

## THE EPISTLES TO THE HEBREWS

### HEBREWS 4:14-10:18, THE SUPERIORITY OF THE WORK OF CHRIST

### HEBREWS 8:1-10:18, THE SUPERIORITY OF THE NEW COVENANT

- Warren Wiersbe, *Jesus Christ is God's superior Priest; but is there anything that can minimize this superiority? Nothing! For He ministers on the basis of a better covenant (Heb. 8), in a better sanctuary (Heb. 9), and because of a better sacrifice (Heb. 10).*
- Ray Stedman, *Moses used the blood of an animal; Jesus used wine as a symbol of his own blood. Moses spoke of the covenant of the law; Jesus alluded to the new covenant of grace. Moses spoke of God's words which provided for the partial covering of sins so God could remain with his people; Jesus promised the actual remission of sins so God could live within his people forever. It is that excellent new covenant which chapters 8–10 of Hebrews now expounds.*

## INTRODUCTION

- A. An outline of Hebrews (to be finalized at completion of Hebrews study)
1. The superiority of the person of Christ (1:1-4:13)
  2. The superiority of the work of Christ (4:14-10:18)
    - a. A superior confession (4:14-16)
    - b. Superior qualifications (5:1-10)
    - c. A warning to keep moving forward (5:11-6:20)
    - d. The superior priestly order of Christ (7:1-28)
    - e. The superiority of the New Covenant (8:1-10:18)
      - 1) A superior High Priest (8:1-13)
      - 2) The earthly sanctuary (9:1-10)
      - 3) The superior sanctuary and Sacrifice (9:11-9:28)
      - 4) The superior effect (10:1-18)
- B. Review of Hebrews 9:11-28
1. Leon Morris, *The sacrifices of the old covenant were ineffectual. But in strong contrast Christ made an offering that secures a redemption valid for all eternity.*
  2. Donald Hagner, *The work of Christ is final, absolute, definitive, complete, and perfect. Only such words are appropriate to describe what the author expounds.*
- C. Introductory comments on Hebrews 10:1-18
1. Thomas Constable, . . . *the writer emphasized the perfecting effect of Jesus Christ's sacrifice on New Covenant believers. He wrote this to impress his readers further with the superiority of their condition compared with that of Old Covenant believers.*
  2. David Brown, *Instead of the daily ministry of the Levitical priests, Christ's service is perfected by the one sacrifice, whence He now sits on the right hand of God as a Priest-King, until all His foes shall be subdued unto Him.*
  3. R. Kent Hughes, *How absurd for anyone, once having the substance, to go back to the shadow. Yet, some in the early church were forsaking the Covenant of Grace for the Old Covenant of the Law. And this is what the author of Hebrews wants to steel his people against as he concludes his comparison of the Old and New Covenants in 10:1–18.*
  4. Warren Wiersbe, *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.*
- D. Structure of Hebrews 10:1-18
1. The writer of Hebrews uses a literary structure called chiasm.
  2. Chiasm is inverted parallelism where two or more points are repeated in reverse order and the point in the middle is the one being emphasized. Here it is A1 (1-4) - B1 (5-10) - B2 (11-14) - A2 (15-18)
  3. The middle points of Hebrews 10:1-18 are verses are points B1 and B2 (11-14) with emphasis on the superiority of Christ as seen in His sacrifice and His priesthood.

