



Who is Yeshua the Messiah?
Part 20: Head of the Body
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{NOTE: The actual oral sermon and video recording may vary significantly and even materially from these notes, but this “transcript” gives you a general idea of the direction of the message.}

{Title slide—1} Shabbat shalom, brothers and sisters. We’re in Week 20 of our sermon series, “Who is Yeshua the Messiah?,” and today we’re going to discuss some things I’ve only mentioned so far in passing. Specifically, Yeshua the Messiah is our eternal High Priest, the Head of the Body of believers He is calling to Himself, and His sacrifice on the cross alone completes the atonement for our sins, iniquities, and transgressions—not just now, but also forever. Because of what Yeshua has done for us, together we are being formed into an eternal temple for the Holy Spirit of God to dwell in forever, and each one of us a “living stone” that makes up the whole. Yeshua is both the living cornerstone—or headstone—of this Holy Temple as well as the glory of God that will fill up His Temple in the New Heaven and New Earth that is yet to come. Today’s message will look at these three major changes between the Old Covenant and New Covenant—two of them in detail, and the third in passing because I’ve already spoken about it quite a bit. Importantly, God told us He was going to make these changes ahead of time—within the mysterious prophetic messages of the Torah itself, but even more clearly in the Prophets, and Yeshua would be the one to institute this prophesied New Covenant Himself. Besides changes to the roles of the High Priest, the temple, and the sacrifices that we’ll discuss this week, Yeshua also brought changes to the Mediator role and our understanding of the law, and we’ll continue to explore these next week. Importantly, each of these roles and the law that discusses them is eternal, and we are called into obedience to God’s instruction because we love Yeshua. But the way the law is applied in these five ways is no longer according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit, and their eternal significance has been revealed to us plainly in Messiah Yeshua. We’re going to begin with a brief discussion of the High Priest role and the sacrifices Aaron and his sons were responsible for, particularly in the Tabernacle and then the Temple, and then we will transition into a discussion of

how these Old Covenant roles were abolished and replaced by Messiah Yeshua—our LORD and our God—as part of the New Covenant established with His blood.

{Next slide—2} Perhaps there's no better place to start today's message than with a reminder what God's law teaches, because it is eternal and reiterated in the prophets as well as the apostolic writings. We humans have a problem, and Paul explained it best in Romans 3:23, where we read: "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." On the surface, this may appear to be a no brainer. We're not God, we're His creatures that He created. He is the eternal Creator. Of course we fall short of His glory. We're not Yeshua. The problem isn't that we're not God, though. The problem IS that we have all sinned, that sin separates us from the presence of God, and that God is the only being with eternal life in Himself, so anything separated from Him is destined to die eternally. In Isaiah 59, verses 1-3, the problem we face in our fallen state intensifies. We read: "Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, Your tongue has muttered perversity." The passage continues from there outlining even more ways that we as men and women have turned our backs on God, but the key phrase here is that our hands are defiled with blood. This will be important in a moment. For now, understand again, we have a problem. We all have sinned and fallen short of God's glory, and thus we are all inherently separated from God. Ah, but God's hand is not shortened that He cannot save, for surely the LORD can restore. In the law itself, God provided a way back to Him that would only be fully realized in Messiah Yeshua. In Leviticus 17:11, we read: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul." Yes, blood makes atonement for our souls, but our hands are also defiled by blood. Hold onto this. The writer of Hebrews acknowledged this Truth in Hebrews 9:22, where we read: "And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission." So God has made it clear that the shedding of innocent blood is the only way back to Him. So when we study the Levitical priesthood and the sacrifices the priests made so they could interact with God in His sanctuary, it should not surprise us that there was plenty of bloodshed. There is deep and significant meaning in all of the Torah's covenantal instruction, and I don't want to take away from God's message to us there—it all points to Yeshua. But we're not going to cover it in detail today, because that's not what today's message is about. For now, I simply want us to agree on this: The blood sacrifices in Torah are difficult to read, especially when we consider

the raw meaning of the letter. There are bulls, goats, rams, lambs, doves and other living creatures being killed regularly on the altar, and their blood is being sprayed and sprinkled all over God's sanctuary. Our hands are full of blood on account of sin. Reflect on this for a moment.

