



## Christ's Perfect Sacrifice Fulfilled the Law Hebrews 10

### Introduction

So far in the Book of Hebrews we have learned about our Great High Priest forever who is able to save to the uttermost (chapter 7), the true sanctuary in which He ministers under a new covenant (chapter 8), and the cleansing blood which opened the way for us to enter the heavenly sanctuary (chapter 9).

A further truth, which will now be considered, is the way by which Christ entered into the Holiest of All. What is the path that He took when He walked the way of the cross to shed His blood and pass through the veil into the inner sanctuary (the Holiest of All) to appear in the presence of God? What was it that gave His sacrifice its worth? What secured His acceptance before God as our High Priest? What is the spiritual character of Christ's blood that gave it such infinite power and efficacy? These are the questions which will be answered in chapter 10.

But before embarking upon an explanation of Christ's efficacious sacrifice, the writer gives an explanation of the impotence of the law. Why had the law failed, for over 1,500 years, to accomplish what Christ's blood effectuated so perfectly in one sacrifice?

### Outline of Hebrews Chapter 10

- I. The Inefficacy (failure) of the Law -10:1-10
- II. The Efficacy and Substance of Christ's Sacrifice - 10:11-25
- III. The Problem of Willful Sin - 10:26-39

#### I. The Inefficacy (failure) of the Law – Hebrews 10:1-10

The Law of Moses was good and fulfilled its purpose, which was to reveal sin to be sin and sinners to be sinners. As Paul wrote in Romans 7:7, *For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, "You shall not covet"*. The law is meant to convict sinners of their sin and point them to Jesus Christ for cleansing from it. The law is like a mirror. We look at the law and see the dirt in our lives and we want to wash it away. And even though the law gave instructions on washing the dirt away (the duties of the priests and the sacrifices), and the law contained symbols which looked ahead to the One who would take the dirt (sin) away once and for all, the law could never wash anyone clean. In fact, the writer of Hebrews describes seven shortcomings of the law

#### A. Seven Points Regarding Shortcomings of the Law – Hebrews 10:1-4

##### 1. The law was a shadow - 10:1

The law was only a *shadow* and never the substance of *the good things to come*. What were those *good things*? They were forgiveness of sins, a right relationship with God, and a clear conscience. These were seen in the law in shadows but could never be grasped in reality.

##### 2. The law was not the very image – 10:1

The law could not reflect perfectly the reality that was to come. It was an image but only a shadowy image and not the *very image*. "When a man makes an image, it is but a dead thing. When God gives an image it is a living reality, sharing in the life and the attributes of the original" (The Holiest of All, Andrew Murray).

The gospel is what gives us the *very image* of things. Christ Jesus, the Son, was the very image of God the Father. He was the true likeness, *the image of the invisible God* (Colossians 1:15), *being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person* (Hebrews 1:3).

##### 3. The law could never make anyone perfect – 10:1

Those who approached God could never be made perfect by the law. No matter how perfectly a man or woman kept the law, it did not have power enough to change or improve anyone. The law made no one perfect in God's sight.

##### 4. The law could not stop the offering of sacrifice- 10:2

If the law had the power to make people perfect, they would have ceased to bring their sacrifices and offerings. There would have been no need.

##### 5. The law could not cleanse the conscience – 10:2

If the worshipers had been purified by the law, they would have no longer had *consciousness of sins*. The word *consciousness* is the same word translated *conscience* in verse 22. If the law had dealt adequately with sin, the worshipers would have been cleansed from guilt.

6. The law was a constant reminder of sin -10:3-4

Sin was unaffected by the law keeping. The offering of blood sacrifice was actually a constant reminder to the worshipers that they were sinners.

7. The law could not take away sins -10:4

All the blood of all the bulls and goats offered day by day and year by year could never remove a single sin. The writer says it was *impossible*, a very strong word. The sacrifices were shadows and images of a far greater reality to come. They were like credit slips. Sin was covered for the moment by their blood because the offerings looked forward to the cross.

#### B. A Perfect Sacrifice Prophesied -10:5-9

1. Quoted by Jesus on earth - 10:5-7

At some time not recorded in the gospels, Jesus quoted from Psalm 40:7-9 where David spoke of the Messiah as entering into the world in human form! These are the main points of the Psalm.

- a. *Sacrifice and offering you did not desire*

The sacrifices and offerings did nothing for God. They served as a visual aid to the offerer of the seriousness of sin and duty to God. They were temporary.

- b. *But a body You have prepared for Me*

The perfect sacrifice would have to be *a body*. It was necessary for Jesus to be human.

