

Lesson 27
The Supreme Sacrifice of Christ
Hebrews 10:1-18

This sermon is somewhat of a special message in the exposition of the Book of Hebrews. Hebrews 10:18 ends the doctrinal section of this book. I think all of us would agree that there have been some deep truths presented in the first ten chapters, but starting with the next message, we will begin our study in the practical section of Hebrews. I do not know about you, but I am personally anxious to get more into practical application of God's Word to our lives.

The author of Hebrews, you remember, is writing to a group of professing Hebrew-Christians who were seriously considering leaving Christianity and going back into Judaism because of the persecution they were experiencing as Christians. They began to rationalize their faith and compromise the truth. They were asking, "Why can't I believe in Christ in the Old Testament sense, for that was good enough to save Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all other Jews up to the death of Christ?"

The author of Hebrews counters all the arguments of these professing Hebrew-Christians by showing that Christ's sacrifice for sin is the supreme sacrifice and that one sacrifice is the fulfillment and end of all Old Testament sacrifices. The author's ultimate point is that there is no salvation apart from the death of Jesus Christ for sin and sinners.

THE DESIGN BEHIND CHRIST'S SACRIFICE - Hebrews 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..." -- This is the clearest statement in the whole Bible that the Mosaic Law was designed by God to be a type, picture or shadow that pointed forward to Christ who was to come. The Old Testament dealt with shadows but the New Testament deals with the actual substance of Jesus Christ and the new spiritual economy He brought in His life, death, resurrection and ascension. The "shadow" is a faint outline but the "form" is a complete and perfect likeness.

When an artist conceives a picture in his mind, he first sketches the outline and then he paints the actual picture. Old Testament sacrifices were but a faint outline of the finished product which was Jesus Christ.

"... can never by the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect those who draw near." -- The Old Testament system in itself could not save a person because only the death of Christ has been the basis of salvation for all believers of all time. Old Testament saints were saved by God's grace through faith in the Messiah to come, but Old Testament sacrifices in themselves could not make a person "perfect" before God because they were only shadows and not the actual substance.

For people to be saved, they must be perfect, for only perfect people can have fellowship with a perfect God. Obviously there are no perfect people, but there is One who was perfect, even

Christ Jesus. Those who receive Christ by faith have the death of Christ applied to them and they receive a perfect standing or position before God. All true believers in Christ stand perfected in Christ and this is why they are accepted by God ("**accepted in the Beloved**" - Eph. 1:6). Every Christian, in his experience, still sins but his position in Christ is perfect.

"Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness (conscience) of sins?" -- Old Testament saints made repeated animal sacrifices for their sins and each year the high priest in Israel made a sacrifice on the Day of Atonement for the sins of ignorance done by the people. It was a repeated process and could never cleanse the conscience of sins. Only Christ's death can actually cleanse one's conscience. ***"How much more will the blood of Christ ... cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God"*** (Heb. 9:14)? Old Testament animal sacrifices merely covered sins until Christ would come to die for sin. Each year the debt of sin for every true believer in Israel was covered but not taken away. This debt continued to pile up against the Old Testament believer, and this debt was not paid until Christ died for sins.

The covering of Israel's sins and the debt accruing against them is like a housewife who keeps sweeping dirt under the rug. Each sweeping of dirt accumulates but there is a day coming when the dirt will be taken away by a thorough house cleaning.

"But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year. For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins." -- Each time an Old Testament believer offered an animal sacrifice, he was reminded of his sins and he made offering over and over again. The Old Testament worshiper should have understood that his sins were covered but not taken away. Yet, these sins would one day be paid for by Christ.

For these Hebrew-Christians to go back into Judaism would actually take them away from the real Christ and real salvation.

Christians today do not remember their sins constantly but they remember the One who took away their sins, even Jesus Christ.

THE SOURCE OF CHRIST'S SACRIFICE - Hebrews 10:5-7

"Therefore, when He comes into the world. He says ..." -- The author of Hebrews now quotes from Psalm 40:6-8 which is a direct reference to King David but is applied to the Lord Jesus Christ.

