

Unit II: Christ's All-sufficient Sacrifice

It Only Takes One

DEVOTIONAL READING: Mark 10:41-45

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURES: Hebrews 9:23-10:25

PRINT PASSAGES: Hebrews 9:23-28; 10:1-4, 11-14, 19-25

KEY VERSE

Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us. (Hebrews 9:24, KJV)

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Christ did not enter a sanctuary made with human hands that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. (Hebrews 9:24, NIV)

LESSON AIMS

As a result of experiencing this lesson, you should be able to do the following:

- Recount the particulars and meaning of the Old Testament's sacrificial code.
- Meditate on the significance of Christ's once-for-all sacrifice for sins.
- Give a confident public witness of the transforming power of the Gospel.

*KEY TERMS

Exhorting (10:25)—Greek: *parakaleó* (par-ak-al-eh'-o): calling to or for; summoning; inviting; “encouraging” (NIV).

High Priest (9:25)—Greek: *archiereus* (ar-khee-er-yuce'): a chief priest (i.e., a leader among priests).

Holiest (10:19)—Greek: *hagios* (hag'-ee-os): set apart by (or for) God to be, as it were, exclusively His; “Most Holy” (NIV).

Holy Place (9:25)—Greek: *hagion* (hag'-ee-on): sanctuary; it was the first room inside the tabernacle and the Temple in Jerusalem; a place sacred to God which is not to be profaned.

Judgment (9:27)—Greek: *krisis* (kree'-sis): a decision, sentence, judging; generally: divine judgment; accusation.

Provoke (10:24)—Greek: *paroxysmos* (par-ox-oos-mos'): to incite, irritate, dispute; “spur . . . on” (NIV).



The Biblical Context

Hebrew Christians in the early church experienced social and physical persecution from Jews and Romans for several reasons. Although they were Jews by birth, the practice of Christian faith was considered as political and religious treason. Second, the rejection of Judaism was considered as rebellion against the nation and rejection of the religion's teaching and practices they had embraced all their lives. Therefore, the author wrote to the church presenting Christianity as superior to Judaism, and Christ's single substitutionary sacrifice for sin as superior to the imperfect Temple sacrifices. Structurally, the book can be divided into two broad categories: Christ's superiority over everyone and everything (see Hebrews 1:1–10:18), and faith's superiority for living a life of obedience and trust in God (see 10:19–13:25). Theologically, Hebrews addresses the finality of Christ's atoning sacrifice, the superiority of the new covenant, faith and perseverance, and warnings about the danger of *apostasy* (abandoning faith in Jesus Christ).

Purged (10:2)—Greek: *katharizō* (kath-ar-id'-zo): made clean; purified; consecrated by cleansing or purifying; "cleansed" (NIV).

Sacrifice (9:26)—Greek: *thusia* (thoo-see'-ah): an official sacrifice prescribed by God; hence, an offering the Lord accepts because it is offered on His terms.

***(Word Study Supplement—Refer to page 2)**

INTRODUCTION

There are countless opportunities and benefits in life that people miss out on because they are unwilling to endure the inconvenience or cost required to obtain it. For example, they need the academic degree but are not ready to study, attend classes, complete assignments, or pay tuition. Or, they may need to lose weight but are not willing to endure the sacrifice and discipline of diet and exercise. During the days of the early church AD 64–67, many Jews who embraced Christianity discovered that faith in Jesus Christ cost more than they were willing to pay. Being a Christian came with a high price tag—severe persecution from the Jewish nation and the Roman political system. The threat of continuing and mounting persecution because of their embrace of Christianity caused some to backslide to the brink of apostasy—specifically, rejecting Christ and leaving the faith to return to the cultural and

religious "comfort" of the Levitical sacrificial system. The epistle of Hebrews is a letter written to teach and encourage Jewish believers who lived in this climate of persecution to persevere in their faith and not abandon the Christian faith by reverting to Judaism. The overarching theme of this letter was Christ's superiority over the old covenant and His role as the perfect and complete sacrifice for human sin.

