

Hebrews Chapter 10

Verses 1-18: The feature of the new covenant emphasized here is Christ's once-for-all sacrifice. The author has frequently stated this point in the preceding chapters (7:27; 9:12, 26, 28), but here it becomes the focal point of the discussion.

First, this truth is highlighted by contrast with the repetitious service of the Mosaic system. Those sacrifices had to be offered "year by year continually". Later, the author demonstrates that Christ's single, one-time sacrifice is completed by His continuing position, seated at God's right hand (verses 11-14).

Hebrews 10:1 "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, [and] not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect."

"Shadow": The Greek term translated "shadow" refers to a pale reflection, as contrasted with a sharp, distinct one. The term behind "Image," on the other hand, indicates an exact and distinct replica (Col. 2:17).

"Perfect": This term is used repeatedly in Hebrews to refer to salvation. As much as those living under the law desired to approach God, the Levitical system provided no way to enter His holy presence (Psalms 15:1; 16:11; 24:3-4).

There is such a difference in the shadow, and the real, that the shadow comes from. A shadow is a distorted view of the real thing the shadow comes from. These sacrifices were no different. These sacrifices of the blood of animals could not do away with sin. They could only cover the sin.

Day of Atonement is the sacrifice mentioned above, when the high priest went into the holy of holies with the blood of an animal for his sins and the sins of the people. For this particular sacrifice, he wore nothing but his white linen garment from head to foot. The plainness of the garment, itself, was telling God that we have nothing within ourselves to offer God.

Our only righteousness is in God's forgiving heart. Truly even the garment was symbolic of the robes which the Christians will wear in heaven. They are white because they have been washed in the blood of the Lamb.

Colossians 2:17 "Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body [is] of Christ."

We see here that all the ceremonies were a shadow of Jesus' great sacrifice for us.

Hebrews 10:2 "For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins."

“Conscience of sins”: This is the same word translated “conscience” (in verse 22, 9:9; 13:18). If sin had really been over-powered by that system of sacrifices, the Old Testament believers’ consciences would have been cleansed from condemning guilt (verse 22). There was not freedom of conscience under the Old Covenant.

We see clearly that this sacrifice of animal blood on the Day of Atonement did not clear the conscience of the person offering the sacrifice. The sin was still there, it was just covered.

It seems that every year, when they sacrificed, they still had the sins of previous years on their conscience. The blood of Jesus washes the sin of the people away, and clears their conscience. Look at the following prophecies of what Jesus' sacrifice did for all of us.

Psalms 103:12 " As far as the east is from the west, [so] far hath he removed our transgressions from us."

Isaiah 43:25 "I, [even] I, [am] he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins."

Isaiah 44:22 "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee."

Micah 7:19 "He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea."

You can easily see from this that there is no comparison, between what the sacrifice of these animals' blood could do, and what the sacrifice of Jesus' blood could do.

Hebrews 10:3 "But in those [sacrifices there is] a remembrance again [made] of sins every year."

“Remembrance”: The Old Testament sacrifices not only could not remove sin, but their constant repetition was a constant reminder of that deficiency. The promise of the New Covenant was that the sin would be removed and even God would “remember” their sins “no more” (8:12, quoting Jer. 31:34).

Exodus 30:10 "And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonements: once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations: it [is] most holy unto the LORD."

The big problem with this type of sacrifice is that there was no new birth in the person sacrificing, and they went right back into sin after they sacrificed. Notice in the following Scripture the fear that goes along with the remembrance of their past sins.

1 Kings 17:18 "And she said unto Elijah, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?"

What a tremendous difference in their atonement and ours through the blood of Jesus Christ.

Matthew 26:28 "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." This prophecy in Scripture of the great sacrifice Jesus made for us explains it so well.

Jeremiah 31:34 "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

Hebrews 10:4 "For [it is] not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."

“Not possible”: The Levitical system was not designed by God to remove or forgive sins. It was preparatory for the coming of the Messiah (Gal. 3:24), in that it made the people expectant (1 Pet. 1:10). It revealed the seriousness of their sinful condition, in that even temporary covering required the death of an animal.

It revealed the reality of God’s holiness and righteousness by indicating that sin had to be covered. Finally, it revealed the necessity of full and complete forgiveness so that God could have desired fellowship with His people.

Remember here that neither can the blood of a mere man. If Jesus was no more than a mere man, then you and I are headed for hell. The blood of Jesus was pure, undefiled blood. So many people are saying that Jesus was just a man when He walked on the earth; if He was, we who have trusted in His blood saving us would be lost.

Jesus was born of a virgin. The Holy thing within her was the Spirit of the Living God. GOD THE WORD took on the form of flesh and dwelt among us.

