

Christ: The Living Sacrifice

Hebrews 10:1-18

1622

In Hebrews, chapter 10, we come to verses 1 through 18 for our study tonight, a most significant passage that we might entitle "Jesus Christ, the Perfect Sacrifice." In a small village, it is said, somewhere in England, there stood a chapel. And beside the chapel was an arch. And over the arch was written, "We preach Christ crucified."

For years, godly men preached there, and they presented a crucified Savior as the only means of salvation. But as the generation of godly preachers passed, there arose a generation that considered the cross and its message too antiquated, and they began to preach salvation by Christ's example rather than His blood. They didn't see the necessity of His sacrifice.

And ivy crept up the side of the arch, it is said, and covered the word "crucified." And so it said, "We preach Christ." And they did, but not crucified. After some time, people asked why the sermons had to be confined to Christ and the Bible. So the preachers began to give discourses on social issues, politics, philosophy, moral rearmament. And the ivy continued to grow until it wiped out the third word. It simply read, "We preach."

The apostle Paul, in cultured Corinth, was determined, he said, to "know nothing among you save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." Here, we preach Christ crucified, the only hope of men. And that's the blessed theme of the tenth chapter of Hebrews, the first 18 verses. For this is the record from, not the historical standpoint, but the theological standpoint, of the death of Christ. This is the depth of what His death meant, in all of its richness.

Now, you'll remember that the theme of the Book of Hebrews, as we have repeatedly said, is the absolute sufficiency and superiority of Christ over all of the features and people connected with the old covenant, that He is writing to Hebrews, obviously, and the author we do not know. We assume the Holy Spirit's inspiration, and so we say most of the time that it was written by the Holy Spirit, for it was.

But the author here, under the power of the Holy Spirit, is presenting to Jewish people the fact that they can put all of their trust in Jesus Christ, that they don't need, even if they're saved Jews, to hang on to the Temple services, to the priesthood, to the rituals, to all of the circumstances of Judaism. They can let go of them.

And He's also speaking to the unsaved Jew who is intellectually convinced and stands on the edge of salvation and saying, "Come on. You can put your trust in Christ. You can come from Judaism to Christianity. It will be sufficient." They don't need the Temple. They don't need the priests. They don't need the sacrifices. They don't need the offerings. They don't need the washings. They don't need

the holy days. They don't need the ceremonies. It's all been done away. All of that was baby talk, kid stuff. Jesus Christ brought maturity and perfection.

And so in this study of Hebrews, He is showing us how it is that Jesus is better than all of these things. And the heart of it, we began to discover from chapter 5 on, is that Jesus is a better priest. And, as a better priest, He secures a better covenant and makes a better sacrifice. And, of course, as I've told you before, the priesthood issue was the heart of Judaism. And so when He presents Jesus as a better priest, that becomes the most important feature of the book. And then He takes that priesthood in the dimensions of its covenant and its sacrifice. And so all through the Book of Hebrews, Christ is shown to be superior to everything in the Old Testament.

Now, as we come to chapter 10, He comes to the fact that Jesus' sacrifice is better. Not only is He a better priest, not only did He secure and become the surety and the mediator of a better covenant, but He made a better sacrifice. The death of Christ became that great and final sacrifice that accomplishes for eternity what an eternity of the other sacrifices couldn't accomplish for time.

Now, we saw in chapter 9 some weeks ago the need for a sacrifice. In chapter 10, we find the character of the sacrifice. Chapter 9 told us how necessary it was in verse 16. It said that "where there is a testament, there must be the death of the one who leaves it." Where there's a will, there has to be a death to make the will valid.

And we saw also that forgiveness demanded blood, in verse 22. "All things are by the law purged with blood, and without shedding of blood is no remission." So somebody had to be a sacrifice. And then the necessity of sacrifice was again stressed in verse 28. "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." Salvation demands substitution.

So in chapter 9 we learned that a testament demands death, forgiveness demands bloodshed, salvation demands substitution. And the demand, then, for a death that would be superior to all the sacrifices of the Old Testament is laid down in chapter 9.

Now, as we come to chapter 10, we find the characteristics of the death of Christ, which supply all that was lacking in the old sacrifices. And some of the things in chapter 10 are repeats of what was in chapter 9 and expanded here in chapter 10.

Now, we're going to look at just a simple contrast in this particular series of verses. First of all, let's look, in the first six verses, at the ineffectiveness of animal sacrifices. Now, you'll remember that in the Old Testament the priests were busy all day long slaughtering animals, just constantly, constantly. It was a bloody mess from dawn to sunset. All day long they were engaged in bloody sacrifices, repeatedly, thousands upon thousands upon thousands of them.

It is said at some Passover times there would be as many as 300,000 lambs slain within a week. It was a massive thing, and so much so that the blood would often run out of the temple ground and down certain prepared places into the Brook Hedron, and at the time of Passover the Brook Hedron could be running with the blood of all the lambs that were being slain. And so there were sacrifices, sacrifices and more sacrifices. But they were ineffective. All of them had failed, because they were unable to satisfy God's holy demands.

Now, let me give you the reasons they failed. Number one, and we'll look at the text and see these reasons unfolded. Number one, they couldn't bring access to God. And the great cry in the heart of a man was to be in the presence of God. But they couldn't do it. Even the priest at his best on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, could not take the people inside the veil. The veil always remained. Remember how we studied that? They couldn't bring access to God. All those sacrifices, even the one on the Day of Atonement, couldn't bring access to God.