"SACRIFICE AND OFFERING THOU HAST NOT DESIRED, BUT A BODY THOU HAST PREPARED FOR ME. IN WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND SACRIFICES FOR SIN THOU HAST TAKEN NO PLEASURE." -- God's real desire was not the death of sacrificed animals but the death of Jesus Christ. God was really not pleased with the Old Testament sacrificial system because it could not forgive sins but only covered them. In one sense, God never cared a snap of His fingers for all the rivers of blood that flowed on Jewish altars. Christians two hundred years ago used to sing this song:

*Not all the blood of bulls
On Jewish altars slain
Could give the guilty conscience peace
Or wash away the stain.*

God was well pleased when Old Testament saints offered sacrifices because this was a demonstration of their faith in God and the promise of the Messiah to come. However, God only delighted in animal sacrifices as they pointed to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb who takes away the sin of all in the world who lay hold of Him by faith.

These animal sacrifices pointed forward to Christ's body, which had been "prepared" by God. Christ's body was specially prepared by all members of the Triune God. In the eternal councils of God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit agreed that Christ, the second person of the Trinity, would leave heaven's glory, take upon Himself a sinless human nature and die on the cross for the sins of God's people. When Jesus was being formed in the virgin Mary's womb, a miracle was taking place. God was preparing the perfect body to be a sacrifice for sins. Christ was a Lamb slain in the eternal plan of God.

"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from the vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you" (1 Pet. 1:18-20 KJV)

"... whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8 KJV).

"THEN I SAID, 'BEHOLD, I HAVE COME (IN THE ROLE OF THE BOOK IT IS WRITTEN OF ME) TO DO THY WILL O GOD.'" -- In the eternal councils of God, it was written that Christ would do the Father's will. We know from the Gospels that Christ always did the will of God in life, but the primary place that Christ did the Father's will was at the cross. There He died for sinners! There He solved the sin problem! Calvary was the ultimate performance of the Father's will.

Christ's death was no afterthought in God's mind; His death was no accident, but was planned by God in the eternal decree. God sent the Son, and Christ voluntarily submitted Himself to the Father's will and He redeemed God's people forever. The very source of Christ's sacrifice was the sovereign will of God.

THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST'S SACRIFICE - Hebrews 10:8-9

"After 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) ..." -- The whole animal sacrifice system was based on the Mosaic Law, but neither the Law nor the animal sacrifices could save people. However, most Jews had perverted the intention of the Law and

felt they could only be saved if they kept the works of the Law.

“... then He said, ‘BEHOLD, I HAVE COME TO DO THY WILL.’ He takes away the first in order to establish the second.” -- Christ’s sacrifice was based on His own character. He voluntarily gave Himself in obedience that He might redeem the true people of God.

“... just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her” (Eph. 5:25b).

“I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep” (John 10:11).

“... and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins” (Matt. 1:21).

Christ’s death brought an end to the Mosaic Law (Old Covenant) and established the New Covenant. The death of Christ was not only the beginning of something new but it was also the final and complete termination of the old.

THE PURPOSE OF CHRIST’S SACRIFICE - Hebrews 10:10

“By this will we have been sanctified ...” -- Animal sacrifices could not save rational human beings, but in Christ there is real salvation. “Sanctification” in this context means “to set apart” and refers to salvation; that is, when a Christian is positionally set apart to God at the moment of salvation. This is equivalent to Paul’s teaching of ***“justification by His blood”*** (Rom. 5:9). Believers have fellowship with Christ because of Christ’s work for their sins.

Christ’s death occurred to save us and set us apart to fellowship with God. Why did Christ save us? To accomplish God’s will! All true believers in Christ have been, are, and will be saved by God’s will. Each and every Christian is saved because of God’s will, for our salvation is part of the eternal purpose of God.

“Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ Himself, according to the kind intention of His will” (Eph. 1:4-5).

“Also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will” (Eph. 1:11).

“Who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity” (2 Tim. 1:9).

It was the Father’s eternal will that sent the Son to be a sacrifice for our sins and it was the same will that planned our salvation in the eternal counsels.

“... through the offering of the body of Jesus once for all.” -- The purpose of Christ’s sacrifice

was to save the people of God. Christ positionally sanctified people through His sacrificial death. Christ offered His holy, sinless body as a sacrifice for our sins. ***“And He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness ...”*** (1 Pet. 2:24).

Christ’s sacrifice is once and for all and forever. His death has provided a total, complete and perfect salvation for sin and sinners, and this salvation is offered to all and anyone who will believe that Christ died for his sins. The purpose of Christ’s sacrifice was to redeem men that men might be saved and positionally set apart to God.

