

Hebrews

Chapter Ten

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Heb 10:1-4 For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never by the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect those who draw near. ²Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins? ³But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year. ⁴For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

The reference is to the rituals on the Day of Atonement. It seems that this should have been so clear to the Israelites! The logic is perfect. If the offerings made someone perfect before God then there is no need to offer them again for the same people. They could be made for different people to cleanse them also, but not for the same people over and over again. The repeated sacrifices only have the purpose of making it clear that their sins were not cleansed and they remained conscious of being sinners. All of the sacrifices and rituals have no effect on the heart and on an individual's status before God. The end of verse four is very important for sins must be taken away and not just covered. Jesus called the Pharisees "white washed" for all they were trying to do was to cover their sins but they still remained sinners: *Matt 23:27 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.* Many of us have seen fences or old houses where the owners tried to paint over the wood to make it look better but the decay and insect damage continues and eventually the fences or houses will fall down because they were never purified of damages events.

Any people today who just come to "church" to confess sins for the purpose of becoming perfect before God before they sin again are repeating the impotent efforts of the scribes and Pharisees. Many people only come to a church worship service on Christmas and maybe also on Easter, but if a person has to continue coming to some religious service once a year for some feeling of atonement then his time is probably being wasted. Real Christians come together each Sunday for corporate worship and praise of God and not for some weekly cleansing. Jesus told us to come together to remember Him and not to continually make sacrifices for atonement: *Luke 22:19 And when He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me."*

Heb 10:5-10 Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, "Sacrifice and offering Thou hast not desired, But a body Thou hast prepared for Me; ⁶In whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast taken no pleasure. ⁷"Then I said, 'Behold, I have come (In

the roll of the book it is written of Me) To do Thy will, O God.'" ⁸After saying above, "Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast not desired, nor hast Thou taken pleasure in them" (which are offered according to the Law), ⁹then He said, "Behold, I have come to do Thy will." He takes away the first in order to establish the second. ¹⁰By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Since the Levitical system was ineffective in taking away sin from the presence of God, a new system was required. Strictly speaking the Law refers to the Mosaic Law but in context he is referring to all the rituals related to the Law. The author prefaces a quote from Psalm 40:6-8 with the phrase: "When Jesus was about to come into the world, He said to God". His wording is somewhat different but does not change any of the meaning of the Psalm:

Psalm 40:6-8 Sacrifice and meal offering Thou hast not desired; My ears Thou hast opened; Burnt offering and sin offering Thou hast not required. ⁷Then I said, "Behold, I come; In the scroll of the book it is written of me; ⁸I delight to do Thy will, O my God; Thy Law is within my heart."

The author takes this Psalm as the basis for the incarnation so that, if the Jews had properly understood their scripture, they would have understood that Jesus was the promised Messiah. In verse 8 all the stated sacrifices for sin are in the plural whereas in the Psalm and in his quote of the Psalm they are singular. Probably he is referencing the many such sacrifices that occurred since the giving of the Law. When the author says that God took no pleasure in them, he means that all such sacrifices did nothing to make any person righteous before Him. The Pharisees thought that they were actually removing sins so certainly God was not pleased with their attitude in their roles. Stating that the quote from Psalm 40 is Jesus saying that He has come to do thy will is a statement that Jesus was following the Father's direction in coming to earth to serve Him. The first that is taken away is the old covenant and the establishment of the second is the bringing about of the new covenant.

Verse 10 states the result of the work of Jesus Christ. We have to be careful with the word "sanctified" for it is used differently by Paul and here, as is obvious from the context. Generally Paul is referring to what we term progressive sanctification, which is the development of Christian character by the child of God in the world as in *Phil 2:12 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling.* Here Paul is telling them to work out their sanctification in cooperation with the Holy Spirit. The author of Hebrews is referring to instantaneous sanctification, which is strictly speaking justification since this act is to make the person a child of God. So he is saying that by Jesus doing the will of the Father in His work in the world this one time sacrifice makes those inheritors **perfect before God** forever. This one-time sacrifice of one person for the sins of all chosen people of all time is distinctive among all religions of the world.