Look at verse 1. "For the law," and that refers to the Old Testament ceremonial law, the sacrificial ritual, "having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of those things," watch this, "can never," did you get it? "Can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make those who come to it perfect." And what did we say the word "perfect" means in the Book of Hebrews? It means what? Access to God. Access to God.

We saw that in chapter 7, verse 11. "If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood," then you wouldn't need the new one. So it can't bring perfection. Then the definition of perfection came over in verse 19. "For the law made nothing perfect, and the bringing in of a better hope, by which we draw near unto God." What did bring perfection? The better hope. And what is perfection? Drawing near unto God. And, you see, the old covenant couldn't do that. The veil always remained. There never was access to God. It couldn't come.

Now, you notice that in verse 1 it says the law was only a shadow and not the very image, and it could never, never, even though it was continually done over and over again, make those perfect. But that it was a shadow. And in that there is a redeeming factor, and we'll talk about that in a moment. It says it was a shadow of good things to come.

Now, what are the good things to come? Well, that speaks of the privileges and blessings that came through the sacrifice of Christ. And the law pictured those things. All of the blessings and all of the privileges which come to us in the death of Christ were foretold in the Old Testament sacrifices. For example, when John first saw Jesus in John 1:29, he looked at Him and said, "Behold," what? "The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." And there he was relating Christ as the fulfillment of all the Old Testament pictures. And so they definitely were a shadow of good things to come.

There's a verse that comes to my mind. In Colossians 2:17, it talks about all of the old things. It talks about the feasts and all of those things. And it says, "which are a shadow of things to come, but the body, or the substance, is Christ." So Christ, then, is the fulfillment of good things to come. It's not talking about prophetic things here in the sense of the kingdom. It's talking about the coming of Christ. And Colossians 2:17 verifies that the coming of Christ was the substance of the good things shadowed in the old covenant.

Access to God and security and power and all of those things were really not there in the old covenant, but they were pictured there. They were pictured there. The old was a shadow, not the very image. The old covenant could never bring a man into the presence of God.

Now, notice these two words, "shadow" and "image," because they're important. He uses the word, first of all, schia. Now, schia means a pale shadow. The law, or the ceremonial ritual, was only a pale shadow of Christ. It was...the word really means a nebulous kind of reflection. It's used to refer to a

silhouette, or an outline, a form without reality, a form without substance. Shadow is probably the best translation, because shadow is a form without any substance. And He says the old situation was only a form without any substance. It portrayed something that was real, but it itself was not that real thing.

Now He says this. It is a shadow and not the very icone, the very icone, the real image. Icone means the exact replica, the complete representation, the detailed reproduction. If they had had such a thing as photographs in those days, the word for a photograph would have been icone. That's exactly what it means, an exact reproduction. It means a portrait.

So the Spirit is saying, "You see, the old system was a shadow. This is the actual substance, the very reality." Without Christ, you can't get past the shadow of God. And the Jews today who live in Judaism and are so dedicated to Judaism are chasing the shadow of God, and there is no substance.

So the good things to come were foreshadowed. They were intimated in the old economy. But they are come in Christ. And it says they can never come, can never come in the old economy. Oh, how important it is that we point this out to our Jewish friends, that there is no perfection in the old economy.

And it's an interesting thing that they have also forsaken the sacrifices. They really stand in limbo. They not only do not accept the final sacrifice of Christ, but they fail to continue the sacrifices of the old covenant. They find themselves talking themselves into a security standing in limbo between two systems, and going through a ritualistic, symbolic representation of the old, which is antiscritural.

And you'll notice the word "perfection," teleao, which means to come to its complete end. It does not...in this sense, the word does not mean maturity. It means to come to full end, to full completion. And the idea, as I said, is access to God. The completed end of any kind of a pattern that God establishes is that man might come into a full relationship with Him. That's possible only through Jesus Christ, not through the old covenant.

And you'll notice that He stresses the fact that they did it over and over again. But no repetition of a shadow amounts to the substance. You can't pile up shadows and all of a sudden have the substance. It doesn't work that way.

You say, "Well, if this thing didn't work, why did God go to all the trouble to give it to them? What was the point of it?" Well, the point of it, number one, was just what I told you. It was a shadow. It did at least show them that some coming reality was going to happen, that their salvation was coming, and that there was a form and a reality, and they needed to look forward to that. And even Peter says, "The prophets searched what person or what time that one whom they prophesied should come," in I Peter 1. They looked to see, because they knew that there was promise in their system and in what they wrote. And so it was a shadow, and a shadow was better than nothing. And it did point to God.

And it was also valuable because, secondly, it served to keep reminding them that God is holy and doesn't like sin. I mean, with all of that sacrificing going on, I think they were fairly well aware of the price of sin. They were constantly being reminded that the wages of sin is death because death was going on all day long throughout their history, and animals were being slaughtered.

And I think thirdly God gave them that not only as a shadow and as a reminder, but, thirdly, I do believe that there was, now, watch this, there was some efficacy in the Old Testament sacrifices. They did not remove sin, but what did they do to sin? They covered it. There was a removal of temporal judgment. And there was an external fellowship with God that was maintained. And those sacrifices did that.

And, incidentally, it was said in the Old Testament that anybody who despised the sacrifices was cut off. So God felt them very important, as a picture of what was to come, as a reminder of sin and as something that was externally efficacious to cover their sin so that they could at least have an external relationship with God, not the fullness of the indwelling Spirit which we have. But they could not bring total access to God.

