysterious capacity to flow into a river and its inherent powers of healing,”<sup>33</sup> as an example.

Jon Levenson articulates a view that Ezekiel is symbolically transferring the importance of the Temple on Sinai to a Zionist theology, which elevates Ezekiel's vision to cosmic mythic dimensions.<sup>34</sup> Levenson's argument is that the cosmic mythological language is meant to link back to the Garden of Eden, which he views as “a pre-societal ideal” because “Eden has no historical association, such as association with monarchy.”<sup>35</sup> In this, Levenson and Allen find agreement that Ezekiel's ultimate goal is to “depoliticize the monarchy through a new constitution”<sup>36</sup> through the use of symbolism.

While an allegorical approach might account for underlying spiritual concerns that Ezekiel was addressing, it does not adequately deal with the text as it is written. Andy Woods cautions that these scholars are “explaining away Scripture's plain meaning through the

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<sup>32</sup> G.K. Beale. *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God* (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 32.

<sup>33</sup> Walter Zimmerli, *I Am Yahweh* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1982), 116.

<sup>34</sup> Jon Levenson, *Theology of the Program of Restoration of Ezekiel 40-48* (Cambridge, MA: Scholars Press for the Harvard Semitic Museum, 1976), 7-19.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*, 33.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*.

adoption of an allegorical hermeneutical approach.”<sup>37</sup> It will be important to examine the dispensational defense of a literal understanding of Ezekiel 40-8.

#### A LITERAL INTERPRETATION OF THE TEMPLE

The allegorical views mentioned above are primarily predicated upon the fact that 40-48 is a vision report (40:1). As such, it is believed many of the contents of the vision, such as the “high mountain” or “the river” “is quite idealistic and even unimaginable.”<sup>38</sup> The main argument against dispensationalism concludes that it is not only impossible to view this visionary text through a dispensational lens; it is outrageous to do so.<sup>39</sup>

Yet, this does not accurately represent the philosophy behind a dispensational hermeneutic. Ryrie boldly states, “Classic dispensationalism is a result of consistent application of the basic hermeneutical principle of literal, normal, or plain interpretation.”<sup>40</sup> The common classic dispensational position of 40-48 is “the passage is apocalyptic and therefore filled with highly symbolic imagery, but it is also prophetic in the sense that it describes literal future events.”<sup>41</sup> The fact that Ezekiel uses metaphorical language should not make one dismissive of a literal fulfillment of that which is being described.

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<sup>37</sup> Andy Woods, “Enthroning the Interpreter: Dangerous Trends in Law and Theology, Part III,” *Conservative Theological Journal* Vol. 8 no. 25 (Dec 2004), 358.

<sup>38</sup> Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel Chapter 25-48*, 501.

<sup>39</sup> Leslie C. Allen, *Word Biblical Commentary: Ezekiel 20-48*, 214.

<sup>40</sup> Charles C. Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*, 97.

<sup>41</sup> Lamar Eugene Cooper, *The New American Commentary: Ezekiel*, 353.

Some critics may surmise that if God intended to literally fulfill this prophecy then Ezekiel would have received this information separate from a vision, unlike 1:1, and 8:3. Yet, this misses the purpose of God-given visions. Brent Sandy writes,

Perhaps the most important point to understand about apocalyptic is its function. It takes readers on a fascinating journey, inviting us to enter a whole new world of imagination and to live in that world before we move beyond it. Apocalyptic addresses a serious crisis of faith. If God is truly in control, why has he allowed things to get so bad here on earth? In reply, apocalyptic boldly proclaims that God has not turned his back on the on the world. Just the opposite: God is going to intervene radically and unexpectedly and introduce a solution that will solve all problems. To bring that intervention and solution to life, the visionary characteristics of apocalyptic are especially appropriate.<sup>42</sup>

Given this description of apocalyptic visions, one can understand that the few idealized depictions in the vision serve as a powerful promise that God will restore national Israel and the temple. Thus, Block was incorrect to assume that the presence of idealized apocalyptic features prevents a literal understanding of the 40-48.

While scholars who interpret this passage allegorically do so on the basis of Ezekiel's symbolism, it must be emphatically stated Ezekiel basis his vision imagery on concrete examples; specifically, the temple and priesthood. Woods adds, "The people involved and the geographical notations are discussed with great specificity."<sup>43</sup> Interestingly, Levenson who does not believe in a literal fulfillment, notes the literal aspects of a temple when he writes,

When the text says that eight steps led up to the vestibule of the inner court (Ezek. 40:31), can this be other than a command that the new Temple be constructed just so? Can this only be description?<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> D. Brent Sandy, *Plowshares & Pruning Hook: Rethinking the Language of Biblical Prophecy and Apocalyptic* (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press Academic, 2002), 109.

<sup>43</sup> Andy Woods, "Enthroning the Interpreter: Dangerous Trends in Law and Theology, Part III," 353.

<sup>44</sup> Jon Levenson, *Theology of the Program of Restoration*, 45.



Therefore, the detailed dates and measurements found throughout chapters 40-48 lend credibility to the argument that Ezekiel understood that he was foreseeing a literal temple. Feinberg writes, “Ezekiel continued to set forth detail after detail, making it increasingly difficult to interpret the whole in a figurative manner, in which case the abundance of minute details is worthless and meaningless.”<sup>45</sup> In fact, in verse four Ezekiel is told to pay close attention to the details of all the measurements the interpreting angel declares. Cooper writes, “If one takes this seriously as a literal future temple, then the attention to detail is no surprise.”<sup>46</sup> Feinberg compares the details of Ezekiel’s temple to the details given about the tabernacle and asks,

Was it not true that the many details of the tabernacle of Moses embodied comprehensive spiritual and prophetic principles? Was the tabernacle actually built in Moses’ day or was it not? Was it purely idealistic or ideational?<sup>47</sup>

The structural details of the temple, albeit much larger than Solomon’s temple,<sup>48</sup> are predicated on the knowledge of the existing structure. God purposely chose the apocalyptic genre to convey “a statement of affirmation about the future of the nation”<sup>49</sup> through the enlarged temple complex.

Sandy laments the fact that scholars attempt to read powerful and lofty portions of prophecy through an eschatological lens as he writes, “If every utterance can be analyzed and objectified and a futuristic significance extrapolated therefrom, we have tamed prophecy and

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<sup>45</sup> Charles Lee Feinberg, *The Prophecy of Ezekiel*, 244.

<sup>46</sup> Lamar Eugene Cooper, *The New American Commentary Volume 17- Ezekiel* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishing Group, 1994), 353.

<sup>47</sup> Charles Lee Feinberg, *The Prophecy of Ezekiel*, 236.

<sup>48</sup> Lamar Eugene Cooper, *The New American Commentary: Ezekiel*, 357.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

made it what we want it to be.”<sup>50</sup> Yet, a compelling argument for 40-48 is “the literary unity of the book requires that a literal temple be understood throughout its chapters.”<sup>51</sup> A literal interpretation of 40-48 appreciates and takes into account the stern warnings given in the previous chapters. In other words, 40-48 is the logical conclusion to Ezekiel’s argument throughout the book.

Many scholars accept that the visions in the previous chapters allude to the historical setting of the people and the temple. Allen writes, “The framework of the vision [in chapters 8-11] is firmly set within Ezekiel’s prophetic ministry to the Judean prisoners in Babylonia, and there is no good reason to doubt this setting.”<sup>52</sup> Peter Ackroyd widens the setting of the vision to “a world context”<sup>53</sup> in order to ascertain the greatest theological significance of restoration. If the historical setting is so important to understand the background of the text, then it only follows that Ezekiel intends for this future temple to be literally fulfilled, as well. “Without chapters 40-48 there is no answer to the outcome of Israel, no resolution to their history of sacred scandal, and no grand finale to the divine drama centered from Sinai on the chosen Nation.”<sup>54</sup> Logically, the literary and prophetic progression of the book would demand a verdict. If the desecration and destruction of the historical temple is proclaimed to Ezekiel in a vision in chapters 8-11, then God blesses the nation in a similar manner in chapters 40-48.

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<sup>50</sup> D. Brent Sandy, *Plowshares & Pruning Hooks*, 207.

<sup>51</sup> Randall Price, *The Temple and Bible Prophecy*, 517.

<sup>52</sup> Leslie C. Allen, *Ezekiel 1-19* (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1994), 129.

<sup>53</sup> Peter R. Ackroyd, *Exile and Restoration* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1968), 117.

<sup>54</sup> Randall Price, *The Temple and Bible Prophecy*, 517.

## CONCLUSION

Ezekiel 40-48 is a complex passage that has caused division among scholars. Many scholars view these chapters as symbolic of something greater, such as a heavenly temple or spiritual ideal. They point to use of the apocalyptic genre and symbolic language in 40-48 to support their non-literal interpretation. While it may be tempting to arrive at such a conclusion, there is evidence to show that Ezekiel's restorative vision expects a literal fulfillment.

The apocalyptic nature of the passage reinforces the seriousness of God's punishment of the nation for their covenant disobedience, resulting in the disappearance of God's glory from the temple. Ezekiel 40-48 is a magnificent promise that the temple will be restored in the future. In contrast to those who claim that a dispensational hermeneutic misses the nuances of Ezekiel's symbolic language, it seems more likely that the symbolism demands a literal fulfillment based on the message of the rest of the book. Additionally, the numerous details given in the passage underscores the prophet's expectation and anticipation of an actual future temple. A literal interpretation of this passage provides a much grander view of Ezekiel's motivation for recording this vision, as it "provides the crown and consummation of all Israel's history."<sup>55</sup> Therefore, it has been shown that a literal understanding of Ezekiel 40-48 is the most preferable rendering of the text.

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid, 279.