{Next slide—3} OK, so here's the point: God doesn't like all that blood either—and for a very specific reason. Jumping ahead for a moment to prove this, take a look at what the LORD said through His prophet Samuel to the rebellious King Saul, who had blatantly violated the LORD's commandments. In 1st Samuel 15:22-23, the prophet Samuel said to him: “Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.” Take this in. The LORD doesn't want the blood. He wants obedience to His instruction. And yet, as we've seen, blood is necessary for atonement. From the very beginning, God has been telling us that He was going to fix our sin problem, but in doing this He has also been calling on His people to respond to His grace and not take it for granted, because it has a high cost to it. He has never wanted blood everywhere. He has always wanted us to be healed so that we could return to Him. King David understood this, when he humbled himself before God after confessing his sins against God. In Psalm 51:16-17, which is part of King David's great prayer of repentance following the matter of Uriah the Hittite, we read: “You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering.” These are declarations David was making about God. He continued: “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart—these, O God, You will not despise.” David understood that the LORD gave us His law so we would humbly obey it for our own good, not so we could continuously splatter the blood of the living creatures that He loves all over His altar for rebelling against it. Reflect on this with me: If the idea of splattered blood disgusts you, then you are starting to understand the heart of God. The imagery of blood in the Torah was meant to show us just how much sin disgusts the LORD, and yet, it also shows us how much more God desires us to turn away from sin and do what He has instructed us to do, instead. Micah the prophet makes this point quite clearly in Micah 6:7-8, where we read: “Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, Ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?” These are rhetorical questions. We know from Torah that God hates when His people “pass their children through the fire” as human sacrifices. The prophet responded accordingly to the rhetoric and continued with this: “He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with

your God?” Yes, as the LORD explained in Hosea 6:6, “I desire mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.” On account of the blood shed to make atonement for our souls, the LORD expects us to change our ways—to live according to His instruction—to go and sin no more. And if we love Him, this is just what we’ll do. God would give His own Son for our atonement, and He is the One who said this: “If you love Me, keep My commandments” (John 14:15). As Paul said, “we are debtors” (Romans 8:12) on account of the atonement we’ve been given.

{Next slide—4} And so, when we turn to Torah and the priestly order of Aaron the Levite, we should be able to deduce from what we’ve already studied that God had something else in mind. I’m not going to get into all the blood sacrifices articulated in Torah, or even detail the Day of Atonement—maybe later this year when we get to it. Today I just want to show you that the LORD legitimately established the Levitical priesthood and the sacrifices of the sanctuary in the Old Covenant for a greater purpose—namely, to point forward to its fulfillment in Yeshua and His followers. In Exodus 28, starting in verse 1, the LORD told Moses: “Now take Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister to Me as priest, Aaron and Aaron’s sons: Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. And you shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty.” The priesthood was established to make intercession for the people of Israel before their God, and the sacrifices they would make would bring atonement. This is why the “holy garments for Aaron ... and his sons” would be beautiful—the breastplate, ephod, robe, tunic, turban, and sash,” because these men would stand before God and plead for His mercy on behalf of the people. When the people looked upon them, they were meant to see the beautiful apparel of the priests and consider how their office was providing a bridge for them to a relationship with their Creator God. Yet, the ordinary people could not come near, and nor could ordinary sacrifices. According to Numbers 3:10, God said “you shall appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall attend to their priesthood; but the outsider who comes near shall be put to death.” Because Aaron and his sons were also men who fell short of God’s glory, they first had to purify themselves before they could go before God, lest they also die. Nadab and Abihu were dead on the first day for trying to do things their own way. And there were many sacrifices that the priests had to make for their own atonement, and only then they could minister to the people and make sacrifices on behalf of the congregation. There was a lot of blood! When we read about all of the sacrifices in Torah, it becomes apparent just how impractical it would have been for each person to make atonement for themselves. God separated Aaron and his sons for this role on their behalf. God told Aaron and his sons in Numbers 18:5, “And you shall attend to the duties of the sanctuary and the duties of

the altar, that there may be no more wrath on the children of Israel.” Again, this entire operation was set up to demonstrate the repugnance of sin and also to reveal God’s heart to bring His people back into a righteous relationship with Him.

