

## 23—Hebrews 10:1-18—The Standing Priest or the Sat Down Priest?

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### I. Introduction

- A. The promises of the new covenant are describes as God’s law written on our hearts. Instead of chiseled into stone, God removes our stone hearts and gives us a heart of flesh that LOVES God’s ways and gladly obeys them.
- B. I’ve said several times, you do what you love. All of us do. I heard an illustration (Howell) that might help you see this thing we’ve been talking about.
  - 1. Imagine that you and I go to the the Dairy Queen to get ice cream. On the way, you go on and on about how you love vanilla ice cream. When we get there and you place your order, you order vanilla ice cream. Isn’t that exactly what we all expected to happen?
  - 2. What if I asked you to get ice cream again but this time since I noticed how much you talk about your love for vanilla and I saw you order vanilla I decided to ask you if you could go against what you love most and order chocolate?
  - 3. When we get to DQ you order chocolate and you show me the chocolate cone as you take your first bite.
  - 4. My question is, did you do what you wanted in that moment? You love vanilla but you ordered chocolate. I think you would say, “Of course, I did. I’m not enslaved to vanilla.”
  - 5. My response would go like this: I think you still did what you wanted. You didn’t want to order vanilla but rather to prove me wrong. Thus you did still did what you wanted to do most.
- C. This text ends with the promises of the new covenant again which are that Christ has made you perfect and he is writing his law upon your hearts. In other words, if you have been born again, what you love most is to do what Christ’s wants and is ever increasingly.
  - 1. And all of that comes through the finished work of Christ who has sat down—it is finished.
  - 2. And I want to end with showing you just how worthy Jesus is.

### II. Main Point

- A. The main point continues to be that Jesus is the better sacrifice and for those who believe, we are eagerly awaiting his salvation.

### III. Outline

- A. The “Can Never Make Perfect” law
- B. The “Have Been Made Perfect” Sacrifice of Christ
- C. The Standing Priest or the Sat Down Priest?

### IV. Exposition

- A. Chapter 10 returns to the helpful image of comparing the law to a shadow. The sacrificial system foreshadowed the superior sacrifice—Jesus Christ. The OC shows us God’s patience to teach Israel and the world that sin was deadly and God is holy. To redeem anyone requires a just payment—blood sacrifice. But God is also merciful and therefore foreshadowed the good things to come in the provisions of sacrifices for our disobedience. Those good things have now come in Christ. Let’s turn our attention first though to the “can never make” law.
  - 1. In my reading this week, I can assure you that the people were not eagerly awaiting a face to face encounter with the Lord. In fact, we can actually see this pretty clearly in the story of Korah rebellion.
    - a) After Korah is swallowed by the earth, the people asked in Numbers 17:12-13 <sup>12</sup> “Behold, we perish, we are undone, we are all undone. <sup>13</sup> Everyone who comes near, who comes near to the tabernacle of the LORD, shall die. Are we all to perish?”
      - (1) A face to face encounter was not something they were eagerly waiting for.
      - (2) Why? Because the law doesn’t make people perfect and to stand before God in judgment. It is a fearful reality when we have read that if you even oppose God’s appointed leader, Moses, then the Lord will swallow up your entire family in the earth.
        - (a) God was about to wipe out the entire nation but Moses mediated by interceding for the people.

