

“The Futile & The Faithful”

Hebrews 10:1-25

December 2, 2018

INTRO: *Let me ask you a nightmarish question as we begin...*

What’s the worst example of forgetfulness you’ve ever personally experienced???

(birthdays? anniversaries? important appointments? personal promises? etc.)

- What did your forgetfulness cost you?
- What were the ultimate consequences?

T/S: Hebrews 10 is *an eternal exhortation... not to forget* that which distinguishes the difference between the futile & the faithful in church!

VIDEO: *“Christ’s Death Brings Man Freedom...”*

(Let us pray that no one here will ever forget these truths.)

CONTEXT:

- Hebrews year-to-date... and the 5 warnings
- Hebrews 8:1-10:18... no imperatives

BIG IDEA: *Remember... religious rituals are foolish & futile without the sacrificial-work AND sanctifying-worship of Jesus the Christ, because it is His blood that defines & delivers the faith-filled family of God... (a.k.a. the TRUE, cross-carrying, Christ-exalting, Christian Church.)*

PREVIEW:

- The FUTILE vv.1-11
- The FORGOTTEN vv.12-18
- The FAITHFUL vv.19-25

I. The FUTILE

v.1-11

1. All shadows
2. All substitutes
3. All sinners
4. All sacrifices

*1 For **since** the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, **it can never**, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, **make perfect** those who draw near. 2 **Otherwise**, would they not have ceased to be offered, **since** the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? 3 **But** in these sacrifices **there is a reminder of sins** every year. 4 For **it is impossible** for the blood of bulls and goats **to take away sins**.*

*Anything & EVERYTHING except the New Covenant gospel of grace is **FUTILE** for salvation!*

5. Only our Savior can save us!

*5 **Consequently**, when **Christ came into the world**, he said,*

“Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; 6 in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure.

6. Only as written in Scripture...

Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.’” When he said above, “You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings” (these are offered according to the law), 9 then he added, “Behold, I have come to do your will.”

7. Only as the Suffering-Servant...

He does away with the first in order to establish the second.

8. The Supreme Solution is the 2nd/New Covenant...

And by that will, we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

- *Be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy... Lev. 19:2*
- *NOW... **we can BE holy!** (2 Corinthians 5:17-20)*

9. Superficial, standing servants

10. Superficial same-ole, same-ole sacrifices

11 *And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins*

- This is Ben Franklin's definition of insanity...
- This is the Bible's definition of

II. The FORGOTTEN

v.12-18

12 *But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God,*

- **Forever...** *"for all time"*
- **Final...** *"a single sacrifice for sins"*
- ***It is Finished!*** *"sat down at right hand of God"*

13 *waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet.*

- Foes & fools WILL-BE His footstools!

14 *For by a single offering he has perfected (past tense) for all time (future tense) those who are being sanctified (active, perfect-present tense).*

- Fullness (past, present, future tenses...)
- **VIDEO:** "O Come To The Alter"

15 And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; (and through us) for after saying, 16 “This is **the covenant** that I will make with them after those days, **declares the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds,**” 17 then he adds, “I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.” 18 Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.

- The true family of God is His forever family!
- (Because... “I will remember your sins no more...” and your sins “are removed as far as the east is from the west...” and “It is finished!” ... It’s as simple as defining “ETERNAL-life”)

*** COMMUNION ***

- *“Do this in remembrance of Me...”*

VIDEO: Crowder: *“All My Hope”*

- **Hebrews 9:28** = *“so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin (again) but to save **THOSE WHO ARE EAGERLY WAITING FOR HIM.**”*

III. The FAITHFUL

v.19-25

T/S: Don’t miss theses in this pregnant paragraph:

- 1 *“Therefore”* (connects 10:19-25 with 8:1-10:18)
- 2 *“since”* clauses (explain “how” & “why” issues)
- 3 *“Let us”* (encouraging exhortations)
 - *Let us* DRAW NEAR
 - *Let us* HOLD FAST
 - *Let us* CONSIDER HOW...
- 7 **imperatives/commands**
 - *“draw near”*
 - *“hold fast”*
 - *“consider how”*
 - *“stir up one another”*
 - actively *“love and do good deeds”*
 - *“do not neglect coming together...”*
 - *“encourage one another”*

20+ prepositions to expand & explain the commands

Friends... this is a portrait of the true Church!

TEXT:

19 *Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus,*

- Our confidence is in the New Covenant...
- *Our confidence is in the CROSS ("blood of Christ")*
- *Our confidence is in the RISEN Christ!*

20 by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, **through his flesh**, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God,

- **Watch now as the exhortations & commands come**

22 let us **draw near** with a **true heart** in full assurance of faith, with our **hearts sprinkled clean** from an **evil conscience** and our **bodies washed** with pure water.

- See the **Stickman Gospel...**
- Take note of the **3 sets of arrows** therein...
 - **Over** the cross = spiritual **"goats"**
 - **Under** the cross = spiritual **"wolves"**
 - **Thru** the cross = spiritual **"sheep & shepherds"**

23 Let us **hold fast** the confession of our hope **without wavering**, (a.k.a. "No matter what!") for he who promised is faithful.

24 And let us **consider how** to **stir up one another** to love and good works,

- It's a biblical command to "stir up one another"
- Praise God for those who inform, inspect, & inspire!

VIDEO: ["Relentless Christianity"](#)

25 **not neglecting** to meet together, as is the habit of some, but **encouraging one another**, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

- Biblical encouraging is NOT about you...
- Biblical encouraging is ALL about Christ...
 - To encourage is to "bring courage to another"
 - Too many want to be coddled vs. encouraged...
- I pray that we will always BE an encouraging people
- As we encourage each other in Christ... focusing on:
 - **Up... In...** and **Out** relationships
 - **Head... Heart...** and **Hands** development
 - What it means to be in **Ekklessia, Koinonia,** & **Homothoomadon...**

- **Locally... Regionally... & Globally...**
 - **ALL** by God' **Grace...**
 - **ALL** thru God's **Gospel.**
 - **ALL** for God's **Glory!**

Amen & AMEN!

CLOSE:

Let me leave you with one more living & loving application & demonstration of this truth in loving being lived out within our family of faith...

Remember... what you are about to see is NOT a commercial on television... it's our little, loving church ON mission!

Let's PRAY

VIDEO: *"HIS-BRIDGE Uganda Living Thanksgiving"*

STUDY NOTES:

10:1 a shadow of the good things to come. The "good things" were future with respect to the law, which foreshadowed them; with Christ's coming they are present ([9:11](#) note).

make perfect. The worshipers could not be "cleansed" for all time ([v. 2](#)). The law could not remove guilt from them and give them permanent access to God ([7:11](#), [19](#); [9:9](#)).

10:2 The sacrifices were repeated again and again, showing that they provided no lasting solution to the problem of sin.

10:3 reminder of sin. **The Old Testament sacrifices were a public notice, before God and humanity, that the people were still sinners (Num. 5:15). In the new covenant, God will "remember" their sins "no more" (8:12; 10:17).**

10:4 The inadequacy of the Old Testament sacrifices is sharply expressed in such passages as [1 Sam. 15:22](#); [Isa. 1:10-17](#); [Amos 5:21-24](#); [Mic. 6:6-8](#). The law was frustrated by the sin of the people ([8:8-12](#); [Rom. 8:3, 4](#)).

10:5-10 [Ps. 40:6-8](#) is here interpreted to point to the replacement of the Old Testament system of animal sacrifice by the obedience and atoning death of Christ.

10:5 a body have you prepared for me. The Hebrew text of [Ps. 40:6](#) reads, "God has opened my ear" (cf. [Isa. 50:5](#)). Hebrews follows the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) translation of the verse, speaking of the readiness of the whole person ("the body") and not only a representative part (the ears). **The "body ... prepared for me" is the humanity assumed by Christ in the course of His full obedience to the Father** ([2:14](#); [5:8](#)).

10:7 the book. Ultimately the Old Testament as a whole, which points to Christ ([Luke 24:27](#), [45-47](#)).

10:8 sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings. These terms sum up the whole Levitical sacrificial system. Over against all this (called "the first" in [v. 9](#)) Christ has another sacrifice ("the second"). Although instituted by God in the Law ([2:2](#); [8:9](#); [12:18-21](#), [25](#)), the Levitical system was not the means willed by God to remove His people's sin permanently.

10:9 to do your will. He will be obedient through suffering ([2:10](#); [5:8](#)), atoning for sin through the sacrifice of His body ([v. 10](#)).

abolishes the first. That is, the Levitical sacrificial system of the Old Testament ([8:13](#)).