## HEBREWS 10:1-18, THE SUPERIOR EFFECT

- A. The insufficiency of the old covenant's animal sacrifices (1-4)
1. The old sacrificial system could not perfect the recipients (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.*
    - a. *a shadow*
      - 1) Hebrews 8:5, *They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things. For when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God, saying, "See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain."*
      - 2) *For* reminds the reader of earlier statements (Hebrews 8:3-5; 9:23-26) that the law was shadow and not reality.
      - 3) William Barclay, *As a "shadow," the Law is only a pale reflection, a mere outline or silhouette, and is thus unsubstantial.*
      - 4) Leon Morris, *The author is saying that the law is no more than a preliminary sketch. It shows the shape of things to come, but the solid reality is not there.*
      - 5) Ray Stedman, *The annual repetition did remind offerers that they were still very much sinners and still very much in need of an adequate substitute if their sin was ever to be removed.*
    - b. *of the good things to come*
      - 1) Hebrews 9:11, *But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation)*
      - 2) William Newell, . . . *the good things to come of which He is High Priest are those good things brought by His having obtained eternal redemption at the Cross: pardon, justification, reconciliation, association with Him as His brethren; "access with confidence," "drawing near" to God in Heaven through Him; and, of course, all future blessings connected with "the promise" of His coming again (10:36-7).*
    - c. *it can never . . . make perfect those who draw near*
      - 1) Hebrews 9:9, . . . *gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper,*
      - 2) The sacrifices were not meant to grant access to God but to remind them of their sins which kept them from access.
      - 3) William L. Lane, *The insufficiency of the sacrifices prescribed by the law to provide unhindered access to God is attested by the necessity of offering them continuously year after year.*
      - 4) Ray Stedman, *To make perfect a sinner before God would be to have sin and its effects totally removed.*
      - 5) Leon Morris, *"Make perfect" does not mean to make sinless but to make perfect in our access to God.*
      - 6) Zane Hodges, *As the following discussion shows, he was concerned with that definitive removal of guilt which makes free access to God possible for worshipers who trust in the sufficiency of the Cross.*
  2. If they had been cleansed there would be no need for more sacrifices (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?*
    - a. *otherwise*
      - 1) It means *had the previous method been effective.*
      - 2) David Brown, *if the law could, by its sacrifices, have perfected the worshipers.*
      - 3) Warren Wiersbe, *The very repetition of the sacrifices day after day, and the Day of Atonement year after year, pointed out the entire system's weakness.*
      - 4) William L. Lane, *The argument concerns the relationship of worshipers to God and the whole process of consecration to the service of God.*
      - 5) Verses 3-4 further explain why the old covenant's sacrifices were ineffective.
    - b. Effective cleansing should remove the guilt of sin.
      - 1) Douglas Mangum, *Had those sacrifices been effective for lasting purification from sins, they would not have been offered continually and repeatedly, year by year. As it is, however, worshipers of Yahweh continued to sin and to have awareness of their ongoing sin. A new sacrifice was always necessary.*
      - 2) William L. Lane, *As long as this sense of sin and transgression with respect to God remained, there could be no effective service of God. A decisive cleansing of the conscience is a prerequisite for unhindered access to God (10:22), and this has been achieved only through the sacrifice of Christ . . .*

- c. *consciousness of sins*
    - 1) William L. Lane, *This expression connotes the Hebrew sense of a burdened, smitten heart, which became most pronounced on the Day of Atonement when it was necessary to confront the holiness of God . . .*
    - 2) Warren Wiersbe, *Animal sacrifices could never completely deal with human guilt . . . People lacked that inward witness of full and final forgiveness.*
    - 3) Thomas Constable, *The Israelites never enjoyed the extent of freedom from sin's guilt that we do.*
3. The purpose of the old covenant's sacrifices was to remind the recipients of their sins (3), ***But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year.***
- a. William L. Lane, *The Day of Atonement was designated as a day for fasting (Lev 23:26–32) and the confession of sins (Lev 16:20–22). The elaborate ritual was intended to accentuate a consciousness of sins. The solemn entrance of the high priest into the Most Holy Place dramatized the fact that sin separates the congregation from God.*
  - b. Donald Hagner, *Indeed, the continuing of the sacrifices on an annual basis (cf. v. 1) is a reminder of the continuing problem of their sins.*
  - c. Warren Wiersbe, *So the annual Day of Atonement did not accomplish "remission of sin" but only "reminder of sin."*
  - d. Thomas Constable, *The Day of Atonement reminded them yearly that their sins needed covering so they could continue to have fellowship with God. We do not have a yearly reminder since Jesus Christ's sacrifice made us acceptable to God (cf. John 13:10; Acts 15:9).*
  - e. The Day of Atonement was an act of mercy when only grace can satisfy.
4. The blood of animals can't take away sins (4), ***For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.***
- a. Psalm 51:16-17, *For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.*
  - b. 1 Samuel 15:22, *And Samuel said, "Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams.*
  - c. R. Kent Hughes, *The shadow of the Old Covenant Law and sacrifice inflamed the unrequited need for forgiveness and a clear conscience. The photograph, so to speak, pictured what could be and activated an ache for the reality.*
  - d. W. H. Griffith Thomas, *The blood of animals cannot cleanse from sin because it is non-moral. The blood of sinning man cannot cleanse because it is immoral. The blood of Christ alone can cleanse because it is moral.*
  - e. Ray Stedman, *Every dying animal meant a life brought to an end. Sin was serious; it forfeited life. Unless the sin could actually be removed, the sinner must die. To save the sinner from such a fate, an equal and willing substitute must be found. Such a substitute the author now finds described in the words of Psalm 40.*
- B. The sufficiency of Christ as the sacrifice (5-10)
1. The writer cited Psalm 40:6-7 to show that Messiah came to do the will of God (5-7), ***Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, "Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. 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.'***
- a. *Consequently*
    - 1) It is a marker of *result*, usually denoting that which is self-evident.
    - 2) Louw-Nida, *Since the result is stated as an inference based upon what has preceded, one may translate this expression of result as 'for this reason' or 'for this very reason.'*
  - b. *when Christ entered he world*
    - 1) Hebrews 1:6, *And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him."*
    - 2) The Greek is *he*, referring to the incarnate Son of God who is speaking to God the Father.

