

7HEBREWS – LEVITICUS
“When the Priest Sits Down”
Hebrews 10:1-18
September 3, 2023

Hebrews 10:1-18

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

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

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.

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.”

**18 Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering
for sin. ¹**

“This is the Word of God” – “Thanks be to God.”

I was listening to Dr. Albert Mohler speak on this passage and he gave an interesting opening illustration about the Rockefeller Memorial Chapel at the University of Chicago. Though many do not know this, the university was once Baptist and with John D. Rockefeller being a Baptist as well, he poured much money into this school, and thus, the building is named for him.

Now, this chapel is for interfaith gatherings and is anything but a Christian site.

This is not unlike some of the old chapels we see in Wales when we visit the country on mission with Linguae Christi, our mission agency in the land.

All throughout Wales, Scotland, England and the entirety of the United Kingdom are church buildings, chapels that have gone out of business. They no longer are church buildings. Those that are still open and not rotting due to being on a historical registry somewhere, have been converted.

¹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Heb 10:1–18). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

Thus, you can go into a chapel with its beautiful architecture and settings that have had the pews removed, the crosses erased or covered up, and now functions as something different.

Some are now daycares, pubs, restaurants, concert halls, museums, gyms, private residences, and holiday homes (or vacation sites) rentable through AirBNB and other sites.

The chapel in Chicago has stripped every vestige of Christianity from the building – no crosses, no biblical statements, empty stained glass windows, and more.

Yet...in some cases, not all, but especially in the case of the chapel in Chicago, it was built not unlike many cathedrals throughout history. From the sky, it becomes clear that the building was designed to look like a cross. This is how Grace Episcopal Church and Grace Anglican Church here in our county are built. This is so very common.

So, as Dr. Mohler pointed out, the architecture says what the folks in Chicago have done their best not to say. It reveals the cross, just by the footprint of the building. That does not make the building holy. But it does declare something about the intent from the builders and designers' view.

Our architecture says things as well. In our room here, the pulpit stands really in the center, thus holding up the Word of God as central to our teaching. Our baptistry reminds us of the ordinance of baptism. These are good, yet we are not a sacramental church and therefore, we know we are not constrained by our buildings and thus, as our satellite campuses in the past showed, we could convert a YMCA or a school cafeteria into a church (and not because we put up curtains or had a portable podium, but because we...the people of God...gathered for worship and study of the Word.) We have friends in China who worship in caves. Stories from throughout the world of gatherings in homes, and

in secret, and in coffee shops and all over happen and that is church. It is good. It is godly.

So our building is not the church and I, the pastor, am not the priest. Words matter. And it is to our health and benefit to get this.

Why does this matter? Because as we gather here today and have walked in and found our seat on a cushioned pew, in an air conditioned facility, with carpeted floors and empty crosses on display, with musicians leading us, there is an expectation and something that has become normative for us in our understanding of worship. In this way, we are like the Hebrews this book is written to in the first century.

For today, no one came in expecting to see me wearing priestly garb, with a sharp blade in hand ready to cut the neck of a bull or goat, so that we could take blood that was spilled to use as a symbol of our payment for sin, to splatter upon an altar. That would be so foreign to our concept of worship it would likely cause many to gasp in offense.

Yet...it is normative, or was normative, for the people of God under the old covenant. It was what the Hebrew believers in the first century knew and what their ancestors knew first-hand.

And expectations drive worship at times. Clarity of the “why” and the “how” and all that entails.

Thus, the Holy Spirit-inspired writer gives clarity here to a people (and to us) regarding the king, the prophet, the priest, who became the sacrifice...once and for all.

Three things today:

1. The Shadow
2. The Substance
3. The Seat

THE SHADOW

Hebrews 10:1

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

The law has but a shadow of the good things to come.

The shadow reveals something is present, but the shadow is not that something.

The foreshadowing of Christ is made clear through these that are but shadows. The sacrificial system was a type or picture of the work our Lord would accomplish on the cross.³

Therefore, like a shadow only exists when the light is shining in a certain place, the law, the old covenant, and the sacrificial system was always meant to be temporary.

Thus, the very repetition of the sacrifices and the work done on the Day of Atonement brought glory to God, yes, but also revealed the entire system's temporal and weak nature.⁴

As John Phillips says, “The shadow of a key cannot unlock a prison door; the shadow of a meal cannot satisfy a hungry man; the shadow of Calvary cannot take away sin.”⁵

Thus, we need more.

