

STUDIES IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

Part III

STUDY NUMBER SEVENTEEN - HEBREWS 10:1-18

Eugene Peterson has written *The Message* and in Psalms 86 he describes God in this way.

“But you, O God, are both tender and kind,
not easily angered, immense in love,
and you never, never quit.”

Now these Jewish Christians are contemplating quitting.

Their prayer is Lord, change my circumstances and the Lord is saying, no I'm going to change you to suit your circumstances, which is often the way He answers prayers like this.

He delights when we persevere.
He delights when we press on.

1. In Hebrews chapter 1 He said Christ is God's last message to man.

2. In chapter 2 there is a consequence for neglect of this great salvation which is yours.

3. In chapter 3 he speaks of the superiority of Christ to the law of Moses.

4. In chapter 4 there is a rest available to those who will persevere and press on and enter into His rest.

5. In chapter 5 they become dull of hearing and there's a problem of immaturity.

6. In chapter 6 there are no rewind buttons on the VCR of life. It's impossible to go back and to relive these things. They want to go back under Judaism where it's a lot more comfortable than to stay with their Christian commitment.

7. In chapter 7 we talked about the new priesthood.

8. In chapter 8 the new covenant.

9. In chapter 9 the new sanctuary and the new sacrifice.

Now as we come to chapter 10 today we finish the argument to the whole book.

At verse 18 the argument ends.

Next week we transition into the practical. And chapters 11, 12 and 13 are filled with fabulous illustrations in truth.

**But today we're wrapping it up.
Are you ready? Look at verse 1.**

v. 1 For the Law, having a shadow of the good things about to be, and not the very form of things, is never able by means of the same sacrifices which they are offering year after year, make perfect those who are drawing near.

The little word “FOR” shows you the contrast between what the Lord can do for you and what the law can do for you.

They are contemplating about going back under the Law and he is urging them with an argument that just lets everything go.

He is trying to get across with a passionate desire the fact that the old order was just a “shadow.”

**The reality is in the person of Christ.
And that word “shadow” is in the emphatic position which means it is the first word in the Greek sentence.**

That's the most important part.

He's saying in essence, “You're going back to the shadows when you already have the reality in the person of Christ.”

**Notice the little phrase
“for the law ... is never able.”
It can’t accomplish this.**

**If you took that sentence and you pulled out
the verb and the subject, it might sound like this,
“The law is never able by means of the same sacrifices
which they are offering year after year, make perfect
those who are drawing near.”**

And God demands perfection.

**The word “SHADOW” would mean a rough outline.
It would mean just a picture of it but it’s not
the reality or the real thing.**

**Listen to Kent Hughes from his commentary
on Hebrews because it really illustrates our point.**

**Soon after I began to date my future wife, Barbara,
I obtained her picture--a beautiful black-and-white 8 x
10 photograph taken the year before we met--and it
immediately became an item of pre-nuptial “worship.”
It was one of those bare-shouldered, sorority-style
pictures so popular at the time. She looked like an
angel floating in the clouds.**

**It became my portable hope, most often sitting on my
desk, sometimes in my car, at other times propped in
front of my plate and my love-struck eyes.**

**However, the day came when we stood before God
and our families and friends and pledged our lives to**

each other as she became mine. Suddenly I had gone from the possession of a one-dimensional portrait to the possession of the real thing, who smiled, talked, and laughed—a real, three-dimensional wife—a living, life-loving soul! And the picture? It remained just as beautiful, but from then on it received relatively scant attention.

But imagine that one day I appear before my wife holding the black-and-white photograph, and I say, “My dear, I’ve missed your picture, and I’m going back to it. I really am attached to the silhouette and the monochrome shading and the matte finish.” Then I passionately kiss the glass protecting the photograph, clutch it to my chest, and exit mumbling my devotion to the picture—“I love you, O photograph of my wife. You’re everything to me.”

People’s suspicions that pastors are weird would be confirmed. Time to call for the men in the white jackets!

See that’s what the author is saying.

“You’re going back to the black and white pictures and you have the reality in the person of Christ.

Don’t make a dumb mistake by going back to something that is not going to accomplish what has to be done by everybody and that is perfection.”

Nobody gains acceptance into God’s site and into God’s presence who is not perfect and so therefore it has to be provided in some other way.

The law is never able to make perfect those who are drawing near.

Now why are they “drawing near”?

They “are drawing near” for salvation which is access and acceptance into the presence of God.

So in verse 1 we have a picture of the shadow of the good things about to come - the reality, the real dimensional person.

The Lord Jesus Christ who comes to bring life.