{Next slide—5} We should briefly look at one additional account in Torah, when Moses was up on the mountain of God receiving the Ten Commandments on two tablets of sapphire stone. The people had already heard God speak the commandments to them directly, including the commandment where He said, according to Exodus 20, verses 4-5: “You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them...” The people trembled before God and stood afar off, terrified that His pure and holy Word would destroy them at once. They promised to obey, so long as Moses would speak to them as a representative for God from that point forward. So be it. Moses went up on the mountain to do just that for 40 days and 40 nights, leaving Aaron in charge of the congregation. How did that go? — In Exodus 32, starting in verse 1, we read: “Now when the people saw that Moses delayed coming down from the mountain, the people gathered together to Aaron, and said to him, ‘Come, make us gods that shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.’” ?They couldn’t wait five weeks before turning their hearts to outright rebellion? But Moses had left Aaron in charge. All was well in the world, ?right? Wrong! We read in verse 2: “And Aaron said to them, ‘Break off the golden earrings which are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me.’ So all the people broke off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them to Aaron. And he received the gold from their hand, and he fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made a molded calf. Then they said, ‘This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt.’” Just so it’s clear: These people were calling this golden likeness of a calf ‘Yahweh’ and they were worshipping the image they had made with their own hands rather than the living God who literally brought them out of Egypt and led them through the middle of the Sea of Reeds to His Holy Mountain, where they literally heard His voice give them His Holy law—the same law their High Priest was now helping them violate directly. When Moses came down from the mountain, according to verse 21, he said to Aaron: “What did this people do to you that you have brought so great a sin upon them?” There were 3,000 men who died that day on account of this rebellion, and conceivably they were the instigators, but Aaron was spared. I am hopeful this opens our eyes to see why Aaron had to make sacrifices for himself and his sons, before he could offer sacrifices for the people. This was an

imperfect priesthood making imperfect sacrifices in an imperfect sanctuary, and this was the beginning of the whole Levitical order. Things were only going to get worse.

{Next slide—6} Before I show you this, I want to establish a critical hermeneutic principle that the LORD explained through His prophets. For those who don't know, hermeneutics is the protocol we use to interpret the Word of God. As Paul noted, in 1st Corinthians 14:32, “the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets,” meaning that the Word of God is the only source we can use to interpret the Word of God. It all has to align. It all has to be consistent. Paul didn't pull this principle from the air, but like an authentic prophet, he took it from the prophets. In Isaiah 42:9, we read: “Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them.” In other words, before the LORD makes any changes to the way we ought to understand His revelation of Truth, He tells us that He's going to make the change within His Word. And so, if we don't see the Torah or the Prophets declare a future change, then God did not intend that future change. Jeremiah 31, verses 31-32, gives us perhaps the clearest examples of one of those changes the LORD was going to make. We read: “Behold, the days are coming,’ says the LORD, ‘when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah —not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke.” It continues from there, and you should study it further. For today's purposes, we can see that this prophesy establishes a few things: First, Israel nullified the Old Covenant with God, and thus it would ultimately pass away, and second, He would establish a New Covenant with Israel and Judah, and as we read in Hebrews 9:18, “not even the first covenant was dedicated without blood.” A third thing here I'm just going to state for you plainly, based on a straightforward reading of the text, is that we have to be grafted-in to Israel in order to enter into this New Covenant, which Yeshua would later establish with His blood. In Mark 14:24, Yeshua said regarding His upcoming sacrifice: “This is My blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for many.” Romans 11 and Ephesians 2 explain that Gentiles are grafted-in to Israel on account of this sacrifice. Scripture interprets Scripture.

{Next slide—7} In any case, I just wanted to make sure to connect some of the dots for you so you know where we're going with this message. Yeshua Himself said something similar to the LORD in Isaiah 42:9, when He prophesied that Judas would betray Him. In John 13:19, He said, “Now I tell you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe that I AM He.” We know that “Messiah Yeshua is the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Hebrews 13:8), and the Word of God bears this out to

