

Bible Study April 5, 2023

“Once For All” HEBREWS 10 (ESV)

Christ's Sacrifice Once for All

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. 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? ³ But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year.

There was the constant reminder that your sin remains and needed to be atoned for again and again year after year.



(Bonus: Here is a video that shares a description of the Day of Atonement from Leviticus 16
<https://youtu.be/fssPmwOhRf0>)

Leviticus 16:34 (ESV) ³⁴ And this shall be a statute forever for you, that atonement may be made for the people of Israel once in the year because of all their sins.” And Aaron did as the LORD commanded Moses.

Atonement: To smear or cover, to appease, make amends

When people gathered for the offering of sacrifices on the Day of Atonement, they would be reminded of their sins, and they would undoubtedly feel guilty all over again. What they needed most was forgiveness—the permanent, powerful, sin-destroying forgiveness we have from Christ. When we confess a sin to him, we need never think of it again. Christ has forgiven us, and the sin no longer exists (see 1 John 1:9).

⁴ **For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.**

Animal sacrifices could not take away sins; they provided only a temporary way to deal with ritual uncleanness until Jesus came to deal with sin permanently.

- **Psalm 103:12 (ESV)** - As far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.
- **1 John 3:5 (ESV)** - You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin.

- **John 1:29 (ESV)** - The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

How, then, were people forgiven in Old Testament times? Because Old Testament believers were following God's command to offer sacrifices, he graciously forgave them when, by faith, they made their sacrifices. But that practice looked forward to Christ's perfect sacrifice. Christ's way was superior to the Old Testament way because the old way only pointed to what Christ would do to take away sin forever.

⁵ Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said,

***"Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired,
but a body have you prepared for me;***

**⁶ *in burnt offerings and sin offerings
you have taken no pleasure.***

**⁷ *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.'*"**

**⁸ *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),
⁹ then he added, "Behold, I have come to do your will." He does away with the first in order to establish the second.***

Canceling the first covenant in order to put into effect a far better one meant doing away with the system of sacrifices contained in the ceremonial law. It didn't mean eliminating God's moral law (the Ten Commandments). With Christ's death and resurrection, that system was no longer needed. And through Christ, we can fulfill the moral law as he lives in us.

¹⁰ *And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*

This quotation does not appear in any other New Testament book. The writer of Hebrews applies to Christ the words of the psalmist in Psalm 40:6-8. Christ came to offer his body on the cross for us as a sacrifice that is completely acceptable to God. In the new and living way God has provided, we don't please him by keeping laws or even by abstaining from sin. We please him by coming to him in faith to be forgiven and then following him wholeheartedly.

¹¹ *And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. ¹² But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³ waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. ¹⁴ For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.*

Christ's work is contrasted with the work of the Jewish priests. The priests' work was never finished, so day after day they had to stand and offer sacrifices; Christ's sacrifice (dying in our place) is finished, so he has sat down at God's right hand. The priests repeated the sacrifices often; Christ was sacrificed once for all time, and his sacrifice is good for all time. The sacrificial system couldn't completely remove sin; Christ's sacrifice has thoroughly cleansed us.

If the Jewish readers of this book were to return to the old Jewish system, they would be implying that Christ's sacrifice wasn't sufficient to forgive their sins. Adding to or taking anything from his substitutionary sacrifice denies its validity. Any system to gain salvation through good deeds essentially rejects the completeness of Christ's death and the Holy Spirit's work. Beware of anyone who tells you that even though Christ died for you, you still need to do more to be acceptable to God. When we believe in Christ, he makes us completely right with God.

We have been made perfect, yet we are still being made holy. Through his death and resurrection, Christ, once for all, made us his new creation, whom God sees as holy. At the same time, he progressively cleanses and sets us apart for his special use in our daily pilgrimage here. We should not be surprised, ashamed, or shocked that we still have room to grow. God is not finished with us. We can encourage this growth process by deliberately applying Scripture to all areas of our lives, by accepting the discipline and guidance Christ provides, and by giving him control of our desires and goals.

¹⁵ And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying,

¹⁶ "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,"

¹⁷ then he adds,

"I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more."

The writer's argument concludes with this powerful statement that God will never again remember our sins. Christ completely removes all our guilt and shame, so we have no need to confess our past sins repeatedly. As believers, we can be confident that the sins we have confessed and renounced are forgiven and forgotten. No human can give this gift; only God can. When you pray in faith for forgiveness, you also can forget your sins. Don't punish yourself by holding on to guilt that God has wiped from his memory.

