

The WildBranch Ministry

...*thou bearest not the root, but the root
thee. Romans 11:18*

Frequently Asked Questions

Ivrim 7:12 - Doesn't a change in the Priesthood mean no more Torah?

This question was asked of me just a few days ago. It never ceases to amaze me, the conclusions people come to when reading passages for the express purpose of finding something, anything, that appears to denigrate Torah. One has to do some terrific mental gymnastics to draw that conclusion here, but I am asked this often enough to address it for those who do not know how to respond to it. I want to add that we are going to discuss the subject of 'sins' and 'sin', and Yahshua's priesthood fulfillment. The teaching on this subject is quite extensive and I will not be able to do anything comprehensive in this area. I want to restrict my comments as much as possible to the following verses.

Ivrim 7:11-12

"If, therefore, perfection were by the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchizedek, and not be called after the order of Aharon? For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law."

First let me begin by saying that this book is not called the letter to the Ivrim (Hebrews) for nothing. The whole theme of this book is to reveal to the Hebrew people that the Messiah is after the order of Melchizedek, with a better priesthood, a better covenant built upon better promises, and a better sacrifice. Nothing in this book addresses the abolishment of *halakhic* or *haggadic* laws. The entire book focuses on the priesthood of Aharon as opposed to the priesthood of Messiah, otherwise known as the order of Melchizedek. This book is about the revelation of the greater over the lessor. Beginning in chapter 5, we have several chapters devoted to comparing the Levitical priesthood to the eternal priesthood of Melchizedek. A *midrash* is used at the beginning of chapter 7 to lay the foundation of this priesthood. Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High 'Elohiym, is taught to be the pattern and order for the eternal priesthood of Messiah. Sha'ul uses the lack of a recorded beginning and ending to this mysterious king's life to illustrate the idea of no beginning or ending to the Messiah's priesthood. Chapter 7 teaches us that the Messiah did not come after the Aharonic order, for he sprang out of Y^ehudah. It was prophesied in Mizmor 110 that the Messiah would come after this eternal order. It is by reason of the Messiah's death, burial, and resurrection that our priestly mediator is an eternal mediator.

The scriptures make a distinction between the commandments for man's discerning of what is righteous and unrighteous and that part of Torah which deals with redemption when man does what is unrighteous. In Mark 12:33 we read:

"And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices."

Obedying His instructions concerning our relationship with YHVH and also our relationship with our neighbor, and love for our personal welfare and growth, requires no sacrifice. There is no law against doing what is right. All the instructions concerning man's relationship with YHVH, his neighbor, and himself are distinct from that part of Torah which concerns the sacrifices and offerings for breaking Torah. This is why obedience is better than sacrifice.

Let me make a very blunt statement about Torah and commandments contained in Torah. Sacrifice did not cease with Yahshua's resurrection. Sacrifices did not end. Nothing in Torah has ceased to exist. The book of Ivrim teaches us that we have been given a BETTER sacrifice, a BETTER covenant, a BETTER priesthood, and we ourselves are a BETTER temple. If you can understand this, you can more fully appreciate the awesomeness of what Yahshua has done for us. When man sinned under the old covenant, there was a penalty to be paid for that sin. When a man stole something from his neighbor, he was to pay restitution for that theft, but this did not render him innocent before YHVH. The 'sinner' brought a sacrifice or an offering to 'Elohiym through the mediation of the priesthood. When this was done, the man's sin was covered by the blood of bulls and goats. However, the next time he transgressed, his living sacrifice was dead, and he was forced to sacrifice another animal. Since Yahshua's resurrection, we now have an eternal, living sacrifice, always making intercession for us, an eternal mediator, a better sacrifice. It is not that sacrifice has ceased so much as it is that Yahshua is our eternal sacrifice, who eternally makes peace between us and YHVH. The reason why a person, who rejects the Messiah, dies in his sins, is because there is no earthly priesthood or temple, and so he cannot sacrifice for his sins. If he rejects the sacrifice of the Messiah, then there is no other sacrifice, and so he dies in his sins (Yochanan 8:24).

The Levitical priesthood has been translated to a higher priesthood and of necessity that which is in Torah concerning this priesthood has been translated as well. This is the meaning behind the Greek word '*metatithemi*' which the KJV translates as 'changed'. The same word is used in this book in chapter 11:5 concerning the disposition of Enoch. "*By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death. . .*" Enoch did not cease to exist, but was taken to a 'higher' place or existence. Talmudic and Rabbinical literature have

always taught about 'weightier matters' and 'higher laws'. Shabbat, for example, can and should be suspended when life is threatened, for life and the sustaining of life is a higher law. The concept of a higher or better law would have been very familiar to Sha'ul's 'Jewish' audience. All the language of the next several chapters points to the change of Torah concerning the priesthood. There is no mention whatsoever of any changes in Torah concerning Shabbat, YHVH's feasts, dietary laws, health laws, murder, theft, laws of clean and unclean, marriage laws, government, crime, or anything of the like. The entire book focuses on Yahshua's sacrifice for breaking of Torah, not for keeping Torah. Listen carefully to just a few excerpts concerning the context of Sha'ul's teaching on the changing of the law:

- Ivrim 7:24 " . . . *But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchange-able priesthood.*"
- Ivrim 7:25 " . . . *he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*"
- Ivrim 7:26 "*For such an high priest was fitting for us. . .*"
- Ivrim 7:27 " . . . *when he offered up himself.*"
- Ivrim 8:1 " . . . *We have such a high priest. . . in the heavens. . .*"
- Ivrim 8:2 " . . . *minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle. . .*"
- Ivrim 8:3 " . . . *to offer gifts and sacrifices. . .*"
- Ivrim 8:12 " . . . *their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.*"
- Ivrim 8:13 " . . . *Now that which decayeth and groweth old is ready to vanish away.*"

Chapter 9 follows this statement, in which the first 9 verses are concerned only with the tabernacle and it's ministry. The context is the Levitical priesthood as compared with Yahshua's priesthood.

- Ivrim 9:14 "*How much more shall the blood of Messiah. . .*"
- Ivrim 9:22 "*And almost all things are by the law purged with blood, and without the shedding of blood is no remission.*"
- Ivrim 9:23 " . . . *better sacrifices. . .*"
- Ivrim 9:26 " . . . *hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*"
- Ivrim 9:28 "*So Messiah was once offered to bear the sins of many. . .*"

As you continue on in chapter 10, you will see that the teaching remains the same. Yahshua has satisfied our atonement before YHVH. This is what the priesthood is all about. Sacrifice and offerings did not take the place of the earthly ramifications of murder, theft, adultery, or any other crimes. Sacrifice and offerings did not nullify Shabbat, take the place of feasts, substitute our diet, heal anyone of leprosy, or become a city of refuge when someone's brother-in-law was after them. Sacrifice rescued us from death, for the wages of sin is death. Sacrifice and offerings made peace between 'Elohiym and man

through a priesthood in a temple. That priesthood has been made higher and eternal by Messiah, and so the law concerning that priesthood has been made higher as well. We are all a royal priesthood now, clinging to a better sacrifice in a better temple.

Shalom Alechem!

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