[10:10](#) by that will. The unchanging purpose of God, which Jesus Christ willingly accomplished, brought salvation to us ([vv. 7, 9](#) and notes).

we have been sanctified. *Here and in [v. 14](#) the topic is not the process of sanctification (as in [12:14](#)), but the once-for-all change in our status when we are united with Christ by faith, and in this way are separated from sin's pollution and qualified for the worship of God. Being "cleansed," "sanctified," and "made perfect" are virtually synonymous in Hebrews.*

[10:11](#) every priest stands daily at his service. The daily morning and evening sacrifices, no less than the yearly Day of Atonement offerings, announce by their repetition that they cannot take sin's guilt away. A further contrast (standing versus sitting) emblematic of the difference between the Levitical priesthood and the priesthood of Christ is introduced.

[10:12](#) sat down. In contrast to the Levitical priests who stand and whose work is never done, Jesus "sat down at the right hand of God," as [Ps. 110:1](#) announces ([1:3](#); cf. [1:13](#); [8:1](#)).

[10:15](#) the Holy Spirit also bears witness. With other New Testament books, Hebrews affirms that the Spirit is the primary author of Scripture ([3:7](#); [9:8](#); [Acts 4:25](#)). The two quotations following from [Jer. 31](#) mark the beginning ([8:8](#)) and the end of the important argument developed from that passage.

[10:16, 17](#) The two quotations from [Jer. 31](#) demonstrate that **Christ's once-for-all sacrifice results in both the inner transformation or sanctification of the believer ([v. 16](#)), and in the forgiveness of sins or justification ([v. 17](#)).**

[10:19](#) Therefore, brothers. The writer includes himself with the readers in a renewed appeal for confidence, or boldness, in approaching God. **This confidence is grounded, not in any merits we possess, but in the person and work of our great High Priest who is able to "sympathize with our weaknesses" ([4:15](#)).**

to enter ... by the blood of Jesus. Not only Jesus on our behalf ([9:24](#)), but also **we ourselves enter into God's heavenly sanctuary through dependence on Jesus' sacrifice.**

10:20 the curtain, that is, through his flesh. In a surprising figure of speech, **the author identifies the veil of the temple as Jesus' body. The analogy lies in that just as the veil of the temple was torn to open the way into the Most Holy Place (6:19; 9:3; Matt. 27:51), so also Christ's body was torn so that His blood might be shed to open the way into the heavenly sanctuary (v. 19).** The parallel is figurative and is not to be pressed.

10:21 over the house of God. See note [3:6](#).

10:22 draw near. See note [4:16](#).

full assurance of faith. [The call for faith hints at the subject of ch. 11.](#)

our hearts sprinkled ... and our bodies washed. The inner cleansing of conscience that makes Jesus' death superior to the sacrifices under the law ([9:13, 14](#)) is visibly symbolized in baptism ([Eph. 5:26](#)). As the high priest washed his body with water in preparation for entering the Most Holy Place ([Lev. 16:4](#); [Ex. 29:4](#)), so we may enter now as priests into God's presence.

10:23 hold fast the confession of our hope. In another Hebrews passage mentioning "the house of God" ([v. 21](#); cf. [3:1-14](#)), there is a similar exhortation to be "firm" ([3:14](#)), and a similar assurance that Christ "is faithful" (cf. [3:5, 6](#)). Probably "our original confidence" ([3:14](#)), like the "confession of our hope" ([v. 23](#)), refers to the time of baptism (note the term "water" in [v. 22](#)) and entrance into the church ([v. 32](#)).

10:24 *consider how to stir up one another.*

The duty of encouraging one another can find expression in the church meetings (v. 25). "Love" completes a familiar triad with "faith" (v. 22) and "hope" (v. 23). This triad seems to have played a prominent role in the

teaching of the early church (1 Cor. 13:13; Col. 1:4, 5; 1 Thess. 1:3).

10:25 **not neglecting to meet together.** The believers had been severely persecuted ([vv. 32-34](#)). Assembling with other believers is an important part of Christian life. See "The Local Church" at [Rev. 2:1](#).

the Day drawing near. The day of Jesus' appearance a second time to bring salvation to those who wait for Him ([9:28](#); [12:26, 27](#)).

- The Reformation Study Bible.

Chapter 10

10:3 When people gathered for the offering of sacrifices on the Day of Atonement, they were reminded of their sins, and they undoubtedly felt guilty all over again. What they needed most was forgiveness—the permanent, powerful, sin-destroying forgiveness we have from Christ. When we confess a sin to him, we need never think of it again. Christ has forgiven us, and the sin no longer exists. See [1 John 1:9](#).

10:4 Animal sacrifices could not take away sins; they provided only a temporary way to deal with sin until Jesus came to deal with sin permanently. How, then, were people forgiven in Old Testament times? Because Old Testament believers were following God's command to offer sacrifices, he graciously forgave them when, by faith, they made their sacrifices. But that practice looked forward to Christ's perfect sacrifice. Christ's way was superior to the Old Testament way because the old way only pointed to what Christ would do to take away sins.

10:5-10 This quotation is not cited in any other New Testament book. However, **it is a central teaching of the Old Testament that God desires obedience and a right heart, not empty compliance with the sacrifice system** (see the chart in [Hosea 7, p. 1413](#)).

The writer of Hebrews applies to Christ the words of the psalmist in [Psalm 40:6-8](#).

Christ came to offer his body on the cross for us as a sacrifice that is completely acceptable to God. **God's new and living way for us to please him is not by keeping laws or even by abstaining from sin. It is by coming to him in faith to be forgiven, and then following him in loving obedience.**

[10:5-10](#) The costly sacrifice of an animal's life impressed upon the sinner the seriousness of his or her own sin before God. Because Jesus shed his own blood for us, his sacrifice is infinitely greater than any Old Testament offering. **Considering the immeasurable gift he gave us, we should respond by giving him our devotion and service.**

[10:9](#) Canceling the first covenant in order to put into effect a far better one meant doing away with the system of sacrifices contained in the ceremonial law. It didn't mean eliminating God's *moral* law (the Ten Commandments). The ceremonial law prepared people for Christ's coming. With Christ's death and resurrection, that system was no longer needed. And through Christ we can fulfill the moral law as we let him live in us.

[10:11, 12](#) **Christ's work is contrasted with the work of the Jewish priests. The priests' work was never finished, so they had to stand day after day and offer sacrifices; Christ's sacrifice (dying in our place) is finished, so he is seated.** The priests repeated the sacrifices often; Christ sacrificed once for all. The sacrifice system couldn't completely remove sin; Christ's sacrifice effectively cleansed us.

[10:12](#) **If the Jewish readers of this book were to return to the old Jewish system, they would be implying that Christ's sacrifice wasn't enough to forgive their sins. Adding anything to his sacrifice or taking anything from it denies its validity.** Any system to gain salvation through good deeds is essentially rejecting the significance of Christ's death and spurning the Holy Spirit's work.

Beware of anyone who tells you that Christ's sacrifice still leaves you incomplete or that something else is needed to make you acceptable to God. When we believe in Christ, he makes us completely right with God. **Our loving relationship leads us to follow him in willing obedience and service. He is pleased with our service, but we cannot be saved by our good deeds.**

10:14 We have been made perfect, yet we are being made holy. Through his death and resurrection, Christ, once for all, made his believers perfect in God's sight. At the same time, he is making them holy (progressively cleansed and set apart for his special use) in their daily pilgrimage here.

We should not be surprised, ashamed, or shocked that we still need to grow. God is not finished with us. We can encourage this growth process by deliberately applying Scripture to all areas of our life, by accepting the discipline and guidance Christ provides, and by giving him control of our desires and goals.

10:17 **The writer concludes his argument with this powerful statement that God will never again remember our sins. Christ forgives completely, so there is no need to confess our past sins repeatedly. As believers, we can be confident that the sins we confess and renounce are forgiven and forgotten.**

10:19 The Most Holy Place in the Temple was sealed from view by a curtain (**10:20**). Only the high priest could enter this holy room, and he did so only once a year on the Day of Atonement when he offered the sacrifice for the nation's sins. But **Jesus' death removed the curtain, and all believers may walk into God's presence at any time** (see also **6:19, 20**).

10:21, 22 How is it possible for us to go right into the presence of God? We come not halfheartedly or with improper motives or pretense, but with pure, individual, and sincere

worship. *We can know that we have "sincere hearts" if we evaluate our thoughts and motives according to his Word (see 4:12).*

Christians can approach God boldly, free from our "guilty consciences" and in full assurance because of the work of Jesus Christ. We can go to God without doubting, knowing that he will hear and answer us. **Under the new covenant, our hearts and consciences are cleansed completely, not partially or temporarily** (see [9:14](#)). Our clean consciences allow us to enter God's presence with boldness. Finally, the imagery of our bodies having been "washed with pure water" actually pictures an inward cleansing. Just as baptism is an outward sign that represents the purification that Christ does inside us, so this washing speaks of an internal cleansing from sin. Once cleansed, we can approach God.

[10:22-25](#) We have significant privileges associated with our new life in Christ: (1) We have personal access to God through Christ and can draw near to him without an elaborate system ([10:22](#)); (2) we may grow in faith, overcome doubts and questions, and deepen our relationship with God ([10:23](#)); (3) we may enjoy motivation from one another ([10:24](#)); (4) we may worship together ([10:25](#)).