¹⁸ Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.

The Full Assurance of Faith

¹⁹ Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, ²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²² let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

The Most Holy Place in the Temple was sealed from view by a curtain (10:20). Only the high priest could enter this holy room, and he did so only once a year, on the Day of Atonement, when he would offer the sacrifice for the nation's sins. But Jesus' death removed the curtain, and all believers have the wonderful privilege of being welcome to walk into God's presence at any time (also see 6:19-20).

How can we go right into the presence of God? As Christians, we come not halfheartedly or with improper motives or pretense, but boldly, with pure and sincere worship. We can go to God without doubting or hesitating, certain that he hears and answers us. Our clean consciences allow us to enter God's presence freely, knowing that he welcomes us gladly.

The imagery of our bodies having been washed with pure water is a picture of baptism, the outward sign of the inward cleansing our hearts experience. Once cleansed, we can approach God without shame or hesitation.

23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Hold fast! He who promised is faithful.

- Even when I am not he is faithful. Jesus died over 2000 years ago, But he is faith and does not lie.
- Since promise is true
 - o Stir up one another to love and good works
 - o Don't neglect to meet together. Encourage each other, seeing you here encourages me. Staying connected

We have significant privileges associated with our new life in Christ: (1) We have personal access to God through Christ and can draw near to him without an elaborate system (10:22); (2) we can grow in faith, overcome doubts and questions, and have deepening relationships with God (10:23); (3) we can inspire and cheer one another on as believers (10:24); and (4) we can worship together (10:25).

To neglect Christian fellowship would mean giving up the encouragement, motivation, and help of other Christians that we need. We gather together to learn from each other, refresh our faith, and strengthen one another in the Lord. As we get closer to the day of Christ's return, we will face many spiritual struggles, and perhaps times of severe persecution as evil forces grow in strength.

26 For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,

This warning was given to Jewish Christians who were tempted to reject Christ for Judaism, but it applies to anyone who rejects Christ for something else or, having truly understood Christ's atoning work, still deliberately turns away from him (also see Numbers 15:30-31; Mark 3:28-30). This warning was given not to threaten us but to help us realize that we have no other acceptable sacrifice for sin besides the death of Christ on the cross. Someone who deliberately rejects the sacrifice of Christ after clearly understanding the Good News is forsaking the only way to receive forgiveness and salvation. God has not provided any other name under heaven by which we can be saved (see Acts 4:12).

27 but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. 28 Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. 29 How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the

one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace?

How have people insulted and disdained the Holy Spirit? As the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit interacts intimately with Christ. When people scorn the sacrifice of Christ, arrogantly rejecting the Holy Spirit, they cut themselves off from the leading and prompting of the Holy Spirit and lose out on God's forgiveness and mercy.

³⁰ For we know him who said, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge his people." ³¹ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

God has awesome power and delivers terrible punishment. These words give us a glimpse into the holiness of God. He rules over all with unlimited power and perfect justice; he will do as he promises. God reserves his judgment for those who have rejected his mercy. For them, falling into God's hands will be a dreadful experience. Their excuses will have run out.

³² But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, ³³ sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. ³⁴ For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one. ³⁵ Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. ³⁶ For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.

Hebrews encourages believers to persevere in their Christian faith and behavior when facing persecution and pressure. These believers needed patient endurance. They needed to remain steadfast and hold firmly to their faith. Because Christ lives in us, we can have that kind of endurance. Patient endurance does not save us, but it gives evidence that we are really committed to Christ. Jesus predicted that his followers would be severely persecuted by those who hated him (Matthew 10:22). When you feel pressure to give up and turn your back on Christ, stand firm and continue to live for him.

***³⁷ For, "Yet a little while,
and the coming one will come and will not delay;
³⁸ but my righteous one shall live by faith,
and if he shrinks back,
my soul has no pleasure in him."***

The Bible gives us a clear choice between two life directions: throwing away our confident trust in Christ or patiently persevering with Christ to the end. You must always take the better path, continuing to walk with Christ, even though it looks more difficult and treacherous. When you are tempted to falter in your faith or to turn back from following Christ, keep focused on what he has done for you and what he promises for the future (see Romans 8:12-25).

³⁹ But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.