- c. No pleasure in burnt offerings and sin offerings

The burnt offering and sin offering were the first and last of the five offerings and so they encompass them all. (See Leviticus 1-7 for a list of all the offerings.) God took no pleasure in any of them.

- d. *Behold, I have come -- in the volume of the book it is written of Me*

Jesus knew exactly why He came and what He was to do. *In the volume of the book it is written of Me* agrees with such statements as Luke 24:27 and John 5:45-47 where Jesus says that the Old Testament is about Him.

- e. *To do Your will, O God*

It was Jesus' priority, purpose and passion to do His Father's will. Is it yours?

2. *He takes the first away that He may establish the second* - 10:8-9.

"The old sacrificial system was removed to make way for the new, once-for-all sacrifice of Christ, who had obediently done God's will (Philippians 2:8)" (The MacArthur Bible Commentary, John MacArthur).

#### C. *By that will we have been sanctified* - Hebrews 10:10

1. Through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ

It was God's purpose to call out a holy people for His name (1 Peter 2:9) and this was accomplished by Jesus' death (1 Pet. 1:18; 2:24). Are you trusting in the perfect offering of Jesus to make you holy and acceptable to God, or are you striving for perfection in your own strength?

2. *Once for all*

Jesus made one offering and it is good for all time and all people. Because it is hard for people to accept this at face value, it is stated three times, again in verse 11 and verse 14. It is good news and it enabled Jesus to cry out triumphantly from the cross, *It is finished* (John 19:30). The work of redemption was completed.

#### II. The Efficacy and Substance of Christ's Sacrifice – Hebrews 10:11-25

- A. The Savior's All Sufficient Sacrifice for Sin - Hebrews 10:11-14

There are four points to notice in this passage.

1. Need for another covenant – 10:11

The daily service and repeated offerings under the old covenant were useless and ineffective because it was a covenant of symbol and shadow only. There were no chairs in the tabernacle or in the temple for the priest's work was never done. They had no rest from offering the sacrifices. There was never time to sit down.

2. Christ offered one sacrifice and sat down - 10:12

Christ's work was finished on the cross and so He sat down at God's right hand. *He (God) raised Him (Christ) from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come* (Ephesians 1:20-21).

3. Waiting for His enemies to be made His footstool - 10:13

The spiritual battle goes on and we are in it. But the outcome is not in doubt.

4. By one offering He made perfect those being sanctified - 10:14

This is the third mention of one all-sufficient sacrifice which did something the law could not do: in this case, it made the believer *perfect*, meaning “complete” forever.

#### B. The Holy Spirit's Witness – Hebrews 10:15-18

1. Prophecy and promise of a new covenant – 10:15-16

The writer endorses the inspiration of Scripture by calling the Holy Spirit the writer of Jeremiah's prophecy: *I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them* (Jeremiah 31:33-34). The heart of a believer is changed by receiving Christ, and his or her very nature is transformed.

2. Sins and lawless deeds are remembered no more – 10:17

*And their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.* Our sins are cast into the deepest sea (Micah 7:19) and, according to Corey ten Boom, “God has put up a No Fishing sign.” If God has forgotten your sins, shouldn't you? This is good news. Humanistic philosophies can tell you how to live with your sins, but only God can forgive sins and pronounce them gone!

3. No further offering needed for sin – 10: 18

The writer's conclusion is that when sins have been forgiven there is no longer need of an offering for sin. When the debt has been paid, there is no need to keep making payments. This is the fourth mention of a once for all sacrifice.

#### C. Summation - 10:19-21

*Therefore*, the writer proceeds to sum up the two major points that have been made.

First, by Jesus' blood, a new and living way to God is opened to us. The veil which barred entrance to the Holiest of All was torn apart when Jesus' blood was shed on the cross. Those who have placed their faith in Him have access to God directly at any and all times (Romans 5:1).

Secondly, we have a great High Priest over the house of God. This is what needed to be proved, and it has been. Jesus is our great High Priest, always on duty, watching over us and interceding for us. What are the applications of these two great facts to your life?

#### D. Exhortations: *Let us* - 10:22-25

There are three applications, or exhortations, for us.

1. *Let us draw near with a true heart* - 10:22

What is the good of having access to God if we do not use it? Why have a key to the bank and never go there? This is a good exhortation. Have you been to the throne of God today? When will you go?

2. *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope* - 10:23

This is the theme of the book: hold fast, hang on, and, above all, do it *without wavering*. We are able because *He who promised is faithful*.