**Now would you notice it says,
“the Law ... is never able by means of the same sacrifices.”**

You know the natural nature of man is to try to gain acceptance into the presence of God by sacrifice.

I mean just stop and think about it.

Some of you sitting here, right now, feel very comfortable about your relationship to God because of all the sacrifices your making.

And in the back of your mind you are programmed to think,

I go to church,

I give my money,

I read my Bible,

**I'm trying to be a good Dad,
I'm trying to do a good job at my work
so God will cut me some slack and so I can get in.**

People all over the world live like that.

Matthew 7:21-23 says:

**Not everyone who says to Me on that day, “Lord,
Lord, haven't we done it,” and I will say, “depart
from Me,
I never knew you; you workers of iniquity.”**

**Time, treasures, all these things are sacrifices
but they are not going to accomplish the perfection
that is demanded to gain acceptance into the presence
of God.**

**It will not be accomplished by these sacrifices
over and over again.**

**v. 2 Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be
offered, because those who are worshipping, having
once been cleansed, would no longer be having a
consciousness of sin?**

**He's saying, hey look, that constant repetition
just tells you that it never gets the job done.**

**Because, if it really got the job done
one sacrifice ought to do it.**

Well what happens every time they have a day of atonement?

They go in, offer the blood, which reminds them of sin.

Come around the next year, go in offer the blood, reminds them of sin.

Sin, sin, sin.

The law, brought alive and kept alive the remembrance and the consciousness of sin by calling it to our minds on a constant basis.

And what we are saying at this point is that the law is not designed to function permanently.

It was only a shadow to bring us to the reality of the new heart that can be ours in Christ under the new covenant.

v. 3 But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year.

All the law does is remind us of the sin.

And so every year on the day of atonement when it rolled around it reminded the people that in the blood of that little lamb, being sprinkled on the mercy seat, you have the sacrifices that are a reminder year by year.

v. 4 For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to be taking away sins.

Now here is the REASON that it is only a REMINDER and not a true SOLUTION to the sin problem.

I want you to notice something.

In verse 1 you have a little phrase. The law is what? Never able to make perfect those who are drawing near.

**Now look at verse 4. “It is IMPOSSIBLE for the blood of bulls and goats to be taking away sins.”
No sacrifice anyone makes can attain salvation.**

v. 5 Therefore when He [who? Christ the reality] is coming into the world, He is saying, “Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me;

There’s the virgin birth.

Isaiah 7:14 predicted it.

“Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and we will call his name Immanuel which means God with us, a body you prepared for me.”

That’s taken, by the way from Psalm 40.

Ray Stedman says it so well and beautifully:

God has no interest in rituals, in candles, in prayer books, in beads, in chanting, in any ceremony.

Ceremonies mean nothing to God.

What He wants is a heart that is His, a life that is His, and a body that is available to Him.

v. 6 in whole burnt offerings and [sacrifices] for sin you took no pleasure.

Now when you read that, you say,

“Well then why did He have all these Levitical offerings and all the Levitical sacrifices if such is the case?

Why didn’t He have pleasure?

The reason a sacrifice isn’t any pleasure to Him is because there’s no heart behind it.

You can go through all kinds of rituals but if there’s no heart in it then it means nothing to Him.

He took no pleasure.

Why was Christ’s sacrifice acceptable?

Because He came with a commitment of obedience to do the Father’s will no matter what that was.

And He came to take the body that had been prepared to carry out the function and that's verse 7.

**v. 7 Then I said, [more quotation from Psalm 40]
'Behold I am coming, (In the roll of the book it has been written concerning me) [what?] to do your will, O God.'**

That's Isaiah 6:8

"Here am I Lord, send me. I want to do your will."

Now there's an interesting thought here in verse 7. When the author says, "Behold I am coming, in the roll of the book it has been written."

That word ROLL occurs 76 times in the Bible in the New Testament and it always is translated *KEPHALE* it's the HEAD.

**"Behold I am coming, (In the HEAD of the book it has been written concerning me)...."
The very first person written about in the book, is Him.
He's at the head,
He's at the top.**

v. 8 After saying above, "Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin you did not desire, nor have pleasure [in them]"

v. 9 then He said, “Behold, I am coming to do your will.” [He coming to do His will – what is His will?] He is taking away the first in order that He might establish the second.

He’s already taken away the law and the Levitical priesthood.

He’s taken that away in order to establish the second.

Now does that summarize everything we’ve talked about?

We have the old priesthood replaced with the new priesthood.

We have the old covenant replaced with the new covenant.

We have the old sanctuary replaced by the heavenly sanctuary.