Heb 10:11-18 And every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; ¹²but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³waiting from that time onward until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet. ¹⁴For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified. ¹⁵And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying, ¹⁶"This is the covenant that I will make with them After those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws upon their heart, And upon their mind I will write them," He then says, ¹⁷"And their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more." ¹⁸Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin.

The Levitical priests never sat in the tabernacle or temple when performing their tasks because their duties were never finished. However Jesus sat in heaven after completing His tasks for He was finished in His duties to remove sin from His people: *Mark 16:19 So then, when the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God.* Sitting is an attitude of rest from labor and the high priest regarded the sitting of Jesus as a mark of blasphemy: *Mark 14:62-63 And Jesus said, "I am; and you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven. ⁶³And tearing his clothes, the high priest said, "What further need do we have of witnesses?*

I would think that the priests would begin to doubt the effectiveness of their actions after awhile. I am reminded of what my wife and I saw once during a Roman Catholic service we attended. At the ringing of a bell the wine in the cup was supposed to turn into the literal blood of Jesus. When the bell rang we saw the priest peek into the cup like he was wondering if it really worked this time! Of course it never did physically change. No acts outside of the works of Jesus Christ can bring any righteousness to people and no miracle is needed now to show that His work was done effectively for His people. The enemies are not defined in verse 13 but Jesus is resting until all those opposed to God are put in subjection to Jesus Christ, meaning the End Times. In verse 14 the author again states that this one offering of Jesus completed the work of Jesus so that His people are made perfect before God forever. The emphasis is on Jesus and not on His offering for nobody but Jesus could have made the proper propitiation for sin. Sanctified means to make holy before God and this act is completed for all time for all of His people forever. This should bring great peace and joy to those affected.

Beginning in verse 15 the author is bringing in the testimony of the Holy Spirit to back up his previous statements. He is quoting from the same source used in 8:7 although he omits the portions of the verse that do not fit the current context: *Jer 31:33-34 "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the Lord, "I will put My law within them, and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.³⁴And they shall not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother,*

saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the Lord, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more." Of course for God to say that He will not remember the sins means that He will never act upon them and that brings great peace and joy to Christians. We have been made pure before God and given the righteousness of Jesus Christ before Him (double imputation). Verse 18 is rather obvious based upon all that has been said! The author emphatically states that the old covenant is totally replaced by the new covenant and anyone who puts any credit at all to any of the old covenant rituals and laws does not understand what God has done through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Heb 10:19-25 Since therefore, brethren, we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, ²¹and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²²let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. ²³Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; ²⁴and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, ²⁵not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.

The author has now completed his doctrinal teaching and the word "therefore" links his conclusions with all that has been written. The high priest could only enter the holy place once a year but Christians can come before the presence of God at any time with full assurance that they are welcome because of the work of Jesus. This entrance to the presence of God is new since it replaces the old covenant procedure and it is living because it is based upon the work and continual presence of Jesus Christ. The old veil has been replaced by the body of Jesus and the way is still blocked for any who are not in Christ: *John 14:6* Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me. Jesus inaugurated this new veil and it has been serving that purpose for almost 2000 years. Jesus is now the high priest presiding over the household of God so that He functions as servant and king.

The author now gives three exhortations. The **first exhortation** is that we should draw near to God since Jesus is our high priest providing us with the purity and righteousness needed to go before God. The heart stands for the inner person representing that entire person before God. Only the pure in heart can see God: *Matt 5:8* "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Scripture is clear that the heart of man before justification is evil and the source of all evil in the world: *Matt 15:18-19* "But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man. ¹⁹For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. The work of Jesus fulfills the prediction of *Ezekiel 36:26* "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove

the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. All Christians should have the assurance of their faith that they indeed do possess this new heart so that they can freely come before God. The bodies washed with pure water is thought by most interpreters (Calvin is an exception) to mean baptism for Christian baptism is only an outward act signifying what has occurred in the inner person by the work of God in justification. The hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience surely represents also the work of the blood of Jesus (meaning His work of propitiation) as was shown in shadow form by the acts of the earthly priests:

Exodus 29:21 "Then you shall take some of the blood that is on the altar and some of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it on Aaron and on his garments, and on his sons and on his sons' garments with him; so he and his garments shall be consecrated, as well as his sons and his sons' garments with him.