ANALYSIS OF THE BIBLICAL TEXT

The Perfect Sacrifice (*Hebrews 9:23-28*)

KJV

23 It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

**24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:
25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others;
26 For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.
27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:
28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.**

NIV

**23 It was necessary, then, for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.
24 For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made with human hands that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence.
25 Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own.
26 Otherwise Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But he has appeared once for all at the culmination of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.
27 Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment,
28 so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.**

Hebrews 9 contrasts the old covenant's earthly tabernacle with the new, heavenly sanctuary where Christ ministers, clearly establishing its superiority. The author skillfully outlines five limitations of the earthly sanctuary (see verses 1-10) and contrasts them with the heavenly sanctuary's five superior aspects (see verses 11-28). **Verses 23-28** describe the absolute perfection and divine approval of Christ's perfect sacrifice. The earthly sanctuary's purification rituals, involving animal blood, were inherently ineffective, offering only temporary atonement for sins. In contrast, Christ's blood achieves permanent redemption (**verse 23**). Furthermore, Christ's perfection is highlighted by His direct access to the heavenly sanctuary, where He perpetually advocates for believers (**verse 24**), thus canceling any need for repetitive sacrifices, as Christ's once-for-all offering conclusively addresses sin and brings an end to the Old Testament's sacrificial practices (**verses 25-26**). Christ's unique position as God's perfect Son enabled Him to accomplish what no earthly high priest could, making His sacrifice forever pleasing to God. By willingly offering Himself, Christ took the total weight of judgment and condemnation meant for those who place their faith in Him, rendering them sin-free, perfected, and eternally accepted in Christ. Thus, they will never face judgment or condemnation again (**verses 27-28**). This assurance allows us to eagerly and fearlessly await His return, anticipating our eternal inheritance with joy.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

How should one's knowing that Christ represents and intercedes for every believer before God's presence affect his or her lifestyle, witness, and worship?

Once Was Enough (*Hebrews 10:1-4, 11-14*)

KJV

FOR THE law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.

2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.

3 But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year.

4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

.....

11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:

12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;

13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.

14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

NIV

THE LAW is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship.

2 Otherwise, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins.

3 But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins.

4 It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

.....

11 Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.

12 But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God,

13 and since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool.

14 For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

Chapter 10 climaxes the section of Hebrews devoted to encouraging believers to remain faithful to Christ by proving the superiority of Christ's priesthood. Specifically, Christ's priesthood was based on a superior sacrifice—Himself. Unlike old covenant sacrifices, ordained by God yet lacking in lasting effectiveness, Christ's sacrifice transcends the earlier rituals which

were mere shadows of His ultimate act on the Cross. The repetitive nature of these ancient sacrifices, which were needed daily and annually on the Day of Atonement, underscores their insufficiency in fully addressing human sin and guilt (**verses 1-2**). The routine of these sacrifices served primarily as a constant reminder of sin, perpetuating a cycle of guilt (**verse 3**). This ritualistic repetition highlighted the urgent need for a more effective solution, as the blood of bulls and goats fell short of genuinely eradicating sin and granting believers uninhibited communion with God (**verse 4**).

In response to this inadequacy, Christ's singular sacrifice is the essential answer to humanity's sin problem. The author of Hebrews draws a vivid contrast between the ongoing duties of priests—who *stood* day by day offering temporary atonements—and Christ's one-time, all-sufficient offering (**verse 11**). Christ, having offered Himself once, now *sits* at God's right hand, a position that signifies His mission's completion and ultimate success as He awaits the final defeat of His enemies (**verses 12-13**). This singular act of sacrifice by Christ achieved what the repetitive offerings of the old covenant could not: it sanctified all who approach Him in faith, rendering them righteous and continuously purified in God's eyes (**verse 14**). This achievement reveals the enduring effectiveness of Christ's once-for-all sacrifice. It also highlights every believer's responsibility to persevere in faith, pursue spiritual growth and maturity, and serve God faithfully despite what may be happening in the world.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

How can we balance the benefits of Christ's once-for-all sacrifice with our responsibilities to live righteously and work faithfully because of it?

