

REVIEW

Today as we begin the New Year we begin a new chapter of Hebrews: Chapter 10. Before we commence in our study, let us take a moment to recall the outline of where we have come.

Our 3 key "P" words for Hebrews are:

PREEMINANCE, PERSEVERANCE and PRIESTHOOD

√ In the early chapters of Hebrews we had the emphasis on the **preeminence** of Jesus:

Better than angels and better than Moses

√ In these early chapters we also heard about our need for **perseverance**:

Don't "drift" (2:1), don't "neglect" (2:3), don't "harden" (3:13) or "partake only of milk" (5:13) or "fall away" (6:6). Or positively, we learned: "pay closer attention" (2:1), "hold fast our confidence/confession" (3:6, 14; 4:16), "encourage one another" (3:13), "fear" (4:1), "be diligent" (4:11), "be imitators" (6:12).

√ And, we were introduced to Jesus, our perfect High Priest:

He was "made like His brethren in all things so that He might become a merciful and faithful High Priest" (2:17)

"Consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession" (3:1)

"Therefore we have a great high priest..."

- a. who has passed through the heavens (4:14)
- b. who can sympathize with our weakness (4:15a)
- c. who has been tempted in all, yet without sin (4:15b)
- d. who did not glorify Himself (5:5)

√ Then, in chapters 7-10 we studied Jesus' priesthood in more detail, under the following outline:

Chapter 7 – A Better Priesthood - the order of Melchizedek being superior to the order of Levi and Aaron; Jesus after the order of Melchizedek

Chapter 8 – A Better Covenant - the new covenant of grace, forgiveness and the law in our heart being superior to old covenant of "if obedience, then blessing"

Chapter 9 – A Better Tabernacle - the heavenly tabernacle and Christ's blood superior to the earthly tabernacle and animals' blood

Chapter 10 – A Better Sacrifice

√ Today we begin the study of chapter 10 which will be in 5 lessons over 5 weeks.

We will learn that the sacrifice of Jesus is superior to the sacrifice of multitudes of animals

And we will learn what made Jesus' sacrifice so perfect.

And that will give us understanding of how our "living sacrifice" as we serve him today can be perfect as well, following in Christ's example.

√ **CHAPTER 10 – Memory aid and key verse**

1 + 0 (10) = "1 Offering

10:14 "For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified."

OUR TEXT

Hebrews 10:1-10 *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 which they offer continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near. Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins? But in those 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.*

Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, “ ‘Sacrifice and offering You have not desired, but a body You have prepared for Me. In whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You have taken no pleasure.’ Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come (In the scroll of the book it is written of Me) to do Your will, O God.’”

After saying above, “Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You have not desired, nor have You taken pleasure in them” (which are offered according to the Law), then He said, “Behold, I have come to do Your will.” He takes away the first in order to establish the second.

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

In this portion of Holy Scripture I want you to notice this simple outline:

The NEED for a better sacrifice (v. 1-4)

The PROVISION for a better sacrifice (v. 5-9)

The EFFECT of a better sacrifice (v. 10)

THE NEED

Here we find two different Greek words to depict the old law and its sacrifices: “shadow” and “form” (or image). As a shadow it is dark and without true form, only vaguely showing the shape of the true reality yet to come. As a form or image it is like a photograph or statue – trying to depict the reality, but not in itself the reality.

And, particularly significant is the statement that these animal sacrifices could not make perfect those who offered them or draw them near to God. After all, that is the nature of worship: to draw near to God as we are made more like Him. And yet this could not be accomplished with animal sacrifices made by human priests advocating on behalf of the worshipper.

The author goes on in verse 2 to point out that the very repetitive nature of the sacrifices showed that worship had not been achieved. If it had, the worshipper would have been cleansed with no consciousness of sin held against him. But rather (v. 3) under the old system the worshipper was continually reminded of his sin as sacrifice after sacrifice was made.

Thus the summary statement in verse 4: “For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.” Why:

1. Merely a shadow of the coming reality
2. Could not cleanse the worshipper of sin
3. Could not bring the worshipper near to God
4. Repetitive and a reminder of need

THE PROVISION

In verse 5 we are taken to Psalm 40:6-8. And the author of Hebrews is quoting from the Septuagint, so we find minor differences in the translation.