Lev 8:30 So Moses took some of the anointing oil and some of the blood which was on the altar, and sprinkled it on Aaron, on his garments, on his sons, and on the garments of his sons with him; and he consecrated Aaron, his garments, and his sons, and the garments of his sons with him.

The **second exhortation** is for the Christian to hold fast the confession of hope. Anybody can make a profession or confession of a belief in Christ but the true Christian will never waver in that hope because it is based upon faith given the person by God. The world uses the word "hope" in a completely different manner than does the Christian. A worldly person may hope that he will win the lottery but the Christian's hope of his salvation is based upon faith based upon God's promises that will never fail.

The **third exhortation** is for the Christian to consider each other person in the body of Christ. The word translated "stimulate" has a meaning as to provoke people deeply and maybe even to irritate each other until the actions of love and good deeds come forward. Verses 24 and 25 make up one thought that the church does not consist of lone individuals but it is a group that interacts with each other in their worship and service of God. People who just come "to church" to enjoy the company of other people, to lift up themselves or their worldly function, to exercise their emotions in happy songs, or to hear words that make them feel better are not showing the attitude of members of God's family. God has given spiritual gifts to His people to build up the church and to assist members to grow spiritually. Each person should be demonstrating love toward each member and doing good deeds to each other and Christians worldwide.

Christians should be doing all exhortations especially in the light of the Day of the Lord coming soon. 2000 years seems like a long wait but: *2Peter 3:8 But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*

Heb 10:26-31 For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,²⁷ but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment, and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries.²⁸ Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.²⁹ How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?³⁰ For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge His people."³¹ It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

This warning is a repeat of the warning the author issued his readers in chapter six. The difference is that since that writing he has made it abundantly clear that the old sacrificial system is of no use in removing sin before God. Thus anyone who now turns his back upon the sacrifice of Jesus Christ has no system to which to return. The old covenant is replaced by the new covenant so if anyone receives this knowledge and refuses to accept it there is no hope for that person. Anyone who willfully turns his back on this revelation and continues in sin with no repentance has no forgiveness. All that awaits such people is a terrifying expectation of judgment by a blazing fury of fire that consumes all enemies of God. One is either a friend or an enemy of God and there is no neutral ground. The Jews regarded the Law of Moses to be given by God and any violation of it was so serious that there had to be two or three witnesses to the transgressions of the person. If those witnesses corroborated the sins of the person then he was to be executed: *Deut 17:6 "On the evidence of two witnesses or three witnesses, he who is to die shall be put to death; he shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness.* *Deut 19:15 "A single witness shall not rise up against a man on account of any iniquity or any sin which he has committed; on the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed.*

Since Jesus is greater than Moses (Heb 3:1) the new covenant is greater than the old covenant and so violations of it are even more severe. The author lifts up three counts in the indictment of the apostate. The **first** is that "he has trampled underfoot the Son of God" and such shows that the person not only rejects Christ but actually despises Him and we see such violent opposition to Him by many atheists today. The **second** is that the apostate has not regarded Jesus' shed blood as any different than the blood of any other person and so is unclean. This shedding of blood by Jesus has the power to justify the person and so is holy but this person has no such regard for the blood. The **third** is that the person has insulted the Holy Spirit and blasphemy of the Spirit is an unforgivable sin: *Matt 12:31 "Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven men, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven.*

The quotes of verse 30 are from (although not exact quotes):

Deut 32:35 'Vengeance is Mine, and retribution, In due time their foot will slip; For the day of their calamity is near, And the impending things are hastening upon them.'