- c. *He said*
- 1) Context
    - a) The Son declared what is Psalm 40:6-8, *In sacrifice and offering you have not delighted, but you have given me an open ear. Burnt offering and sin offering you have not required. Then I said, "Behold, I have come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me: I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart."*
    - b) Donald Hagner, *The meaning of the psalm passage in its own historical context seems clear. A pious Israelite, perhaps David or a Davidic king, stresses that what concerned God is not sacrifices but obedience.*
    - c) Douglas Mangum, *Through a bold interpretation of an obscure phrase in an ancient psalm, the author places the words of the psalmist (Ps 40:6–8) into the mouth of Christ at his incarnation.*
  - 2) Concerning old covenant sacrifices and Christ's sacrifice
    - a) William Barclay, *In its essence, sacrifice was a noble thing. It meant taking something that was dear and giving it to God in order to show love. But, human nature being what it is, it was easy for the idea to degenerate and for sacrifice to be thought of as a way of buying God's forgiveness.*
    - b) Thomas Constable, . . . (Ps. 40:6–8) expresses Messiah's commitment to offer His body as a sacrifice to God (at His first advent) because animal sacrifices were inadequate.
    - c) The incarnation of the Son of God provided Him with a body prepared for Him by the Father.
    - d) Warren Wiersbe, *The quotation makes it clear that Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the Old Covenant sacrifices.*
  - 3) Concerning obedience - *I have come to do your will*
    - a) John 4:34, *Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work.*
    - b) William Newell, *Take the four Gospels, upon your first opportunity, and find and mark our Lord's constantly repeated testimony that He "came to do the will of Him that sent Him."*
    - c) Ray Stedman, *Verses 5–7 quote Psalm 40:6–8 from the Septuagint. They describe, in words directly ascribed to Christ, his complete willingness to sacrifice himself to remove our sins.*
    - d) William Barclay, *Jesus was the perfect sacrifice because he perfectly did God's will. He took himself and said to God: 'Do with me as you will.' He brought to God on behalf of men and women what no one had been able to bring—the perfect obedience, that was the perfect sacrifice.*
    - e) Warren Wiersbe, *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).*
2. The writer added that the old covenant has been replaced by the new (8-9), ***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), then he added, "Behold, I have come to do your will." He does away with the first in order to establish the second.***
- a. The writer rewords the same statements cited from Psalm 40:6-7 (Hebrews 10:5-6).
    - 1) William L. Lane, *The repetition of phrases and clauses from the citation indicates the points of emphasis in the writer's reading of the biblical text.*
    - 2) He repeats them for emphasis and again ties them to his main point found in Psalm 40:8, the perfect obedience of Jesus.
  - b. He states that sacrifices and various offerings were made according to the law but God took no pleasure in them.
    - 1) William L. Lane, *This comment . . . relegates the sacrifices of the old cultus to the period when God's arrangement with his people was regulated by law . . .*
    - 2) Ray Stedman, *He acknowledges that though God authorized the animal sacrifices of the past, he did not delight in them.*
    - 3) R. Kent Hughes, *The fact was, though God had instituted blood animal sacrifices (Exodus 24), he had never been pleased with them and did not see them as ends. He had established them as object lessons to instruct his people about the sinfulness of their hearts, his hatred of sin, the fact that sin leads to death, the need of an atonement, and his delight in those whose hearts were clean and obedient and faithful.*