As we have seen so many times before, we see Scripture interpreting Scripture. In this case the Hebrews author, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, indicates that it is Jesus, as he comes into the world, who is speaking through David in Psalm 40.

And Jesus says (according to Hebrews):

1. God, you have not desired or required of me the typical sacrifices
2. You have prepared a body for me (implied: to sacrifice)
3. You have not required burnt offerings, or take pleasure in them

Rather I come (as it has been written from eternity) to do Your will
(i.e. to offer my body as a sacrifice for sin)

The author goes on in verses 8-9 to explain that “doing the will of God” supersedes or replaces the previous sacrifices that were out of obligation and establishes “doing God’s will” as the new acceptable sacrifice.

THE EFFECT

And in verse 10 we find a number of wonderful truths about Christ’s sacrifice:

1. We are SANCTIFIED (made holy and acceptable to God) by it
2. It is Christ’s WILLINGNESS that accomplishes this
3. It is specifically the offering of the BODY of Christ
4. The sacrifice is ONCE FOR ALL

Requirements for a BETTER SACRIFICE

1. **Perfect** (holy, divine, truly spotless)
2. **Human** (to cleanse human sin)
3. **Willing** (not out of obligation)

Perfect

It was required of the animal sacrifices of the Old Covenant that they be “without spot or blemish.” But no animal was perfect – only perfect as compared to the rest of the worshipper’s flock. The principle behind the “perfectness” is that it must be perfect to be acceptable to a perfect God.

The animal sacrifices were as perfect as they could be. But the “better sacrifice” of God’s Son, the Lamb of God, was indeed perfect in His sinlessness. In Jesus, the true (not the “shadow”) requirement was met - a truly perfect, sinless offering. Better indeed.

Human

Clearly Jesus as the God-man was fully human and the animal sacrifices were not. But why was “human” a requirement? Answer: because it was to cleanse a human. Just as God required “an eye for an eye” so God requires a human sacrifice to provide cleansing for a human. And specifically, a human body. We will see this theme played out in more detail over the course of chapter 10. Jesus: better indeed.

Willing

Here is the requirement that is often overlooked and thus is emphasized here in Hebrews 10. God wants a willing heart, not one motivated only by obligation. As parents, we can understand this – we want children who WANT to obey, not just obey because they are supposed to do so.

Christ came willingly. And He died willingly, giving His body up as a sacrifice for sin. “This is my body which is given for you” is the remembrance in the emblem of the bread which we take at communion.

APPLICATION

There is so much more of this that we will learn in coming weeks. But for now, ponder that these three requirements for a better sacrifice that Jesus fulfilled, are the same three requirements that Jesus want of us as His disciples as we offer our bodies as living sacrifices to Him.

***Romans 12:1** I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living a holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.*

God wants our sacrifice to be PERFECT – impossible in ourselves, but made possible by the sanctifying of our person in Christ. Therefore, we must ever represent Jesus in our actions and thoughts. This is what is pleasing to God.

God wants our sacrifice to be HUMAN. This one is easy for us. But realize that God is pleased with us to offer ourselves – body, soul, mind and spirit. You are his favorite offering - your very person submitted to Him.

God wants our sacrifice to be **WILLING**. Here is the toughest of all. I must ever be willing to lay down my will for His. I must be willing to see others as he sees them, not with my prejudices. I must be willing to attend to His agenda. I must be willing to see all others as more important than myself. I must be servant and minister/pastor to all. I must not grow weary in my service. I must ever repeat the words of our Savior in the garden: “Not my will, but Thy will be done.”

Then, and only then, will my life be the “perfect sacrifice” emulating the better sacrifice that Jesus gave for me: PERFECT, HUMAN and WILLING.

CLOSING THOUGHT TO PONDER

When "God manifested in the flesh," became the sacrifice,
and His death upon the accursed tree paid the required ransom,
then the free-will Sufferer being of infinite worth,
provided salvation of infinite value !