[10:25](#)

To neglect Christian meetings is to give up the encouragement and help of other Christians. We gather together to share our faith and to strengthen one another in the Lord. As we get closer to the day when Christ will return, we will face many spiritual struggles, and even times of persecution. Anti-Christian forces will grow in strength. Difficulties should never be excuses for missing church services. Rather, as difficulties arise, we should make an even greater effort to be faithful in attendance.

- Life Application Study Bible.

The Superior Sacrifice

[Hebrews 10](#)

A teenage boy, whose mother was away on a visit, found himself with time on his hands. He decided to read a book from the family library. His mother was a devout Christian, so the boy knew there would be a sermon at the beginning and an application at the end of the book, but there would also be some interesting stories in between.

While reading the book, he came across the phrase "the finished work of Christ." It struck him with unusual power. "The finished work of Christ."

"Why does the author use this expression?" he asked himself. "Why not say the atoning or the propitiatory work of Christ?" (You see, he knew all the biblical terms. He just did not know the Saviour!) Then the words, "It is finished," flashed into his mind, and he realized afresh that the work of salvation was accomplished.

"If the whole work was finished and the whole debt paid, what is there left for me to do?" He knew the answer and fell to his knees to receive the Saviour and full forgiveness of sins. That is how J. Hudson Taylor, founder of the China Inland Mission, was saved.

The tenth chapter of Hebrews emphasizes the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ, in contrast with the imperfect sacrifices that were offered under the Old Covenant Our Lord's superior priesthood belongs to a better order—Melchizedek's and not Aaron's. It functions on the basis of a better covenant—the New Covenant—and in a better sanctuary, in heaven. But all of this depends on the better sacrifice, which is the theme of this chapter.

The writer presented three benefits that explain why the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is superior to the Old Covenant sacrifices.

1. Christ's Sacrifice Takes Away Sin (Heb. 10:1-10)

Sin, of course, is man's greatest problem. No matter what kind of religion a man has, if it cannot deal with sin, it is of no value. By nature, man is a sinner; and by choice, he proves that his

nature is sinful. It has well been said, "We are not sinners because we sin. We sin because we are sinners."

The need for a better sacrifice (vv. 1-4). Why were the Old Covenant sacrifices inferior? After all, they were ordained by the Lord; and they were in force for hundreds of years. While it is true that at times the Jewish people permitted these sacrifices to become empty rituals ([Isa. 1:11-15](#)), it is also true that many sincere people brought their offerings to God and were blessed.

The very *nature* of the Old Covenant sacrifices made them inferior. The Law was only "a shadow of good things to come" and not the reality itself. The sacrificial system was a type or picture of the work our Lord would accomplish on the cross. This meant that the system was temporary, and therefore could accomplish nothing permanent. The very repetition of the sacrifices day after day, and the Day of Atonement year after year, pointed out the entire system's weakness.

Animal sacrifices could never completely deal with human guilt. God did promise forgiveness to believing worshipers ([Lev. 4:20, 26, 31, 35](#)), but this was a judicial forgiveness and not the removal of guilt from people's hearts. People lacked that inward witness of full and final forgiveness. They could not claim, "I have no more consciousness of sins." If those worshipers had been "once purged [from guilt of sin]" they would never again have had to offer another sacrifice.

So the annual Day of Atonement did not accomplish "remission of sin" but only "reminder of sin." The annual repetition of the ceremony was evidence that the previous year's sacrifices had not done the job. True, the nation's sins were covered; but they were not cleansed.

Nor did the people have God's inward witness of forgiveness and acceptance.

Yes, there was a desperate need for a better sacrifice because the blood of bulls and of goats could not take away sins. It could cover sin and postpone judgment; but it could never effect a once-and-for-all redemption. Only the better sacrifice of the Son of God could do that.

The provision of the better sacrifice (vv. 5-9).

It was God who provided the sacrifice and not man. The quotation is from [Psalm 40:6-8](#), and it is applied to Jesus Christ in His incarnation ("when He cometh into the world"). The quotation makes it clear that Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the Old Covenant sacrifices.

The word *sacrifice* refers to any of the animal sacrifices. Offering covers the meal offerings and the drink offerings. The burnt offering and sin offering are mentioned ([Heb. 10:5, 8](#)). The trespass offering would be covered in the word *sacrifice* ([Heb. 10:5](#)). Each of these offerings typified the sacrifice of Christ and revealed some aspect of His work on the cross (see [Lev. 1-7](#)).

The phrase, "a body hast Thou prepared Me" ([Heb. 10:5](#)), is not found in the original quotation. [Psalm 40:6](#) reads, "Mine ears hast Thou opened." The writer of Hebrews was quoting from the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament. How do we explain this variation? Some connect "Mine ears hast Thou opened" with [Exodus 21:1-6](#), a passage that describes the actions of a master whose servant did not want to be set free. The master bored a hole through the ear lobe of the servant, which was a sign that the servant preferred to remain with his master. The idea is that our Lord was like a willing servant who had His ears bored.

The problem with that explanation is that only *one* ear was bored, while the verse ([Ps. 40:6](#)) speaks of *both* ears. Furthermore, the verb used in [Exodus 21](#) means "to pierce," while the verb in [Psalm 40:6](#) means "to dig." Our Lord was a servant, but it is not likely that the writer had this in mind. Probably "opened ears" signified a readiness to hear and obey the will of God (see [Isa. 50:4-6](#)).

God gave His Son a prepared body that the Son might serve God and fulfill His will on earth. Our Lord often referred to this truth ([John 4:34](#); [5:30](#); [6:38](#); [17:4](#)).

Of course, the same Holy Spirit who inspired [Psalm 40](#) has the right to amplify and interpret His Word in [Hebrews 10](#). "Opened ears" indicates a body ready for service.

Twice in this paragraph, the writer stated that God "had no pleasure" in the Old Covenant sacrifices (see [Heb. 10:6, 8](#)). This does not suggest that the old sacrifices were wrong, or that sincere worshipers received no benefit from obeying God's Law. It only means that **God had no delight in sacrifices as such, apart from the obedient hearts of the worshipers. No amount of sacrifices could substitute for obedience ([1 Sam. 15:22](#), [Ps. 51:16-17](#); [Isa. 1:11, 19](#); [Jer. 6:19-20](#); [Hosea 6:6](#); [Amos 5:20-21](#)).**

Jesus came to do the Father's will. This will is the New Covenant that has replaced the Old Covenant. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus Christ has taken away the first covenant and established the second. The readers of this epistle called Hebrews would get the message: why go back to a covenant that has been taken away? Why go back to sacrifices that are inferior?

The effectiveness of the better sacrifice ([v. 10](#)). Believers have been set apart ("sanctified") by the offering of Christ's body once for all. No Old Covenant sacrifice could do that. An Old Covenant worshiper had to be purified from ceremonial defilement repeatedly. But a New Covenant saint is set apart finally and completely.

2. Christ's Sacrifice Need Not Be Repeated ([Heb. 10:11-18](#))

Again the writer contrasted the Old Covenant high priest with Jesus Christ, our Great High Priest. The fact that Jesus *sat down* after He ascended to the Father is proof that His work was completed ([Heb. 1:3](#), [13](#); [8:1](#)). The ministry of the priests in the tabernacle and temple was *never done* and *never different*: they offered the same sacrifices day after day. This constant repetition was proof that their sacrifices did not take away sins.

What tens of thousands of animal sacrifices could not accomplish, Jesus accomplished with one sacrifice forever!

The phrase "sat down" refers us again to [Psalm 110:1](#): "Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." Christ is in the place of exaltation and victory. When He returns, He shall overcome every enemy and establish His righteous kingdom. Those who have trusted Him need not fear, for they have been "perfected forever" ([Heb. 10:14](#)). Believers are "complete in Him" ([Col. 2:10](#)). We have a perfect standing before God because of the finished work of Jesus Christ.

How do we know *personally* that we have this perfect standing before God? Because of the witness of the Holy Spirit through the Word ([Heb. 10:15-18](#)). **The witness of the Spirit is based on the work of the Son and is given through the words of Scripture.** The writer ([Heb. 10:16-17](#)) quoted [Jeremiah 31:33-34](#), part of a passage he'd also quoted in [Hebrews 8:7-12](#).

The Old Covenant worshiper could not say that he had "no more consciousness of sins" ([Heb. 10:2](#)). But the New Covenant believer can say that his sins and iniquities are remembered no more. There is "no more offering for sin" ([Heb. 10:18](#)) and no more remembrance of sin!

I once shared a conference with a fine Christian psychiatrist whose lectures were very true to the Word. "The trouble with psychiatry," he told me, "is that it can only deal with symptoms. A psychiatrist can remove a patient's *feelings* of guilt, but he cannot remove the guilt. It's like a trucker loosening a fender on his truck so he won't hear the motor knock. A patient can end up feeling better, but have *two* problems instead of one!"