## CHAPTER 3

# THE FUNCTION OF ANIMAL SACRIFICES IN EZEKIEL 40-48 PERTAINING TO THE MEANING OF ATONEMENT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO THE NEW COVENANT

## INTRODUCTION

Perhaps the greatest hindrance to interpreting Ezekiel 40-48 in a literal manner is predicated upon the fact that the sacrifices in the millennial temple “atone” for sin under the new covenant. Arnold Fruchtenbaum succinctly states the question posed by critics, “If the death of Christ was the final sacrifice for sin, how could these animal sacrifices provide an expiation for sin?”<sup>56</sup> Therefore, the sacrifices carry a far greater significance than most Christians would be comfortable. For it appears that these sacrifices that have the power to atone, thereby it “seems to conflict heavily with the theology of the New Testament.”<sup>57</sup>

This has resulted in many dispensationalists adopting a “memorial view,” which “basically says that the sacrifices offered during the earthly reign of Christ will be visible reminders of Christ’s work on the cross.”<sup>58</sup> Thus, the issue of atonement in Ezekiel must be addressed if the problem of sacrifices in the millennial temple is to be honestly dealt with. This chapter will demonstrate that it is possible to differentiate the animal sacrifices in Ezekiel 40-48, which purify outwardly, from the superior substitutionary death of the Messiah.

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<sup>56</sup> Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *Israelology: The Missing Link in Systematic Theology* (Tustin CA: Ariel Ministries, 1989), 810.

<sup>57</sup> J. Daniel Hays, *The Temple and the Tabernacle: A Study of God’s Dwelling Places From Genesis to Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2016), 184.

<sup>58</sup> Jerry M. Hullinger, “A Proposed Solution to the Problem of Animal Sacrifices in Ezekiel 40-48,” (unpublished Th.D. dissertation, Dallas TX: Dallas Theological Seminary, 1993), 6.

## Views on Atonement

In English, atonement “is a combination of ‘at’ plus Middle English ‘one (meant),’ meaning to be or make at one . . . On one level this, in fact, is a good definition of the basic effect that to atone, make atonement (the verb *kpr*) had in the relationship between God and human beings within the Israelite cultic sacrificial system.”<sup>59</sup> There is a great amount of debate among scholars as to the precise function of atonement in the Old Testament. Traditionally, the meaning of “atonement” has been classified under three categories of meaning: “1) to cover, 2) to ransom (carrying with it the idea of propitiation); 3) to wipe away.”<sup>60</sup> In order to appreciate the nuanced usages of “atonement,” it will be beneficial to examine each view of the meaning of “to atone.”

The BDB lists “cover over” as the primary purpose of “atone” in the sense that a sacrifice covers over sin to pacify the displeasure of one offended. The examples offered to illustrate this are: Genesis 32:21; Isaiah 47:11; and Proverbs 16:14. Yet, this view has been widely rejected by scholars today. Rooker explains the view:

Until recently it was widely held among evangelical and non-evangelical scholars alike that the term was related to an Arabic cognate with the meaning ‘to cover.’ This connection with the Arabic language has been virtually abandoned in modern scholarship because of the failure to demonstrate this meaning based on use in Hebrew as well as the methodological problem of using only Arabic to validate a Hebrew meaning.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Richard E. Averbeck, “כִּפֵּר,” Willem VanGemeren, editor. *A Guide to Old Testament Theology and Exegesis: An Introductory Articles from the New International Dictionary of Theology and Exegesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999), 690.

<sup>60</sup> BDB, 497-498.

<sup>61</sup> Mark Rooker, *The New American Commentary Leviticus*, (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishers, 2000), 52.

It appears that a consensus of scholars agree that “to cover” does not adequately represent the way in which atonement is achieved. The next two views (erase/wipe away/purge view and the ransom/propitiation) are believed to contain elements of atonement according to contextual clues depending on the object being atoned for.<sup>62</sup>

## THE ERASE/WIPE AWAY/PURGE ASPECT OF ATONEMENT AND THE NEW COVENANT

### The Erase/Wipe Away/Purge View

The erase/wipe away/purge view of atonement emphasizes “sacrifice accomplished the removal of ritual impurity in order to restore a worshipper’s ability to approach God.”<sup>63</sup> The necessity for this atonement is “human impurity and wrong doing pollute the sanctuary.”<sup>64</sup> The sacrifice that typifies this form of atonement is חַטָּאת (*hatta’t*), and is referred to as the “sin offering,”<sup>65</sup> or the “purification offering.”<sup>66</sup> The names of this offering are derived by the placement and context of Leviticus 4:1-35. The introduction to this sacrifice is structurally significant in the book of Leviticus because the offerings that were introduced in chapters 1-3

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Randall Price, *The Temple and Bible Prophecy*, 555.

<sup>64</sup> John H. Hayes, “Atonement in the Book of Leviticus,” 6. *Interpretation* 52, no. 1 (01, 1998).

<sup>65</sup> Mark F. Rooker, *The New American Commentary: Leviticus*, 106.

<sup>66</sup> Jacob Milgrom *Leviticus 1-16*, 228.

(the burnt, grain, and fellowship offerings) were “voluntary,”<sup>67</sup> whereas the sacrifices in chapters 4-5 are “mandatory; it is a prohibition.”<sup>68</sup>

The seriousness of this sacrifice (and hence being made mandatory) is evident in the Hebrew word it is predicated upon. John Hartley explains, “The term for ‘purification offering’ (תִּשְׁתָּחֶה) comes from the root שָׁחָה, ‘fail, sin...It describes behavior that violates community standards. Because God set these standards, שָׁחָה is primarily a religious judgment on deviant behavior.”<sup>69</sup> It is important to note that this sacrifice is only for sins committed “inadvertently,” or sin that “may result from negligence or ignorance.”<sup>70</sup> The root word שָׁחָה, and the larger section it is found (“the sin offering pericope”<sup>71</sup>) have led many scholars to translate this sacrifice “sin offering.”<sup>72</sup> More significantly, sin becomes equivalent to impurity, which must be dealt with for the presence of God to abide.<sup>73</sup>

Yet, scholars offer a more specific usage of this sacrifice. Godfrey Ashby states, “It became a technical term, and in Hebrew usage meant to eliminate, to cancel or remove.”<sup>74</sup> A leading expert in this field of study Jacob Milgrom, asserts that the verb form of שָׁחָה (*hatta't*)

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<sup>67</sup> Mark F. Rooker, *The New American Commentary: Leviticus*, 106.

<sup>68</sup> Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 228.

<sup>69</sup> John E. Hartley, *Leviticus*, 55.

<sup>70</sup> Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 228.

<sup>71</sup> Mark F. Rooker, *The New American Commentary: Leviticus*, 106.

<sup>72</sup> John E. Hartley, *Leviticus*, 55.

<sup>73</sup> Baruch J. Schwartz, “The Bearing of Sin in the Priestly Literature,” 21.

<sup>74</sup> Godfrey Ashby, *Sacrifice: Its Nature and Purpose* (London, SCM, 1988), 33.

in this chapter is “synonymous with ‘purify’ and ‘purge.’ The *hatta*’t, therefore, is to be rendered ‘purification offering.’”<sup>75</sup> “This view of כִּפּוּר comes from its Akkadian cognate *kuppuru*, which means ‘to wipe off’ or ‘to purify.’”<sup>76</sup> Hartley offers support to this thesis, “Milgrom’s proposal to translate כִּפּוּר, ‘a purification offering,’ is a much better rendering for this term in English, which unfortunately does not have a word for “de-sin.”<sup>77</sup> Wenham agrees, “Simply to adopt the rendering “sin offering” for *hatta*’t obscures the precise function of this sacrifice”<sup>78</sup>

Some scholars object to limiting the practice of this sacrifice for purgatory purposes. Rooker argues, “The overall objective is divine forgiveness of the Israelites.”<sup>79</sup> John Hayes advocates for the need for forgiveness on behalf of an individual. He argues that it is the desire of the worshipper to seek forgiveness that is the motivation for bringing the sacrifice.<sup>80</sup> Yet, not all scholars arrive at the same conclusion that the idea of forgiveness is the correct aspect of the atonement being sought in *hatta*’t. Wenham concludes, “Purification is the main element in the purification sacrifice.”<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 232.

<sup>76</sup> Jerry M. Hullinger, “The Problem of Animal Sacrifices in Ezekiel 40-48,” 284.

<sup>77</sup> John E. Hartley, *Leviticus*, 55. Hartley’s reasoning for the translation “de-sin” is as follows: “But on the basis that כִּפּוּר is built on the piel of כִּפּוּר, which carries the opposite meaning of the qal, namely to ‘de-sin, expunge, decontaminate, purify.’”

<sup>78</sup> Gordon Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, 89.

<sup>79</sup> Mark F. Rooker, *Leviticus*, 110.

<sup>80</sup> John Hayes, “Atonement in the Book of Leviticus,” 10. His conclusions are drawn from the guilt offering in Leviticus 5-6.

<sup>81</sup> Gordon Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, 89.



Hullinger makes the following observation to underscore the seriousness of sin,

The first specific occasion for the  $\text{זָבַח}$  was when the priest committed some inadvertent sin (Lev, 4:3-12). Interestingly, his sin brought guilt on the entire nation. This is because the priest, as the representative of the people before God (Exod. 28:12, 29, 38), was to manifest at all times the holiness God expected of His people. Thus, his sin carried great weight of the entire congregation.<sup>82</sup>

Milgrom equally feels that divine forgiveness is not the focal point in *hatta* 't, but rather the object of contamination. He writes,

The high priest has erred in judgment, 'causing his people harm,' (v.3) whereby in following the high priest's ruling, the people also erred. Because both their errors compromise inadvertent violations of prohibitive commands (vv.2, 13), which pollute the Tabernacle shrine, each party is responsible for purging the shrine with the blood of a similar sacrifice- a purification offering bull.<sup>83</sup>

Thus, the purpose of the purification offering was to clean "the sancta that had been defiled either from unintentional mistakes or the unavoidable contracture of uncleanness. The blood of offering was required to purify even when no specific sin is mentioned as needing atonement."<sup>84</sup> "W.H. Bellinger explains, "The purification ritual makes the atonement possible by removing the effects of sin and uncleanness from the sanctuary. Accordingly, Yahweh may remain present to give life to the community and stability to the created world."<sup>85</sup> Wenham is forceful on the necessity of this sacrifice,

Sin not only angers God and deprives Him of his due; it also makes his sanctuary unclean. A holy God cannot dwell amid uncleanness. The purification offering

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<sup>82</sup> Jerry M. Hullinger, "The Function of the Millennial Sacrifices in Ezekiel's Temple: Part Two," 172.

<sup>83</sup> Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 241.

<sup>84</sup> Jerry M. Hullinger, "The Function of the Millennial Sacrifices in Ezekiel's Temple: Part Two," 173.