3. *Let us consider one another* – 10:24-25

This is an exciting application because it involves others. However, it rests on and follows the other two. If we are not coming to God regularly and holding fast in our faith, we will not be effective in the lives of others. After seeing to our own individual spiritual response, there is a corporate responsibility to *stir up love and good works*.

We are to meet together. The first exhortation we should give each other is, “See you in church!” or “See you at Bible study!” We need each other. No one is an island. When we are saved we are taken into God's family, the Body of Christ. Of Paul's thirteen letters, only four are addressed to individuals. Nine are to churches where Paul had taught them to gather together on the first day of the week. When a believer misses church, church misses him or her. The individual misses fellowship, news, prayer, strengthening, and the preaching of the word of God.

We are to encourage one another and do so in the light of Judgment Day. Haven't you appreciated it when someone cared enough to encourage you, or to exhort you to be your best in Christ? Will you ask God who you can do this for today? He may ask you at the Judgment.

#### III. The Problem of Willful Sin - Hebrews 10:26-39

This section makes it clear that willful sin is very serious and has specific consequences. Many people

think they can indulge in sin, confess it and God will forgive them over and over. But that is not the scenario we see here. Instead, we find two consequences and an illustration.

#### A. No Further Sacrifice – Hebrews 10:26-31

The believer cannot go get a bull or a goat and bring it to be sacrificed for his transgressions. Jesus has died as the once for all perfect sacrifice. There is not another sacrifice for sins.

##### 1. Looking for Judgment – 10:27

Willful sin committed in full knowledge of wrongdoing leaves no alternative but judgment. God will judge the sin. The consequences will be carried out. This passage is similar to Hebrews 6:4-6.

##### 2. Punishment Under Moses – 10:28

Punishment under the Mosaic Law is used for illustration. The law was not known for its mercy, although there was mercy built into it. On the one hand, infractions had to be punished. On the other hand, the punishment was limited; “an eye for an eye” and no more, “thirty-nine stripes”, not forty. However, when transgressions were discovered, punishment was automatic. The priest did not have the option of showing mercy.

##### 3. Reasons for Judgment – 10:29

*Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose will he be thought worthy?* God is not unreasonable. It is the sinner who is unreasonable. In deliberately sinning against knowledge, the sinner has also *trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace.*

Of course the offender will say, “I didn’t mean to do all that.” But he has. That is the nature of sin. We always misjudge its seriousness. You dare not play games with God.

##### 4. Vengeance belongs to God the Judge – 10:30-31

*It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God* (Deuteronomy 32:35; Psalm 135:14). Is it worth it to see if you can get away with it?

It is because of Jesus Christ interposing His precious blood that God shows us mercy. Otherwise, to be true to His holy character, sin would be immediately punished. But, Jesus Christ took that punishment for us (1Corinthians 5:21).

#### B. Reminder of What It Means to Be Saved – Hebrews 10:32-34

How wonderful is the attitude of new believers! The writer reminds his readers of their joy in the early days of salvation when they underwent afflictions, persecutions, trials, and sufferings, regarding them as nothing. They even welcomed them. They regarded being a spectacle (*gazingstock*, KJV) as a privilege. They identified with and helped the writer who at some time was in prison, probably endangering their own lives.

#### C. Exhortations – Hebrews 10:35-36

The writer gives two exhortations. First is the warning not to cast away your confidence for it contains eternal reward. Secondly, have patience after having done the will of God so that *you may receive the promise*.

#### D. The Promise – Hebrews 10:37-39

##### a. Return of Christ – Habakkuk 2:3-4

*He who is coming will come.* All the promises and rewards are bound up in the return of Christ. He is our hope.

##### b. *The just shall live by faith* – Habakkuk 2:3-4

This wonderful verse appears for the fourth and last time in the Bible. It originated with Habakkuk. Then Paul used it twice (Romans 1:17 and Galatians 3:11). Believers are those who are made just by faith and they continue to live by faith.

#### E. Summation

Just as in Hebrews 6, the writer ends with what we would call today a “disclaimer”. *But we are not of those who draw back into perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.* Does this describe you?

#### Applications

1. There are two alternatives for those who profess to be Christians -- believing or drawing back. Do you live as one who believes or as one who is drawing back?
2. Andrew Murray made a statement which is worth contemplating, “It was to meet the judgment and the wrath of God that Christ’s blood was needed. The blood stands midway between the judgment threatened and the judgment yet to be poured out. As we believe in the judgment we shall honor the blood and as we believe in the blood we shall fear the judgment” (The Holiest of All).