We have an old sacrifice of the blood of bulls and goats replaced by a new sacrifice, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so the whole purpose in His coming is to replace the one with the other and they want to go back to the one that’s been replaced.

And contrary to God’s will they want to do this.

v.10 By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

After you experience the new birth you are declared justified in God's sight perfectly righteous.

But practically we are far from what we need to be.

**And so we progressively become more like Christ as we read the Word,
study,
and get closer to the goal,
being made more like Him.**

That's called progressive sanctification.

**The word here is "sanctified" in the past tense.
It's just like justified in the book of Hebrews.
It means that I have been declared righteous.
"By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Christ once for all."**

We have been sanctified and we can translate it like this; we have been set apart for an intended use. God has a purpose in setting it apart to use us.

Ruth Meyers in her little book called *31 Days of Praise*. says this.

How safe it is for me to trust Your reasons for acting (or not acting) and Your methods of working!

Thank You that I can safely commit my location and situation to You. I can “be willing for You to shift me anywhere on life’s checkerboard, or bury me anywhere in life’s garden, gladly yielding myself for You to please Yourself with, anywhere and anyway You choose” (source unknown). Thank You that I can trust You with my future places--ready to go, ready to stay.

v.11 And every priest has [what?] stood daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins;

In verse 11, we’re going back to the old order for just a moment.

Notice the words? “STOOD DAILY.”

Every priest under the old order never sat down, his work was never done.

And daily tells you it was not effective.

It was over and over again ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices which can never take away sins.

Here’s the whole argument in brief?

What does verse 1 say? Never able.

What does verse 4 say? Impossible.

What does verse 11 say? Can never take away sin.

**The old order cannot handle it,
it is not adequate to take away sin.**

Here comes one of the high points of the argument.

**v.12 but He, when He offered one sacrifice for sins for
all time, sat down at the right hand of God,**

**“He offered one sacrifice for sins.”
For how long? “For all time.” No annual deal with this.**

**“Sat down.” He’s not going to stand around –
at the right hand of God.**

**v.13 then waiting until His enemies be made a footstool
for His feet.**

Why is He waiting?

**He is not willing that any should perish but that all
should come to repentance.**

He longs for that.

He doesn’t want anyone doomed for eternity.

**v.14 For by one offering He has perfected for all time
those who are sanctified.**

You talk about a complete bill of health.

**“One offering,” “He has perfected for all time those who
are sanctified.”**

**If Christ can't save you nobody else can.
He is the only one who is qualified.**

How do you feel today about your condition?

**Let's say one is the worst – ten is the best.
Ten is perfection.**

**Where do you put yourself on that scale right now?
Between one and ten.**

**Realize that you are a ten and
it's totally independent of what you are and do.**

**Yet we have people living in defeat today
even who are believers who don't really believe
that their a ten.**

They don't really believe what's said in that 14th verse.

**That He offered one sacrifice and He perfected
for all time those who are sanctified. That's the gift.**

Christ came to make you a ten.

And on a scale of one to ten only tens go to heaven.

A holy God demands perfection.

By the sacrifice of Christ, He has provided the access and perfection of all the tens into glory, who have been declared righteous by the sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

v.15 And the Holy Spirit also is bearing witness to us; for after having said,

v.16 “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, the Lord is saying: I am putting my laws upon their hearts, and upon their mind I will write them,

v.17 and their sins and their lawless deeds I will positively [absolutely] not remember any more.”

That is the strongest negative in the Greek text that you can find.

Which says, “I will absolutely, positively, never remember their sins anymore.

Are you are sitting here thinking, “I wonder if it covers this and I wonder if it covers that?”

It is says here, “He will positively, absolutely remember them no more.”

Do you believe that?

Psalm 103:12-14

**As far as the east is from the west,
He has removed our transgressions from us,**

**Verse 18 is the grand finale and conclusion
of the whole argument.**

**v.18 Now where there is forgiveness of these things,
there is no longer any offering for sin.**

**You don't have to go back under the old order.
The one sacrifice has been done.**

There are no more sacrifices to be made.

**It's all taken care of since Christ brought perfection
by His death.**

**His sacrifice has provided for forgiveness of sin and
where there is forgiveness there is no more need
for the Levitical sacrifices.**

**William Graham Scroggie was a Scottish evangelist and
preacher and Bible teacher of great stature during his
life. He spoke at a Keswick conference and there was a
young lady who continued sitting after the service
thoughtfully by herself. Graham went up to her and
asked if there was anything that he could for her, or
clarify something he had said.**

“No,” she replied, “I think I know what God wants me to do, but I cannot seem to make up my mind whether I want to do it.”