<sup>85</sup> W.H. Bellinger, *Leviticus, Numbers* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishing, 2001), 38.

purifies the place of worship, so that God may be present among His people. This interpretation of the term seems to be compatible with its root meaning, and explains the rituals of blood sprinkling peculiar to it.<sup>86</sup>

It is evident that the purification offering is needed to cleanse the Temple from the contamination of sin if a holy God is to dwell in the Temple.

#### The *Hatta't* Sacrifice in Ezekiel 40-48

In 43:1-5, Ezekiel is given a vision of God's glory returning to Temple. "Since Ezekiel saw the return of the glory of God to the temple, one would expect a heavy emphasis on holiness as a result of His presence".<sup>87</sup> It is emphatically stated in 43:6-12 that God's glory requires an undefiled sacred space to dwell. It is on this point that some scholars reject a continual need for the purification offering. Wenham states, "Christ's death has purified us from the pollution of sin in a complete and absolute way that need never repeated."<sup>88</sup> Yet, "If the presence of Yahweh is the sine qua non for the temple to function, another essential premise is a properly dedicated alter, on which the regular rites of worship and expiation may be carried out."<sup>89</sup> Hence, in 43:13-17 a description of an alter is presented to Ezekiel. The significance of the alter is that it is "a symbol of holiness, purity, and mercy."<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Gordon J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, 89.

<sup>87</sup> Jerry M. Hullinger, "The Divine Presence, Uncleaness, and Ezekiel's Millennial Sacrifices," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 163:652 (October 2006), 407.

<sup>88</sup> Gordon J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, 102.

<sup>89</sup> Lamar Eugene Cooper, *Ezekiel*, 385.

<sup>90</sup> Jacob Milgrom and Daniel I. Block, *Ezekiel's Hope*, 123.

Accordingly, as stated in 43:18-20, upon this alter a sacrifice is to be presented to “make atonement for it,” the first of five references to “atonement” in chapter 40-48.<sup>91</sup> The placement of the blood on the four horns, four corners of the ledge, and the border of the alter signifies the purpose of the “atonement.”<sup>92</sup> These parts of the alter are ‘vulnerable to pollution,’<sup>93</sup> This is due to the impurity of humanity, which “and rapidly contaminates other persons and objects.”<sup>94</sup> Moshe Greenberg reinforces the need for *hatta ’t* when he writes,

This is done by purgation and whole offerings whose function is to kipper (purge), *hittte’* (decontaminate), and *tihher* (purify), the alter so as to make it fit for the regular worship (43:20, 22, 26). These rites have to do with the very idea that all pollutions contaminated the sanctuary.<sup>95</sup>

Although, the need for purification extends beyond the altar. Ezekiel’s use of atonement in 45:15,17,20 comes within the context of the “temple as the material embodiment of divine holiness.”<sup>96</sup> Milgrom and Block write, “There is nothing that illustrates Ezekiel’s obsession with the purity of the sanctuary more than this chapter.”<sup>97</sup>

Thus, the necessity of *hatta ’t* to rid the contamination of sin is certainly applicable to the Millennial Temple, as described by Ezekiel. Hullinger writes, “This shows how wholly other

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<sup>91</sup> “Atonement” is mentioned in Ezekiel 43;20,26; 45:15,17,20.

<sup>92</sup> Ezekiel 43:20.

<sup>93</sup> Jacob Milgrom and Daniel I. Block, *Ezekiel’s Hope*, 121.

<sup>94</sup> Jerry M. Hullinger, “The Divine Presences, Uncleaness, and Ezekiel’s Sacrifices,” 418.

<sup>95</sup> Moshe Greenberg, “The Design and Themes of Ezekiel’s Program of Restoration,” *Interpretation* 38 (1984), 194.

<sup>96</sup> Leslie C. Allen, *Ezekiel 20-48*, 269.

<sup>97</sup> Jacob Milgrom and Daniel I. Block, *Ezekiel’s Hope*, 209.

God is when dwelling with impure humankind and how necessary it will be during the millennium to deal with this problem, since many people in the millennium will be in nonglorified bodies.”<sup>98</sup> It will be beneficial to examine how the animal sacrifices operate under the new covenant.

## THE NEW COVENANT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

### The Purpose of Covenants

God established and maintained a relationship with the nation of Israel through covenants. Robin Routledge explains the importance of a covenant in the ancient world,

A covenant was not just an agreement or contract; it was a solemn bond established between two parties (usually on the basis of a promise or pledge) and involved a firm commitment to the relationship established by the covenant and to its obligations.<sup>99</sup>

Bruce Compton comments on the three kinds of covenants common in the Old Testament,

The parity covenant between parties of roughly equal status involving mutual obligations; (2) the suzerainty covenant between parties of unequal status where the superior (suzerain) placed obligations in the inferior party (vassal); (3) the promissory covenant also between parties of unequal status where the superior party obligated itself for the benefit of the inferior party and without making reciprocal demands. In terms of the major covenants associated with the nation of Israel, the Abrahamic (Gen. 12:1-3; 15:1-21), the Davidic (2 Sam. 7:8-29; 1 Chr. 17:7-27; Ps. 89:19-37), and the new are viewed as promissory. The Mosaic covenant (Exod. 19-24), on the other hand, is identified as a suzerainty covenant.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Jerry M. Hullinger, “The Divine Presence, Uncleanness, and Ezekiel’s Millennial Sacrifices,” 418.

<sup>99</sup> Robin Routledge, *Old Testament Theology: A Thematic Approach* (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 164.

<sup>100</sup> Bruce Compton, “Dispensationalism, the Church, and the New Covenant,” *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 8:1 (Fall 2003), 11.

Pentecost offers a summary of the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants and their relationship to the Millennial Kingdom,

*The Abrahamic covenant.* The promises in the Abrahamic covenant concerning land and the seed are fulfilled in the Millennial age (Isa. 10:21-122; 19:25; 43:1; 65:8-9; Jer. 30:22; 32:38; Ezek. 34:24, 30-31; Mic. 7:19-20; Zech. 13:9; Mal. 3:16-18). Israel's perpetuity, their blessings are directly related to the fulfillment of this covenant.

*The Davidic covenant.* The promises of the Davidic covenant concerning the king, the throne, and the royal house are fulfilled by Messiah in the Millennial age (Isa. 11:1-2; 55:3, 11; Jer. 23:5-8; 33:20-26; Ezek. 34:23-25; 37:23-24; Hos. 3:5; Mic. 4:7-8). The fact that Israel has a kingdom, over which David's Son reigns as King, is based on the Davidic throne.<sup>101</sup>

The promissory or unconditional nature of the Abrahamic, Davidic, and New covenants are because it is God who makes promises to Israel without the demands hindering the final outcome of the promises. Hullinger lends support to the unconditional nature of the New Covenant when he writes,

The covenant is largely occupied with issues of salvation from sin and the impartation of a new heart which is solely the work of God... God must make a unilateral commitment to the human race in order to see the fulfillment of His promises.<sup>102</sup>

The promise and description of this New Covenantal relationship is most clearly seen (but not limited to) in the major prophets.

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<sup>101</sup> J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things To Come*, 476.

<sup>102</sup> Jerry M. Hullinger, "The Compatibility of the New Covenant and Future Animal Sacrifice," 51.

## The New Covenant in the Major Prophets

### **The New Covenant in Jeremiah**

It must be noted that the primary recipients of this covenant was national Israel.<sup>103</sup> F.B. Huey describes the need for a new covenant in Jeremiah 31:31-34,

What was needed, as God revealed through Jeremiah, was not another covenant renewal but an internal transformation of the people based upon the divine provision of complete forgiveness. These would be the provisions of what would be referred to here as the ‘new covenant,’ which he promised to institute with Israel and Judah in days to come to replace the one made at Sinai.<sup>104</sup>

What set this covenant apart from the other covenants is that “God promised to write the law on their ‘minds’ and ‘hearts.’”<sup>105</sup> Yet, the fact remains that Israel has had a difficult time in keeping the previous stipulations that God had commanded them to keep. “The radical nature of this change is emphasized elsewhere by speaking of a ‘new heart’ and a ‘new spirit.’”<sup>106</sup>

### **The New Covenant in Ezekiel**

The prophet Ezekiel gives additional information to Jeremiah’s prophecy regarding the way in which Israel will be able to sustain their new covenant relationship with God. In Ezekiel 36:26 “God promised to regenerate his people spiritually by giving them a ‘new heart’ and a new

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<sup>103</sup> F.B. Huey, *The New American Commentary: Jeremiah, Lamentations* (Nashville, TN: Broadan Press, 1993), 286.

<sup>104</sup> F.B. Huey, *The New American Commentary: Jeremiah, Lamentations*, 280.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid*, 284.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid*, 284.

spirit.”<sup>107</sup> God called this new spirit ‘my Spirit (v. 27) meaning Yahweh’s Holy Spirit who would empower them to obey the law of God.”<sup>108</sup> John Oswalt notes the importance of Ezekiel’s contribution as it relates to Isaiah 11:1-16,

The Spirit of the Lord is the means by which God’s people will be able to finally keep their covenant with God (Ezekiel 36:27). Thus, the Messiah will not rule by the power and motivation of the fallen human spirit but by the life and breadth of God Himself.<sup>109</sup>

In Ezekiel 37:21-28 seven features are given pertaining to the theocratic government under the New Covenant

- (1) Israel to be regathered
- (2) Israel to be one nation to be ruled by one king
- (3) Israel no longer to be idolatrous, to be cleansed, forgiven
- (4) Israel to dwell forever in the land after regathering
- (5) The covenant of peace with them to be everlasting
- (6) God’s tabernacle to be with them; i.e., He will be present with them in a visible way
- (7) Israel to be known among Gentiles as a nation blessed of God.<sup>110</sup>

What Ezekiel describes is a theocratic kingdom in which the Messiah rules the nation from the temple depicted in Ezekiel 40-48.

### **The New Covenant in Isaiah**

“A century before Jeremiah and Ezekiel, the prophet Isaiah foresaw the New Covenant system, even though he did not use the technical term.”<sup>111</sup> Isaiah “declares that that covenant is

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<sup>107</sup> Lamar Eugene Cooper, *The New American Commentary: Ezekiel* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1994), 316.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> John N. Oswalt, *The NIV Application Commentary: Isaiah* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003) 187.

