

“Jesus Christ Once For All”

Hebrews 10:1-18

Once For Absolution

The author is wrapping up his reasons that Jesus and His priestly work exceeds that of the Old Testament priests. From chapter 4, verse 14 all the way through chapter 10, verse 18 the writer does not hardly stop to catch his breath as he puts forth the New through Christ has replaced the Old. It is Jesus alone who has ushered in the New Covenant; not priests nor any human. With the sacrifice; the death of Christ and His resurrection the Old Covenant no longer is in effect. It foreshadowed the New and the New came with Christ. The writer is clear beginning in chapter 4 as he declares 3 times that perfection or righteousness is needed by those who worship God in order to be in His presence and that righteousness is only available through faith in Jesus Christ.

Reading Hebrews 4, verse 14, **“Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.”** Jesus is the last priest, the final priest. The writer is making clear that righteousness before God cannot be acquired through the Old Testament Mosaic system and since Christ’s resurrection it cannot be acquired through any other religion but only through true faith in Christ and belief in God’s holy Word. To solidify this truth the writer says in chapter 7, verse 11, **“Now if perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need would there have been for another priest to arise after**

the order of Melchizedek, rather than one named after the order of Aaron?” The false religion of Mormonism that I came out of tries to use these priestly orders through men to gain power to save themselves and they do this to their doom. Those who do not let go of the Old Covenant and priesthood diminish the sacrifice of Christ.

Moving to chapter 8 the writer makes another point of why the New replaced the Old, reading at verse 7, “For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second.” Connecting this verse to the 2nd verse of chapter 10 that we are exploring this morning, “Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins?” No other religion or belief system; believes, teaches and practices those who worship the permanent cleansing of sin through Christ and by the righteousness of Christ may come before God and when they come to God, He sees them with Christ’s perfection. The Bible has been shown to be true over and over again through the centuries. All the historical evidence supporting who Jesus Christ was and is leads one to truth. Many may claim a Christ, but it is the Christ of the Bible that saves. My beloved there is no other way to salvation than Jesus Christ found only in the inerrant Holy Word of God and the Word makes clear ritual does not save, but salvation in through faith in Jesus.

Once To Replace The Old (vs. 1-4)

Many Old Testament worshippers brought their ritual sacrifices to the Lord in the way He prescribed. Their hearts were sincere and they were blessed. Their sin was temporarily covered until Jesus came to pay their penalty in full. When that happened, their sin was not covered, but removed. Reading at verse 1 of chapter

10, “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.” The Old Testament people, who approached God with a contrite heart and gave a sacrifice had their sin covered but not removed. They offered God duty but had no permanent change. They learned the 10 Commandments; both its requirements and punishments for violating them. But the Law was external – they had no Law written on their hearts and minds and souls. The Old Testament sacrificial system was a dim representation of the amazing bright and glorious future that Christ would bring. The “good things to come”, as verse 1 states, would far exceed the shadows of the sacrificial system that was meant to prepare the way for Christ.

There were those Old Testament worshippers who were socially and racially Jews and they brought sacrifices to the Lord as a ritual but without their hearts being committed. For them, the sacrifice had no effect, not even a covering. God has always been more interested in the heart of the worshipper than in outward practices and rituals. Coming to church does not make one saved; it is the belief of the heart and soul in Christ that saves. Ritual does not save, works do not save, nationality does not save – it is only belief in Jesus as Lord and Savior that saves.

The New Covenant takes care of not only the guilt of sin like the Old Covenant did but also cleanses the worshipper and in scriptural language makes one perfect before a holy God through Christ. By the perfect sacrifice of Christ

God chooses not to see our sin and even further, to remember it no more. Praise Jesus!

The Psalmist wrote of the change Jesus would bring, ¹⁵“O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. ¹⁶For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. ¹⁷**The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.**” (Psalm 51:15-17) God has never been interested in a ritual sacrifice without a repentance. That sacrifice had to be coupled with a repentant heart to be effective. The amazing thing about the New Covenant is that it gives us repentant hearts. Christ gives each believer the gift of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that changes one from the inside; removing the heart of stone and giving one a heart of flesh.

God desires repentant hearts, but even with this there was the problem of sin. How did the Old Testament worshipper know that the animal sacrifice could not take away sin? He knew this because at a minimum of once a year another offering would be offered. If the Old Testament sacrifice could cleanse the worshipper of sin, there would be no need for next year’s sacrifice. This is made crystal clear by verse 4, “**For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.**” Animal blood cannot cleanse human sin. Sin is simply too terrible for that. Only human blood can cleanse human sin and only the blood of a human that had never sinned. Christ was the One, the perfect One and this caused Paul to write, “**For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.**” (Romans 10:4) The clear deficiency of the Old Covenant was that it could not provide forgiveness for the worshipper. This is why the writer asks an important question in verse 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?**” Only the

shed blood of Jesus Christ removes sin and cleanses one's conscience of the guilt of sin.

Once To Do God's Will (vs. 5-10)

For centuries Old Testament worshippers had been offering animal sacrifices to God in ritual form. When the worshipper was sincere, they were accepted and sin covered. When the worshipper exercised faith in God and the sacrifice given through the priest, the mediator, and the offering was received. The sacrifice of an animal was to show the seriousness of sin, a death and blood was required and the sacrifice reminded the worshipper that something needed to change. Year after year this same practice was commanded and year after year it temporarily covered sin but failed to cleanse or removed sin. Then came man's habitual practices without the right heart attitude. Many made sacrifices without really thinking about what they meant. They began to imagine that it was the sacrifice that had some saving work about it. We are told in this text and in other places that God never meant for the animal sacrifices to bring about forgiveness of sin because they were never meant for that purpose and were from the beginning powerless to accomplish that goal. It is the same today the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, they do not remove sin, they do not save, but are meant to show the seriousness of one claiming to be Christian and demonstrate one's heart and life belongs fully to God and not to the world. The writer now moves to the fact Christ came to bring a better way, a permanent solution.

