



INTRODUCTION

Hebrews 10:1-18

Soon after I began to date my future wife, Barbara, I obtained her picture— a beautiful black-and-white 8 x 10 photograph taken the year before we met— and it immediately became an item of pre-nuptial “worship.” It was one of those bare-shouldered, sorority-style pictures so popular at the time. She looked like an angel floating in the clouds. It became my portable hope, most often sitting on my desk, sometimes in my car, at other times propped in front of my plate and my love-struck eyes.

However, the day came when we stood before God and our families and friends and pledged our lives to each other as she became mine. Suddenly I had gone from the possession of a one-dimensional portrait to the possession of the real thing, who smiled, talked, and laughed— a real, three-dimensional wife— a living, life-loving soul! And the picture? It remained just as beautiful, but from then on it received relatively scant attention.

But imagine that one day I appear before my wife holding the black-and-white photograph, and I say, “My dear, I’ve missed your picture, and I’m going back to it. I really am attached to the silhouette and the monochrome shading and the matte finish.” Then I passionately kiss the glass protecting the photograph, clutch it to my chest, and exit mumbling my devotion to the picture—“ I love you, O photograph of my wife. You’re everything to me.”

People’s suspicions that pastors are weird would be confirmed. Time to call for the men in the white jackets!

How absurd for anyone, once having the substance, to go back to the shadow. Yet, some in the early church were forsaking the covenant of grace for the old covenant of the Law. And this is what the author of Hebrews wants to steel his people against as he concludes his comparison of the old and new covenants in 10: 1– 18.¹

Open it

1. Describe your favorite picture you have with friends or family. Who is in this picture with you? What makes this picture so meaningful? What was happening when this picture was taken?

¹ Hughes, R. Kent. Hebrews (2 volumes in 1 / ESV Edition) (Preaching the Word) (Kindle Locations 4245–4259). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

Apply it

Whenever the sacrifices were offered, man realized his spiritual need. Although these animal offerings could not fully meet such need, they pointed inward by exposing man's sin, and forward to a time when adequate provision would be made for man's pardon and reconciliation.²

- 7. In what ways does God still reveal to you your spiritual need today? In what ways does God still expose and convict you of your sin?**

Sin, of course, is man's greatest problem. No matter what kind of religion a man has, if it cannot deal with sin, it is of no value. By nature, man is a sinner, and by choice, he proves that his nature is sinful. It has well been said, "We are not sinners because we sin. We sin because we are sinners."³

- 8. As we watch the world around us, what things does the world place at the root of "man's greatest problems"? In what ways do you find yourself falling prey to the world's way of thinking at times?**

² Brown, Raymond. The Message of Hebrews (The Bible Speaks Today Series) . InterVarsity Press. Kindle Edition.

³ Wiersbe, Warren W.. Be Confident (Hebrews): Live by Faith, Not by Sight (The BE Series Commentary) (p. 130). David C Cook. Kindle Edition.

9. How can you as a Christian serve as a messenger of Truth and hope in the midst of a lost and confused world?

What, then, was the immediate effect of old covenant sacrifices? According to Romans 3:21-26, those sacrifices held back the wrath of God for a time. ... When the high priest went into the most holy place on the Day of Atonement and sprinkled the blood of the animal on the mercy seat, God withheld his wrath for another year. Thus, God received every sacrifice that preceded Christ's sacrifice as a means of suspending his wrath against sin.⁴

10. What do the Old Testament sacrifices show us about God's character? While there is now a New Covenant in Christ, how do we still see the same character of God on display today?

⁴ Mohler, R. Albert. Exalting Jesus in Hebrews (Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary) (pp. 146-147). B&H Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

When Christ died on the cross, he did not shed the blood of another; he shed his own blood. Nor did he enter the tabernacle by making a sacrifice for his own sin first; he was sinless. Nor did he enter the manmade tabernacle; he entered the heavenly tabernacle. Then, after he accomplished atonement for us, he accomplished an eternal redemption once for all time, which brings true forgiveness of sins. All those animals died as shadows pointing to these realities accomplished through the cross of Christ. There Christ perfectly fulfilled all these things.⁵

11. In which ways do you recognize Jesus' ministry and sacrifice to be a fulfillment of the shadows of the law?

12. How would you explain Jesus' superior sacrifice to someone who is unfamiliar with Christianity?

⁵ Mohler, R. Albert. Exalting Jesus in Hebrews (Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary) (pp. 146-147). B&H Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

God delights in obedience, not in burnt offerings and sin offerings (1 Sam 15:22-23). This does not mean the old covenant offerings contradicted the will of God in any way. It simply means God is not interested in religious ritual if it is not driven by faith and obedience. Works without faith are meaningless in God's eyes.⁶

13. What are some modern religious rituals you find yourself “going through the motions” without intentional faith and obedience?

14. While you no longer need to make ritual sacrifices for sin today, Romans 12:1 calls you to a new kind of sacrifice. In what ways are you currently offering your body as a living sacrifice to God? Are there any greater ways God may be calling you to offer yourself as a living sacrifice to Him as your act of worship?

⁶ Mohler, R. Albert. Exalting Jesus in Hebrews (Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary) (p. 149). B&H Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

In contrast, the seated posture of Jesus is important. It shows that His work is finished. He doesn't need to stand ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices as priests under the Old Covenant had to. Jesus still ministers in heaven – He has a ministry of intercession for His people. But that ministry flows from His completed work, so He can adopt a posture of rest – He sat down at the right hand of God.⁷

15. How does Jesus' "once for all" sacrifice shape how you view sin in your life? How does it influence how you respond to sinfulness in your life?

16. What do you think the author of Hebrews is saying in verse 14?

⁷ David Guzik Commentary found at <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/hebrews-10/>

Today I ask: does your faith make you eager to forsake sin and make progress in holiness? ... This faith says, "Christ, today I have sinned. But I hate my sin. For you have written the law on my heart, and I long to do it. And you are working in me what is pleasing in your sight. And so I hate the sin that I still do, and the sinful thoughts that I contemplate. And in this hatred of my sin, and in my meager advancements in holiness I rejoice that, according to your promise in Hebrews 10:14, I have been perfected for all time by a single offering, your precious self."⁸

17. What areas of sin in your life do you need to bring before the Lord in confession and reliance on Him for victory?

⁸ Sermon by John Piper found at: <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/perfected-for-all-time-by-a-single-offering>
This study was compiled and questions were written by Pastor Jeremy Anderson (Indian Creek Campus)—www.villagebible.church/smallgroup