be true. What He said to the prophet Isaiah is the same thing He said when He came in the flesh. In other words, Yeshua explained that the fulfillment of His Word would prove to us that He is God who came in the flesh. In the same way, we know God's Word to the prophets to be True because of the new things that He declares that ultimately come to pass. Here's another witness in Isaiah 48, verses 3-5, where we read: "I have declared the former things from the beginning; they went forth from My mouth, and I caused them to hear it. Suddenly I did them, and they came to pass." Why does the LORD do this? He explained: "Because I knew that you were obstinate, and your neck was an iron sinew, and your brow bronze, even from the beginning I have declared it to you; before it came to pass I proclaimed it to you, lest you should say, 'My idol has done them, and my carved image and my molded image have commanded them.'" God doesn't want us to repeat the mistakes of our fathers; He wants us to learn from their mistakes and look to Him alone for our salvation, then turning to follow Him instead of the wicked ways of the past. In any case, I have a point, and it is this: God always explains what changes He's going to make in His Word, and if we don't find a particular change described there, we ought to reject it. In fact, God specifically warned us about this in Deuteronomy 4:2, which reads: "You shall not add to the Word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you." Are these contradictions? No! Any time we as men attempt to alter the Word of God, we blaspheme His Holy Name. God wants us to obey His Word. But God Himself can and does change the way we ought to understand His law within the Law and Prophets, and this is what I'm going to show you next.

{Next slide—8} As I noted a few moments ago, following the example of Aaron and his sons violating God's commandments, things would only get worse, and because of it, God was about to declare a new thing. It was only a few generations after Israel entered the Promised Land when God sent a prophet to rebuke Eli the priest, because Eli had allowed his sons to become so corrupt they didn't know the LORD at all. They ate sacrifices that were meant for the LORD and they slept with the women who came to worship the LORD, a cultic practice they likely picked up from the heathens around them. They didn't heed their father's warning to turn away from such sin. We pick up the story in 1st Samuel, chapter 2, starting in verse 27, where we read: "Then a man of God came to Eli and said to him, 'Thus says the LORD: 'Did I not clearly reveal Myself to the house of your father when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's house? Did I not choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be My priest, to offer upon My altar, to burn incense, and to wear an ephod before Me? And did I not give to the house of your father all the offerings of the children of Israel made by fire? Why do you kick at My

sacrifice and My offering which I have commanded in My dwelling place, and honor your sons more than Me, to make yourselves fat with the best of all the offerings of Israel My people?’ Therefore the LORD God of Israel says: ‘I said indeed that your house and the house of your father would walk before Me forever.’ But now the LORD says: ‘Far be it from Me; for those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed’....” If we were to stop here, it would seem that the LORD was planning to simply replace Eli’s sons with better priests. Many interpret these verses and say that Samuel the prophet himself would replace them, but how could he? He was from the tribe of Ephraim; He was not a Levite. Perhaps there’s a deeper meaning for us here—that God would no longer require His priests to come from the Tribe of Levi—but I want to keep things simple here. I won’t argue against Samuel being a short-term fulfillment of this prophesy, but the longer term prophesy is absolutely pointing to Yeshua.

{Next slide—9} We can see this as we continue into verse 31, where we read this: “... Behold, the days are coming that I will cut off your arm and the arm of your father’s house, so that there will not be an old man in your house. And you will see an enemy in My dwelling place, despite all the good which God does for Israel. And there shall not be an old man in your house forever. But any of your men whom I do not cut off from My altar shall consume your eyes and grieve your heart. And all the descendants of your house shall die in the flower of their age. Now this shall be a sign to you that will come upon your two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas: in one day they shall die, both of them. Then I will raise up for Myself a faithful priest who shall do according to what is in My heart and in My mind. I will build him a sure house, and he shall walk before My anointed forever. And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left in your house will come and bow down to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and say, ‘Please, put me in one of the priestly positions, that I may eat a piece of bread.’” So Eli’s sons died in a day, and Eli with them, but it’s quite clear from this prophesy that Samuel could not be this prophesy’s final fulfillment. The prophet Samuel may indeed walk before Messiah Yeshua forever, but only Yeshua Himself would build this “sure house,” and only Yeshua Himself would offer the priests of Levi a servant role in His eternal Kingdom. He would be raised up from the dead, and He indeed would be a faithful High Priest who would live a perfect life in the flesh, keeping the commandments of God forever without any error. On the other hand, the Levitical priesthood would be replaced. “The days” would be coming, according to this prophesy, and based on the full evidence of Scripture, and we now know that these days are here. Before we get to that, I want to show you a few other prophesies that clearly explain this change to the priesthood, in case this first example escapes you.