The Way Is Made (Hebrews 10:19-25)

KJV

19 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,
20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;
21 And having an high priest over the house of God;
22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.
23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)
24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:
25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

NIV

19 Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus,

20 by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body,
21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God,
22 let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.
23 Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.
24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds,
25 not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

This section offers words of consolation and encouragement by validating Christ's superior priesthood and warning readers to persevere in faith. Because of Christ's perfect sacrifice, believers confidently draw near God and enter His presence (**verse 19**). This open invitation to approach God for worship could only be made possible by Christ's perfect sacrifice. Christ's death on the Cross removed the barrier separating humanity from His presence in the Holy of Holies, symbolized by Christ's body (**verse 20**). When Christ offered Himself, He gave believers the necessary access to God, described as "new and living." This invitation to approach God fearlessly is only possible because Christ Himself is the Great High Priest over God's heavenly sanctuary. His presence and finished work allow believers to enter God's presence freely, with sincerity, full assurance of faith, and a sense of personal holiness (**verses 21-22**).

Hebrews closes by directing the readers to hold firmly to the hope they professed in Christ and to dismiss any tendency to return to old covenant rituals and regulations. Instead, believers should continue trusting God's faithfulness to His promises, consider how to encourage one another to love, produce fruits of righteousness, and faithfully meet together for communal fellowship and worship because of Christ's anticipated second coming (**verses 23-25**). This message is relevant for the faith community now. There are defections from local congregations and social, political, and culturally motivated persecution and opposition to God's Word and mission in the world. Therefore, the faith community must prioritize encouraging one another to hold fast to and live out their faith through demonstrating unconditional love and good works as we await Christ's return.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Name a few spiritual disciplines that may prepare believers to draw near God, hold fast to their professed hope, and show Christian concern for others.

A CLOSING THOUGHT

Hebrews 10:22-25 encourages believers to hold fast to their faith because of the eternal effectiveness of Christ's superior sacrifice and high priestly ministry in heaven on their behalf. This message has relevant applications for the faith community today amid subtle and sometimes obvious opposition, to include an internal falling away from communal worship and ministry. These applications include fostering a culture of authentic trust in God through prayer and meditation, mutually sharing doubts and struggles in emotionally safe environments.

They may also include remaining faithful to the practice of one’s faith through teaching, testimony, worship, prioritizing public in-person worship while considering the relevance of digital platforms (especially when in-person gathering is challenged), and intentionally building an environment where mutual spiritual encouragement is present.

YOUR LIFE

As a result of studying this lesson, consider personalizing it by evaluating your level of commitment to persevere when facing opposition or some form of persecution for your profession of faith in God. If your self-assessment uncovers any areas of unfaithfulness to God, identify and commit to at least one spiritual discipline to guide you closer to God and more effective Christian service despite any obstacles or personal struggles.

YOUR WORLD!

Due to intensifying persecution, the Jewish believers were torn between choosing to embrace Christian faith or returning to the easy familiarity and comfort of Judaism’s rituals and regulations. Likewise, the chaos, uncertainties, and struggles of modern living can challenge believers’ commitment to Christian faith and practice. Consider how you can encourage others to live out their faith through mutual fellowship and good works.

CLOSING PRAYER

Father God, thank You for allowing Your Son to give us free access to You through His perfect, once-for-all sacrifice on the Cross. We humbly rededicate ourselves to living out our faith as we persevere for Your glory. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

CONCLUSION

(Preparing for Next Week’s Lesson)

Next week’s lesson explores the essential evidence of God’s presence in believers’ lives—demonstrating His love (1 John 2:1-6; 4:9-17).

Home Daily Bible Readings		
MONDAY, April 7	“Our Sins Have Hidden God’s Face”	(Isaiah 59:1-8)
TUESDAY, April 8	“Healed by Christ’s Wounds”	(1 Peter 2:19-25)
WEDNESDAY, April 9	“The Promise of Eternal Life”	(John 3:1-15)
THURSDAY, April 10	“God So Loved the World”	(John 3:16-21)
FRIDAY, April 11	“Atonement through His Blood”	(Romans 3:19-31)
SATURDAY, April 12	“Reconciled to God by Christ”	(Romans 5:1-15)
SUNDAY, April 13	“Atonement through God’s Son”	(1 John 2:1-6; 4:9-17)