<sup>110</sup> John Walvoord, *The Millennial Kingdom* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1977), 212.

everlasting and especially designed to be real to all observers that God has blessed the seed of Israel.”<sup>112</sup> Isaiah contributes information regarding the king of the kingdom, as Walvoord writes, Isaiah 11 paints the graphic picture of the reign of Christ on earth, a scene which cannot be confused with the present age, the intermediate state, or the eternal state, if interpreted in any normal sense. As presented it describes the Millennial earth.<sup>113</sup> As such, “the reign of Christ is a Messianic empire extending through Israel to all the nations of the earth to fulfill the Abrahamic mandate.”<sup>114</sup>

It is in the Millennial kingdom that the promises given to Israel by God will find ultimate fulfillment.<sup>115</sup> The foundation upon which these sacrifices will be fulfilled is found in God’s faithfulness (*hesed*), as Hullinger explains,

God’s love has pledged Himself to an unalterable course of action to the nation of Israel...Therefore, the elaborate vision of Ezekiel 40-48 including Temple, glory, and sacrifices is assured based on the name of God which Ezekiel is jealous to honor. If the events of chapters 40-48 are not fulfilled as specified by the prophet, then God’s plans and covenants with the nation have been frustrated and His preeminence as God will not be established.<sup>116</sup>

Therefore, the purification offering mentioned in Ezekiel’s prophecy of the temple through which Christ rules and reigns as King must be utilized to make His glorious presence possible.

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<sup>111</sup> John Whitcomb, “Christ’s Atonement and Animal Sacrifices in Israel,” *Grace Theological Journal* 6 no. 2 (Fall 1985), 206.

<sup>112</sup> John F. Walvoord, “The New Covenant with Israel,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 110 (1953), 197.

<sup>113</sup> John F. Walvoord, *The Millennial Kingdom*, 298.

<sup>114</sup> Don Trest, “Concluding Thoughts: The New Covenant Matters,” In *An Introduction to the New Covenant*, Christopher Cone, editor (Hurst, TX: Tyndale Seminary Press, 2013), 372.

<sup>115</sup> J, Dwight Pentecost, *Things To Come*, 477.

<sup>116</sup> Jerry M. Hullinger, “The Compatibility of the New Covenant and Future Animal Sacrifice,” 54-55.



## Sacrifices Under the New Covenant

What clearly emerges from the description of the new covenant proclaimed by the prophets is that it was made with the nation of Israel. As such, “it is God’s intention to restore again the nation and her distinctive during the kingdom age. That God would reinstitute the nation together under her distinctive is only fitting.”<sup>117</sup> This being the case, it only makes sense that the act of sacrifice would resume once more. Hullinger writes, “The crucial point to kept in mind is: the prophets were comfortable with linking the promises of regeneration and a new heart with animal sacrifices.”<sup>118</sup>

Some scholars ardently disagree, such as G.K. Beale. He writes, “Implicitly, Christ’s great sacrifice is the ultimate fulfillment of Ezekiel’s temple vision.”<sup>119</sup> Yet, Whitcomb confirms Hullinger’s assertions as he points to the connection of animal sacrifices and the new covenant,

Isaiah not only foresaw God’s New Covenant with Israel, but also a temple in the holy land (2:2; 56:3; 60:13). Here animal sacrifices would be offered on its altar by Egyptians (19:21) and Arabians from Kedar and Nebaioth (60:7) through priests and Levites (66:21)...Jeremiah, in stating the total demise of the temporary old covenant (31: 32) and in anticipating the national regeneration provided in the permanent New Covenant (31:31-34; 32:38-40; 33:6-13; 50:5), included animal sacrifices offered by the Levitical priests as permanent aspects of the new covenant for national Israel...Other prophets who spoke of the future temple were Joel (3:18), Micah (4:1-5), Daniel (9:24), and Haggai (2:7,9). Zechariah also foresaw the strict enforcement of the Feast of Tabernacles among the Gentile nations (14:16-19); cf. Ezekiel 45:25). Zechariah also anticipated, in connection with the fulfillment of the new covenant (9:11; 13:1), that ‘all who sacrifice will come and take [every cooking pot in Jerusalem] and boil in the.’<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Jerry M. Hullinger, “The Compatibility of the New Covenant and Future Animal Sacrifice,” *Journal of Dispensational Theology* 17:51 (Spring 2013), 62.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid*, 58.

<sup>119</sup> G.K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 343.

<sup>120</sup> John Whitcomb, “Christ’s Atonement and Animal Sacrifices in Israel,” 206.

Whitcomb's observations indicate that Ezekiel's revelation of millennial sacrifices is consistent with the wider message of the prophets who preceded him. In fact, they will be a priority in keeping the New Covenant. Price explains,

It is necessary to remember three facts about the Millennial kingdom. First, the presence of God will literally dwell in the midst of the people...Second, the unglorified human population will be capable of incurring ritual defilement and polluting the earthly sanctuary...third, the population will be under the New Covenant will be regarded as a holy and priestly nation just as they were under the Mosaic Covenant.<sup>121</sup>

Indeed, this was the purpose emphatically stated by God for instituting the sacrifice, as it is written,

He said to me, Son of man, this is the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell among the sons of Israel forever. And the house of Israel will not again defile my name, neither they nor their kings, by their harlotry and by the corpse of the their kings when they die, by setting their threshold by My threshold and their door post by My door post, with only a wall between Me and them. And they have defiled My holy name by their abominations which they have committed. So I have consumed them in my anger. Now let them put away their harlotry and corpses of their kings far from Me; and I will dwell among them forever.<sup>122</sup>

Ezekiel was notified that that this was the cause of His leaving the temple in chapter 8. Thus, if God's presence is to reside among His people, purification of sin must take place.

The theocratic nature of the Millennial kingdom in which a glorified Christ rules over a people susceptible to sin necessitates the need for animal sacrifices that are purification offerings. Under the theocracy, the purification offering "will serve to restore the individual Israelite to the theocracy of which he or she is a part," and "to purge the sancta of

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<sup>121</sup> Randall Price, *The Temple and Bible Prophecy*, 555-556.

<sup>122</sup> Ezekiel 43:7-9.

uncleanness.”<sup>123</sup> It must be noted that the purification offering is one of five offerings in Ezekiel, but all the sacrifices are to be given by those “in a covenant relationship with God that required obedience as part of the stipulations and especially the maintenance of ceremonial purity so that the relationship (or fellowship) could continue between a Holy God and a sinful people.”<sup>124</sup>

To be fair, it is on this point that many dispensational scholars disagree and hold to a memorial view of the sacrifices. John Mitchell defends the memorial view writing, “The Old Testament sacrifices were offered in anticipation of the death of Christ, while the millennial sacrifices are brought in appreciation of that death and what it provided for those who believe in it.”<sup>125</sup> Merrill Unger agrees when he writes, the sacrifices are “a perpetual reminder of the Lamb of God who beareth away the sin of the world.”<sup>126</sup> Cooper writes, “These systems of worship were intended to employ rituals to communicate spiritual truths.”<sup>127</sup> “Ezekiel, however, does not say the animals will be offered for a ‘memorial’ of the Messiah’s death. Rather they will be for atonement (45:15,17,20;cf. 43:20, 26).”<sup>128</sup> Hullinger expresses the atoning purpose that Ezekiel envisions,

When the glory of God returns during the kingdom age, the unclean will be present through unglorified humanity. The prophet was contemplating the future theocratic community, in which divine holiness would be the regulatory feature. As a reaction against the idolatry that had brought the collapse of the nation,

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<sup>123</sup> Jerry M. Hullinger, “The Compatibility of the New Covenant and the Future Animal Sacrifice,” 60, 62.

<sup>124</sup> Randall Price, *The Temple and Bible Prophecy*, 555.

<sup>125</sup> John L. Mitchell “The Question of Millennial Sacrifices,”

<sup>126</sup> Merrill Unger, “The Temple Vision of Ezekiel,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 52.

<sup>127</sup> Lamar Eugene Cooper, *The New American Commentary: Leviticus*, 380.

<sup>128</sup> John Whitcomb, “Christ’s Atonement and Animal Sacrifices in Israel,” 212.

Ezekiel emphasizes the new community must necessarily follow a rigid pattern of worship, with continual emphasis upon the concept of the sanctifying presence in their midst.<sup>129</sup>

The nature of atonement and the need for purification in the millennial temple indicates that Ezekiel's use of "atonement" has a more significant purpose than being a memorial of the sacrifice of Jesus.

### RANSOM/PROPITIATION ASPECT OF ATONEMENT

The ransom/propitiation view

This view contends that "a person is paying or making a ransom for himself when he offers a sacrifice,"<sup>130</sup> Leon Morris is an advocate for this view, he writes, "To make atonement means to avert punishment, especially the divine anger, by a payment of a **כֶּפֶר**, a ransom, which may be of money or which may be life."<sup>131</sup> Thus, the anger of God is averted (called *propitiation*), as Gordon Wenham writes, "Propitiation of divine anger, it has been suggested, is an important element in the burnt offering."<sup>132</sup> Douglas Judisch contends that Ezekiel's sacrifices reference propitiation as "vicarious satisfaction."<sup>133</sup> This is evident in Leviticus 17:11, a verse that places great importance blood within the sacrificial process. Rooker writes, "The blood of a

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<sup>129</sup> Jerry M. Hullinger, "The Divine Presence, Uncleanness, and Ezekiel's Millennial Sacrifices," 410.

<sup>130</sup> Mark Rooker, *The New American Commentary: Leviticus*, 52.

<sup>131</sup> Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1965), 166.

<sup>132</sup> Gordon J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 1990), 89.