When a sinner trusts Christ, his sins are all forgiven, the guilt is gone, and the matter is completely settled forever.

3. Christ's Sacrifice Opens the Way to God (Heb. 10:19-39)

No Old Covenant worshiper would have been bold enough to try to enter the holy of holies in the tabernacle. Even the high priest entered the holy of holies only once a year. The thick veil that separated the holy place from the holy of holies was a barrier between people and God. Only the death of Christ could tear that veil ([Mark 15:38](#)) and open the way into the *heavenly* sanctuary where God dwells.

A gracious invitation ([yv. 19-25](#)). "Let us draw near.... Let us hold fast... Let us consider one another." This threefold invitation hinges on our boldness to enter into the holiest. And this boldness ("freedom of speech") rests on the finished work of the Saviour. On the Day of Atonement, the high priest could not enter the holy of holies unless he had the blood of the sacrifice ([Heb. 9:7](#)). But our entrance into God's presence is not because of an animal's blood, but because of Christ's shed blood.

This open way into God's presence is "new" (recent, fresh) and not a part of the Old Covenant that "waxeth [grows] old [and] is ready to vanish away" ([Heb. 8:13](#)). It is "living" because Christ "ever liveth to make intercession" for us ([Heb. 7:25](#)). Christ is the new and living way! We come to God through Him, our High Priest over the house of God (the church, see [Heb. 3:6](#)).

When His flesh was torn on the cross, and His life sacrificed, God tore the veil in the temple. This symbolized the new and living way now opened for all who believe.

On the basis of these assurances—that we have boldness to enter because we have a living High Priest—we have an "open invitation" to enter the presence of God. **The Old Covenant high priest visited the holy of holies once a year, but we are invited to dwell in the presence of God every moment of each day. What a tremendous privilege!**

Consider what is involved in this threefold invitation.

Let us draw near (v. 22). Of course, we must prepare ourselves spiritually to fellowship with God. The Old Testament priest had to go through various washings and the applying of blood on the Day of Atonement ([Lev. 16](#)). Also, during the regular daily ministry, the priests had to wash at the laver before they entered the holy place ([Ex. 30:18-21](#)). **The New Testament Christian must come to God with a pure heart and a clean conscience. Fellowship with God demands purity ([1 John 1:5-2:2](#)).**

Let us holdfast (v. 23). The readers of this epistle were being tempted to forsake their confession of Jesus Christ by going back to the Old Covenant worship. **The writer did not exhort them to hold on to their salvation, because their security was in Christ and not in themselves ([Heb. 7:25](#)).** Rather, he invited them to hold fast "the profession [confession] of... hope." (There is no manuscript evidence for the word "faith." The Greek word is "hope.")

We have noted in our study of Hebrews that there is an emphasis on the glorious hope of the believer. God is "bringing many sons unto glory" ([Heb. 2:10](#)). Believers are "partakers of the heavenly calling" ([Heb. 3:1](#)) and therefore can rejoice in hope ([Heb. 3:6](#)). *Hope* is one of the main themes of [Hebrews 6](#) (vv. 11-12, 18-20). We are looking for Christ to return ([Heb. 9:28](#)) and we are seeking that city that is yet to come ([Heb. 13:14](#)).

When a believer has his hope fixed on Christ, and relies on the faithfulness of God, then he will not waver. Instead of looking back (as the Jews so often did), we should look ahead to the coming of the Lord.

Let us consider one another ([vv. 24-25](#)).

Fellowship with God must never become selfish. We must also fellowship with other Christians in the local assembly. Apparently, some of the wavering believers had been absenting themselves from the

church fellowship. It is interesting to note that the emphasis here is not on what a believer gets from the assembly, but rather on what he can contribute to the assembly. Faithfulness in church attendance encourages others and provokes them to love and good works.

One of the strong motives for faithfulness is the soon coming of Jesus Christ. In fact, the only other place the word translated "assembling" ([Heb. 10:25](#)) is used in the New Testament is in [2 Thessalonians 2:1](#), where it's translated "gathering" and deals with the coming of Christ.

*The three great Christian virtues are evidenced here: **faith** ([Heb. 10:22](#)), **hope** ([Heb. 10:23](#)), and **love** ([Heb. 10:24](#)). They are the fruit of our fellowship with God in His heavenly sanctuary.*

- Bible Exposition Commentary – Be Confident (Hebrews).

[10:1-18](#) Christ's offering was a once-for-all sacrifice which is superior to all the sacrifices of the Levitical system.

[10:1 shadow.](#) See note on [8:5](#). The Greek term translated "shadow" refers to a pale reflection, as contrasted with a sharp, distinct one. The term behind "very image," on the other hand, indicates an exact and distinct replica (cf. [Col. 2:17](#)). **good things.** See note on [9:11](#). **perfect.** This term is used repeatedly in Hebrews to refer to salvation. See notes on [5:14](#); [7:11](#); [9:9](#). As much as those living under the law desired to approach God, the Levitical system provided no way to enter His holy presence (cf. [Pss. 15:1](#); [16:11](#); [24:3, 4](#)).

10:2 *consciousness of sins*. This is the same word translated “conscience” in [verse 22](#); [9:9](#); [13:18](#). See note on [9:9](#). If sin had really been overpowered by that system of sacrifices, the OT believers’ consciences would have been cleansed from condemning guilt (cf. [v. 22](#)). There was not freedom of conscience under the Old Covenant.

10:3 *reminder*. **The OT 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](#)).

10:4 *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 (cf. [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 fellowship with His people.

10:5-7 Quoted from **Psalm 40:6-8**.

10:5, 6 *You did not desire*. God was not pleased with sacrifices given by a person who did not give them out of a sincere heart (cf. [1 Sam. 15:22](#); [Ps. 51:17](#); [Isa. 1:11](#); [Jer. 6:20](#); [Hos. 6:6](#); [Amos 5:21-25](#)). **To sacrifice only as a ritual, without obedience, was a mockery and worse than no sacrifice at all (cf. [Isa. 1:11-18](#)).**

10:5 *a body You have prepared for 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 (cf. [1 Sam. 15:22](#)). Christ needed a body in order to offer Himself as the final sacrifice ([2:14](#)).

10:7 *To do Your will*. Cf. [Matthew 26:39, 42](#).

10:8, 9 The writer quotes from [Psalm 40:6-8](#) again, but in a condensed form.

10:9 *first... second.* The old, repetitious sacrificial system was removed to make way for the new, once-for-all sacrifice of Christ, who had obediently done God’s will (cf. [5:8](#); [Phil. 2:8](#)).

10:10 *sanctified.* **Sanctify means to “make holy,” to be set apart from sin for God** (cf. [1 Thess. 4:3](#)). When Christ fulfilled the will of God, He provided for the believer a continuing, permanent condition of holiness ([Eph. 4:24](#); [1 Thess. 3:13](#)). This is the believer’s positional sanctification as opposed to the progressive sanctification that results from daily walking by the will of God (*see notes on* [Rom. 6:19](#); [12:1, 2](#); [2 Cor. 7:1](#)). **body.** Refers to His atoning death, as the term *blood* has been used to do ([9:7](#), [12, 14, 18, 22](#)). Mention of the body of Christ in such a statement is unusual in the NT, but it is logically derived from the quotation from [Psalm 40:6](#).

Mosaic Covenant vs. New Covenant	
Mosaic Covenant	New Covenant
1. First— 8:7 ; 9:1, 15, 18 ; 10:9	1. Second— 8:7 ; 10:9
2. Old— 8:13	2. New— 8:8, 13 ; 9:15 ; 12:24
3. Obsolete— 8:13	3. Better— 7:22 ; 8:6

10:11, 12

The old and new are contrasted: thousands of priests versus one Priest; the old priests continually standing versus the sitting down of the new; repeated offerings versus a once-for-all offering; and the ineffective sacrifices that only covered sin versus the effective sacrifice that completely removes sin.

10:11 stands. See note on [1:3](#). In [2 Chronicles 6:10, 12](#), Solomon sat on his throne as king, but stood at the altar when acting in a priestly role (cf. [Deut. 17:12; 18:7](#)).

10:13 footstool. See note on [1:13](#). This is yet another reference to [Psalm 110:1](#). This prediction will be fulfilled when Christ returns and all creation acknowledges His lordship by bowing at His feet ([Phil. 2:10](#)).

10:14 perfected. See note on [verse 1](#). This involves a perfect standing before God in the righteousness of Christ (see notes on [Rom. 1:16; Phil. 3:8, 9](#)). **sanctified.** See notes on [verse 10](#).

10:15-17 The writer confirms his interpretation of [Psalm 40:6-8](#) by repeating from [Jeremiah 31:31-34](#) what he had already quoted in [8:8-12](#).

IV. The Superiority of the Believer's Privileges (10:19-12:29)

A. Saving Faith ([10:19-25](#))

10:19-25 For the second time (cf. [8:1-6](#) for the first), the writer gives a summary of the arguments for the superiority of Christ's priestly ministry.

