

PART 6

Typical Jewish Objections to the Gospel

Blood Sacrifices

Judaism teaches that repentance, prayers and good deeds (mitzvot) are substituted for the animal sacrifices. So why talk to us of blood sacrifices? This is an old-fashioned concept.

The Old Testament clearly teaches that forgiveness of sins is by substitutionary sacrifices. (Exodus 12:13; Lev. 17:11; 16:6,21) In the Torah (Genesis – Deuteronomy) the sin offering dealt with the matter of sin. Through this sacrifice a man was to learn how to have a good standing in God's righteousness.

According to the instructions in Leviticus concerning the sacrifices, the person offering the sacrifice had to lay his hands on the sacrificial animal. We see this clearly illustrated in Leviticus 16:21-22 in the context of a sacrifice for the nation of Israel. Here we see the priest lays hands on the sacrifice and confesses the sin and iniquity of the nation over the goat. It says then that the sins are put upon the goat. The goat bears all their sin, transgressions and iniquities and is led out of the city into the wilderness. This is the clear teaching about the meaning of the laying of hands on the sacrifice. In Leviticus 1:4 the laying on of hands is for individual atonement. The meaning is that sin, transgression and iniquity are transferred from the offender to the innocent victim. When hands are laid on the goat, sin is taken away.

The only places where sacrifices were to be offered was in the Tabernacle and later in the Temple in Jerusalem. (Lev 17:3-4) When the Temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. Jewish scholars substituted repentance, prayers and good deeds for the sacrifices. There is nothing wrong with these three exercises. But they cannot be substitutes for satisfying God's righteousness (propitiation). This is contrary to the levitical laws of sacrifice which require blood/life to satisfy the justice of God.

No better reason can be given that the sacrificial system has never been abrogated than the statement of purpose of the Temple Institute in Jerusalem. This is an Orthodox Jewish organization committed to the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem. The following was taken from their web site at www.Templeinstitute.org:

Why build the Temple?

Why this fuss over an ancient, seemingly outdated concept? What relationship does the Holy Temple have to our world today? The people of Israel have lived without a Temple for nearly 2,000 years, and seem to be doing fine without one. We don't seem to need it, and G-d certainly doesn't, so why think about rebuilding?

202 Biblical Commandments

The Jewish people accepted the "Yoke of Heaven," the structure of their relationship with the Creator and their spiritual responsibility, at the Mount Sinai revelation. This relationship is based on Israel's acceptance and fulfillment of the Torah's 613 Divine commandments. But in fact, fully one third - 202 of these commandments - are totally dependent on the existence of the Holy Temple for their fulfillment. But what is our attitude regarding these commandments? Do we think of them as inactive, dormant, dead? Do we believe that they are no longer applicable? Do we perhaps relegate them to that nebulous time of messianic redemption; that they will only be activated in the future with the coming of the messiah?

The Torah's commandments are eternal, for now and forever

Nothing can be further from the truth. Maimonides teaches (Sefer Igeret Ha 'Shmad) that the performance of all the commandments are not dependent on the coming of the messiah. They are to be fulfilled at all times. G-d does not change His mind, or nullify any of the commandments included in the Torah, which were given once, for all time. In lieu of Temple service, we may observe various "remembrances" of these commandments, but that is all they are - merely gestures of nostalgia.

Fish out of water

But we fool ourselves if we think that the state of Judaism today, without the Temple, is normal. On the contrary, we are like fish out of water. If 1/3 of all the Torah's commandments center on the Temple, it would seem that Biblical observance in the Temple's absence is but a skeleton of what G-d had intended it to be.

God has not left the world without a blood sacrifice. God has provided a perfect sacrifice in Yeshua the Messiah as the prophet Isaiah foretold in Isaiah 53. Because He provided the perfect sacrifice God removed the Temple so that Israel might know that He has provided a new and better way to find atonement for sin.

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