<sup>133</sup> Douglas McC. L. Judisch, "Propitiation in the Old Testament," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 49(Jan 1985), 9.

sacrificial victim makes atonement for the worshipper, for the victim's blood is being offered in the worshipper's place."<sup>134</sup>

The concept of atonement functioning as a ransom for the sins of another in order to propitiate God's anger is seen most vividly in the Day of Atonement in Leviticus 16. "The Day of Atonement was the culminating day of sacrifice in the Mosaic system."<sup>135</sup> It consisted of three parts: 1) a sacrifice was to be made for the high priest (Leviticus 16:11-14), 2) a sacrifice was to be made for the people of Israel (Leviticus 16:15-19), and 3) a goat was to be released into the wilderness carrying the sins of the people. Rooker explains the significance of the sacrifices,

This was the only occasion in which blood was brought into the Most Holy Place, which underscores the singular solemnity of this preeminent day. The mercy seat covered the ark, which contained the Ten Commandments, manna, and Aaron's rod... Thus the cherubim looking down upon the mercy seat saw only the evidence of Israel's unfaithfulness. The blood on the mercy seat indicated that Israel's sins were atoned for by a substitutionary death.<sup>136</sup>

In addition to the importance of the sacrificed goat's blood for the people's sins, there was equal significance in the act of releasing the goat carrying confessed sins. "This symbolized the transference of the guilt of the people to the goat."<sup>137</sup> Rooker posits,

The scapegoat ritual may have been in Isaiah's mind when he described the suffering of the Suffering Servant as bearing grief and sins (Isa. 53:4,6). The term

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<sup>134</sup> Mark Rooker, *The New American Commentary Leviticus*, 53.

<sup>135</sup> Jerry M. Hullinger, "Two Atoning Realms: Reconciling Sacrifice in Ezekiel and Hebrews," *Journal of Dispensational Theology* 11:32 (2007), 35.

<sup>136</sup> Mark F. Rooker, *Leviticus*, 218.

<sup>137</sup> Jerry M. Hullinger, "Two Atonement Realms: Reconciling Sacrifice in Ezekiel and Hebrews," 37.

*nasa* used in Leviticus 16:22 in reference to the scapegoat's 'bearing' iniquities is used in the same sense in Isa. 53:4,12.<sup>138</sup>

Therefore, "It is best to see the two goats of this part of the ceremony as forming one offering." Charles Erdman writes, "the first goat signified the means of reconciliation to God, namely, by the death and sprinkled blood of a vicarious offering, so the dismissal of the second goat typified the effect of expiation in the removal of sin from the presence of a holy God."<sup>139</sup>

The ultimate fulfillment of this type of sacrifice is seen in death of Jesus Christ; He is our propitiation. "Isaiah 53, the holy of holies of Old Testament prophecy, stresses more than any other prediction the vicarious value of the Messiah's suffering and death."<sup>140</sup>

The term "propitiation" (*hilasterion*) and its usage in the New Testament links the sacrificial blood needed on the mercy seat in Leviticus 16 with that of the blood Jesus shed on the cross, as prophesized by Isaiah. Douglas Moo makes a strong case that Paul intends to convey a dual purpose in the use of the word "propitiation" in Romans 3:25,

It means 'propitiation,' but it refers to the cover of the ark. Paul's readers, who, although Gentile, are obviously well acquainted with the Old Testament, would recognize immediately the reference to this piece of furniture in the tabernacle. But they would have given it the meaning that *hilasterion* conveys: an object that deflect God's wrath and thereby provides atonement for the people of God.<sup>141</sup>

In *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* a similar observation is made as Romans 3:25 is placed under two categories of meaning: "means of expiation" and "place of

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<sup>138</sup> Mark F. Rooker, *Leviticus*, 221.

<sup>139</sup> Charles Erdman, *The Book of Leviticus* (New York, NY: Fleming Revell, 1951), 75.

<sup>140</sup> Douglas McC. L. Judisch "Propitiation in Old Testament Prophecy" *Concordia Theological Quarterly* (Jan 1985), 9.

<sup>141</sup> Douglas J. Moo, *Encountering The Book of Romans: A Theological Survey* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 84.

propitiation.”<sup>142</sup> Moo explains the fascinating evidence for the unique usage of *hilasterion* from the Greek translation of the Old Testament, “In twenty-one of its twenty-seven occurrences there it refers to the mercy seat, the cover over the ark on which sacrificial blood was poured.”<sup>143</sup> Moo concludes his study on propitiation, “The Old Testament mercy seat foreshadows the cross, on which Christ poured out His blood in atoning sacrifice, forever taking care of the sins of the world.”<sup>144</sup>

Atonement as payment for the sins of another to propitiate God’s anger is the aspect of sacrifice that the author of Hebrews refers to in Hebrews 9-10. “He was preoccupied with the work of Christ and Day of Atonement (or purgation).”<sup>145</sup> Hullinger believes that Hebrews 9:12 is the most significant verse in this section because the writer contrasted the offering of the Day of Atonement with the offering made by Christ.”<sup>146</sup> Gareth Cockerill details the significance of this verse within the Hebrews 9-10,

In v.12 he addresses his main concern in the passage- the means by which Christ has entered God’s presence an effective High Priest ‘by means of His own blood.’ In accord with his habit, the pastor underscores the effectiveness of Christ’s ‘own blood’ by contrasting it with the ‘blood’ of the old animal sacrifices...He shed ‘blood’ in His willing offering of His life through death on the cross. It is by means of this self-offering alone that he entered heavenly presence of God.

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<sup>142</sup> Walter Bauer, W.F. Arndt, F.W. Gingrich, and F.W. Danker *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago, Ill: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 474

<sup>143</sup> Douglas J. Moo, *Encountering the Book of Romans*, 85.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 84.

<sup>145</sup> Jerry M. Hullinger, “Two Atonement Realms: Reconciling Sacrifice in Ezekiel and Hebrews,” 34.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

Heb.10:5-10 will make this understanding of the blood of Christ absolutely clear.<sup>147</sup>

Hullinger explains the significance of Christ's substitutionary death as explained in the book of Hebrews,

The one offering of Christ was the most pronounced contrast with the Day of Atonement. The Mosaic provided cleansing within its sphere of operation through continual offerings, but the superior sacrifice of Christ provided cleansing in its sphere of operation through one sacrifice.<sup>148</sup>

Most certainly Christ's sacrifice was far superior to that of the sacrifices offered on the Day of Atonement. "The blood of Christ achieved what the blood of animals never could *nor was ever intended* to achieve, namely, internal cleansing resulting in salvation and access (both presently and eschatologically) into the immediate presence of God."<sup>149</sup> The ransom/propitiation aspect of atonement is ultimately fulfilled through the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ.

#### THE NEW COVENANT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

References to the "New Covenant" include: Hebrews 8:6; 8:8; 8:13; 9:15; 12:24; Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:25; and 2 Corinthians 3:6. The emphasis in Luke 22:20 and 1 Corinthians 11:25 is the "new-covenant sacrifice of Christ on the cross," and "the cup at the Last Supper" signifying the death of Jesus.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> Gareth Lee Cockerill, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 393-394.

<sup>148</sup> Jerry M. Hullinger, "Two Atonement Realms: Reconciling Sacrifice In Ezekiel and Hebrews," 61-62.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid*, 63-64.

<sup>150</sup> George H. Guthrie, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: 2 Corinthians*, 197.



One of the central arguments against the possibility of animal sacrifice in the Millennial temple is found in the use of “New Covenant” as it is expressed in the book of Hebrews. It will be important to look at the verses where “New Covenant” is mentioned in Hebrews, and the context in which they occur to adequately express an affirmation of the superiority of Christ’s sacrifice. This will appropriately set the boundaries for the role animal sacrifices to be strictly for purification purposes in a future temple.

### **Hebrews 8:7-8, 13**

These verses rest within a section in which the author of Hebrews is contrasting the Levitical priesthood with that of the priesthood of Christ. Under the Mosaic covenant, the priests were the avenues through which the nation gained access to God. The significance of the distinction is to show that Christ is “a mediator of a better covenant” (8:6). The word “mediator” is “always associated with the new covenant” in the book of Hebrews.<sup>151</sup> William Lane explains the purpose for this, “The New Covenant required a new mediator. By his life of perfect obedience and death, Jesus inaugurated the new covenant of Jeremiah 31:31-34.”<sup>152</sup>

Building on verse 6, the author then quotes Jeremiah 31:31-34 to reinforce his message that the old Mosaic covenant is inadequate in light of the New Covenant in Christ. In doing so, the author highlights the nation’s inability to keep the covenant, but through Christ “the new covenant will be kept.”<sup>153</sup> It will be possible to sustain covenant relationship because it is predicated upon the priesthood of Christ who offers access to God through himself. With this

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<sup>151</sup> William L. Lane, *Hebrews 1-8* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991), 208.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, 209.

separation between the old and new covenant firmly established, the author elaborates further how Christ is “a mediator of a new covenant” (8:6) in the next chapter.

### **Hebrews 9:15**

The term “New Covenant” in 9:15 is very significant, for it is the “hinge verse in the entire chapter.”<sup>154</sup> In the preceding verses of this chapter the author describes the layout of the tabernacle and the duties of the priests to bring sacrifices “for the sins of the people” (9:7). “But now Jesus, the eternal high priest, has made atonement, cleansed the inner conscience of believers, and fitted them to serve God as spiritual priests themselves.”<sup>155</sup> In other words, the Mosaic covenant “exact[ed] death for transgressions committed under it,” but “Jesus identified with the transgressors and died a representative death for them.”<sup>156</sup>

The phrase “for this reason” links the sacrificial death of Jesus described in 9:11-14 to the New Covenant because Christ’s death “not only consummated the old order, it also inaugurated the new.”<sup>157</sup> Gareth Cockerill describes how this occurs,

By cleansing the inner being of the worshiper, Christ’s sacrifice brought an end to the sacrifices that could cleanse nothing but the ‘flesh’ (9:10). Thus, by establishing an effective way of approaching God, he terminated the old covenant as a way of salvation and inaugurated the new that it typified.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> David L. Allen, *The New American Commentary: Hebrews*, 475.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, 474.

<sup>156</sup> Peter T. O’Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, 328.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>158</sup> Gareth Cockerill, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 401-402.

“Flesh’ and ‘conscience’ constitute the two sides of human existence for the author of Hebrews.”<sup>159</sup> The word “conscience” in this verse means “the inward faculty of distinguishing right and wrong, moral consciousness.”<sup>160</sup> Lane succinctly states, “The religious life embracing the whole person in relationship to God. It is the point at which a person confronts God’s holiness.”<sup>161</sup> Ron Johnson concludes, “The earthly flesh could be cleansed by the earthly Levitical system, whereas the conscience side of humanity required a superior sacrifice. The blood of bulls and goats purified the flesh (9:13) but could not perfect the conscience since it dealt only with external cleansing.”<sup>162</sup>

The result of this changed conscience through Christ’s sacrificial death is that the believer “may receive the promise of eternal inheritance” (9:15). The author uses the phrase “eternal inheritance” as a bridge between the Abrahamic covenant and the new covenant, for the promise of inheritance was given to Abraham, for “the promise concerns the enjoyment of eternal salvation.”<sup>163</sup> What emerges from this section is the new covenant represents the inward

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<sup>159</sup> Ron Johnson, “The Centrality of the Jewish Temples in the Affairs of God, Israel, and the Nations: Part II- Future Temples,” *Conservative Theological Journal* 1:2 (August 1997), 135.