“Oh,” said Scroggie, “I think you need to come with me to Joppa, and see what Peter said.” He turned the leaves of his Bible to the tenth chapter of Acts, and pointed to the story of Peter on the rooftop, when he saw the sheet let down, full of animals, and the voice of God told him to rise, kill and eat. His reply had been, “No, Lord, I have not eaten anything common or unclean.”

Scroggie said, “You know there is something strange about Peter’s reply to God. He said, ‘No, Lord.’ Now that is not really a proper sentence at all. Peter could have said ‘No’ and that would have been a statement. Or he could have just said ‘Lord!’ and that would have meant ‘Yes!’ But you just cannot say ‘No’ and then finish by saying ‘Lord.’ Those words do not belong together.”

Graham Scroggie then wrote on a piece of paper in bold letters the words NO, LORD and put it on his Bible, and gave it to the lady, on her lap. He said, “I think that is what you are trying to say. Now I am going to leave you and go over there to pray for you. I want you to pray too, and then take this pencil and cross out one of those words.”

He hardly had time to kneel down when the Lord told him it was time to go back. He went to her, and saw the word NO had been crossed out. She was sitting back in her chair, crying and repeating to herself, “Jesus is LORD, Jesus is LORD, Jesus is LORD.” That was her moment of truth. For her, that was the Lord’s Breakfast. That was when she knew decisions had to be made; and she made them; decisions from which there was no turning back.

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

LESSON #1: The Old Covenant is the “shadow,” the New Covenant is the reality.

LESSON #2: The Law by means of its sacrifices could never perfect those who are drawing near to God.

LESSON #3: The sacrifices were a constant reminder, not a remedy for sin.

LESSON #4: “It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to be taking away sins.”

LESSON #5: A body was prepared in the virgin’s womb for the Savior to come and to offer that acceptable sacrifice for sin once and for all.

LESSON #6: Jesus Christ came to do the will of the Father.

LESSON #7: He came to take away the Old Covenant in order that He might establish the New Covenant.

LESSON #8: Jesus, by the sacrifice of Himself upon the Cross, has done all that is necessary for us to have acceptance and a perfect standing in the presence of a Holy God.

LESSON #9: Jesus Christ, after making His sacrifice, sat down at the right hand of God indicating the fact that His work was done.

LESSON #10: We have the promise in the New Covenant that our sins and lawless deeds will positively not be remembered any more.

LESSON #11: There is total forgiveness in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

STUDIES IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

PART III

STUDY NUMBER SEVENTEEN — Hebrews 10:1-18

v. 1 For the Law, having a shadow of the good things about to be, and not the very form of things, is never able by means of the same sacrifices which they are offering year after year, make perfect those who are drawing near.

v. 2 Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because those who are worshipping, having once been cleansed, would no longer be having a consciousness of sin?

v. 3 But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year.

v. 4 For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to be taking away sins.

v. 5 Therefore when He is coming into the world, He is saying, “Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me;

v. 6 in whole burnt offerings and [sacrifices] for sin you took no pleasure.

v. 7 Then I said, ‘Behold I am coming, (In the roll of the book it has been written concerning me) to do your will, O God.’”

v. 8 After saying above, “Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin you did not desire, nor have pleasure [in them]” (which are being offered according to the Law),

v. 9 then He said, “Behold, I am coming to do your will.” He is taking away the first in order that He might establish the second.

v.10 By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

v.11 And every priest has stood daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins;

v.12 but He, when He offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God,

v.13 then waiting until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet.

v.14 For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.

v.15 And the Holy Spirit also is bearing witness to us; for after having said,

v.16 “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, the Lord is saying: I am putting my laws upon their hearts, and upon their mind I will write them,

v.17 and their sins and their lawless deeds I will positively not remember any more.”

v.18 Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin.

QUESTIONS:

- 1. Read Hebrews 10:1-18 and summarize in your own words what Paul is saying in this section.**
- 2. What is the limitation of the Law, according to verse 1?**
- 3. What is impossible, according to verse 4?**
- 4. What is the supreme desire of Jesus, according to verse 7?**
- 5. What is possible for us as believers as a result of the “offering of the body of Jesus Christ,” according to verse 10?**
- 6. What is the limitation of the sacrifices of the Old Testament, according to verse 11?**
- 7. What is Jesus doing now, according to verse 13?**
- 8. What has Jesus accomplished, according to verse 14?**
- 9. What verse in the study has meant the most to you?**
- 10. What lesson have you learned from this study?**

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

LESSON #1: The Old Covenant is the “shadow,“ the New Covenant is the reality.

LESSON #2: The Law by means of its sacrifices could never perfect those who are drawing near to God.

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