10:19 brethren. See note on [3:12](#). As on the earlier occasion, the writer addresses his Jewish brethren with an invitation to leave behind the Levitical system and to appropriate the benefits of the New Covenant in Christ. **boldness.** Or "confidence," an important emphasis in the epistle (see note on [4:16](#)). Because of the high priestly ministry of Christ and His finished sacrifice, the Hebrews can enter boldly into the presence of God.

10:20 new. In Greek, this word originally meant "newly slain," but was understood as "recent" when the epistle was written. The way is new because the covenant is new. It is not a way provided by the Levitical system. **living way. Though it is the path of eternal life, it was not opened by Christ's sinless life; it required His death.** See notes on [2:17, 18; 4:16](#). The Hebrews were invited to embark on this way which is characterized by the eternal life of the Son of God who loved them and gave Himself for them (cf. [John 14:6; Gal. 2:20](#)).

The Christian faith was known as "the Way" among the Jews of Jerusalem ([Acts 9:2](#)) as well as among the Gentiles ([Acts 19:23](#)). Those receiving this epistle understood quite clearly that the writer was inviting them to become Christians—to join those who had been persecuted for their faith. True believers in their midst were even then suffering persecution, and those who had not committed themselves to the Way were asked to become targets of the same persecution.

veil... flesh. When Jesus' flesh was torn at His Crucifixion, so was the temple veil that symbolically separated people from God's presence ([Matt. 27:51](#)). When the high priest on the Day of Atonement entered the Holy of Holies, the people waited outside for him to return. When Christ entered the heavenly temple, He did not return. Instead, He opened the curtain and exposed the Holy of Holies so that we could follow Him there. Here *flesh* is used as was *body* ([v. 10](#)) and *blood* ([9:7](#), [12](#), [14](#), [18](#), [22](#)) to refer to the sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus.

10:21 *the house of God.* See note on [3:6](#).

10:22 *let us draw near.* See note on [7:19](#). Based on what had been written, this was the heart of the invitation to those in the assembly who had not come to Christ. The same invitation is found in the first NT book to be written ([James 4:8](#)), where James reveals the corollary of drawing near to God: God will draw near to you. Asaph taught that it is a good thing to draw near to God ([Ps. 73:28](#)). The full restoration of Israel to God's blessing is dependent upon them drawing near to Him ([Jer. 30:18-22](#)). In other words, it is an eschatological invitation coming to them in "these last days" ([1:2](#)). **This verse describes the prerequisites for entering the presence of God (cf. Ps. 15): sincerity, security, salvation, and sanctification.**

true heart. *The Greek term behind true carries the ideas of being sincere, genuine, and without ulterior motive (cf. Jer. 24:7; Matt. 15:8). This one thing these particular Hebrews lacked: genuine commitment to Christ.*

full assurance of faith. See note on [6:11](#). Utter confidence in the promises of God is intended by the phrase. Such confidence will result in heartfelt assurance or security which will allow them to persevere through the coming trials. This is the first of a familiar triad: faith, hope ([v. 23](#)), and love ([v. 24](#)). ***hearts sprinkled.*** See notes on [9:9](#), [14](#); [10:1-4](#); [1 Peter 1:2](#). ***pure water.*** The imagery in this verse is taken from the sacrificial ceremonies of the Old Covenant, where blood was sprinkled as a sign of cleansing, and the priests were continually washing themselves and the sacred vessels in basins of clear water. The "washing with pure water" does not refer to Christian baptism, but to the Holy Spirit's purifying one's life by means of the Word of God (cf. Eph. 5:25, 26; Titus 3:5). This is purely a New Covenant picture ([Jer. 31:33](#); [Ezek. 36:25, 26](#)).

10:23 ***hold fast. Holding on, or the perseverance of the saints, is the human side of eternal security. It is not something done to maintain salvation, but is rather an evidence of salvation.*** See note on [3:6](#). ***confession of our hope.*** Affirmation of salvation. See note on [3:1](#). ***without wavering. The idea is not to follow any inclination that leads back to the Old Covenant.*** In other ancient literature, the same Greek term is used of enduring torture. Persecution will come ([2 Tim. 3:12](#)), but God is faithful. Temptations will abound, but God is faithful to provide an escape (cf. [1 Cor. 10:13](#)). God's promises are reliable ([1 Cor. 10:13](#); [1 Thess. 5:24](#); [Jude 24, 25](#)). With that confidence, the believer can persevere.

10:24 consider. The same verb is used about Jesus in [3:1](#). The invitation must be responded to individually, but the response also has a corporate side. They are members of a community of Hebrews whose initial attraction to Christ is in danger of eroding. They have been considering a return to the Levitical system of Judaism to avoid the persecution (cf. [John 12:42, 43](#)).

Mutual encouragement to make full commitment is crucial.

stir up. The English word *paroxysm* is derived from the Greek term used here. The meaning in this context is that of stimulating or inciting someone to do something. **love and good works.** An example of such mutual effort in the midst of persecution was to be found at Corinth ([2 Cor. 8:1-7](#)).

10:25 not forsaking the assembling. Collective and corporate worship is a vital part of spiritual life. The warning here is against apostasy in an eschatological context (cf. [2 Thess. 2:1](#)). The reference is to the approaching “day” (the Second Coming of Christ; cf. [Rom. 13:12](#); [1 Cor.](#)

[3:13](#); [1 Thess. 5:4](#)). **exhorting. Exhortation takes the form of encouragement, comfort, warning, or strengthening.** There is an eschatological urgency to the exhortation which requires an increased activity as the coming of Christ approaches (cf. [3:13](#); cf. [1 Thess. 4:18](#)).

- The MacArthur Bible Commentary.

The Sufficiency of Christ’s Once-For-All-Time Sacrifice

[Hebrews 10:1-18](#)

Main Idea: Whereas old covenant sacrifices were unable to completely atone for sin, Jesus’s sacrifice puts aside old covenant practices and secures total forgiveness and sanctification for God’s people.

- I. **Insufficient Sacrifices ([10:1](#))**
 - A. Key contrasts
 - B. Shadows and the Son
- II. **A Sacrifice Sufficient to Take Away Sin ([10:2-4](#))**
- III. **A Sacrifice Sufficient to Supplant Old Testament Sacrifices ([10:5-10](#))**
 - A. Jesus and [Psalm 40](#)
 - B. Jesus and the last sacrifice
- IV. **A Sacrifice Sufficient to Bring Perfection ([10:11-14](#))**
 - A. The priest who sits
 - B. The priest who sits in power
- V. **A Sacrifice Sufficient to Bring Forgiveness ([10:15-18](#))**

As we begin the tenth chapter of Hebrews, we face one of the most important issues in biblical interpretation: understanding the contrast between the old and the new covenant. When Christians talk about the differences between these covenants, we almost habitually fall into a mindset that views the old covenant as bad and the new covenant as good. We are tempted to consider the old covenant negatively because we know it could not save us. The author of Hebrews, however, does not see the contrast in this way. Although he draws necessary and sharp distinctions between the covenants, he does not want his readers to despise the old covenant. Rather, he contrasts the two covenants to show how the old one cries out for and finds fulfillment in the new one. [The old covenant prepares the way and ultimately reveals our need for the new.](#)

Insufficient Sacrifices

[Hebrews 10:1](#)

These verses pinpoint some of the key deficiencies of the old covenant sacrifices. As the author makes clear in these verses, **old covenant sacrifices were merely shadows of better things to come.** They were offered year after year but could never save and could not perfect those drawing near to God.

Key Contrasts:

In [verse 1](#) the author uses descriptive language to demonstrate that the law pointed to “the good things to come.” The phrase “the good things to come” sums up everything Christ purchased and accomplished for us by virtue of his life, death, and resurrection. The greatest of these good things is the forgiveness of sins. The writer already made this point clear in [9:11-12](#).

The eternal redemption accomplished by Christ is the key contrast between the old and the new covenant.

While the new covenant brings permanent redemption through Christ, [the old covenant only temporarily suspended the judgment of God.](#) As we look back on the old covenant sacrifices through the lens of [Hebrews 9:22](#), we can see that old covenant sacrifices could not achieve the forgiveness of even one sin. Instead, we see that these sacrifices *pointed* to the forgiveness of all sin.

What, then, was the immediate effect of old covenant sacrifices?

According to [Romans 3:21-26](#), those sacrifices held back the wrath of God for a time. For instance, on the night when the angel of death struck the firstborn of Egypt, the firstborn sons of Israel were saved because the Israelites acted in faith and put the blood of the Passover lamb across their doorposts as God commanded.

While Israel's firstborns would eventually die because of their sin, they did not expire on that horrible day of God's judgment against the Egyptians.

God delayed his justice and judgment on account of the sacrifice offered in faith.