<sup>160</sup> Walter Bauer, , *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (967. Two other options are given: 1) awareness of information about something (as seen in 1 Corinthians 8:7, Hebrews 10:2, and 1 Peter 2:19), and 2) attentiveness to obligation (not found in the New Testament).

<sup>161</sup> William L. Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, 240.

<sup>162</sup> Ron Johnson, “The Centrality of the Jewish Temples in the Affairs of God, Israel, and the Nations: Part II-Future Temples,” 135.

<sup>163</sup> William L. Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, 241.

transformation of the believer due to “the redemptive accomplishment of Christ”<sup>164</sup> which purifies the heart and allows one access to God.

### **Hebrews 12:24**

The reference to the new covenant in this verse resides in a section that contrasts Mt. Sinai and Mt. Zion. In 12:18-24 Mt. Sinai symbolizes “mountain of terror and separation from God,” while Mt. Zion represents Jerusalem and “the dwelling place of God.”<sup>165</sup> The use of the new covenant in this verse completes the argument that Jesus is the mediator of the new covenant through his sacrifice on a cross. The capstone to the argument that Jesus is superior goes as follows: “Jesus as mediator through his offering of himself is the reason and basis for their entry into the joyful gathering in Mount Zion.”<sup>166</sup> Thus, it is only through sacrifice of Christ that one may enter into the presence of God.

The “sprinkled blood” refers to a greater atonement offered through Christ (juxtaposed with the Day of Atonement under the Mosaic covenant), which brings an inward “cleansing from sin and release from judgment.”<sup>167</sup> This atonement is elevated in meaning through the syntactical construction in Greek because the name of Jesus is “placed last in the clause for emphasis focusing on his humanity as well as his work of redemption,” therefore giving “a focus on quality and nature” of the mediator and the sacrificial blood that he offers.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> Ibid, 240.

<sup>165</sup> George H. Guthrie, *The NIV Application Commentary: Hebrews*, 419.

<sup>166</sup> Peter T. O’Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, 488.

<sup>167</sup> Gareth Lee Cockerill, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 658.

<sup>168</sup> David L. Allen, *The New American Commentary: Hebrews*, 592.

## A Significant Distinction

After studying the passages in Hebrews that speak of the New Covenant, an important observation is stated by Whitcomb,

The NT, including the book of Hebrews does not teach that Israel has been forever set aside. It does teach the end of the Old Covenant given by God to Israel through Moses. Yet, it does not reject the Abrahamic Covenant (which the New Covenant of Jeremiah 31 further elaborates)... The contrast in Hebrews, then, is not between the Church and Israel under the New Covenant, or between the spiritual sacrifices offered by the Church (Heb. 13:15) and the animal sacrifices which Israel will someday offer under the New Covenant. It is rather between the shadowy, insufficient nature of the Old Covenant and the sufficient, permanent nature of the New Covenant.<sup>169</sup>

## CONCLUSION

On the surface it may appear to some that the sacrifices in the millennial temple contradict the atoning work of Christ. Woods writes, “Many interpreters reflexively and instinctively allegorize this section of Scripture [Ezekiel 40-48] because it is difficult for them to harmonize its plain language with statements found in Hebrews indicating that Christ’s death rendered obsolete the animal sacrifices instituted under the Mosaic law.”<sup>170</sup> This misunderstanding is due in large part to the traditional understanding of **כִּפּוּר**. Yet, it has been shown that animal sacrifices had two primary purposes: to be a ransom and to purify. Price summarizes the difference between the animal sacrifices and Christ’s sacrifice,

While the Old Testament sacrificial system was effective, it was not expiatory. In the words of Hebrews, it was effective for temporary ritual restoration, the ‘cleansing of the flesh’ (Hebrews 9:13), but it could not permanently expiate guilt ‘by taking away sins’ (Hebrews 10:4) or ‘cleansing the conscious’ (Hebrews 9:14). ... The Savior offered Himself in place of guilty sinners to both expiate

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<sup>169</sup> John C. Whitcomb, “Christ’s Atonement and Animal Sacrifices in Israel,” 204.

<sup>170</sup> Andy Woods, “Enthroning the Interpreter: Dangerous Trends in Law and Theology, Part III,” 353.

(remove the guilt of sin) and propitiate (appease the righteous wrath of God against sin). Therefore, the outward and earthly character of the ceremonial sacrifices and the internal and spiritual character of Christ's are two different kinds, operated in two different spheres, and were for two different purposes.<sup>171</sup>

It cannot be stated emphatically enough that they do not take away from Christ's atoning work on the cross. There is a clear difference between the animal sacrifices that bring purification and Christ's work that brings internal reconciliation and justification between a sinful person and a holy God. An understanding of *atone* which fits better contextually in Ezekiel 40-48 is the erase/wipe away/purge view. The *hatta*'t sacrifice will be needed in the Millennial Kingdom because a holy God will dwell in the midst of unclean people. Therefore, ritual purification must take place through the millennial sacrifices. "When the two atonement realms are grasped [Christ's sacrifice and the purification offering], the integrity of Ezekiel's prophecy is maintained, as well as the unique and precious nature of our Lord's sacrifice."<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Randall Price, *The Temple and Bible Prophecy* 556-557.

<sup>172</sup> Jerry M. Hullinger, "Two Atonement Realms: Reconciling Ezekiel and Hebrews," 64.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE FUNCTION OF ANIMAL SACRIFICES IN EZEKIEL 40-48 PERTAINING TO THE THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

#### INTRODUCTION

If the animal sacrifices are to be interpreted literally transpiring in a future Millennial temple, then the broader theological implications must be addressed. Cooper summarizes the dispensationalist's perceived theological problem, "Obvious questions arise about this approach, such as: Why a temple? Why reinstate animal sacrifices? Why the return to the requirements of the Mosaic Law?"<sup>173</sup> Scholars who reject a literal fulfillment of Ezekiel's depiction of the Millennial temple point to the animal sacrifices within the passage for doing so. They claim that it contradicts with Hebrews 9-10, thus undermining the New Covenant as understood in the New Testament.

On the surface, the animal sacrifices do present legitimate concerns about the reinstatement of the Mosaic Law and the potential of cancelling out the New Covenant. Yet, dispensationalists need not abandon a literal interpretation of this passage due to this perceived problem. It will be shown that the sacrifices in the Millennial temple will operate under the New Covenant, and does not imply that the Mosaic Law will be reinstated in the Millennial Kingdom.

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<sup>173</sup> Lamar Eugene Cooper, *The New American Commentary: Ezekiel*, 353.

## THE NEW COVENANT IS FOR ISRAEL

If one is to comprehend how the Millennial Temple operates under the New Covenant, then one must grasp to whom the New Covenant was given. The two divergent views in this debate are replacement theology (or covenant theology) and dispensational theology.

### Covenant Theology

“Formal definitions of covenant theology are not easy to find even in the writings of covenant theologians.”<sup>174</sup> George Gunn defines replacement theology’s view as, “The church is entirely fulfilling the new covenant. National Israel has been superseded by the church, the true or spiritual Israel. The church’s ministers, by fulfilling the Great Commission, function as ministers of the new covenant.”<sup>175</sup> Allis offers the covenant theology view of the Church’s relationship to the New Covenant when he writes,

For the gospel age in which we are living is that day foretold by the prophets when the law of God shall be written on the hearts of men (Jer. Xxxxii. 33) and when the Spirit of God abiding in their hearts will enable them to keep it (Ezek. Xi 19, xxxvi 26). The gospel age is the age of the New Covenant, and it is marked by freedom from the law, by return to a dispensation of promise which knew nothing of obedience as a condition.<sup>176</sup>

### Paul’s Usage of “New Covenant” in 2 Corinthians 3:6

While the New Testament references to the new covenant in 1 Corinthians, Luke, and Hebrews refer to Christ’s sacrificial death; Paul’s use “New Covenant” in 2 Corinthians 3:6 is unique in that it shows the power of the Holy Spirit as promised in Ezekiel 36:26. Many scholars

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<sup>174</sup> Charles C. Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*, 213.

<sup>175</sup> George A. Gunn, “Second Corinthians 3:6 and the Church’s Relationship to the New Covenant,” 26.

<sup>176</sup> Oswald T. Allis, *Prophecy and the Church*, 42.



observe the tendency of Paul to link his ministry with that of Ezekiel's portrayal of the New Covenant, as well. Cooper finds the connection in Israel's inability of being able to keep the law, which "was the primary concern presented by the apostle Paul."<sup>177</sup> Cooper continues, "The solution to his dilemma was living in the power of the Holy Spirit,"<sup>178</sup> as indicated in Ezekiel 36:26. This explains why Paul would use the New Covenant as way to promote the Holy Spirit's work. The law could not do anything productive because God promised to work through the Holy Spirit under the New Covenant; the means by which Paul was conducting his ministry.

To further enhance the role of the Spirit in his ministry, Paul contrasts the "letter," or the law, with the Spirit. Mark Seifrid finds the interpretative key in the phrase "the Spirit makes alive" later in verse 6, he writes, "The glory of Moses' mission has been done away with. The unseen glory of the gift of the Spirit abides without end; the Spirit who makes alive, makes alive eternally."<sup>179</sup> Thus, Paul is proclaiming that his ministry is superior to those who oppose him, for he is utilizing the same Spirit who worked through Moses. But unlike Moses' ministry, the Spirit illuminates the eternal blessings of the New Covenant through Paul's ministry because he proclaims Jesus, whose blood brings all who believe into eternal glory.