The second thing He says here about the ineffectiveness of animal sacrifices is they couldn't remove sin, either. Now, that's really what men want. That's what eats away at us is guilt and sin, and that's where men want deliverance. And it's usually that when a man reaches the point of a total sensitivity to sin that he turns his life over to God if he knows the facts of the gospel. It usually takes that. But the old system couldn't remove sin.

Look at verse 2. "For then would they not have ceased to be offered?" And He's still bouncing from verse 1. He says, "If it ever did bring perfection, they would've stopped doing it, because once they arrived at perfection it would've been unnecessary. "Because the worshippers, once purged, should have had no more consciousness of sins." In other words, if the thing had really done the job, it would've removed sin and they wouldn't have been burdened by the guilt of their sin.

Now, the word in this Authorized Version here is "consciousness," but I want to make a statement about that. Rather than removing the consciousness of sin, it is better to translate the word removing the "conscience" of sin, in the sense of guilt. And I'll explain that in a minute.

But let me just give you a thought here. If, at any time along the way, this sacrifice system had actually removed their guilt and actually brought them into fellowship with God, it would've ceased to be necessary, because it would've accomplished its perfect end. But it never did. And so when they were doing this, not only did it not remove their sin, watch this, but it constantly reminded them that it did not remove their sin. You see?

Look at verse 3. "But in those sacrifices there is a" removal of sins. Is that what it says? No, what? "A remembrance." All it did was drum into their brains every day that their sin was not removed. It was only what? Temporarily covered. And the lid came off every time they sinned again.

Now, you can imagine living under a system like this, that it was somewhat burdensome. Suppose, for example, you get sick, only for example, and you go to the doctor, and the doctor gives you one of those \$25 prescriptions. Now you take your little bottle home and you've got a little bit of medicine. Now, if the medicine works, and you are cured, every time you see that bottle you're going to say, "That is what cured me, that little bottle full of medicine." And every time you look at that bottle, you'll be reminded that your disease is removed.

But, on the other hand, as often happens, let's say you take your little bottle home and you take your

medicine and you do not get well. In fact, you are just as sick as ever. And taking your medicine faithfully, you remain sick. Every time you look at that bottle, it will only remind you that you are sick, and that it is powerless to make you any better.

Now, in a sense, that's exactly what was going on in Israel. Instead of being able to look at the sacrifice and say, "Wow, I'm forgiven," they kept looking at the sacrifice and said, "Oh, yeah, I'm not. I'm just as sick as I've always been. And I've got to go down there again with another lamb. And I'm not getting any better."

And so, you see, rather than the old covenant removing sin, it just stood as a constant reminder that sin was not removed. The sacrifice of animals is powerless to remove sin. To purify a man, to free a man from the conscience of guilt that binds his mind, they cannot do it. All they can do is go on reminding a man that he is uncured, and that he's a sinner at the mercy of God and he's not free to enter into God's presence at all, because he's not holy. So, far from erasing sin, they only underlined it.

Now, the conscience of sin, let me just say a word about this, the conscience of sin has to do with guilt. There's a certain amount of guilt that comes with sin. It's just a system built into you, just like pain is built into you. Where pain reacts to bodily injury, guilt reacts to the injury of your soul by disobedience to God, and it's a warning system. And they never, in the Old Testament, ever were relieved from the tension of guilt.

It's a wonderful thing in the Christian life to know that there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ, isn't it? It's a wonderful thing to be free from guilt, and to recognize that your sins are continually being forgiven by the grace of God through the death of Christ. But they didn't have that freedom. They had a tension. They were torn between what they knew was God's law and the consciousness of guilt that they always had because they always broke His law.

Govett said, "He who is obliged to take a medicine to stay alive cannot be said to be cured." And so it was in the old covenant. They kept taking the same bottle, and it was only a reminder that they weren't cured. From God, now watch this, from God's viewpoint, yes, their sins were covered by the blood of Jesus yet to be shed. But until then, from their viewpoint, there was no freedom from guilt. And that's what He means in Hebrews when He says repeatedly they never had their conscience purged.

And so if they had ever had that, if they had been once purged, it says at the end of verse 2, they would've had no more conscience of sin. Now, it doesn't mean that the one who is purged today, you say, "Well, I'm purged, so therefore I don't even think about sin anymore. Why, I don't even know where there is any. I don't even know if there's sin in my life anymore, I'm so purged." No, no. Who is the most sensitive person in the world to sin? The believer. There's a difference between being conscious of it and being guilt-ridden by it.

And no one is more painfully aware of sin than a regenerate soul. The deluded one is the unbeliever, I John 1:8, who said, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." "We make God a liar," he says in verse 10. Proverbs 28:13 is true in every dispensation. It says this. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."

It's always the believer who is sensitive to sin. And the idea that we have no more conscience of sin as a believer is not that we don't have any sensitivity to it. It means that we are delivered from the fear of judgment for it. You see? We are released from the guilt feelings of the old economy, where they never were free to enjoy their life in the fullest sense, because they were afraid around the next corner was more sin and God's judgment.

That's why, you see, it is so important that we just accept the single sacrifice of Christ. Because the sacrifices of the old system were to remind them they were not forgiven. Now, you see, that's the problem I have, say, for example, with the Catholic mass. The Catholic mass is a re-crucifixion of Jesus every week. In fact, at the one by our house, it's six times that Jesus is crucified every Sunday morning.

