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## Into Thy Word Bible Study in Hebrews

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### Hebrews 10:1-18: *Christ's Sufficient Sacrifice!*

**General idea:** All that Moses did and set up was merely a shadow to Christ. He pointed to the things to come and the reality of Christ's saving grace that we have now. These sacrifices and offerings had to be repeated again and again, year after year, and yet they were never able to cleanse or to save. They could not even enable one to worship God effectively; thus all that was left was unresolved sin and guilt before a most Holy God. Christ came as our offering for sin, which bulls and rituals could not fully do. He came to do the Father's will and to take away our sin. Thus, He cancels the Old Covenant and gives us a new one that is effectual and that we most desperately needed. His sacrifice is continual and never ever needs to be repeated or have anything added to it. He will never leave us or forsake us! Yet, the Law was not in error; it showed us our need for a Savior and showed us a God who is here, Who cares, and Who is Holy. He humbles our enemies and gives us great comfort. The Holy Spirit also testifies to this and will pour out Himself to us too. He will not even remember our evil deeds; they are covered by His deeds of atonement and love. We will be able to live for Him and obey Him from a willing heart because we have been forgiven!

#### **Contexts and Background:**

This passage is about the sufficiency and importance of Christ; His sacrifice is all that is needed and it is complete. Here is imagery of *perfection*. Perhaps the writer, to further make his point, used residues from Plato's teachings of the *perfection of heaven* and that *all that is on earth are mere shadows of feeble replicas*. The Gnostics picked up on this and said we must escape the earth's corruption by centering our minds on God; what our bodies do is irrelevant, thus providing an excuse to sin. But Plato was referring to reason alone; Christ is reason, faith, life, our all in all, and He is perfect. Heaven and the Temple in Heaven are perfect. The earth's Temple was a mere copy as the writer previously stated. Now he gives hope that our true home is heaven, as we were not made for this world. While we are here, we have a duty to learn and grow, but our true home is still to come. We are to make the most of life now as we wait either for His return or for our homecoming into eternity before He comes and all of its rewards because of or our trust in Christ.

#### **Commentary; Word and Phrase Meanings:**

- *The law.* Referring to the Mosaic system, which includes the Levitical system and the priesthood, together with all of the sacrifices and offerings for sin.

- *Only a shadow.* A Plato philosophical teaching, meaning the earth is imperfect, filled with corruption, and a shadow of God's perfect heaven. This was meant to give encouragement and a future hope that our life has value here and now, but will have even more in the eternity of rest (Heb. 9:23).
- *Good things that are coming/to come.* Refers to Christ's redemption, which the Law and Old Testament system of sacrifices foreshadowed.
- *Make perfect.* Worshipping God then did not cleanse you and a worshipper actually disgusted God by his or her defilement of sin and guilt that could not be removed. Now, we are clean before Him and can truly worship God (Heb. 7:11-19; 9:9).
- *Draw near to worship.* We now have the right of entry to worship God because of Christ.
- *Stopped being offered.* Adding to the argument of the previous chapters that what Judaism had to offer was temporary and had to be continually supplemented; but Christ needs no addition or supplementation. He is complete and He will not even remember our sin (Heb. 8:12).
- *Annual reminder.* Sacrifices were a public notice that all were sinners before a Most Holy God who had to be appeased. Also, this refers to the Day of Atonement and perhaps Passover too, that had to be completed each year to show all people their sins and give them opportunity for repentance and restitution. The Jews had to be continually reminded of God's past redemptive works so they could trust His future plan. Under the New Covenant, Christ is in our hearts (Ex. 12:14; Lev. 16:21; Num. 5:15; Heb. 8:12).
- *Impossible for the blood of bulls.* The law was frustrated by the disobedience of its priests and observers. It only worked when the people did what they were supposed to do. Animal sacrifices are merely symbolic to Christ's coming redemptive work that we now have. This is a reference that true repentance must come from our willingness to do so as it can't be forced or coerced; yet repentance was then and is now necessary for the forgiveness of sins. Thus, the point is that animal sacrifices do not fulfill our need to be cleansed of sin and are inadequate for our redemption because an animal cannot substitute for a person made in God's image. Most Greek philosophers were revolted on the action of animal sacrifices. This is neither a retort nor an agreement to this, just a point that Christ is needed. The thought that the Temple must be rebuilt and the sacrificial system to be reinstated, as some so-called Bible teachers proclaim, is repulsive and an insult to God and His work. Even if the Jews do rebuild it, it has nothing to do with Christ's redemptive work and His second coming. Such thinking cheapens His work and nullifies our responsibility to seek redemption by our trust in Him (1 Sam.

15:22; Psalm 51:16; Prov. 21:3; Isa. 1:10-17; Jer. 11:15; Hosea 6:6; Amos 5:21-27; Micah 6:6-8; Rom. 8:3-4; Heb. 8:8-12).