² [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Heb 10:1). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

³ Wiersbe, Warren W. *The Bible Exposition Commentary, New Testament, Vol. 2* (Colorado Springs, CO: Victor, 2001), 313.

⁴ Wiersbe, 313.

⁵ Phillips, John. *Exploring Hebrews: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel), 121.

THE SUBSTANCE

There is a build-up here in this chapter for something to come in chapter 11. A verse that many have memorized or at a minimum rings familiar.

Here's a preview:

Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.⁶

Faith is the “assurance” of things hoped for. You may have memorized it as “faith is the substance of things hoped for.” That’s how the King James Version puts it.

More on that in coming weeks, but let’s think about what substance means.

This dictionary says substance is “that of which a thing consists – physical or material.”⁷

So, while the shadow is empty and just reveals, though incomplete, something else, that which it reveals is the thing with substance.

This is elementary school science, so not too far-fetched for us to grasp, but when you are holding onto your traditions, your pre-conceived ideas, that which you believe to be all there is and most valuable, you may be sacrificing the real deal for a crude copy.

Would you rather have a diamond or a cubic zirconia. One is authentic while the other created to look like the authentic.

⁶ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Heb 11:1). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

⁷ “Substance Definition & Meaning.” *Dictionary.Com*, Dictionary.com, www.dictionary.com/browse/substance. Accessed 28 Aug. 2023.

When my dad was stationed in Korea he was able to buy a bunch of “knock-off” name brand things to send home. Initially, it was pretty cool, but once the Fila shoes tore up and I realized the guy on the horse on my Ralph Lauren Polo shirt was falling off, I discovered that having the real thing was better than a copy.

In faith, the Lord set up a system that previewed something better to come. The trailer showed highlights, but the real feature was Christ, not just snippets of a story.

The costume jewelry was the sacrificial system. The priceless gems were found in the new covenant.

Hebrews 10:4

⁴For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins⁸

Why would you trade the priceless gem for plastic?

Why would you abandon Christ for a model that was designed to reveal him, but not be him?

Why slide into a system that will never fully work when the one that works, that is real, that is complete, that has substance and is not just a shadow is available?

Why?

You see, Christ is that sacrifice that became final. There are no altars here with blood-stained corners. There are no animals tied up out front for purchase so that you could make an offering with a sheep or goat or bull today. There is no bloody vestment or clothing for me to wear as I am not a priest and you don't need a human priest.

⁸ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Heb 10:4). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

You see the futility in this?

To come to Christ in surrender...

To receive his sacrifice as one of substance...

To fall down in worship, realizing how great a gift of sacrifice has been made...

Is what the Hebrews were being called to, and what we have been drawn to by the Spirit of God.

For Christ has done the work. He has paid the price. He has done what he came to do, fully and complete.

Hebrews 10:9-10

⁹ then he added, “Behold, I have come to do your will.” He does away with the first in order to establish the second. ¹⁰ And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. ⁹

Through Christ, because of Christ, due to his giving of blood for you, you can be or have been sanctified.

What the bull and goat could never do for you... Christ did.

What you could never do for you...Christ did.

Then, he sat down.

THE SEAT

Hebrews 10:11-13

⁹ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (Heb 10:9–10). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

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.¹⁰

There were no chairs in the tabernacle.

Why? Because the priest was never done. He had to stand to do the job.

But Jesus, in exact fulfillment as the priest in the order of Melchizedek, as stated in Psalm 110, sat down.¹¹

Psalm 110:1

**¹ The LORD says to my Lord:
“Sit at my right hand,
until I make your enemies your footstool.”¹²**

Thus, the work of our Savior was completed at the cross and through the resurrection.

As Louis Evans has said, “The Apostle-Son-Messiah who has become the Priest after the order of Melchizedek has offered himself as the perfect sacrifice remitting all the sins of humanity forever. Indeed, it is finished.”¹³

He has done the work. Have you done the surrender?

¹⁰ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Heb 10:11–13). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

¹¹ Hughes, R. Kent. *Hebrews: An Anchor for the Soul* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 252.

¹² [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Ps 110:1). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

¹³ Evans, Louis H., Jr. *Hebrews: The Communicator’s Commentary* (Waco, TX: Word, 1985), 182.