Now, that, to me, is nothing more than a constant reminder that they're not forgiven. That's a throwback to the old economy. We only need Jesus Christ to be crucified once. We don't have to re-crucify Him all the time. Because then we're doing exactly what the Old Testament said. We're saying to you, "You can only be forgiven a week at a time." And that's wrong. That's wrong.

"My little children, your sins are forgiven forever for His name's sake." That's in the new covenant. The Son of God paid the debt in full. He removed sin. And He removed judgment. And with it, He removed the fear of judgment. I don't live in mortal fear of seeing God. I live in great anticipation, because my sins are covered. And so the ceremonial animal sacrifices couldn't do it. They were ineffective. They couldn't remove sin.

Third thing, they were only external. They never got to the heart of the issue, either. They always were on the outside looking in. Verse 4. Look how external they were. "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin." Can you imagine that? There are some people, and I've asked this question in classes where I've taught, I've said, "How were people in the Old Testament saved?" And they say, "By sacrifices." And I say, "Do you mean to tell me that just going out in your field and cutting up a bull is going to forgive your sins? The physical blood of a bull spread on the ground is going to remove the moral offense that you've made before God?" Course not. Course not.

This truth is obvious. It is not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin. That can't be. Verse 13 of chapter 9, "If the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean sanctifieth only to the purifying of the external, how much more shall the blood of Christ who, through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience?"

In other words, all that the blood of bulls and goats could do would...all it was was an act of obedience that had an external significance. It never got to the heart of the issue at all. It never took away sin. It was only, in effect, a man saying, "Okay, God, I believe you. Okay, God, I want to worship you, so I'll obey you and I'll offer a sacrifice." And God was saying, "On the basis of your works, in response to your faith, I accept that."

The truth is obvious. There is no relationship at all between the death and the physical blood of a dumb animal and the forgiveness of man's moral offense against God. There's no connection. It was impossible for any animal to satisfy the demands of the creator God. It couldn't be done. Only Jesus

Christ, the perfect union of humanity and deity, could satisfy God. Only His death could be the ultimate sacrifice.

And so the Levitical sacrifices possessed by God's design an efficacy to remove an outward ceremonial defilement, but they never got inside to change a man's nature. They never got inside to reverse the moral trend. They never got inside to turn the offense to God into a sweet-smelling savor. They never could do that. And that's why Ezekiel said, "There's coming a day when God is going to pour out His Spirit, when He's going to take away the stony heart of your...that's in you, and He's going to give you a heart of flesh, and He'll pour His Spirit upon you. This is coming in the future, because you need to be changed on the inside." And the old system couldn't do it...couldn't do it.

So the external cleansing was ineffective for two reasons. Number one, it was only ritualistic. It could only care for the outside. And watch this one. In many cases, it...God didn't even like it at all, even for that. You say, "Why?" Because they didn't do it out of an honest heart. They did it out of a ritual.

And God really bangs away on this issue. Look at verse 5. Verse 5 and 6 says, "Wherefore when He cometh into the world," this is Christ talking to the Father before He entered the world, "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not." Now jump to 6, "In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure." You say, "Well, if God didn't like it, why did He invent it?" the way He invented it, it was all right. But the way men messed it up, He didn't like it.

Because you know what they did? They took something that should've been a symbol of real faith and they turned it into a ritual where there was no faith. And very frequently in the land of Israel they'd be worshipping Baal and having orgies all week long, and they'd all roll into the temple regularly to make their sacrifices. They were carrying out the ritual, but there was no reality there at all.

And you'll notice in verses 5 and 6 that, He quotes from Psalm 40, verses 6 to 8, and it's a pretty devastating quote, because, you see, that is a reminder to the Jews that God didn't like the old system. And that's a pretty heavy statement. Because the Jews were hanging on to that thing. And he was trying to tell them all the way along, "Let go of it," and then He just comes right out in Psalm 40 and says, "God doesn't like that system, anyway."

And their natural argument will be, "Well, if He didn't like it, why did He start it?" And the point is, He started it the way He liked it, but it got messed up along the way, and it turned into a ritual without any reality. You know what God wants? He wants obedience, doesn't He? "To obey is better than," what? "Sacrifice." And if sacrifice is out of an obedient heart, then God accepts it. If it isn't, He doesn't.

Oh, it was easy for sacrifices to be a ritual, because they were so external, you see. It should have been a token of love, and it should've been a token of devotion, and it should've been a symbol of obedience. But it was a ritual, and it didn't have anything else to it for most of Israel. And I'll just give you some verses so that you can support this if you're thinking on these lines.

In I Samuel 15:22, the first one. Don't try to follow me, but just listen. I Samuel 15, I think it's 22, Samuel said, listen, "Hath 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 hearken than the fat of rams." And in the next verse he says, "Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft. Because thou hast rejected the Word

of the Lord, He hath also rejected thee from being king." He said to Saul, "Don't you come to God with your ritual if it isn't real in your heart."

So, you see, even the old system had deteriorated to the point where it was a ritual and didn't have any meaning. In Psalm 51, David's penitent Psalm, listen to what he says. Verse 16, "For thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it. Thou delightest not in burnt offering." Listen. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit. A broken and a contrite heart, oh, God, thou wilt not despise." What you really wanted all along was our hearts, didn't you, God? Only we just kept giving you our ritual without our hearts, and that's how it deteriorated.