2 Corinthians 3:6 becomes a key text for covenant theologians because of the presumed "paradoxical relation of 'the letter' and 'the Spirit,' by which Paul defines his apostolic mission."<sup>180</sup> Seifrid explains how this becomes an interpretive issue, "The work of God in Christ is then reduced to a spiritual or moral principle, or perhaps a rhetorical strategy," and it is

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<sup>177</sup> Lamar Eugene Cooper, *The New American Commentary: Ezekiel*, 317.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>179</sup> Mark A. Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 130.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*

through this reasoning that Origen obtained his allegorical method, therefore ushering in the idea of translating Scripture figuratively.<sup>181</sup> Thus, it is assumed that Paul is allegorically stating that the church has replaced Israel.

Many scholars take the same metaphorical approach today. Fee writes, “These metaphors serve as the starting point for us to penetrate Paul’s understanding. The Spirit is the evidence that the eschatological promises of Paul’s Jewish heritage have been fulfilled.”<sup>182</sup> Garland writes, “Paul confidently declares that the prophecies about God writing on hearts have come to pass through his ministry in the church at Corinth.”<sup>183</sup> Seifrid detects in the early church the sense that they were assuming the promises given to Abraham while practicing the Lord’s Supper, he writes, “This new identity was based on a decisive break with God’s dealings with his people through the law, a break that brought the fulfillment of God’s promises.”<sup>184</sup> Beale believes that the animal sacrifices in the Old Testament are replaced by “sacrifice we [believers under the new covenant] offer in our own body.”<sup>185</sup>

#### Dispensational theology

Price explains the dispensational view, “The dispensational view sees the new covenant, which includes the inheritance of the land of Israel, as intended primarily for Israel (Jeremiah 31:28; Ezekiel 36:28; 37:14,25), and as including spiritual provisions participated in by the

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<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> Gordon D. Fee, *Paul, and the Spirit, and the People of God*, 56.

<sup>183</sup> David E. Garland, *The New American Commentary: 2 Corinthians*, 161.

<sup>184</sup> Mark A. Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 124.

<sup>185</sup> G.K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 398.

church (Jeremiah 31:34; Ezekiel 36:25-27).<sup>186</sup> Yet, it must be stated that there are nuanced views that lay in the middle of these polar opposite general views, particularly in dispensationalism.<sup>187</sup> Although, most dispensationalists can agree that the church participates in the New Covenant through the salvific benefits of Christ's atoning blood and the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. Yet, classic dispensationalism is adamant that the church has not replaced nor inherited the blessings that national Israel will obtain in the future.

There is evidence that the church and Israel are distinct in the passages that mention the New Covenant previously discussed. Clearly, the recipients of the New Covenant, as indicated in Jeremiah 31:31, is "the house of Israel." Israel as the recipient is confirmed in Hebrews 10:15-17. Christopher Cone writes, "The passage distinguishes in 10:15-17 once again- as Hebrews has consistently- between *us* and *them* (this is the covenant I will make with *them*). The NC of Jeremiah 31:33 is loosely summarized in 10:16-17 with the original recipient language maintained."<sup>188</sup> Bruce Compton believes the author of Hebrews intended to his readers to

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<sup>186</sup> Randall Price, *The Temple and Bible Prophecy*, 723.

<sup>187</sup> George A. Gunn. "Second Corinthians 3:6 and the Church's Relationship to the New Covenant," 26. Gunn identifies four views in dispensationalism regarding the church's relationship to the new covenant as follows:

- 1) View #1: *Partial fulfillment*- the church, by fulfilling the Great Commission, is accomplishing a partial fulfillment of the new covenant, but complete fulfillment awaits the spiritual renewal of national Israel in the millennium.
- 2) View #2: *Participation*-The church, by fulfilling the Great Commission, does not partially fulfill the new covenant, but does participate in some of the blessings of the new covenant.
- 3) View #3: *Two New Covenants*- The church has its own 'new covenant' with God that is distinct and separate from Israel's new covenant in Jeremiah 31.
- 4) View #4-*No Relationship*- The church is not directly related to the new covenant in any way. The church is related to the Mediator of the new covenant and to the blood of that covenant, but is not a participant in the covenant itself.

<sup>188</sup> Christopher Cone, "The New Covenant in Hebrews," *In An Introduction to the New Covenant* (Hurst, TX: Tyndale Seminary Press, 2013), 266-267.

understand that “they benefit from the forgiveness promised in Jeremiah,” but they “are not the designees of Jeremiah’s covenant, the author of Hebrews uses the pronoun ‘them’ to describe the actual recipients.”<sup>189</sup>

## THE ANIMAL SACRIFICES FOR ISRAEL UNDER NEW COVENANT

Israel operating under the New Covenant in the future becomes clearer when one interprets Scripture in a literal manner. Another debate that has generated a lot of discussion is the issue of continuity or discontinuity of the Law and the New Covenant. Specifically, it pertains to “the precise way in which the Testaments relate.”<sup>190</sup>

### The Continuity of the Law

Those who contend for continuity do so by arguing that the “law denotes the rule of life which God gives to his people, that way in which they are to walk, those commandments they are to obey.”<sup>191</sup> As it pertains to 2 Corinthians 3:6, they argue it is the Spirit who brings an understanding of how to do so. Chamblin elaborates on this reasoning,

Paul now speaks not of gospel replacing law, nor of a new law, but of a new and more personal administration of the ancient law. This I conclude from the allusions made in verse 3 to Exodus 31:18, Jeremiah 31:33, and Ezekiel 36:26,

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<sup>189</sup> Bruce Compton, “Dispensationalism, the Church, and the New Covenant,” 34.

<sup>190</sup> Rodney Petersen, “Continuity and Discontinuity: The Debate Throughout Church History,” In *Continuity and Discontinuity: Perspectives on the Relationship Between the Old and New Testaments*, John S. Feinberg, editor (Wheaton, Ill: Crossway, 1988), 33.

<sup>191</sup> Knox Chamblin, “The Law of Moses and the Law of Christ,” In *Continuity and Discontinuity: Perspectives on the Relationship Between the Old and New Testaments*, John S. Feinberg, editor (Wheaton, Ill: Crossway, 1988), 181.

and the subject of 2 Corinthians 3:4-18. It is the veil, not the law, which is removed by the Spirit's work (2 Corinthians 3:13-18).<sup>192</sup>

Guthrie echoes these sentiments, "The contrast in 2 Corinthians 3 is not primarily with the old covenant per se, but with the ongoing attempt to minister apart from the work of the Spirit and the veil which lies over people's hearts."<sup>193</sup>

### The Discontinuity of Law

Other scholars strongly articulate the view of discontinuity of the law based on the New Covenant in Jeremiah 31. The word "new" in Jeremiah 31 indicates that the very nature of this covenant is different than the Mosaic Law. "Jeremiah 31:31-34 is the only passage in the OT that promises the future establishment of a definitive relationship with God that is described as qualitatively 'new.'<sup>194</sup> The change that this attributive adjective<sup>195</sup> refers to is predicated "on the interior quality of the human response to God through the new covenant."<sup>196</sup> Furthermore, "discontinuity with the past is also emphasized by the adverbs 'not like' (v. 32) and 'not anymore' (twice in v. 34; 30:8; 31:12,40)."<sup>197</sup> These features indicate that Jeremiah was expressing a distinction based on "primarily a changed nature rather than the acquisition of

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<sup>192</sup> Ibid, 192.

<sup>193</sup> George H. Guthrie, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: 2 Corinthians*, 198.

<sup>194</sup> William L. Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 209.

<sup>195</sup> Brown, S. Driver, and C. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs- Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 294. The adjective "new" has two primary categories: attributive and predicate, although the predicate use is rare.

<sup>196</sup> William L. Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 209.

<sup>197</sup> Gerald L. Keown, Pamela J. Scalise, and Thomas G. Smothers, *Jeremiah 26-52*, 130.

facts.”<sup>198</sup> Therefore, the emphasis of the new covenant is not on the worshipper; it is on the new change brought by God through the blood of Christ and the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

It certainly appears that Paul also is clearly drawing a line of demarcation between the Law and the New Covenant in 2 Corinthians 3:6, as well. Garland refutes the belief that the veil is “simply a metaphor for Israel’s failure to see and understand,”<sup>199</sup> as expressed by those who prefer to see a continuity. Israel’s problem under the Mosaic Law was not an intellectual one, rather, “the people suffered from stone cold hearts.”<sup>200</sup> In other words, they needed a new covenant that brought about a change of heart. Garrett equally is adamant that Paul’s point is “that in Christ the old covenant has been nullified.”<sup>201</sup> Fee writes of this passage, “The promised new covenant has replaced the old, and the gift of the Spirit proves it.”<sup>202</sup> As one gathers the details from the context of 2 Corinthians 3:6, it is more likely that Paul is pointing out that his Jewish opponents (and those who follow them) are making a grave mistake because “they cling to the nullified ‘letter’ that kills.”<sup>203</sup> Thus, a discontinuity between the Law and the New Covenant would be the preferred conclusion of Paul’s teaching in 1 Corinthians 3:6.

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<sup>198</sup> F.B. Huey, *The New American Commentary: Jeremiah, Lamentations*, 286.

<sup>199</sup> David E. Garland, *The New American Commentary: 2 Corinthians*, 190.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid*, 191.

<sup>201</sup> Duane A. Garrett, “Veiled Hearts: The Translation and Interpretation of 2 Corinthians 3,” 771.

<sup>202</sup> Gordon D. Fee, *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God*, 100.

<sup>203</sup> Duane A. Garrett, “Veiled Hearts: The Translation and Interpretation of 2 Corinthians 3,” 771.

Robert Saucy uses the idea of the Suffering Servant fulfilling his mission through Israel to establish the kingdom in Isaiah 40-66 as a proof of the discontinuity between Israel and the Church,

It is obvious from history that Israel has not to this point accomplished this mission. But even in the OT, when the nation miserably failed its God, the prophets continued to spur the hopes of the people with predictions of a time when this purpose would be a reality. These predictions provide evidence for discontinuity between Israel and the church in that their fulfillment is best understood in relation to Israel as a national entity among the nations and not through the church.<sup>204</sup>

The animal sacrifices serve as means through which Israel may fulfill their mission in the Millennium. Some theologians contend that this implies that the Mosaic Law will be reinstated. Allis write, “Literally interpreted this means the restoration of the Aaronic priesthood and of the Mosaic ritual of sacrifices essentially unchanged.”<sup>205</sup> Hullinger reports that dispensationalists who hold to a literal understanding of Ezekiel 40-48 have often been “misunderstood to teach the reimplementation of the Mosaic system, which is a false representation, for it is not claimed by dispensationalists that the Mosaic order will be brought back.”<sup>206</sup>

Yet, there are significant differences between what Ezekiel portrays and the Mosaic Law. Most notably is the absence of the Temple furniture: the ark, lampstand, anointing oil, and the

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<sup>204</sup> Robert L. Saucy, “Israel and the Church: A Case for Discontinuity,” in *Continuity and Discontinuity: Perspectives on the Relationship Between the Old and New Testament* (Wheaton, Ill: Crossway, 1988), 256.