{Next slide—10} There would be many more Levitical priests following Eli and his sons, and some of them would be good, but ultimately they would follow a similar path to their forefathers, leading to this proclamation from the LORD in Ezekiel 22. In verse 26, we read: “Her priests have violated My law and profaned My holy things; they have not distinguished between the holy and unholy, nor have they made known the difference between the unclean and the clean; and they have hidden their eyes from My Sabbaths, so that I am profaned among them.” In verses 30-31, He added this: “So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one. Therefore I have poured out My indignation on them; I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath; and I have recompensed their deeds on their own heads,” says the Lord GOD.” There wasn’t a single man who could fulfill the priestly role and point God’s people to obey His commandments, and so God would judge these people. It wasn’t enough for these men to make sacrifices for themselves and then the people. Their sins were so heinous, God was going to shake out the land and start over. He sent Judah into captivity for 70 years to live under the bondage of the Babylonians; this was the indignation the LORD prophesied through Ezekiel. The people would return to the land and try again with a second temple, the requisite sacrifices, and a new group of priests, but they would also fail again. More indignation would follow. The temple would be destroyed again, in AD 70—this time even until this present day, and then the city itself would be destroyed again in AD 135. Until this day, Jerusalem is still divided. There are no priests or sacrifices, and there is no temple—at least not on the earth. And even if one is ever built and sacrifices are made, I’ll tell you right now that we should not trust in it. God has given us a New Covenant with a new High Priest, an eternal sacrifice, and an eternal temple, and we ourselves have become a part of it.

{Next slide—11} I’ve shown you where the LORD declared this future in 1st Samuel 2, but it definitely was not the only place. Another example is the conclusion of the prophesy we began with today. When we read in Isaiah 59:1, “Behold, the LORD’s Hand is not shortened that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear,” He doesn’t leave us hanging there. It’s true, our “iniquities have separated us from [our] God, and [our] sins have hidden His face from [us], specifically because our hands have been defiled with blood and our fingers with iniquity, but the LORD has provided us with a way back to Him that does not have to be repeated day-by-day and year-by-year. When the LORD looked upon the depravity of man and the imperfect system, He knew that it was only a shadow of things to come. We read in Isaiah 59, verses 15-17, “... Then the LORD saw it, and it displeased Him that there was no justice. He saw that

there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor; therefore His own Arm brought salvation for Him; and His own righteousness, it sustained Him. For He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on His head; He put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak.” Indeed, the LORD sent His Son of righteousness, His right Arm, into the world to become an intercessor for His people. Yeshua would be God's High Priest and would wear righteousness, salvation, and zeal for the commandments of God as His clothing, and He would also bring vengeance against those who would reject the atonement that He would bring through His own sacrifice—the sacrifice of Himself.

{Next slide—12} And God indeed prophesied how the former things were passing away. He indeed declared the new things that were coming, even before they would spring forth. Let's look at the beginning of the verse that explains this, starting with Isaiah 42:5, where we read: “Thus says God the LORD, Who created the heavens and stretched them out, Who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it, Who gives breath to the people on it, and spirit to those who walk on it: ‘I, the LORD, have called You in righteousness, and will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, as a light to the Gentiles, to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the prison, those who sit in darkness from the prison house. I am the LORD, that is My name; and My glory I will not give to another, nor My praise to carved images. Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them.” We've looked at this verse before, and we know that the LORD was talking to someone in this prophesy—someone who was not "another," because God did give His glory to Yeshua. Isaiah was explaining, from the Father's perspective, that God would call His Son to come into the world and bring the New Covenant to the people of Israel through His blood. In His ministry, He would open the eyes of the blind and release the prisoners from their captivity. He would send out volunteers in the days of His power to declare His coming kingdom. The Gospels declare this about Yeshua over and over again, and He is doing this even now as He intercedes for us as High Priest from His throne in Heaven. Take a look at this example from Luke 7, verses 22-23, where John the Baptist, a Levitical priest, asked Yeshua the Messiah whether or not He would be coming a second time. Yeshua answered in this way: “Go and tell John the things you have seen and heard: that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.” This is the same John who declared earlier about Yeshua, according to John 3:30, “He must increase, but I must decrease.” John was a Levite and he knew the time for the Levitical order was coming to an end, and yet even he didn't