Matthew 1:23 "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."

The blood of animals and man is defiled. This blood shed at Calvary was the blood of the sinless Son of God. Look at the next few Scriptures and see just how angry God had gotten at the people for their sacrifices without true repentance.

Isaiah 1:11-15 "To what purpose [is] the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats." "When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts?" "Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; [it is] iniquity, even the solemn meeting." "Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear [them]." "And when ye spread forth your hands, I

will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood."

You can easily see from this that God was fed up with their form of religion without their heart being in it. We should take a warning from this. In the 3rd chapter of 2 Timothy we read of a similar happening in the last days. Men having a form of religion; we are warned to turn away.

"Verses 5-6 "Thou hast had no pleasure": God was not pleased with sacrifices given by a person who did not give them out of a sincere heart (Psalm 51:17; Isa. 1:11; Jer. 6:20; Hosea 6:6; Amos 5:21-25). To sacrifice only as a ritual, without obedience, was a mockery and worse than no sacrifice at all (Isa. 1:11-18).

Hebrews 10:5 "Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me:"

(Verses 5-7 is quoted from Psalm 40:6-8).

"A body hast thou prepared me": (Psalm 40:6 reads), "My ears you have opened."

This does not represent a significant alteration in the meaning of the psalm, as indicated by the fact that the writer quoted the LXX version of the Hebrew idiom, which was an accurate representation for Greek readers.

The Greek translators regarded the Hebrew words as a figure of speech, in which a part of something signified the whole, i.e., the hollowing out of ears was part of the total work of fashioning a human body.

And ears were selected as the part to emphasize because they were symbols of obedience as the organ of the reception of God's Word and will (1 Sam. 15:22). Christ needed a body in order to offer Himself as the final sacrifice (2:14).

The He, spoken of here, is Jesus. He took on the form of a body, that He might take our sin on that body. The body of Jesus Christ which took our sin on His body died on the cross. In a figure, sin died on that cross for all who look to Him for salvation. Jesus defeated sin for the Christian on the cross, just as He defeated death, for the Christian, when He rose again.

Sacrifice and offering would have been sufficient, if it had changed the heart of the one doing the sacrifice. It did not bring new birth and could not do away with sin, so the person sacrificing went right back into the sinful way of life, until the next Day of Atonement.

We see that the law could not, and would not, free man from his sinful nature, so God sent us a better plan in His Son Jesus.

1 Timothy 3:16 "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

Hebrews 10:6 "In burnt offerings and [sacrifices] for sin thou hast had no pleasure."

God was not disappointed with the sacrifice, as much as He was with the attitude of the people, when they sacrificed. To obey is better than sacrifice.

1 Samuel 15:22 "And Samuel said, Hath 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 hearken than the fat of rams."

Hebrews 10:7 "Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God."

We know that the desire of Jesus was to do the will of the Father. He was obedient even to the death on the cross.

Matthew 26:39 "And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou [wilt]."

To be the Christian that we should be, we too, must say, not my will O Lord, but thy will be done in me.

Hebrews Chapter 10 Questions

1. What is the law called in Hebrews 10:1?
2. How often was the sacrifice in 10:1 done?
3. What was it called?
4. What is a shadow?
5. What was the only thing the sacrifice of an animal's blood could do?
6. What did the high priest wear, when he offered the blood of the animal for his sins and for the peoples' sin in the Holy of Holies?
7. What did the plainness of this garment symbolize?
8. What were all the ceremonies conducted in the temple symbolic of?
9. Why was the conscience of the person sacrificing not cleared?

10. How far away does Jesus put our sin that He died for, from us?
11. Where does it say that our sin is blotted out?
12. Why are these Scriptures about Jesus' sacrifice found in the Old Testament?
13. Where is the specific Scripture telling the Hebrews that they were to sacrifice once a year for the sins of the people?
14. What was wrong with this type of sacrificing animals?
15. In first Kings 17:18 what makes the woman afraid?
16. In what prophetic book do we find the promise that all of them will know God and He will remember their sins no more?
17. What is another thing we should remember when we read that the blood of animals cannot do away with sin?
18. If Jesus were no more than mere man, what would happen to us at our death?
19. What makes Jesus' blood different?
20. What name means, God with us?
21. In Isaiah 1, how does God feel about the animal sacrifices?
22. This was a form of religion without what in it?
23. What are we warned of in 2 Timothy chapter 3?
24. Why did Jesus take on the form of a body for His stay on earth?
25. At what point did Jesus defeat sin?
26. At what point did Jesus defeat death?
26. What would have made the sacrifice and offerings acceptable unto God?
27. Where do we find the Scripture that tells us to obey is better than sacrifice?
28. What lesson can Christians learn from this?