- *Sacrifice and offering.* A quote from Psalm 40:6-8 as Scriptural power to back up the author's point of a distinction of what God really wanted and what it took to cover our sin because we did not honor His request. It took the ultimate obedience and sinless nature of Christ and His sacrifice to atone for our imperfect humanity. He covers our sin by His sinlessness; this is what atonement is all about.
- *A body you prepared for me.* Meaning complete, as our "holistic person," all of us. Here, Christ is fully obedient and submitted to the Father. This is an expression meaning that God will open our ears and heart to His Word and prepare us to do His will. Our part is our response; thus the question is not that we do not know, because we do. The question is *if* we will do what He has given us to do. It is our sinful nature that picks and chooses what we will do, then rationalizes it, thus giving in to apathy or disobedience (Psalm 40:6-8; Isa. 10:5).
- *The scroll/book.* Here referring to the entirety of the Torah and Writings—the Old Testament as we have it. The New Testament at this time was still being written; however, this now applies to the Bible as a whole—Old *and* New Testaments. (Luke 24:27; 45-47; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).
- *Do your will.* Referring to obedience, which was missing from most of the Jewish nation over the centuries, and what was needed to make the Law work. Obedience is what Christ does for us by His suffering and we can respond back to Him in gratitude (Luke 22:42; John 4:34).
- *He sets aside/abolishes the first to establish the second.* A prelude to the finishing of the sacrificial system and the beginning of the new Covenant of Grace that supersedes and replaces the Levitical sacrificial system. God did not desire sacrifices; He wanted our right hearts. The sacrifices were to cover our sin. His will is for us to know Him more and live our life for Him more (Heb. 8:13).
- *We have been made holy/sanctified.* God makes us justified and consecrated, as in holy, and set aside from sin so we can come before Him. What Christ did, giving us redemption and the forgiveness of sin to which we responded to justification by faith alone, results in our inner transformation and qualifies us to know and worship God. Before, the pollution of sin kept us separated from God.
- *Religious duties.* The sum total of the Levitical system instituted by God for redemption and prepared for the Christ, our Ultimate Redeemer. This is what the priests did as mediators for atonement; now Christ is our Mediator. The

basic point of the last few chapters was that the old system did not work well as it could not permanently remove sin; it only pointed to our need for the once-and-for-all sacrifice that Jesus Christ gives us (Psalm 110:1-4; Heb. 2:2; 8:8; 12:18-25).

- *Stands... he sat.* This is a contrast between the two covenants. In the first, the priest always stood, because the work was never completed; but now, Christ has finished it.
- *Waits for his enemies to be made his footstool.* A reference to Melchizedek who was waiting for his role to be fulfilled (Heb. 2:8).
- *Holy Spirit also testifies/bears witness.* Referring to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit as Author of Scripture. He has given the Scriptures and inspired the human writers to pen the Bible, giving us the Word of God. This can also refer to giving credence to what is being said, that this is not the author's idea, it is God's (Jer. 31:31-34; Acts. 4:25; Heb. 4:25; 8:8-12).
- *This is the covenant.* God now forgives our sins based on the Person and Work of the Son; no more using rituals and sacrifices for atonement when Christ is sufficient and fulfills it all. This is the crux of the argument to the Jewish Christian audience who wanted to leave Christianity and go back to the old system. That would be foolish because we have so much more now; it is better beyond our situation or thinking (Isa. 53; Ezek. 40:39; 42:13; 43:18-27; 44:29; Heb. 8:6-13).
- *Sins and lawless acts/iniquities.* Being people of lawless deeds, unconcerned for Truth and Righteousness. When we are in Christ, we are concerned about what concerns Him (Rom. 1:18-32).
- *These have been forgiven.* This new covenant assures us that our sins will be effectively and completely forgiven. The curse of the law has been removed, but we still have responsibility (John 14:15).

### **Devotional Thoughts and Applications:**

*How is your personal relationship with Christ? How do you show—in your life, will, mind, and attitude—that Christ is your Priest and Lord, and that you know He is the One we go to? He knows us intimately and asks us to do the same with Him—know Him more. How do you do this now? How can you even more so? This is what will help you grow spiritually and enable you to survive and even thrive, through the hard times of life and loss as well as the jubinations, and still be content. *I will be your God*; this is an effectual and powerful promise of fact and a call to be His children. Knowing God is a contract, God declaring an agreement, but also a personal call to each person that He is a God that loves and cares; He wants to form and mold us further in Him so we can be our best*

for His glory. A mature Christian seeks from God: *how I can know you more?* An immature Christian seeks just what he or she can get from Him.

**The Essential Inductive Questions** (for more Inductive questions see Inductive Bible Study):

1. What does this passage say?
2. What does this passage mean?
3. What is God telling me?
4. How am I encouraged and strengthened?
5. Is there sin in my life for which confession and repentance is needed?
6. How can I be changed, so I can learn and grow?
7. What is in the way of these precepts affecting me? What is in the way of my listening to God?
8. How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?
9. What can I model and teach?
10. What does God want me to share with someone?

**Additional Questions:**

1. What chore do you hate the most? Cleaning the toilet? How does this relate to this passage?
2. The Jews had to be continually reminded of God's past redemptive works so they could trust His future plan. How do you need to be reminded?
3. Law was not in error; God did not make a mistake, so how did it show our need for a Savior? How does His Word and this passage now show you a God who is here and Who cares and Who is Holy? How do you feel about this? How does or can this give you great comfort?
4. How has the Holy Spirit testified to you about the Son? How can He pour Himself out to you more? What would you do?
5. Do you fully realize deep within you that Jesus will never leave or forsake you so much that your heart, faith, and actions show it?
6. Why was the Old Covenant not capable to help one to worship God effectively?
7. Do you have the ultimate hope and assurance that you are not made for this world, that your true home is heaven? How do you feel about this?
8. Because our salvation is secured in Christ, how can you make the most of your life now as we wait for His return or our homecoming into eternity? What role will your trust in Christ play?

9. Because of Christ, how can you better live for Him and obey Him from a willing heart? What would this look like? Keep in mind: you have been forgiven!
10. How and why did you most desperately need a Savior prior to becoming a Christian? How do you need Him now? How should you need Jesus in your daily life? What can you do?
11. What would you do if you had to deal with unresolved sin and guilt? Why do some Christians struggle with this? What can they do about it?
12. How has the reality of Christ's saving grace had an impact on your life? How has this impact affected others around you? How can you be a better impact? What can you do to dig deeper into personal holiness?

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