Deut 32:36 "For the Lord will vindicate His people, And will have compassion on His servants; When He sees that their strength is gone, And there is none remaining, bond or free.

The emphasis is that God will act and there will be perfect justice in the day of God's choosing. Someone may claim to be a member of the church but God sees a person's heart and an apostate will be severely punished since he had known the truth and rejected it. God is not dead as everyone will understand and those who have not trusted in the precious blood of Jesus will face judgment and not mercy. The certainty of such a time should be most fearful to those awaiting judgment. Refusing to believe in God will not protect someone from this judgment but such actually guarantees a guilty decision and everlasting punishment.

Heb 10:32-36 But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings, ³³partly, by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated. ³⁴For you showed sympathy to the prisoners, and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and an abiding one. ³⁵Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. ³⁶For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.

These verses are an introduction to chapter 11 in which the author will list many people who lived and died by faith in Jesus Christ. Now he reminds them that they did not become apostate when faced with persecution but prevailed through it. Millions of Christians have been persecuted during the time since the resurrection of Jesus Christ and many more will probably suffer before the time for His return. Some of the people to whom he is writing had individually suffered and some suffered because they belonged to the church group who maintained that Jesus Christ was Lord. Some suffered verbal attacks as many do in the United States today and especially those who teach in secular universities. Some suffered by more severe tribulations and some had their property seized. Whatever happened to them by virtue of remaining faithful to Jesus Christ they joyfully accepted since they knew that their rewards would be much greater than anything they might have on earth. It is one thing to accept harmful actions with no regard for vengeance but it is indeed something special to suffer joyfully as can only be done by Christians. These people clearly understood the admonition of Jesus: *Matt 10:28 "And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*

Suffering and persevering for Christ has its rewards and one of those is the building of confidence in that faith and he urges them to not throw away that earned confidence by turning

their backs on Christ in the future. There are rewards in heaven for the saints but no true saint has the rewards as motive for service. Christianity is a life-long journey and many trials and tribulations await the servants of Jesus on earth as related by Luke and Paul:

Acts 14:22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God."

Rom 5:3 And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance;

Eph 3:13 Therefore I ask you not to lose heart at my tribulations on your behalf, for they are your glory.

The Christian then has need for endurance as does a marathon runner. The devotion to doing the will of God will direct the person throughout his life and he will then receive the promise of everlasting life with Him.

Heb 10:37-39 For yet in a very little while, He who is coming will come, and will not delay. ³⁸But My righteous one shall live by faith; And if he shrinks back, My soul has no pleasure in him. ³⁹But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.

The author again goes to some OT verses that should have been familiar to the readers regarding waiting for God to act in His time such as: *Habakkuk 2:3-4 "For the vision is yet for the appointed time; It hastens toward the goal, and it will not fail. Though it tarries, wait for it; For it will certainly come, it will not delay. ⁴Behold, as for the proud one, His soul is not right within him; But the righteous will live by his faith.* The context of this OT verse is that the people must wait for God to destroy the Chaldeans in His time and not try to hasten Him. In this NT book, the author is telling the people to remember those earlier times and to wait on the Lord to return in His time. For all of these people the arrival of Christ was at their death and it may be the same for those reading these notes. But that time is totally up to the Father and we should only look forward to it and not try to predetermine it. In verse 38 he mentions faith and in the next chapter he will treat it extensively by example of many people who lived by faith. Paul also made this statement about living by faith: *Rom 1:17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "But the righteous man shall live by faith."*

If anyone shrinks back from standing firm in his faith then such action shows that he never had the faith from God but just a statement of a human-based faith that does not endure. Those who shrink away will go to utter destruction forever but those who persevere will have their soul persevered forever before God. He closes this chapter with an endorsement of confidence that he and the readers of the letter are not people who will shrink away from trials and tribulations but will persevere by faith through all of life.