THE GUARANTEE OF CHRIST’S SACRIFICE - Hebrews 10:11-14

“And every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices which can never take away sins; but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God ...” -- The priests, in their tabernacle service, never sat down for there were no chairs in the whole tabernacle. The priests never sat down because their work for sin was never finished. However, Christ made His sacrifice for sin, which was final, complete and perfect. Then He sat down because He had finished the work for sin.

The guarantee to Christ and to us that His death alone is acceptable to forgive sins was that God raised Him from the dead, and He ascended into heaven where He reigns at God’s right hand.

Christ has substituted for sin and sinners! Christ has shed His blood that men might be saved! Christ has sacrificed Himself that God’s people might be saved! Who are God’s people? Any and all who truly believe that Christ died for their sins!

“... waiting from that time onward UNTIL HIS ENEMIES BE MADE A FOOTSTOOL FOR HIS FEET.” -- This is a quote from Psalm 110:1. Christ reigns because He has a position on God’s right hand in a place of sovereign power. He presently rules with His Father, but the day is coming when Christ shall again leave heaven and come to earth in His second advent to destroy His enemies and set up His kingdom. Christ is anxiously anticipating His return at the Father’s appointed hour.

Those who reject Christ are His enemies and all Christ’s enemies will be judged without partiality.

“For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.” -- Christ, through His death, has positionally perfected and sanctified those who believe in Christ. This salvation is “for all time;” it is eternal.

“... but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption” (Heb. 9:12).

“So Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time ...” (Heb. 9:28).

“By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Heb. 10:10).

All who have trusted in Christ have been guaranteed eternal salvation because of the sacrifice of Christ for sins.

THE REWARDS OF CHRIST’S SACRIFICE - Hebrews 10:15-18

“And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying ...” -- The author now points out that the Holy Spirit also bears witness to the death of Christ through the Scriptures and he quotes from Jeremiah 31 concerning the New Covenant.

“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 ...” -- God has done away with the Mosaic Law as a rule of practice, but now in the age of grace or the age of the gospel, He writes the eternal moral law of God on the hearts of all true believers in Christ. God’s law is stamped upon our hearts because Christ’s sacrifice has saved us.

“He then says, ‘AND THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS I WILL REMEMBER NO MORE.’” -- The Mosaic Law and the sacrifices of the Law brought a remembrance of sin and the offerer’s conscience could not be cleansed. But Christ’s sacrifice is the basis for the New Covenant and any sinner who comes to Christ will have his sins forgiven and God will remember them no more.

Sins are forever washed away by the sacrifice of Christ and the sins of God’s blood-purchased people cannot again come up. Why? They are remembered no more, having been cast into the sea of God’s forgetfulness “forever.”

“Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering made for sin.” -- These words conclude the doctrinal portion of the Book of Hebrews and the argument is convincing and irrefutable: “Christ’s death is complete and final! All the purposes of an atonement are met in Christ. There is no more need for the shedding of one drop of blood, nor the death of one more single lamb. The death of Christ is adequate for the total history of humanity for all eternity.

Think on this! Sins are atoned for once and for all by the one offering of Christ. Sins have been taken away forever by Christ. Christ’s death is complete, final and efficacious and there is no more offering for sins..

This truth must grip us: The one perfect sin offering has been made in Christ and cannot be made again, nor need it be. Christ has done all for us!

How many times have people said to me, “I have prayed again and again that Jesus would come into my life and save me. This is a wrong understanding for you can receive Christ only once for salvation just in the same way Christ died only once for your sins. We must stop asking and start

believing in Christ's once for all and forever sacrifice for sins. If we have once appropriated by faith Christ's death for sin, then we must not keep asking Him to forgive us but thank Him that He has died for us.

About ten weeks after I had received Christ as my Savior and Lord, I came into the assurance of my salvation. I remember sitting at my desk in my fraternity house meditating upon the fact that Christ died for my sins. I realized that Christ had done something for me that I could never do. He died in my place. He died for my sins. From that moment on, I stopped trusting in me, my efforts, my faith, and trusted wholly in Christ who died for my sins. I have often wondered if that was the day I was truly saved, for this was my first inkling of what biblical grace is all about.

CONCLUSION

Have you come to the place in your experience where you believe that Christ died once and for all and forever for your sins? If you do not believe it, the Bible says you are lost. But if you will believe it, Christ will forgive your sins and give you a new life in Him. Christ does save all who draw near to Him in faith.