Isaiah says the same thing, Isaiah, chapter 1. He says in verse 10, "Hear the word of the Lord, you rulers of Sodom. Give ear unto the law of our God, you people of Gomorrah. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me, saith the Lord. I am full of the burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts, and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, of lambs and he-goats." "I'm sick of it," He says. "It's ritual. There's no meaning to it."

He says in verse 16, "Wash yourselves. Make yourselves clean. Put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes. Cease to do evil. Learn to do well. Seek justice. Relieve the oppressed. Judge the fatherless. Plead for the widow." And then He pours His grace out and says, "'Come now, let us reason together,' saith the Lord. 'Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool, if you be willing and obedient.'"

You see, they were not cleansed. Their sins were not cleansed by those sacrifices. Their sins were cleansed when they offered those sacrifices out of a loving, devoted, obedient heart. And there are people who can go through the ritual without the reality. They do it today. Do you know that? There are people who waltz in and out of the church, and they go right through the whole routine. They don't have any reality at all. At all. And the old system couldn't do it. It couldn't take away sin. And not only couldn't it do it initially, it could only cover sin, but soon it didn't even cover sin, because it was purely form, without content.

All right. So what do we say, then? The animal sacrifices were ineffective for three reasons. They couldn't bring access to God. They couldn't remove sin. They couldn't really get inside. They were always external.

Now let's look at the second point in the contrast. The ineffectiveness of animal sacrifices is now compared to the effectiveness of Christ's sacrifice, and we'll pick it up again at verse 5 and go through verse 18. Here He contrasts the tremendous effectiveness of what Christ did to this old system. And there are many things about it. We'll see how far we get with them.

First of all, Christ's sacrifice was so effective because, number one, watch this, it was God's will all along. It was God's will all along. In the mind of God, before the world was ever created, God knew that the old system wouldn't cut it. And in His mind way back when, He had planned that Jesus would have to come and die.

And even in Psalm 40, He laid it all out. Look at verse 5, which is just right out of Psalm 40, verses 6 to 8. He quotes their own testament. "Wherefore, when He cometh into the world," when Christ got ready to be incarnated, when He was standing on the edge of heaven and talking to the Father,

getting ready to leave, this is what He said. "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not."

"God, you didn't want sacrifice and offering. All along you didn't want it, ultimately. All along you knew it wouldn't do it. All along you were well aware of the insufficiency of that whole system." "But a body hast thou prepared me." "Your ultimate plan was for my incarnation, wasn't it?" And doesn't the Bible not say that He was a Lamb slain from when? From the foundations of the world. God all along planned the death of Christ. "And you made me a body."

Then jump to verse 7. "And then said I, Lo, I come." "God, I'm going to obey you. I'm going to obey you." Skip the parentheses. "I come to do," what? "Thy will, O God." And He just throws in this little shot for the Jewish readers. "In the volume of the book, it's all written there." "If you read your Old"...remember the road to Emmaus? "If you had known your own text, you'd have known who I am. Right?"

Jesus said in John, "Search the Scriptures, for they are they which speak of me." And so He just slides that thought in there and says, "If you read your Old Testament right, it's all there." Psalm 40, verses 6 to 8, God said, "I'm sick of burnt offerings, but I've got another plan. I've prepared a body."

And Jesus says to the Father, in pre-incarnate conversation, and, boy, if you want a great proof to the fact that Jesus existed before His incarnation, there it is. If you want more of a proof that Jesus is not just a man, but that He existed apart from his physical body, there it is. Pre-incarnation conversation with God. And He says, "I come to do thy will, oh, God. You made a body for me, and I submit to it." And He came. And it was God's plan all along. You see? All along.

God could never be ultimately satisfied with offerings of animals. And God became less and less satisfied with them at all, because they became such a sham and a mockery as they were ritualistic and not real. And so God had formed a body for the Son.

Now, it's interesting. I want to just call one thing to your attention. Notice verse 5. It says, "A body hast thou prepared me." That's interesting. That's a comment, really, on the Psalm, because the Psalm says this. "Mine ears hast thou digged." "Mine ears hast thou digged." Everything else is the same. But that statement changes. "Mine ears hast thou digged." And here it says, "A body hast prepared for me."

You know what that means? It's saying the same thing, only the Psalmist is very specific. He is, in effect, in the Psalms saying, "You actually got down there, God, and you dug out those ears." That's the first possible concept there. "You made the body." And it pictures God as a craftsman, carving out the ears. And here He merely expands the thought to say, "A body thou hast prepared me."

But there's another beautiful thought in it as well, I think. And that is the fact that He says in the Psalm, "Thou hast digged my ears." Because the ear is that which hears the command and obeys it. And Jesus says in verse 7, "I come to do thy will." And so the portrait in the Psalms is that His ears are prepared to hear the will of God and be obedient.

But there's even another one. In Exodus 21:6, there was a certain Jubilee, a certain Sabbath year, the seventh year. And at the seventh year, all the slaves were let free. But a slave might like his master. And if he liked his master, he could then say, "I don't want to go free. I want to stay with my

master."

If he said that, he stood up against a post, and his ear was pulled out like this, and a nail was driven through his ear. His ear was pierced right here. And then it was removed, and that was the symbol that he had assigned himself willingly to the service of that master for the rest of his life. And so you could always tell those who loved their master and who had assigned themselves to serve them for their lifetime. They had a hole in their ear.