<sup>205</sup> Oswald T. Allis, *Prophecy and the Church*, 246.

<sup>206</sup> Jerry M. Hullinger, “The Compatibility of the New Covenant and Future Animal Sacrifice,” 64.

Table of bread of Presence.<sup>207</sup> The fact that the sacrifices are not missing in the Millennial Temple is consistent with how God has historically dealt with Israel, as Hullinger points out,

It is God's intention to restore again the nation and her distinctives during the kingdom age. The God would reinstitute the nation together with her distinctives is only fitting. The vision given to Ezekiel was intended for the house of Israel... Therefore, no matter how strange it seems to a twenty-first century Gentile, sacrifices are an integral part of Jewish history.<sup>208</sup>

Whitcomb is insistent that Ezekiel's animal sacrifices do not constitute a return to the Mosaic Law, "Israel will indeed be under a New Covenant program, not the Old Covenant given to Moses which was not designed to guarantee salvation."<sup>209</sup> "The bloody atonement offerings will be necessary because of the transcendent, physical presence of Yahweh as He dwells among mortals."<sup>210</sup>

## CONCLUSION

It becomes evident that one's hermenutical approach will determine the theological implications of animal sacrifices in Ezekiel 40-48. The covenant theologian will view the sacrifices completely unnecessary because the Church is spiritual Israel that fulfills the New Covenant, operating under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The dispensationalist will understand that Israel must fulfill the New Covenant promises, separate from the Church. Sacrifices are a natural extension of Israel doing so. It must be emphatically stated that while sacrifices will be

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<sup>207</sup> Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 25-48*, 501.

<sup>208</sup> Jerry M. Hullinger, "The Compatibility of the New Covenant and Future Animal Sacrifice," 63.

<sup>209</sup> John C. Whitcomb, "Christ's Atonement and Animal Sacrifices in Israel," 216.

<sup>210</sup> Jerry M. Hullinger, "The Compatibility of the New Covenant and Future Animal Sacrifice," 64.



reintroduced in the Millennial Temple, it does not imply that the Mosaic Law is being reinstated. There is a discontinuity between the Mosaic Law and the New Covenant.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

When one reads the book of Ezekiel, a sense of wonder and amazement is produced; particularly in chapters 40-48. One begins to imagine what the impressive temple that Ezekiel depicts might look like and how it functions. Scholars have wrestled with what this vision was intended to portray. The method of interpretation one chooses will impact the meaning of the text. If one views this passage through a non-literal lens, then Ezekiel's words are understood to be allegorical. If one accepts the literal sense of the text, then a real future Millennial temple is to be expected.

Those who hold to a non-literal interpretation believe that Ezekiel was attempting to encourage the exiles to whom he was ministering. To accomplish this, he used symbolism to present a spiritual ideal to convince them to hope in God, or to present the attributes of God in an overwhelming way. A literal view of the passage assumes that God gave this vision to Ezekiel to depict events that will take place in the future. This is the best manner in which to exegete 40-48 because it contextually follows the visions given in chapters 8-11 of God's glory leaving the Temple. The temple described in those chapters are accepted by most scholars to refer the existing temple. So too, the temple in 40-48 will exist in the future. The fact that Ezekiel is told to take note of the exact details of the structure only bolsters the argument that this was always intended to be a literal temple. Thus it is logical to surmise that the temple described in 40-48 will be an actual temple.

Yet, if the evidence leads to the conclusion that this temple actually being operational in the future, then the text presents some interpretative issues. The perceived problem is stated as such: If this temple will stand in a time still to come upon Christ's return, then the sacrifices in

the temple conflicts with the death of Jesus on the cross. Simply put, the primary accusation against a literal view of Ezekiel's temple is that it contradicts with the New Testament's teaching on the New Covenant. On this basis, many scholars contend that a dispensational view of this passage is to be rejected.

To counter these charges, dispensational scholars formulated a view that the existence of these animal sacrifices serve as a memorial of the death of Jesus; similar to the Lord's Supper in the Church. The difficulty with this solution is that Ezekiel does not present them in this manner. Quite to the contrary, they are said to be for the purpose of atonement in 43:20, 26:45:15,17, 20. This need not discourage a literal interpretation of the passage. One must examine carefully the use of atonement in Scripture to best comprehend the intent of the animal sacrifices in the Millennial Temple. Scholars find two main purposes for animal sacrifices in the Old Testament: for purifying from sin and for paying the price of sin. It can be demonstrated that these two purposes of atonement do not undermine the New Covenant, but rather necessarily satisfies the requirements for the New Covenant.

The sacrifice for atonement first examined is the *hatta't*, which is offered to achieve a wiping away of sin. The effect of the *hatta't* sacrifice is the cleansing the temple and its sancta from the contamination of sin, hence being called the purification offering. It is important to note this sacrifice was to be offered for unintentional sins only. One must understand the ease with which sin infects a relationship with a holy God, for God cannot dwell in an unclean sanctuary. The *hatta't* serves to ceremonially cleanse the temple of sinful contaminates so that God's presence can coexist with sinful people.

God's desire to be among His people is the contextual background of the book of Ezekiel. Ezekiel was told in no uncertain terms that the people's sins had so contaminated His abode that

it was impossible for His presence to dwell. In order for God to take up residence in His holy habitation in the future, Israel will need to continually purify the temple from the ever-present sin that is fatally infectious in their relationship with God. Thus, the sin offering described in Ezekiel is for the purpose of cleansing the divine space in which God will dwell.

God's insistence that He dwell among Israel is the foundation of the New Covenant that is promised in the Old Testament through the prophets. Make no mistake about it- the New Covenant is made with Israel and will be fulfilled through national Israel. God used covenants to keep in relationship with Israel. God had used the Abrahamic Covenant to create a nation with the promise of land, seed, and blessings. The Davidic Covenant established a throne and a King that the Messiah will sit on in the Millennial Kingdom.

Yet, for the presence of God to be a reality, an inward transformation of the people needed to occur. The New Covenant declared by the prophet Jeremiah promised Israel that God would initiate a change in their hearts and minds. The prophet Ezekiel was alerted to the fact that this change would come through the Holy Spirit. Isaiah was prompted to foretell of the coming of the Messianic King who would establish His kingdom over all the earth. Therefore, the New Covenant establishes a theocratic government in which Christ will rule and reign from the temple depicted in Ezekiel 40-48 during the Millennial Kingdom.

Intertwined in the promises of a restored relationship was the mandate for sacrifice to be reinstated. The reappearance of animal sacrifices are necessary for a glorified Christ to dwell among a nation hampered with contagion of sin. Within the confines of these boundaries it may be said that that the animal sacrifices in Ezekiel 40-48 are effective in atonement by ceremonially purifying the temple and its objects. This negates the typical dispensational view that the sacrifices simply memorialize Christ's death. Rather, they allow for the Jesus to exist in

His full glory among His people Israel. The objection raised by many is that the presence of sacrifice itself denies the work of Jesus on the cross. It can be easily observed that that purpose for which Jesus died was foreshadowed in an aspect of sacrifice different from the *hatta't* referenced thus far.

The second aspect of atonement brought a payment, or ransom, for someone. This averted God's anger of sin, which is called propitiation. The Old Testament example that most vividly displays this is the Day of Atonement, as seen in Leviticus 16. On this most important day, the priest was to use two goats. After making a sacrifice for himself, he was to sacrifice one goat and set the other goat free carrying the people's confessed sins away. This act symbolized removal of the guilt of sin on the back of the released goat through the substitutionary death of the sacrificed goat.

There can be no doubt that the ultimate fulfillment of this sacrifice was the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ on the cross in the place of all humanity. When God commanded Israel to once yearly sacrifice a goat and smear the blood on the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies of the temple, He fully intended to offer His Son as a vicarious offering to permanently atone for our sin and guilt. It cannot be emphasized enough that Christ's supreme sacrifice was in a completely separate realm than any offering that was ever made. The Son of God shed His blood so that sinful man can be reconciled to God and obtain access to the eternal presence of God.

It is upon this basis that the author of Hebrews asserts that what took place in Israel on the Day of Atonement was voided. The more superior sacrifice of Jesus nullified the necessity of the vicarious death of an animal. The Lamb of God satisfies the requirement for sin and death. An impassioned objection might be raised against the possibility of any future sacrifices in the

Millennium because the declaration of Christ's complete sacrifice is interwoven with the references to the New Covenant in Hebrews 9-10. Therefore, it is assumed that this section states the end of sacrifices altogether. Although, the central message of Hebrews is centered on the insufficient nature of the Old Covenant that required sacrifices on the Day of Atonement and the permanent nature of the New Covenant.

The author of Hebrews is completely focused on Christ as the Mediator of the New Covenant. One must notice that the book of Hebrews is not advocating for the end of the promises of the New Covenant given to Israel; only for the end of the ineffective Mosaic Law. This is an important point to be made because some accuse dispensationalism of teaching that the Mosaic Law will be reinstated in the Millennial Kingdom. This could not be farther from the truth. Dispensational scholars agree that the Mosaic Law was feeble and ineffective; especially in light of Christ's superior sacrifice. But, these scholars also note the distinction the author of Hebrews is careful to preserve in Hebrews 10:15-17 as it relates to the recipients of the New Covenant. The very nature of the New Covenant makes it a unique relationship in which God will be present with Israel in the Millennial Kingdom. The sacrifices in Ezekiel 40-48 affords Israel the opportunity to keep the temple cleansed and purified as God's glory resides in their midst. It has been shown that the animal sacrifices in Ezekiel 40-48 will take place in a literal future temple for outward purification purposes in the presence of Christ Jesus glorified who resides over His theocratic kingdom operating under the New Covenant in the Millennial temple. Thus, Ezekiel 40-48 is best interpreted literally.

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