Reading verses 5 to 10, "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.’ (Psalm 4:6-8)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.”

The Triune God prepared the path for Christ, God the Son, to come to earth as a human. This human body given to God the Son had but one ultimate purpose; to be the eternal and one-time sacrifice for the sin of mankind. When this perfect and lasting sacrifice was made, the Old ways were set aside and God was pleased with Jesus and the New. Since sin entered the world through Adam and Eve there had never been a sacrifice that satisfied the need to remove sin. Only now because of the death of the second Adam, the sinless Adam, Jesus Christ, could God and His people have a true relationship. Jesus Christ put on flesh and came to earth to do the Father’s will. What was the will of the Father? Verse 9 and 10, “ ‘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.”

One Offering For All (vs. 11-14)

Reading verse 11, “**And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.**” Try and imagine you are an Old Testament priest. You go to the temple and spend all day, every day cutting up animals. You perform the same rituals over and over. The blood and the burning flesh offered over and over but you see or experience very little change; it is all about ritual and not change in people. Not one sacrifice actually removes sin

or forgives. At the end of each day, you wash up and return home. After days, months and years of sacrificing animals, I think I would become a vegetarian or a pescatarian – red meat, a nice steak would lose its appeal. What is worse this job never accomplished anything of lasting effect.

However, with the long-awaited Messiah, came not the covering of sin but the forgiveness of sin. Verses 12 to 14 gives us a stark difference between a temple priest and Jesus Christ. “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.” Notice a couple of differences; the priests stands; they are constantly working and Jesus does a single sacrifice and then “sat down at the right hand of God” – His work is finished. The priest’s sacrifices never removed sin but Jesus’ “single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.”

Jesus is now interceding for the saints and waiting for history to be completed and His enemies to be destroyed. God’s plan is in motion and will progress just as He has determined. The saints are to be Christ’s witnesses on earth until He returns and history ends. Those who believe by faith are saved and those who reject Jesus remain accountable for their sins and are lost.

The cross was so powerful that the one death set in motion a series of events that will result in all of Jesus’ enemies being placed under His feet. When that last enemy is defeated the end or we should say the beginning will come. History will end but eternity begins. As Paul wrote to the believers in Rome,⁸ “God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.⁹ Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him

from the wrath of God. ¹⁰ For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. ¹¹ More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.” (Romans 5:8-11) Paul and his group of missionaries were once enemies of Jesus. Rather than experiencing death they were forgiven through the death of Jesus. Paul was an important enemy of Christ he persecuted the believers and arrested them. Paul was one of many in the long line of enemies that Jesus’ death overcame and reconciled back to God. If you believe with your heart, mind and soul you too were once an enemy of Christ and like Paul you are now saved, your life is to be lived for the glory of Christ.

Jesus is sitting at the right hand of God the Father watching the result of His death and resurrection now over one enemy after another. Some enemies will be reconciled showing His mercy. Some enemies will be judged showing His justice. All will be placed in subjection to His authority.

Forgiveness For All (vs. 15-18)

Here in these last verses for today, the writer pulls together his two themes. The New Covenant means forgiveness of sin and perfection for the worshipper. The Lord has taken His enemies and out of them produced those who worship Him. Those who used to hate the Lord now adore Him. Go with me to verse 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,” (Jeremiah 31:33) ¹⁷ then he adds, “I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.” (Jeremiah 31:34) ¹⁸ Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.” Because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross, God forgets the sin of His

people; quoting Jeremiah the writers states, **“I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.”**

He also declares that His law is now written on our hearts. This takes place when the worshipper is indwelt with the Holy Spirit. If you are sitting here today as reconciled enemies to God through Christ, you have proof that the New Covenant has been set in motion because you are indwelt with the Holy Spirit.

All of our past, present and future sins are forgiven and forgotten for all eternity because of Jesus Christ. He also gives us His righteousness which produces a perfected worshipper. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit enables a believer to rise above many sins and desire to live for Christ’s glory. Paul desired the church understand this great spiritual transformation. Reading from Ephesians chapter 1, **³“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴ even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. ⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁸ which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight ⁹making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ ¹⁰as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.”** (vs. 3-10)

Because the elect has been perfected forever and our sins destroyed by the death and resurrection of Christ, there is no need for any further offering for sin. All other means of dealing with sin are meaningless. Only Jesus and His death and

resurrection bring forgiveness of sin. Apart from Christ salvation is impossible. Some will say, that is true for Christians, but there are other paths to God. For a Christian salvation comes through Jesus. Listen, let me be clear, for the Scriptures are clear - there is no salvation for any human apart from Jesus of the Bible. I do not care how much someone prays, fasts or how devoted they are. I do not care how many good things they do. Unless they have trusted Jesus Christ for salvation, they will be lost for all time.

What does it mean to have your sins forgiven? Do you believe that by faith in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior your sins have been forgiven and remembered no more? If you believe this, then you know this is not an excuse to sin but God's call to live the exciting and fulfilled life of bringing Jesus' glory.

So, let me ask, "Are you living in light of the finished work of Christ?" If not – why not? As individuals and as a community of Christ let us hold fast to and live fully, the words of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, " 'The Lord our God, the Lord is one. ³⁰ And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' ³¹ The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these.' " (Mark 12:29b-31) If this is our goal and aim – everything else will fall into place. Let us live for the glory of God through our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen!