

Jesus' Sacrifice is Superior Pt. 2: Hebrews – Week 13

HOOK

Illustration: Cutting off the ends of the turkey story.

For Israelites, there was an attraction to the repetitive, old covenant sacrifices. They had grown up with them, so the rituals and offerings were familiar and comfortable. But also, they gave you something to do - a checklist to complete - so you could feel confident in your atonement. (E.g. **Pushing the crosswalk button** at an intersection – I always push it a bunch of times. I know it's not true, but I can't help but think it speeds up the light, or at least it makes sure that the signal went through.)

When you feel you've done the works that God requires, not only can you rest that it's accomplished, but you also get to pat yourself on the back because you've completed the requirements and done a good job. It was attractive.

INTRO

We are wrapping up the bulk of the theological argument of Hebrews and Part 2 of the author's explanation of Jesus' being a superior sacrifice.

There is no reason to return to Judaism (or any other religious system) to hear from God or be near to God. Jesus is superior to all other messengers of God (prophets, angels, Moses, and priests). And the covenant Jesus established is superior to the Mosaic covenant (promises, priesthood, tabernacle, and sacrifice).

But our knowing God, having salvation, inheriting the kingdom, and being freed from sin and death all hung on the provision of a superior sacrifice. Tonight:

1. The former sacrifices were insufficient.
2. Jesus' sacrifice was sufficient and did away with the old sacrifices.
3. We still have a sacrifice to give.

BOOK

Hebrews 9:24 - *For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.*

- Nothing can be depended on which is made by hands. The earthly version of a holy place was temporary and fragile. But it was only a symbol. Symbols are never as real as what they represent. They are merely **shadows** of what is real.

- **What is the TRUE holy place? What did the tabernacle represent?** The TRUE holy place is “*heaven*,” which is the manifested “*presence*” of the holy God. The only High Priest that was worthy “entered” into the only place that mattered to give the only sacrifice which was effectual to atone for our sin.

1. THE SACRIFICES WERE INSUFFICIENT

Hebrews 9:25-26 - *Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, 26 for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*

- **The main theme: Jesus’ sacrifice was a once-and-for-all sacrifice.**
- This was the opposite of the repeated sacrifices needed under the old covenant. Jesus wouldn’t have to be sacrificed repeatedly or else He would have to have been sacrificed continually since the beginning of the world.

Hebrews 9:27-28 - *And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, 28 so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.*

- **Just like we’ll only die once, Jesus only needs to die once.** So, unlike the animal sacrifices which happened over and over, His sacrificial death 2k years ago was the final completion of His atoning work. He won’t need to be sacrificed ever again because He’s fully dealt with the sin of His people.
- **But He still has two roles left in the work of salvation for us.**
 - **1.** Just like He left, He’ll return for His people and complete the work of their sanctification making us fitted to be in God’s presence. (**1 Thess.4**).
 - **2.** When He returns, it’ll be Jesus who is the judge. He’ll “save” His own OR, the work He has left to do for unbelievers is to punish their sin and rejection.

Hebrews 10:1-2 - *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???*

- **Illustration: Bathing.** It would be a gross statement, even right out of the shower, to say, “I will never bathe again.” **Why?** That shower could never suffice for my life’s filth. **OR**, if you were sick and had to take medicine every hour to stay alive, you couldn’t say you were cured of your sickness.
- The annual need for the Day of Atonement meant the previous year’s sacrifice didn’t suffice to deal with sin. = “Covered, but not cleansed.”
- What the Jews saw as a good thing – repetition – actually revealed their inadequacy. If the work of the sacrifices was actually sufficient, they wouldn’t need to be done over and over again.

Hebrews 10:3-4 - *But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. 4 For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.*

- The law didn’t cure the sin or the conscience. What it did was regularly stab the conscience awake to remember your sin.

Illustration: The regular sacrifices of innocent animals worked to their conscience like a cup of cold water does when your **falling asleep at the wheel**. It was a needed shock to wake up.

- **It kept people aware of their sin and their need for closeness to God as their only hope of atonement.** And, it pointed to Jesus and the supernatural superiority of his sacrifice. (E.g. Woman at the well. “Never thirst again.”) It never needs to be repeated.
 - The old covenant sacrifices were insufficient.

2. JESUS’ SACRIFICE DOES AWAY WITH THE NEED FOR SACRIFICES

Hebrews 10:5-9 - *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.*

- The author then gives **scriptural evidence** for the old covenant being inferior and temporary using **Ps.40:6-8**. Someone will come and He, Himself, will replace the sacrifices and offerings.

- **“Sacrifices and offerings”** (O.C.) – God doesn’t actually desire these.
- **“to do your will”** (N.C.) – What God does desire.
- Jesus fulfills the psalm. His sacrifice was sufficient because of His obedience. Compare to Psalm **40:6**. The author significantly changed one phrase.

Psalm 40:6 (of David) – *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: 8 I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart.”*

- This became recognized as a prophetic psalm. It wasn’t limited to David alone, but understood as being predictive, as if spoken by David’s Messianic Heir.
- Why did the author of Hebrews, by the leading of the Holy Spirit, change the phrase? What does, **“given me an open ear”** mean in **Ps.40**?
 - Imagine having clay in your ears and someone digs them out so you can hear. What is this saying in the context of doing God’s will? The author can’t obey without hearing God’s command, so God makes it possible for David to listen and respond to instruction.
 - The author uses this psalm which the Jews recognized as Messianic to show HOW God would prepare His Messiah to obey Him.

Hebrews 10:5-6 - *“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.’”*

- **John 1:14** - *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.*
 - **How does the Messiah do God’s will?** He took on a body - flesh and blood. God gave Him human ears to listen and human hands to obey.
 - **John 6:38** - *For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.*
 - With a human heart, mind, and body, He perfectly obeyed God’s will in every way.
- **Romans 5:19** - *For as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous.*
 - He did what we couldn’t.

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

- **“body”** – Intentionally tying in “body” from v.5. Jesus gave Himself entirely in obedience to God.
- **2 Cor. 5:21** – *For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*
 - His perfection takes the place of our imperfection.

Hebrews 10:11-12 - *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 sacrifice was final and did away with the old sacrificial system.
- **There were no chairs in the tabernacle.** Sin was always a persistent cancer, so the priest’s job was never done. They never sat while on duty. But Jesus sits down with His work having been finished. And, He doesn’t just sit anywhere. His once-and-for-all sacrifice was finished, but He continues as our High Priest and Intercessor with the Father.
- How does this apply to us? Since Jesus did the work, we don’t have to.

Illustration: A young man who didn’t come down for the altar call. He went to the preacher after the service and asked what He could do to be saved. The preacher said, “Nothing.” He responded, “Because I didn’t come down during the service, I can’t be saved?” “No,” said the preacher, “Jesus has already done it all. You only have to put your faith in His work and faithfulness to be saved.”

Application: If you’re relying on repeatedly doing enough good stuff to be good enough to get into heaven, you’ll either:

1. Live in the stress of frantically working your whole life and never be sure if it’s enough. OR.
2. Live proud because you succeeded at the scale you invented based on what you imagine God wants. OR.
3. Live discouraged from repeated failures at being good enough for your scale.

- Stress, Pride, Discouragement: Climbing good works to reach God is like climbing your mom's step ladder to reach the moon. All we have plus all the works we can do fall inconceivably short.
- BUT, while the uncountable sacrifices (= works) given by the priests couldn't remove a single sin, Jesus' single, superior sacrifice atoned for all our sin and makes way for us to be with the One we're reaching for.
 - Then, what's up with the Bible's constant encouragement to good works and service and self-sacrifice?

3. WE STILL HAVE A SACRIFICE TO GIVE

Hebrews 10:14 - *For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.*

- The paradox of His once-time, sufficient sacrifice.
- **"Perfected"** – What Jesus has done for us – justification, atonement, and making us heirs – was a one-time event and eternally secure. We will never be slaves to sin again. God will forever see us as His sons and daughters. And, we will not lose our inheritance of eternity and heaven.
- **"Being sanctified"** – (to be made holy – set apart) He is working in us through His Spirit of Holiness to make us more like Jesus, like Himself. Throughout the rest of our lives, **He does surgery on those things which are not of His character.** Paul calls it putting to death the flesh. God is regularly bringing to mind things we need to put on the alter, sometimes repeatedly.
 - He follows this paradox with scriptural support.

Hebrews 10:15-17 - *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."*

- **"put... on hearts"** and **"write... on minds"** – active work (**sanctification**)
- **"remember their sin... no more"** – finished work (**atonement and justification**)

Hebrews 10:18 - *Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.*

- Jesus' perfect sacrifice did away with the former sacrifices. **There is no longer an offering for sin, but we still bring an offering of worship.**

Hebrews 10:19-22 – *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 culmination and purpose of the author’s arguments, tying all the points together, is to make one main point = We can “**draw near**”.
- **We’ve been purchased, freed, and cleansed, and all we have to give to the one to paid it all is our whole selves.**

TOOK

Illustration: When a genuine worshipper came to give a sacrifice, God saw more than a person with an animal. Works done out of obligated duty or thoughtless repetition are worthless to the God who sees our hearts. 10,000 animal sacrifices won’t please Him.

Giving flowers on Jacqui’s birthday. Her: “Aw, they’re so beautiful. Thank you!” Me: “It was your birthday, so it was the right thing to do.” **OR.** “Oh ya, I set up a repeating order with the flower store for every March 29th. I’m glad they came in.” **OR** “Absolutely, when I tell you I love you, I don’t say it out of habit. I say it to remind you that I adore you.” **Which pleases her heart most?**

In fact, God took great delight in the sacrifices of sincere worshippers. He called them a fragrant incense. But His delight wasn’t in the ritual but the obedient heart of the man or woman.

Application: Our obedience doesn’t earn salvation, but flows out of salvation.

Rom. 12:1 - *I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.*

- Jesus - *“If anyone would come after me, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.”*
- **Worship is making all of yourself your gift to God.** Our lives become an altar and obedience is placing all our thoughts, words, and actions on it to be sweet incense to the Lord. **THIS** is our holy and acceptable spiritual worship.

Is your obedience to God a check list to keep God from being mad at you? Is rejecting sin a killjoy obligation you've gotta do because your heavenly Father will be checking your report card? Is praying, reading your Bible, giving offerings, or going to church your way of paying dues to keep your heaven membership? Or does your abstinence of sin, choices for righteousness, and pursuit of relationship come **from a heart which delights in doing God's will? Do you love to please the Lord?**

RECAP

- The repetition of the old sacrifices wasn't a good thing but revealed their inability to actually deal with sin.
- Jesus' perfect sacrifice did away with the need for the old sacrifices and did away with the need for us to hopelessly earn our salvation.
- God has both saved us where we can rest in His finished work and is saving us where He's daily working in us to reflect His love and holiness.
- Our good and loving works don't earn salvation, but flow from our joy of salvation.
- Our worship is the gift of our whole lives in obedience to Him.

Challenge 1: Be brave. Pray and ask the Lord how you can be obedient today?

Challenge 2: When you read the Bible, ask how you can apply what you've read.

~ Soli DEO Gloria