And so it may be that this is implied as well. He's not only saying, "You made me. You prepared my body." But He's also saying, in the Psalm, concentrating on the ears, "Because I hear and I obey," but He's also saying, "I willingly become your servant to do whatever you want me to do as long as I live." Take your pick. One, two or three, or all.

So God willed a holy humanity, and Jesus said, "I come to do what you will, Father." There can be no conflict in the Trinity. Do you know that? None at all. None at all.

I want you to notice something else. This is an indication of the Virgin Birth, that Jesus was not born of an earthly Father. It simply says, "God prepared a body." God did it. God prepared a body in Mary. Didn't need a father. God could handle that one.

And God says, in verse 6, or Jesus says, reflecting on God's attitude, "In burnt offerings and sacrifice for sin hast thou had no pleasure," but of Jesus He said this, Matthew 3:17, watch it. What'd he say? "This is my beloved Son, in whom," what? "I am well pleased." "I don't have any pleasure in offerings. But, oh, I am well pleased with this one, who will be the final offering, my own beloved Son." And Jesus came into the world and kept repeating, "I have come to do," what? "The will of Him that sent me." Obedient. Submissive. He was a perfect sacrifice, in perfect obedience. "I come to do thy will, oh, God."

And, you know, all the way along, it was very often a problem, because Jesus was confronted with a chance to be disobedient. Jesus had just said He was going to die, and Peter runs over and says, "Lord, let it not be so. Don't die." And Jesus didn't say, "Oh, thank you, Peter. Whew. Am I relieved." No, He said, "Get thee behind me, Satan." John 14:31, He said this, "But that the world may know that I love the Father," watch this, "and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go." You see that? "That the world may know I love the Father and I obey the Father, let's go. Let's go to the cross."

And He wanted to hurry out of the Upper Room anyway, because He might miss Judas. You ever thought of that? What if Judas and all those soldiers came and He wasn't there to be captured? And so He had to hurry to get there. And the moment of arrest came, and Peter drew his sword, and the Lord said, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? Put it away, Peter."

Here are His own words. In the Old Testament, there is another indication of pre-incarnate words of Jesus. Listen to them. They're in Isaiah, chapter 50, verses 5 and 6. Here's Jesus talking to the Father before He ever was incarnated. Listen. "The Lord God hath opened my ear, and I was not rebellious. I was not rebellious. Neither turned away back. I gave my back to the smiters. I gave my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair. I hid not my face from the shame and spitting." That's pre-incarnate conversation with Jesus. He came to do the Father's will, whatever it involved.

"The Lord God has opened my ear. I'll hear. I'll obey. I'm His servant for life. He prepared this body. I'll do His will." Then you remember that when He got into the Garden, He began to exhibit some of His holiness. And in the horror of having sin moving toward Him to infiltrate that holiness for the moments on the cross, He shrank from being made sin, and He cried out, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me." Instantly, He cried out, "Nevertheless," what? "Not my will, but thine, be done." And so He was obedient.

And so God prepared a body, and Christ said, "Father, I know you're not satisfied with the old system, but you are with me, and I'll obey." And He did. And God was satisfied, and said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And so Christ's sacrifice was effective because it fulfilled the ultimate will of God. It was His will all along.

Secondly, it was effective because it replaced the old system. Verse 8, and here's the author's commentary on Psalm 40. "Above," that is, in the verses I just mentioned from Psalm 40, when he said, "Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldst not, neither hadst pleasure in them, which are offered by the law," then when he said, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God," He said all that to show that He takes away the first, that he may establish the second.

You see, here's His commentary on that passage. He says to these Jews, "You know why God said that? He said that to indicate that there had to be something better." He said, "These old sacrifices don't make it. I've got to prepare a body to do the job." And that's the point of the text. It's trying to tell you the old is done away, the new has come, you see. The old didn't do it. God planned it all along.

The old is done away there in verse 8. He says, "I don't want sacrifice and offering, burnt offering and offering for sin." And there are all four words used there of the Old Testament sacrifices. "I don't want that anymore. I don't have pleasure in that. It doesn't do it. It doesn't bring access to my presence. It doesn't remove sin. It's only external, and it's deteriorated to a ritual."

"But I come to do thy will," verse 9, and there's the new. And that's exactly why He said that, says the writer of Hebrews. You see, He takes away the first that He may establish the second. And don't you see, the Jews were always accusing the Christians of bringing in some heresy, and so they always related to Old Testament passages. Remember what John 1:17 says? "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by," whom? "Jesus Christ." And so Christ's sacrifice was better because it replaced the old.

Thirdly, it was better because it sanctifies the believer. It makes him holy. Could the old system make a man holy? No, it could not. Watch verse 10. Oh, I love this. "By which will," what will? The will of God, that sent Christ. By what Christ did in response to the will of God "we are sanctified," how? "Through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

You know that when Jesus died on that cross and you put your faith in Him, you became sanctified. What does that word mean? Well, it means set apart. You say, "Was that His will?" It says right there, "By which will we are sanctified." Did you know that God's will is that you be sanctified? I Thessalonians 4:3. Do you want to hear an interesting verse? "This is the will of God, even your sanctification." That's God's will. He wants you to be sanctified, set apart, not only positionally but practically.

The word is hagiodzo. It means to be set apart to God. It's the word from which we get another form of the word agios, saint, holy, set apart, given to God. And the words here in this verse 10, "we are sanctified," are what, in the Greek, is a perfect participle with a finite verb. Without saying all that or explaining it, let me just say this. It shows in the strongest way the permanent, continual state of salvation in which the believer exists. It's talking about permanence. "By which will we are sanctified."