understand whether Yeshua would bring His new order immediately to the earth. He would, but on the Spiritual level and not in the physical world. Yeshua answered John with the prophesy from Isaiah, linking Himself directly to the One the Father was addressing there, explaining the mission He had come to fulfill. John was not offended, but rather offered up the prophetic Word about Yeshua's priestly ministry, that Yeshua would increase while he would pass away, and Yeshua responded with a word of blessing.

{Next slide—13} I want to make another connection here for you to the changing priesthood, and this one is rather obscure but it is linked to the former prophesy we just looked at in Isaiah. In Psalm 110, verses 1-4, David wrote: "The LORD said to my LORD, 'Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.' The LORD shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of Your enemies! Your people shall be volunteers in the day of Your power; in the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning, You have the dew of Your youth. The LORD has sworn and will not relent, 'You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.'" Like the prophesy of Isaiah, the Father was addressing the Son, and David called them both LORD. More than this, He presented a unique understanding of who this LORD would be: He would be both a King who would rule from the throne and a Priest who would intercede for His people forever, according to the order of Melchizedek. There was no other priest like this. Yeshua Himself, when speaking of this prophesy, presented yet another level of meaning. Importantly, in Mark 12, verses 35-37, we read: "Then Yeshua answered and said, while He taught in the temple, 'How is it that the scribes say that the Messiah is the Son of David? For David himself said by the Holy Spirit: 'The LORD said to my LORD, 'Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'" Therefore David himself calls Him 'LORD'; how is He then his Son?' And the common people heard Him gladly." Indeed, the common people, who would be healed by the LORD and offered redemption by His blood, understood that the Messiah had come. This Messiah, though known to be the Son of David—or the Son of Man as we covered over the past few weeks—was also David's LORD. This King and High Priest whom David announced was none other than the God of Heaven who had come to the Earth to offer Himself as an eternal sacrifice for the people who trust in Him. He came forth from the grave—the womb of the morning; He rose from the dead so He could sit on the throne of glory, offering intercession for those who trust in Him. He rules there and He also intercedes from there, a King and a Priest. He was unlike any other, and He certainly preceded David—He preceded us all! He is eternal!

{Next slide—14} Let's talk more about this Melchizedek. Did this priestly order come after the order of Aaron and the Levitical line, as some might suppose? Far from it. Melchizedek appeared only two times in the Tanakh, in the prophesy of David that we just explored and also in Genesis, when he made a mysterious cameo appearance before Abraham in Genesis 14. Following Abraham's victory in battle, we read this short section about him in verses 18-20: "Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said: 'Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand.' And he gave him a tithe of all." That's it! That's all we have to go by in the Old Testament. One revelation can be drawn out of the text when we consider the way this Man is described. Melchizedek is actually two Hebrew words, which translate to "King of Righteousness." Though "King of Salem" is translated into English, it reads in the Hebrew, Melech-Shalom, or King of Peace. This King of Righteousness and King of Peace is quite similar to the one David mentioned, and He is also a priest for God Most High who brought out bread and wine. And importantly, Abraham, the father of us all, gave Him a tenth of his increase. Was this a pre-incarnate Yeshua? A prophetic template for Yeshua? Here's how the writer of Hebrews answered in Hebrews 7, verses 1-3: "For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated "king of righteousness," and then also king of Salem, meaning "king of peace," without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually...." This doesn't quite answer the question, but I think it's safe to say, Melchizedek was either a prophetic template for Yeshua as High Priest and King of kings, like Ezekiel was a prophetic template for the Son of Man, or He was Yeshua Himself appearing in His pre-incarnate form, and the latter is my personal understanding. Either way, as the Scripture continues, we will learn some very important truths about Yeshua through this reference.