- c. He declared that the New Covenant replaced the old based on Jesus' perfect obedience.
- 1) Ray Stedman, . . . *he stresses the fact that Christ deliberately set himself to do the will of the Father, though he knew it would lead to pain and separation . . . it was on the cross that they were fully carried out. Here the writer also declares that the death of Jesus, by fulfilling the will of the Father, completely replaces the provision of animal deaths which had provided some degree of forgiveness before.*
  - 2) Thomas Constable, *He took away the first Mosaic Covenant and its sacrifices to establish the second New Covenant.*
  - 3) William L. Lane, *That statement affirms the creation of a qualitatively new foundation for the consecration of worshipers to the service of God . . . In the design of God, the two redemptive arrangements are irreconcilable; the one excludes the other. The suppression of the first occurs in order that the validity of the new order of relationship may be confirmed (cf. 8:7, 13).*
  - 4) Warren Wiersbe, *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?*
3. The sacrifice of Christ perfects the recipients once for all (10), ***And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.***
- a. *And by that*
- 1) The writer ties Jesus' obedience to the Father's will as the basis for sanctification.
  - 2) Raymond Brown, *Christ came to do God's will and by that will we have been sanctified. Once again our writer is leading us to Gethsemane ('Not my will, but thine') and underlining the immense cost of our sanctification.*
  - 3) William L. Lane, *The will of God that Christ came to accomplish is the will by which we are intimately transformed and consecrated to God.*
  - 4) David Brown, *The whole work of redemption flows from "the will" of God the Father, as the First Cause, who decreed redemption from before the foundation of the world.*
- b. *we have been sanctified*
- 1) The writer is speaking of positional sanctification (justification).
  - 2) W. H. Griffith Thomas, *Indeed it can be said that sanctification in Hebrews is almost equivalent to justification in Romans, both referring to our position, not to our condition. But there is this vital difference of standpoint: that justification deals with position in relation to God as Judge, while sanctification deals with position in relation to our fellowship with God and our approach to Him in fellowship.*
  - 3) Zane Hodges, *Here it occurs in a tense that makes it plain, along with the rest of the statement, that the sanctification is an accomplished fact.*
  - 4) R. Kent Hughes, . . . *for "we have been made holy" refers to an enduring, continuous state (perfect tense). Our salvation is a completed thing . . .*
  - 5) Ray Stedman, *The Greek expression for made holy indicates action with a lasting effect. We have been made holy by the death of Jesus, and we remain holy even though we struggle with daily weakness and sin . . . It is a holiness obtained by faith, not by self-righteous effort, and it is not lost by momentary failure.*
- c. *through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ*
- 1) Ephesians 5:2, *And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.*
  - 2) William L. Lane, *The immediate ground of consecration is the totally new offering of the body of Jesus Christ as the inaugural act of the new covenant. The ultimate source is the will of God . . .*
  - 3) Zane Hodges, *By the sanctification which is accomplished through the death of Christ, New-Covenant worshipers are perfected for guilt-free service to God (cf. 2:11).*
- d. *once for all*
- 1) Hebrews 9:12, *he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.*
  - 2) Warren Wiersbe, *Believers have been set apart ("sanctified") by the offering of Christ's body once for all.*
  - 3) Raymond Brown, . . . *once for all may refer here not only to the sacrifice which has been offered, but the sanctification it has effected. Something more is achieved by Christ's death than the removal of guilt. We have been sanctified. And the verb is in the perfect tense. It is actually done. Our sanctification is perfectly accomplished by Christ for all time.*
  - 4) Douglas Mangum, *The final phrase of the paragraph, "once for all," reiterates the unique, comprehensive, and lasting nature of Jesus' sacrifice and initiates a transition into the next paragraph.*

***To be continued, Lord willing!***

C. The sufficiency of Christ as High Priest (11-14)

1. Levitical priests continually offered insufficient sacrifices (11), ***And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.***
2. Jesus' sacrifice was sufficient which allowed Him to await the subjection of His enemies (12-13), ***But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet.***
3. Jesus' one-time sacrifice provides sanctification for all who receive Him by faith alone (14), ***For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.***

D. The sufficiency of the New Covenant's one-time sacrifice (15-18)

1. The writer cites Jeremiah 31:31 and 34 which declares God's perfecting grace under the New Covenant(15-17), ***And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying, "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," then he adds, "I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more."***
2. Forgiveness eliminates the need for sacrifices (18), ***Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.***