Similarly, when the high priest went into the most holy place on the Day of Atonement and sprinkled the blood of the animal on the mercy seat, God withheld his wrath for another year. Thus, God received every sacrifice that preceded Christ's sacrifice as a means of suspending his wrath against sin.

Shadows and the Son

The author of Hebrews uses the image of a "shadow" to draw the contrast between Christ's sacrifice and the old covenant sacrifices. When Christ died on the cross, he did not shed the blood of another; he shed his own blood. Nor did he enter the tabernacle by making a sacrifice for his own sin first; he was sinless. Nor did he enter the manmade tabernacle; he entered the heavenly tabernacle. Then, after he accomplished atonement for us, he accomplished an eternal redemption once for all time, which brings true forgiveness of sins. **All those animals died as shadows pointing to these realities accomplished through the cross of Christ.** There Christ perfectly fulfilled all these things.

When the author uses the word *law*, he refers to the totality of the old covenant. The law, that is, the old covenant, "has only a shadow of the good things to come." Under the old covenant, Israel merely saw the shape of what was to come. The shadow left them crying out for the real thing. As a shadow, the old covenant is insufficient. It could not perfect those who draw near.

Only Jesus can accomplish that. God is satisfied with the sacrifice of Christ and imputes the righteousness of his Son to us because nothing less than a perfect righteousness will meet God's standard. We are woefully and infinitely short of perfect righteousness on our own. Only the righteousness of Christ will suffice for sin. Only Christ can bring atonement for sin and secure eternal redemption.

A Sacrifice Sufficient to Take Away Sin

[Hebrews 10:2-4](#)

In [verse 2](#) the author asks a rhetorical question to draw out the insufficiency of the old covenant sacrifices. "Consciousness of sins" points to the part of the human person that remained untouched and unaffected by the old covenant sacrifices. Although the high priest went into the most holy place on the Day of Atonement to cleanse the people of sin, nothing could cleanse the consciences of the people for the sins they would commit right after the sacrifice. **The law could do nothing to alleviate the guilt of the human conscience.**

The logic of [verse 2](#) is that if old covenant sacrifices had sufficiently delivered all the promises of God, the priests would have stopped offering them. But they did not stop offering them. Sacrifices were made daily, weekly, and yearly. Israel's sacrifices could not keep up with the people's sinfulness.

[Verse 3](#) reveals that these recurring sacrifices served as reminders of sin. They annually reminded the people of their guilt and disobedience and that the sacrifices could not ultimately purify them. “Year after year” clearly links these sacrifices to the Day of Atonement. That day was essentially an annual and graphic event that reminded the people they were unable to perfectly obey the commands of the law and desperately needed a priest to mediate on their behalf.

Verse 4 establishes an essential gospel point: it is impossible for the blood of animals to wash away sin.

This claim is interesting, especially when we consider that the author says there is no forgiveness for sin without the shedding of blood ([9:22](#)). Nevertheless, the old covenant sacrifices, in all their bloodiness, could not take away sin. Instead, they pointed to the one sacrifice that could bring forgiveness of sin: Jesus Christ. His perfect sacrifice happened once and never needs to be repeated. His blood, unlike that of animals, washes sins away forever.

A Sacrifice Sufficient to Supplant Old Testament Sacrifices

[Hebrews 10:5-10](#)

In these verses the author continues to draw out the distinctions between Christ's sacrifice and old covenant sacrifices. He continues to highlight the inadequacy of the sacrifices made by the high priests under the old covenant when compared to the superiority of the sacrifice made by the great high priest, Jesus Christ. Here the author particularly explains what Christ came into the world to accomplish and shows the necessity of his death. To this end, the author leans heavily on [Psalm 40](#).

Jesus and [Psalm 40](#)

The writer of Hebrews attributes [Psalm 40:6-8](#) to Christ at his incarnation. He says Christ spoke these words. This should not surprise us since the author believes that the triune God is the author of Scripture. By asserting this, the writer demonstrates to his readers how to see Jesus in the Old Testament correctly. The author shows us that he didn't believe this psalm should *only* be read historically, but that it should also be read typologically.

Jesus came into the world to do his Father's will. This required laying down his life as a sacrifice for sins. This is what [verses 5-7](#) teach. When Christ entered the world, he knew his body would be the sacrifice that pleased God and satisfied his wrath. Old covenant sacrifices and offerings

could not ultimately bring the forgiveness of sins. Even worse, for many who made the offerings, the sacrifices represented nothing more than mere religious ritual. Those people no longer offered up sacrifices in faith and obedience. They were just going through the motions.

The Father did not ask his Son to offer sacrifices. He prepared a body for him and asked him to be the sacrifice. In doing so, the Father was asking the Son for obedience. The Father's will and the Son's obedience are precisely what we see described in Isaiah 53. God delights in obedience, not in burnt offerings and sin offerings (1 Sam 15:22-23).

This does not mean the old covenant offerings contradicted the will of God in any way. It simply means God is not interested in religious ritual if it is not driven by faith and obedience.

Works without faith are meaningless in God's eyes.

In [verse 8](#) the author of Hebrews gives a brief commentary on the words he attributes to Jesus. He further explains that God did not delight in the sacrifices of the Levitical cult “offered according to the law.” Once again, this highlights the temporary and inadequate nature of the old covenant sacrifices. A greater sacrifice was still to come—a sacrifice in which God would be permanently pleased.

Jesus and the Last Sacrifice

Verse 9 tells us Jesus did away with the old covenant in order to establish the new. This is what Jesus was announcing when he said, “See, I have come to do your will.” These words took away the first and established the second. Therefore, the Old Testament sacrificial system is completed. The author actually uses the Greek word for “abolish” to punctuate the termination of the Old Testament sacrificial system as forcefully as he can. The era of the law is over. Jesus abolishes it. He is why we no longer need to sacrifice bulls and goats. This is good news for bulls and goats, and it is far better news for us.

Verse 10 expands on the supremacy of the second and final sacrifice. In doing so, the author returns to the language of Jesus's body. Jesus did the will of the Father by offering his body as a once-for-all-time substitute for sin. His willing sacrifice is the final and fully effective one that abolishes the old sacrifices and inaugurates the new covenant. **By virtue of their union with Christ and on account of his sacrifice, believers are now in the realm of the holy and purified. They "have been sanctified."**

"Once for all time" is one of the most important phrases in Hebrews. It announces loud and clear that Christ's sacrifice is definitive and sufficient. No sacrifice ever needs to be made again. God is pleased with Christ's. The author is speaking emphatically: not just once, but once for all time.

A Sacrifice Sufficient to Bring Perfection

[Hebrews 10:11-14](#)

The Priest Who Sits

At the heart of these distinctions are two kinds of priests: priests who stand and the priest who sits. Verse 11 details the inadequacy of priests who stand. Under the old covenant, priests stood daily at God's service, offering the same sacrifices repeatedly. The sacrifices could never take away sins ([10:4](#)), yet they continued to offer them. **They stood every day because their work was never completed, nor did their work progress.**

This is why the priests stood each day offering the "same" sacrifices. Their ministry had to be repeated over and over again, generation by generation, and it could not save a single sinner.

Verse 12 details the priest who sits: Jesus Christ. Once Jesus offered a single sacrifice for sins that was sufficient for all time, he sat down at the right hand of God.

This is known as the Session of Christ. It means Jesus is seated in authority and power at the right hand of the Father and carries out the ministry of intercession for God's people there, waiting for the day his enemies are made a footstool for his feet. The priests who stand offer many sacrifices repeatedly. Jesus, however, only offers one sacrifice. His is sufficient to take away sins forever, and its benefits never end. **Jesus sits because there's no need for him to keep standing. His atoning work is complete, and now he intercedes for us.**

The Priest Who Sits in Power

The anticipation of the time when Jesus's enemies are made his footrest brings us back to the words of **Psalm 110. The psalmist tells us that the Messiah will make his enemies a footstool. This is a reference to Jesus's second coming.** The author of Hebrews has already alluded to the second coming in the previous chapter ([9:28](#)).

This shows us the return of Christ is at the forefront of the author's mind.

Jesus will return, but he will not come to offer another sacrifice. The priest who sits will return to judge his enemies. Jesus is the priest who sits in power.

[Verse 14](#) reiterates the effectiveness of Jesus's single offering. **By the priestly offering of his own body, Jesus has perfected—not just improved—those who are being sanctified.**

How many times and in how many ways can the author make this point? Evidently one time is not enough. **We need to see this beautiful reality emphasized repeatedly.** Jesus has perfected, for all time, those who are being sanctified. His work perfects believers forever. Their perfection is an objective and eschatological reality that will never end.

A Sacrifice Sufficient to Bring Forgiveness

[Hebrews 10:15-18](#)

The author makes another appeal to the Old Testament [in verses 15-18. Here he turns to Jeremiah 31:31-34 and the revelation of the new covenant.](#) The Lord promises to put his laws in the hearts of his people and to write them on their minds. Jesus's final and supreme sacrifice brings the full forgiveness of sins, so an offering for sin is no longer necessary.

