

One Sacrifice for Sin for All Time — Hebrews 10:1-18
James Muldoon - Carey Baptist Church – 7 October 2007

In **Hebrews 10:1-18**, the writer re-emphasises the message he has been giving his readers since **Hebrews 4:14** to make sure they really get it. Once again, he is showing that Jesus Christ, our new covenant high priest, is greater than the priests of the old covenant.

i Shadow and substance

In **v1**, we see that the old covenant law, with all those sacrifices and offerings, was just a shadow. Good things were coming. In fact, by the time Hebrews was written, those good things had come: Jesus had come, bringing unimaginable blessing. And it was those good things which were the substance, the reality. After all, if the old covenant sacrifices had really cleansed people, they wouldn't have needed to be repeated, as **v2** shows. **v4** teaches that the blood of bulls and goats could never really have taken away sin. All they could do, **v3**, was remind the people of sin. Just as a shadow won't save you if you are in danger, so the old covenant sacrifices could not save people from their sin because they were just a shadow of better things to come.

The writer comes to those better things in **v5-7**. He quotes **Psalm 40:6-8**. David there teaches that obedience is better than sacrifice. But as he wrote the psalm, he was wiser than he knew. His words were actually words which were to be found on Christ's lips when he came into the world. Only Jesus, in fact, could say with 100% honesty, "**I have come to do your will, O God.**" He is the only person ever who did do God's will every second of his life. All the rest of us, David included, go wrong countless times every day.

The Lord Jesus Christ, then, came into the world. But he did not come to offer lots of sacrifices, offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings. He came instead to live a life of obedience to God, which involved, of course, sacrificing himself. And the significance of all this appears in **v8-10**. Because of Christ's obedience and sacrifice, the old covenant is finished. All that remains is the new covenant, mediated by our majestic Saviour and Redeemer.

What does that mean to you and me? It means that you must remain faithful to Christ. To drift away from him is to drift away from the only one who can save you. So don't. Cling to him.

ii Standing and sitting

v11 teaches that the old covenant priest constantly had to stand. He stood to perform his duties. Day after day he stood. The point is that his work was never complete. The sacrifices he offered could not actually take away sins. But Jesus is different, **v12**. He offered one sacrifice. It was the sacrifice which counted. And when he'd offered it, he sat down. His work of sacrificing was done.

In fact, Jesus “**sat down at the right hand of God**”. He is seated in the place of the highest honour. He is so glorious! He is in the place of the highest exaltation, just as he should be.

That does not mean that Jesus is doing nothing now. His work of sacrificing is done. But he still works. He intercedes for us at God's right hand, as **Hebrews 7:25** told us. He reigns over the church, as **Ephesians 5:23** shows. He rules over the whole world, as **1 Corinthians 15:25** makes clear. Our Saviour is not doing nothing. It's his sacrificial work which is done, as **v14** spells out.

These verses show that the end will come one day. The day will come when Satan and all those on his side are finally defeated. The victory has already been won; the day is coming when that victory will be seen by all. So, Christian, cling to Jesus with all your might. And if you are not a Christian, confess your sin to God, trust in Jesus Christ and start to follow him. If you do that, you will be safe forever. If you've never done so, turn to Jesus today.

iii Short-term and stability

In **v15-17**, the writer quotes from **Jeremiah 31:31-34**, verses all about the new covenant which Christ would bring in, and has now brought in. They show that the new covenant would bring with it the power to change people's lives. So God's laws would be written upon his followers' hearts and minds, **v16**. And God would forgive all their sin, **v17**.

What is the result of all this? **v18** shows that if the new covenant really gives power to live a godly life, and if the new covenant really cancels out sin, then the old covenant sacrifices are defunct.

But the new covenant remains. It has eternal stability. And no wonder! It gives us all we need for past, present and future. It obliterates our sin. And it gives us the power to live godly lives by making God's laws a part of us.

So, Christian, thank God for saving you. Seek to keep in step with the Holy Spirit, as **Galatians 5:25** puts it. Obey God's word, God's will, God himself, always relying on the help of the Holy Spirit to enable you to do it. Cling to Jesus Christ.