And when you have a perfect participle and a finite verb, you have permanence. If you want it simply stated, you can't lose your salvation. I can't state it any simpler than that. One act, one time, at one moment, did it forever, for everybody who believes. He sanctified us, set us apart unto Himself, holy. And, dear ones who know Christ, you shall remain positionally holy forever.

Now, we're positionally holy, but how are we doing practically? Hmmm. Paul says to the Corinthians, "You're holy, but cleanse yourselves from all filthiness. Positionally, you're terrific. Practically, you're hurting." And God's will is that we be practically holy to match the position. But He's talking about position here.

Isn't it a fantastic thing that He says only one offering, on one occasion, did what all those millions of offerings could never do? Satisfied God. God expressed His will in the death of His Son, and brought us into holiness. You know, there's only one way a man can enter God's presence. What does He have to be to get there? Holy. Does God let anything in His presence that's unholy? Habakkuk said, "God, you're of pure eyes than to look upon iniquity. You cannot see sin. You cannot view it."

Therefore, if a man is to enter into presence with God, if he's to have access to God, his sin has to be removed. Is your sin removed? Absolutely. And positionally you stand holy, because as God sees you, He sees not your righteousness but whose? Christ's righteousness in your behalf, because you believed. And that Christ provided and the old covenant couldn't. And you can't be holy by works. You can work your head off, and you're not going to get holy. You'll just get tired.

Fourthly, Christ's sacrifice is better because it removes sin. You see, that's what the other one couldn't do. Look at verse 11. It just removed sin _____. "And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering the same sacrifices over and over which can never take away sin." What a sad plight.

"But this one," "man," as a word, itself is not there. We could substitute in italics "priest." "But this priest, after he had offered," how many sacrifices? "One sacrifice for sins for ever." He was done, so He sat down. He didn't need to stand up. The work was over with.

Now, the subject here in 11 and 12 is the complete removal of sin. And He says, "The old thing couldn't do it." It's a series of contrasts. Look at the two contrasts as we go. First of all, "every priest" is contrasted in verse 12 with "this one." Okay? They had...the Levitical order had 24 orders of priests, and in each of those orders there were all kinds of priests.

And they went through cycles. They only ministered in the Temple only periodically, because they went through all these cycles of 24 different priests, and in each order of the 24 there were more and more priests all the time. And so of course there were just hundreds of them, thousands of them, ministering all the time. And so He says, "every priest," "this one."

Another contrast, "standeth." In verse 10, they were always standing up because they never got done. And it says in verse 12, "Jesus sat down on the right hand of God." He was finished. Theirs was the position of a servant. His was the position of a king. And today He's seated in heaven for us.

Now look at the next contrast. "Daily ministering and offering often the same sacrifices." Over and over, the same stuff. Verse 12, "after He had offered," what? "One sacrifice." What a contrast.

Another contrast. "Which," verse 11, "can never take away sins." The old system couldn't do it. Verse 12, "one sacrifice for sins." It did it. It did it. The sacrifice of Jesus was made once, and it was effective forever.

There's no analogy. I thought and thought and wracked my brain for an analogy to try to help you see this, and the best I could come up with was this. There are some things that can't be reproduced, and the act of Jesus can't be. And, therefore, to make an analogy that explains it is difficult, but let me give a humble effort. It's possible, for example, to reproduce poor art. Would you buy that? That's very possible. I mean, they reproduce that stuff hand over wrist. And it's possible even for some of you to reproduce poor art and do it just as poorly as it was done originally. No. You know, to make it look like the original. Right?

Not only that, I think it is very easy to reproduce poor music. I mean, they're making a million on that every day. But just sit down with your little handy dandy paint kit and try to reproduce Rembrandt. Or sit down with your little sheet of music and try to reproduce the Ninth Symphony of Beethoven, or maybe the Fifth. You can't reproduce that. That stands alone.

You see, there's a uniqueness to certain things, and they cannot be reproduced. It's possible to reproduce the kind of poetry on Christmas cards. I mean, that's, you know, "Roses are red," and so forth, and all that. But try to repeat Shakespeare's blank verse and the hexameters of Homer's Iliad and see how well you do.

And you see, it is so only in an infinite category that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is so unique that it could never be repeated anyway, so He sat down. It was a masterpiece of the ages. It accomplished everything it was ever intended to accomplish. There wasn't anything else to do. And nor was there anybody who could reproduce it. It doesn't need to be reproduced, and it cannot be reproduced, for it removed sins forever for all who believe.

Fifth, Christ's sacrifice was effective because it destroyed His enemy. Do you know that all the sacrifices in the Old Testament didn't do a thing to get rid of Satan? Not a thing. They had absolutely no effect on him at all, nor on the godless people. They didn't have anything to do with them. But when Jesus offered Himself...look at verse 13. "From henceforth expecting," just waiting around, "till his enemies be made," what? "His footstool." When Jesus died on the cross, He dealt a death blow to all of His enemies.

First of all, He destroyed him that had the power of death, Satan, Hebrews 2. Secondly, He showed openly in triumph over fallen angels, when He descended into the prison where the angels were kept and He declared His triumph over them. So He declared a victory there. Thirdly, over all those who reject Him and reject God throughout the ages He showed His triumph. And He's only waiting now

until all of His enemies be made His footstool. And the term here simply expresses the fact of a king who sits on a throne and his subjects are beneath him.