The new covenant brings a new heart.

The author once again attributes the words of the Old Testament to the Holy Spirit. We have already seen him say the Holy Spirit speaks through the Old Testament in [Hebrews 3:7](#) and [9:8](#). The new covenant was new, but it was not a new revelation. Jesus's sacrifice was the fulfillment of an old revelation, the one promised by the prophet Jeremiah through the witness of the Holy Spirit. Notice that the promise was not Jeremiah's; it was God's. [Through Jeremiah's prophetic word, the Holy Spirit bears witness to this new covenant.](#)

We have already seen the author reference [Jeremiah 31:31-34](#) in [Hebrews 8:8-12](#). He cites these verses again to tell his readers this new covenant has been made with them, which suggests the author may be conceiving of his readers as the new Israel. Whatever the case, the writer is expressing that the readers of his letter are also the recipients of the new covenant.

One of the key features of this new covenant is God's sovereign grace. God himself writes his laws on the hearts and minds of his people. Their obedience is a result of his sovereign and gracious inscription.

The old sacrifices could never accomplish this—only Christ could.

“I will never again remember their sins and their lawless acts” was not a reality under the old covenant. The people of Israel cried out in the knowledge of their sin, especially on the Day of Atonement. God still remembered their sin, even though he did not pour his wrath out on it immediately. But now that Christ has mediated a new and better covenant, God no longer remembers our sins and our lawless deeds. The blood of Jesus blots them out forever.

[Verse 18](#) gives another important component of the forgiveness won by Jesus in the new covenant.

If Christ's blood has truly granted the forgiveness of sins forever, then "there is no longer an offering for sin." This is why there's a table for the Lord's Supper and not an altar for sacrificing animals at the front of our church auditoriums.

A Confident Confession of Christ

Hebrews 10:19-25

Main Idea: We have confidence to approach God through Jesus Christ's priestly work. Because of this confidence, we can encourage one another to grow in assurance as we anticipate Christ's return.

- I. **Confidence in Christ (10:19-22)**
 - A. Entering through the blood
 - B. Entering through the priest
 - C. Entering with a true heart and full assurance
 - D. Entering with clean hearts
- II. **Holding On to the Confession (10:23-25)**
 - A. God's faithfulness to past promises
 - B. Present assurance through Christian fellowship
 - C. Anticipation for Christ's future return

When the author sets out the structure and substance of the gospel in Hebrews, he continually reviews its meaning. He will often repeat the same truth, but will do so by emphasizing a slightly different aspect to get the attention of his readers. After considering the "once for all time" aspect of the gospel in Hebrews 10:1-18, the writer turns his attention to another implication of the gospel in Hebrews 10:19-25. He is once again going to summarize its various aspects in order to help his readers remember the glorious realities Jesus's work accomplishes for his people. Additionally, he will exhort his people to action on the basis of these glorious realities.

Confidence in Christ

[Hebrews 10:19-22](#)

The word *therefore* at the beginning of [verse 19](#) marks a new section and leads us into several implications that are grounded in the truths the author has just finished discussing. The exhortations given by the writer are anchored in the priestly work of Jesus and reinforce just how truly remarkable his work is.

Entering Through the Blood

Notice these words: “since we have boldness to enter the sanctuary through the blood of Jesus.” Christian readers can pass over these words without even realizing it, but we must slow down and digest them. “The sanctuary” refers to the most holy place in the tabernacle. No one could enter it except the high priest, who could only go inside it once a year under the strictest supervision. If anyone besides the high priest entered the most holy place without permission, they died. Now, however, on account of Christ’s work on the cross, believers can enter the most holy place with confidence. This does not mean they enter a physical sanctuary, only that they can now enter the very presence of God with confidence in Christ’s work. By God’s grace, the door to his presence is now wide open. That is nothing less than revolutionary.

Some individuals have sought to rid Christianity of blood language, speaking only about Jesus’s love instead. The blood of Christ, however, is integral to Christian theology. His blood divides the sheep from the goats, but unites those it saves. If we lose the language of blood, we

lose the gospel. The hymn “There Is a Fountain Filled with Blood” by William Cowper captures the role of Christ’s blood beautifully:

There is a fountain filled with blood

drawn from Immanuel’s veins,

and sinners plunged beneath that flood

lose all their guilty stains.

Those words have full biblical warrant.

Hebrews shows that Christians have access to God precisely because the blood of Jesus Christ has made it possible.

Without Christ’s blood there is no access to God.

There is no remission of sins without the shedding of blood. Just as the old covenant required blood sacrifices, so too does the new covenant require a blood sacrifice. The final and effective blood sacrifice, however, came not through the blood of an animal shed on an altar, but through the blood of God’s own Son shed on the cross. In his perfect and sinless blood, we have boldness to enter the sanctuary.

Entering Through the Priest

Verse 20 continues explaining the way Christ opened the door to the presence of God. The author calls this “a new and living way,” words that once again highlight the superiority of the new covenant. Jesus is a better priest of a new covenant, and one who intercedes for his people forever ([7:25](#)).

This new and living way is opened “through the curtain.” The curtain in this instance refers to “his flesh”: Christ’s body, broken and bloodied for us on the cross. In the tabernacle, the curtain (or veil) separated the holy place from the most holy place. Christ, by dying on the cross, opened the way to God’s presence. This is represented in the tearing of the temple curtain at the time of Jesus’s death ([Matt 27:51](#)). By virtue of Jesus’s priestly work and sacrifice, we no longer enter

God's presence through a curtain. We enter through Jesus, our great high priest over the house of God.

Entering with a True Heart and Full Assurance

On account of all Christ's work as priest, the author confidently claims that God's people are to "draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith." To whom can we draw near? To the Father. And in what manner can we draw near to him? With a true heart in full assurance. In other words, we can now stand before God certain that our sins are forgiven by virtue of our faith in Jesus.

Full assurance of faith has been a matter of Christian turmoil and some controversy throughout the centuries of the church. Many Christians struggle with the certainty of their salvation. But the New Testament exhorts Christians to know they are saved. God grants assurance, not on the basis of man's faith, but on the basis of Christ's faithfulness.

The apostle John writes in [1 John 5:13](#), "I have written these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life." And [Romans 10:9,13](#) promise that the one who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Thus, the believer is to have full confidence, not in self or in personal faithfulness, but in the object of the faith, Jesus Christ. **At**

the same time, believers must heed the numerous warnings the author of Hebrews gives through his letter. A believer necessarily produces fruit. If a faith is fruitless, it will not save.

Entering with Clean Hearts

The language of sprinkling alludes to the sacrificial system in the Old Testament. On the Day of Atonement, the priest would sprinkle the blood of the sacrifice on the mercy seat of God, resulting in propitiation ([Lev 16:14](#)). Consequently, God would alter his disposition toward Israel from wrath to acceptance. Just as the blood spilled and sprinkled purified God's people under the old covenant, Christ's blood purifies us under the new covenant. Jesus's blood, however, cleanses us with superior power and efficiency. His blood, unlike that of bulls and goats, purifies the conscience. It cleanses us from sin at our cores and perfects our hearts.

The washing with "pure water" also points back to the Old Testament, where washings of the body were required for cleanliness. These washings were unable to truly cleanse the people, though. A washing that truly purifies seems to be the type the author of Hebrews has in mind

here. This pure water washes us completely clean from sin. It is a comprehensive cleansing that purifies us internally, not just externally. **The language of washing also suggests a beautiful image pointing to baptism as a picture of salvation. In baptism we are graphically buried with Christ and beautifully raised with him in newness of life. It is the external symbol of the internal work accomplished by Christ.**

Holding on to Our Confession

[Hebrews 10:23-25](#)

In this passage the author of Hebrews brilliantly addresses all aspects of time:

- **Past: God's Faithfulness to Past Promises in Christ**
- **Present: Assurance through Christian Fellowship**
- **Future: Anticipation of Christ's Return**

He first comments on the past by mentioning God's faithfulness to his promises. He addresses the need for Christian fellowship and encouragement in the present. He also extends his exhortations into the future, recognizing the approaching day of the Lord.

God's Faithfulness to Past Promises

On the grounds of confidence and full assurance, **the author of Hebrews implores his readers to "hold on to the confession of our hope." The confession demonstrates faith. It is the verbal verification of repentant hearts.** What is the confession of Christian hope? Jesus is Lord and Jesus saves. The writer of Hebrews is not referencing a lengthy doctrinal statement. The confession on his mind is the central confession that **Jesus saves sinners. Christians must never waver or stray from that confession in any capacity. Like the author's audience, we must hold on to the confession in which we initially place our hope.**

The Christian holds on not by his own tenacity, but by God's faithfulness. We will persevere until the end because God does not abandon his children. God has proved faithful to his promises throughout Scripture.