{Next slide—15} Continuing in verse 4, we read: "Now consider how great this man was, to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils. And indeed those who are of the sons of Levi, who receive the priesthood, have a commandment to receive tithes from the people according to the law, that is, from their brethren, though they have come from the loins of Abraham; but he whose genealogy is not derived from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. Now beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better. Here mortal men receive tithes, but there he receives them, of whom it is witnessed that he lives. Even Levi,

who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, so to speak, for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.” Are you following? In other words, Abraham was the father of Isaac the father of Jacob the father of Levi, the grandfather of Aaron, and Abraham gave a tithe to Melchizedek, which demonstrated the priestly king’s superiority and eternal pre-existence well before Aaron was even born, let alone made an imperfect priest. This priestly order of Melchizedek is superior in every way to the order of Aaron—it is eternal and it is perfect!

{Next slide—16} As the writer of Hebrews continues in verses 11-18, he further explained: “Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law.” Now, I have to stop here for a moment. There is a reason I took you on a very lengthy roundabout way to get to this explanation. All of the prophecies about the priesthood explain that God would annul the order of Aaron and replace it with an eternal priesthood. None of the prophecies said the law would be done away with—quite the contrary, actually. The Word of God explains, over and over, that the Levitical priesthood was not upholding the law of God, and thus that imperfect priesthood would be replaced by a righteous Priest who would uphold the law and teach it to the people of Israel. The text here in Hebrews does not say the law would be annulled. It explains that the law would be changed, and that distinction is real. Before Yeshua, there was an imperfect Aaronic priesthood making animal sacrifices in a man-made structure to atone for the sins of the people, but now there would be an eternal priest offering Himself as a perfect sacrifice for a spiritual temple made up of His people. Thus, the law itself is preserved, while the covenantal system of applying it has been replaced. And if you read the account in Hebrews carefully, this is exactly what it teaches. Continuing in verse 13, we read: “For He of whom these things are spoken [referring to Yeshua] belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar. For it is evident that our LORD arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life. For He testifies: ‘You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek.’ For on the one hand there is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness, for the law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, there is the bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.” The law that made

nothing perfect here refers to the priestly order of Aaron and the animal sacrifices he brought in a man-made temple—nothing more, nothing less.

{Next slide—17} Continuing in Hebrews 7, verses 22-28, the explanation becomes even clearer. We read: “by so much more Yeshua has become a surety of a better covenant.” There it is! Yeshua has not replaced the law, but the application of the law has been changed according to the terms of the New Covenant by the blood of Yeshua that He offered up by Himself, instead of the bulls of animals offered up by a human High Priest. Continuing, the writer of Hebrews adds this very thing. We read: “Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing. But [Yeshua], because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people’s, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. For the law appoints as high priests men who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, appoints the Son who has been perfected forever.”

{Next slide—18} As we continue reading, the writer continued to explain his point with the following in Chapter 8. I invite you to study your Bibles here and compare to Jeremiah 31, which we read earlier, because everything is going to come together in this section. We’re only going to examine a few key passages, starting with this important nugget in verses 1-2, where we read: “Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the LORD erected, and not man.” Please consider this interpretation. Yeshua is now our eternal High Priest and He is seated at the right hand of God interceding for us in the eternal Temple of God that the LORD has built and is still building—from our perspective. He doesn’t serve over an earthly temple, but a heavenly one. Continuing in verses 6-8, we learn this: “But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. Because finding fault with them, He says: ‘Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—’” And this is where I invite you to study this passage further. It’s abundantly clear that the New Covenant is not set off

in some distant future, but is active right now for the house of Israel and the house of Judah—those who remain a remnant of true believers in the Messiah among the children of Jacob and those of us grafted-in through faith in Yeshua. The Old Covenant, which is the manner in which God applies the law to His people, is no longer active. This is confirmed in Hebrews 8:13, where we read: “In that He says, ‘A new covenant,’ He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.” At the time of this writing, the Temple was still standing in Jerusalem. But as I noted, it was destroyed in AD 70, not very long after this letter. The Old Covenant was abolished at that time. It is no more. No child of Israel or Jew today has any benefit from it at all. As Paul wrote in Romans 10, verses 12-13, ““For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same LORD over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For ‘whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.’” Our High Priest Yeshua presides over the New Covenant between God and His people, and only through faith in Yeshua the High Priest can anyone be forgiven of sins, regardless of their heritage.