Jesus Christ will stand above all those who were His enemies. He destroyed them at the cross. You see, all of the enemies of God throughout all of the ages gathered together all their strength, and the best thing they could come up with to get rid of Jesus was to kill Him. Right? What is the greatest power that Satan has? The power of death. And he threw it all at Jesus. And you know what happened? He just went in one side and out the other side.

And, in effect, what happened was, Satan shot his wad at the cross, and it didn't work. That's all he's got. Him who had the power of death spent it all on Jesus, and He came right out of the grave. Therefore, Satan is defeated. The apostle Paul even says he's under our feet, because we're in Christ.

And so the day is coming, verse 13, when all these enemies will be made His footstool. And don't you love to read in Revelation where it says that one of these days He's going to come and He's going to reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords? Wonderful promise.

Then His sacrifice was effective, sixth, because it perfected forever the saints, verse 14. "For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." And here again is this same intimation of the security of the believer, eternal forgiveness. He didn't perfect us until we next sin. He didn't bring us into access with God until we blew it and deserved to get kicked out. "For by one offering" He brought us into God's presence "for ever." For ever. There is no way that a believer can lose that forever forgiveness.

And, you see, the old covenant forgiveness was as good as the last sins. It covered yesterday, and when you sin today you've got to go back again. The death of Jesus Christ covered sin forever. You say, "Boy, I'll tell you, that sure loosens me up, and I'm going to go out and just live it up." "Shall we sin that grace may abound? God forbid." "How shall we that are servants of Jesus Christ yield our members as servants of unrighteousness?" What do you think you're doing? Don't you know you're dead to sin? If you're really a believer, you won't even have that desire. And so there is a permanent state of completeness in salvation brought about by one act.

Lastly, the sacrifice of Christ is effective because it fulfills the promised new covenant. God said, "I'm going to bring a new covenant." And when Jesus died, He sealed the new covenant. Remember, the covenants in the Old Testament were always sealed in blood, weren't they? Jesus died and sealed the new covenant.

And the writer, in verse 15, begins to quote from Jeremiah 31 again, the same thing He quoted in chapter 8, verse 13. And Jeremiah 31's a prophecy of the new covenant, you see, and it says to the Jew, "God always intended a new covenant, so what are you so uptight about? Because it's arrived. What are you accusing us of heresy for? What are you accusing of some new revelation for? This is the same thing Jeremiah told you was coming. Read your own testament."

So when He does this, it's unbelievable what He does to them. Listen to verse 15. "And the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us." "Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?" is what he's saying. Of course they did. "The Holy Spirit told us," of course, through Jeremiah, "This is the covenant that I will make

with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts." That's something new. Not on tables of stone, but right in their hearts. "And in their minds will I write them, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." That's the new covenant promise, that it's going to be inside, and sin's going to be forgiven and washed away and removed.

And Jeremiah said it would happen, but Jeremiah didn't say it on his own. He was inspired by the Holy Spirit. Now, do you see what the writer is doing to these Jewish readers? He's putting them on the horns of an unbelievable dilemma. He's saying this. He's placing these readers in a position where they will accept their beloved prophet Jeremiah, and they will accept what the Holy Spirit said through him, and if they do that they'll have to accept Christ and the new covenant. If they reject Christ and the new covenant they also reject Jeremiah and the Holy Spirit. Now, that's a tough spot to be in, because they loved Jeremiah, and they believe in the Holy Spirit.

And what He's saying to them is, "You don't need the old, because the new is come, and God even promised that it would come." And verse 18, He wraps it up. What a terrific statement. "Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin." It's done. It's forgiven. Don't go back to the Temple and make more sacrifices. It's over. Complete forgiveness. You just need to lean on the one sacrifice of Jesus. You say, "You mean to tell me that I can be saved tonight, without any works, by just leaning on the one perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ?" That's exactly what I'm trying to say. Exactly.

The sacrifice of Christ is effective, then, forever, because it fulfills God's will. It replaces the old system. It sanctifies the believer. It removes sin. It destroys the enemy. It has eternal security built into it. And, lastly, it fulfills the promise for a new covenant. It's so perfect you can't add anything to it. All you need to do is believe.

You say, "Does God want me to do that?" Yes, He does. II Peter 3:9, Peter said, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise as some men count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." God has revealed this glorious revelation in Christ for you, that you might not perish, but that you might come to Christ and have your sins forgiven. It's a glorious and a perfect salvation. Let's pray.

Our Father, we thank you that you've taught us again from your book tonight, and these have been deep truths, rich, meaty. Father, we pray that we will have understood them well. Equip us, Lord, not only to better understand our wonderful relationship with you, but to better be able to communicate that relationship to others.

Lord, we think of so many of Israel who as yet have not seen their Messiah, who are still lingering between an old covenant that they have rejected, in terms of its actuality, and replaced with symbolism and a new covenant which they have totally rejected. Father, we pray that you might give us a zeal for Israel, that we might share these truths with them, even as the writer of Hebrews did with those two thousand years ago.

Lord, we thank you for such a salvation. Oh, what a glorious salvation is ours. How thrilling it is to know in our hearts and lives that you have redeemed us in this way, and secured us forever, and that there is, apart from Jesus Christ, no salvation in any other name. God, I pray that no one would leave this place tonight who has not put their trust and confidence and hope in Jesus Christ. We pray in His

name, amen.

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