Jesus affirmed the Father's faithfulness in [John 6:37](#): *“Everyone the Father gives me will come to me, and the one who comes to me I will never cast out.”*

No one who comes to Christ can ever be snatched out of his hand ([John 10:28](#)).

God's power guards his children.

Man can do nothing by his own power to keep himself. **The security of God's protection and provision allows the church to hold the confession without wavering.**

Present Assurance Through Christian Fellowship

The author shifts to the present in [verse 24](#). Here he stresses Christian fellowship and the church's role in helping believers persevere until the end. We cannot have confidence and full assurance of faith apart from the church.

We cannot endure in isolation. Each Christian desperately needs the body of believers for encouragement.

To obtain assurance, we need continual reminding from other saints.

Christ calls his followers to bring out the best in each other. Believers must actively and verbally stir up one another to love and good works.

An unhealthy church fails to do this. Unfortunately, some churches bring out the worst in their attendees rather than the best. The hymn “Blest Be the Tie That Binds” beautifully echoes the fellowship in the Lord Jesus Christ and the value of bearing one another's burdens.

Christians must not neglect gathering together for corporate worship and for times of prayer and encouragement.

Verses 24 and 25 are strong words of judgment against those who are in the habit of neglecting other believers. Those who neglect assembling together cut themselves off from the very means whereby Christ feeds, assures, and protects his people. To say, “I can do this alone,” is to defy the very command of Christ.

Some may claim that they can hear better preaching on the Internet or that they are too busy to attend church, but these excuses reveal the reality of a disobedient heart. Instead of searching for an excuse, Christians should be doing everything within their power to meet together. Not only because they need to be fed by the preaching of God’s Word but also because it is part of the faith to stir up fellow believers to love and good works.

Anticipation for Christ’s Future Return

Finally, the author turns his focus on the future. Many English translations capitalize the word *day* because it refers to a specific day in history. It refers to the day of Christ’s return and God’s judgment ([2 Pet 3:10](#)).

Christ will call together his church on that day, and he will judge those who do not belong to it.

Faithful anticipation should characterize the church's daily life. The nearness of Christ's return makes our encouragement of one another and our gathering together all the more urgent and all the more significant. As time moves toward the Day of the Lord, the author expects the church to grow in faithful commitment. No one knows when that day will come, but God's Word confirms that the day is imminent. We must remain ready.

- **Christ-Centered Exposition** – Exalting Jesus in Hebrews.

Christ's Sacrifice Once for All

1For **since** the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, **it can never**, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, **make perfect** those who draw near. **2Otherwise**, would they not have ceased to be offered, **since** the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? **3But** in these sacrifices **there is a reminder of sins** every year. **4**For **it is impossible** for the blood of bulls and goats **to take away sins**.

5Consequently, when **Christ^a came into the world**, he said,

“Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired,
but **a body have you prepared for me**;

6in burnt offerings and sin offerings
you have taken no pleasure.

7Then I said, **‘Behold, I have come to do your will, O God,**
as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.’”

8When he said above, “You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings” (these are offered according to the law), **9**then he added, “Behold, I have come to do your will.” **He does away with the first in order to establish the second.** **10**And **by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.**

11And every priest stands daily at **his** service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can **never take away sins.** **12**But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, **13**waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. **14**For **by a single offering he has perfected** (past tense) **for all time** (future tense) **those who are being sanctified** (active, perfect-present tense).

15**And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us;** (and through us) for after saying,

*** NOTE: see the Trinity in this passage!

- God the Father's

16“This is **the covenant** that I will make with them after those days, **declares the Lord**:

I will put my laws on **their hearts**,
and write them on their **minds**,”

(Thus, if He has WRITTEN... & you don't have WANT-TO... you're not in the New Covenant covering of Christ / Christianity. – JDP)

17then he adds,

“I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.”

18**Where there is forgiveness** of these, **there is no longer any offering for sin.**

(Because... “I will remember your sins no more...” and your sins “are removed as far as the east is from the west...” and “It is finished!”)

The Full Assurance of Faith

19Therefore, brothers, **since we have confidence** to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, **20**by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, **21 and since we have a great priest** over the house of God, **22**let us **draw near** with a **true heart** in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an **evil conscience** and our **bodies washed** with pure water. **23**Let us **hold fast** the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. **24**And let us **consider how to stir up one another** to love and good works, **25 not neglecting** to meet together, as is the habit of some, but **encouraging one another**, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

CONTEXT:

- See 8:1-10:18 as a unit

See Melchizedek (ch.7) as context of context

See 10:1-8 as summation of ch.8-9

See 10:19-25 as application of 8:1-10:18

- See rest of ch.10 as “Hebrews’ Warning #4”

Next = 10:26-39 “Exhortation Exemplified”

a. 10:26-31... Don't forget

b. 10:32-36...Remember when

- c. 10:37-39... BE ready!
- ch.11 "Examples Exemplified - No Excuses"
- ch.12 = Hebrews' Warning #5
- ch.13 = Hebrews' closing & sendoff...

Start of 2019 = "Fruit of the Spirit" series :-)

Part A: The FUTILE (vv.1-11)

- A. v.1-4 = The Law/O.C. would/could never save
- B. v.5-10 = That's why Jesus said & did...
 - v.5-7 = Explanation
 - v.8-10 = Expound upon the explanation...
- C. v.11 = Definition of Futility & Insanity (Ben Franklin)
 - N.T. expounding of O.T. explanation
 - O.T. explanation again shows "foretelling"

Part B: The FORGOTTEN (vv.12-18)

- A. Direct contrast & comparison between priests
- B. N.T. expounding of O.T. explanation
- C. O.T. explanation which again reveals "foretelling"
- D. See & contrast the "forgiven"
- E. See & contrast the "footstools"

➤ "Do this in remembrance of Me..."

*** COMMUNION *** (with Crowder: "All My Hope")

➤ Hebrews 9:28 = "so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin (again) but to save THOSE WHO ARE EAGERLY WAITING FOR HIM."

Part C: The FAITHFUL (vv.19-25)

- A. v.19 "Therefore" = conclusion & application
- B. v.19 "brothers" = contextual recipients
 - Generic brothers = followers of Judaism
 - Gospel brothers = followers of Jesus
 - NOTE: this passage is a "faith filter"
 - Not knowing... author leaves it open...
 - The point... one's life will reveal one's faith
- C. v.19 "since" = first justification of conclusion:
 - "we have confidence" = root justification

"to enter the holy places" = use of con

v.20

- ~ "by the blood" = source of confid.
- * "of Jesus" = specific Source
- ~ "by the new (way)"
- ~ "by the living way"
- * "that HE opened"
- € "for us"

"thru the curtain"

~~ "that is"

"thru His flesh"

v.21 "and since" = 2nd justification of conclusion
- "we have a great high priest"

"over the house of God"

v.22 = imperatives of micro/macro application

A. "Let us"

1. "draw near"
 - a. "with a true heart"
 - b. "in full assurance"
 - c. "of faith"
 - d. "with our hearts sprinkled clean"
 - ~ "from an evil conscience"
 - ~ "and our bodies washed"
 - * "with pure water"

v.23

B. "Let us"

2. "hold fast" ("Hold On!")
 - a. "the confession"
 - ~ "of our hope"
 - ~ "without wavering"
 - ~ "for He who promised is faithful"

v.24

C. "and Let us"

3. "consider how"
 - a. "to stir up one another"
 - ~ "to love"
 - ~ "and good works"

v.25

- ~ "not neglecting" / (to not neglect)
- * "to meet together"
- * "as is the habit"

"of some"

- b. "BUT... encouraging one another"
 - ~ "and all the more"
 - * "as you see"

"the day approaching"

CLOSE:

- The futile =
- The faithful =
- What's the difference?
- The forgotten!
 - See the "Stickman Gospel"
 - See the 3 sets of arrows...
 - Over the cross... goats
 - Under the cross... wolves
 - Thru the cross... sheep/sheepdogs/shepherds

Predicates

Indicatives

Imperatives

8:1 - 10:21 = ZERO imperatives...

10:22-25 =

- A. "Draw near" (v.22)
- B. "Hold fast" (v.23)
- C. "Consider how" (v.24)
- D. "Stir up one another" (v.24)
- E. "Love (verb) and good deeds" (v.24)
- F. "Not neglecting" (v.25)
- G. "Encouraging one another" (v.25)

TEXT:

v.19 = "Therefore" - ties all of 8:1ff together
 - denotes summation & app.

= "brothers" - Note the generic vs Holy...
 - text reveal uncertainty of who

= "since" - affirms application coming next...

= "we have confidence"

"to enter the holy places"
 ~ "by the blood of Jesus"

v.20 =
 ~ "by the new & living way"
 * "that He opened for us"
 * "thru the curtain"
 € ("that is")
 € "His flesh"

v.21 =
 = "and since"

"we have a great High Priest"
 ~ "over the house of God"

Therefore:

- Message
- Melchizedek
- Miracle
- Minister
- Messiah
- Mediator
- Mission