{Next slide—19} As I noted earlier in today’s message, God did not desire the blood of bulls and goats. This was never His intent for the atonement of the sins of His people. And true to His Word, the LORD also prophesied about this very thing and then revealed it at the appointed time. Please take the time to study Isaiah 52:13-53:12 in depth—if you haven’t looked at it lately. Your mind will be blown by how much these passages point forward to Yeshua, our perfect sacrifice. Today, we’re going to take a look at Isaiah 53, verses 4-6, where we read: “Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” Indeed, we have all sinned. We have all fallen short of God’s glory. There is no hope for any one of us outside the atonement the LORD offers through His blood. And this is why the LORD gave us these amazing words in Isaiah 53, verses 10-11, where we read: “Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand. He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities.” It pleased the LORD to bruise Him. Do you see what I see? The LORD said earlier, “to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams.” David wrote, “You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it.” Hosea wrote, “I desire mercy and not sacrifice, and

the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.” He doesn’t desire bulls and goats, but He did desire to make a way back to His Kingdom for His people who have fallen, and this is why He came Himself to offer up His own life one time for the required blood atonement God explained in Leviticus 17:11. Are you starting to see why Yeshua said to the woman caught in adultery, according to John 8:11: “Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.” It pleased God to put His Son to death one time to end all sacrifice, for, according to Hebrews 9:12, He didn’t desire “the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.”

{Next slide—20} Yeshua has replaced the Levitical Priesthood—He is the High Priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek. Yeshua has replaced all of the sacrifices, and never again would a sacrifice be needed to atone for sin. And Yeshua has replaced the need for a temple, because today the temple is being built up with Him as its head by all who call upon on His name. Hebrews 10, verses 11-22 helps us to bring everything we’ve covered so far today together. Starting again with an explanation of the abolished Levitical priesthood, we read: “And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified. But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after He had said before, ‘This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,’ then He adds, ‘Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.’ Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.” Pause here. Contemplate this. I want you to grasp this. “There is NO LONGER AN OFFERING FOR SIN.” Yeshua is the final offering for sin. There is no more Levitical Priesthood, and never again will there be. If there are Levites who make it into God’s Kingdom, they will come and bow down low to Yeshua and beg for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, saying, “Please, put me in one of the priestly positions, that I may eat a piece of bread.” What greater bread is there than the Bread of Life, who is Yeshua, the Word who became flesh and dwelt among us, the Unleavened Manna from Heaven who was lifted up on our behalf so that we can be made righteous in the eyes of God. There is no one, Jew or Gentile, who will make it into the Kingdom of God without total surrender to Yeshua, our LORD and our God.

{Next slide—21} Because of Yeshua’s sacrifice, because our Messiah sits on the throne of God, interceding for us as our High Priest, we ought to enter the Heavenly

temple regularly to praise and worship our King, making sure that we do not have an occasion to put Him back on the cross again. The writer of Hebrews explains this best, as we read in Hebrews 10, verses 19-27: “Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Yeshua, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching. For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.” Let us “not be haughty but fear,” for God can certainly cut us off from His salvation if we fail to continue in the righteousness that Yeshua has called us to follow. While we who trust in Yeshua have been washed clean by His blood, we come in together today in His Holy assembly, seeking to build each other up into the living stones that will ultimately become His eternal temple. We exhort one another every Sabbath Day to stand firm in our confession of faith in Yeshua as our LORD and our God, and stir one another up to walk in love with the good works that Yeshua Himself demonstrated, because the adversary is seeking to devour God’s children while he still has a chance. I am personally encouraged to stand firm in my faith in Yeshua and obedience to God’s commandments by meditating on the sacrifice that He offered up for us. Our God loved us so much that He came down from Heaven and suffered the most gruesome death possible, not for His own sins, but for yours and mine. How could we even bear the thought of sinning again and putting Him to an open shame?

{Next slide—22} The Apostle Paul presented a passage in Colossians 1, verses 15-23 that I want to leave you with today, because it ties today’s message into the rest of the series, answering the question quite thoroughly, “Who is Yeshua the Messiah?” We read: “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church [assembly], who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to

Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight—if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven....” Thank you Yeshua for the salvation you’ve offered! Please help us to walk in a way that is humble before you, because of what you have done for us, what you are now doing, and what you have still promised to do. Amein. Shabbat shalom.