- (b) The Lord displayed his justice and foreshadowed his the good things that were to come.
- b) Are you asking the question—how then is it possible to eagerly wait for God’s appearing to save me?
2. Chapter 10 explains how first by saying what the OC law could not do. Beginning there in verse 1, the preacher concluded that the law can never make perfect those who draw near to God.
- a) The law is described as a shadow of the good things to come.
- (1) The law taught God’s righteousness and holiness and that nothing unclean could approach God and live.
- (a) That’s why God’s presence was in the tent. He was there to be their God and they his people.
- (b) He was there in their midst to make himself known to them so that they would become like him.
- (c) But he was also in the tent to protect them from himself.
- (d) However, that doesn’t fix the intended purpose of creation—to be in glad fellowship with God.
- (2) The law also taught them that a relationship with him required cleanness but the law also taught that cleanness came through sacrifice.
- (a) This temporary foreshadowing of good things to come pointed to the perfect sacrifice that would make them perfect inside and out.
- b) In the words of Hebrews, the good things to come, are finished in God’s eternal Son. He is the true image of these realities.
- (1) He brings about eternal redemption.
- (2) He mediates the promises of a new covenant which brings about an eternal inheritance.
3. The means God used to foreshadow the good things to come were through the same sacrifices that were continually offered every year.
- a) The preacher clearly concludes that the continuing of these same sacrifices every year proved that they could not make the worshiper perfect.
- b) As he ask the question in verse 2, otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered?
- (1) I was preaching at our county jail one time and I asked them the question—if the things that you think make you happy—like drugs, money that’s been stolen, sex, or whatever—why do you have to keep doing them over and over? If they are so good why don’t they continue to make you happy?
- (2) Why wasn’t it enough? Why did you need more? Because those things are not sufficient to make you eternally happy.
- (3) I offered them Jesus who is the living water and they would never thirst again.
- (4) The offering of same sacrifices year after year were not enough either.
- c) If the law of the old covenant sacrifices made them perfect, then they would NO LONGER have any consciousness of sins.
- (1) However, verse 3 points out that there was a reminder of sins every year.
- (a) “It reminds you that you need to get rid of them but it never actually gets rid of them” (Bret Rogers).
- (2) Why? Because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.
- (a) Let me try this—if your daughter was kidnapped and killed and the court decided that if her killer would bring a goat to slaughter every year for the rest of his life would you feel like justice had been served?
- (b) How much less can a goat take away our sins against the Holy God of the universe?
- (c) This first section’s point? The law can never make things right and keep me from dying in his presence and judgment.
- B. Now if that were it, we sinners of this world would have no hope of eagerly waiting for God’s appearing. It’s coming whether we are eagerly waiting or dreading it. However, that’s not the end of the story. The can never of the law gives way to the can forever of Christ.

1. This idea of sacrifice was not something that only the Jews did. Offering sacrifices to idols was common among many of the religions of the world. So, whether this text is directed at Jews trusting the OC sacrifices or you thinking that you are sacrificing something by being here that makes you perfect, the following message is the same for both.
2. Let's hear what can—there in verse 5 since bulls and goats offered forever and no matter how many can never make those who draw near perfect, therefore, when Christ came into the world... skipping ahead to get the answer we need in verse 10...we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.
  - a) There's a common misconception that we are the ones in our religious efforts pursuing God.
    - (1) Most of the religions of the world describe their pursuit of God through their own path. They might say that you have yours and I have mine and we will all get to God.
    - (2) However, what's different about Christianity is that God came down into the world to save us. Did you hear that in v. 5? He came into the world and he has sanctified us through the offering of his own body.
    - (3) He is the one who pursues us. He is one who redeems us. He is the one who reconciled himself to us. He is the one who did it all. We receive this great salvation by faith.
      - (a) That means God gets all the glory and not us.
3. The writer of Hebrews takes up a portion of Psalm 40 (our call to worship) to show us what God does not desire and then points us to what he does desire which is obedience.
  - a) I hope in your preparation this week to hear God's word you read and thought about why the preacher brings in this Psalm.
    - (1) I must say it's not obvious. It takes some work to figure out.
    - (2) The psalms are grouped in books. In fact, they are not randomly ordered but rather strategically placed together in groups. For example, the songs of ascent.
    - (3) Psalm 40 is one of the last psalms of book one but Psalm 39 even connects our theme of waiting eagerly for the appearing of Christ for salvation. (I've been helped by Jim Hamilton on what follows)
      - (a) Psalm 39:7 "And now, O Lord, for what do I wait? My hope is in you.
      - (b) Psalm 40:1 indicates the wait is over—I waited patiently for the LORD; he inclined to me and heard my cry.
      - (c) Most of these Psalms of David follow many of his difficulties he had with Saul throughout the book of Samuel.
      - (d) Psalm 40 is connected to the scene where Saul was told by Samuel in the battle with the Amalekites to devote everything to destruction.
        - i) As you may know, Saul did not listen to Samuel but spared the king and kept the best of the animals.
        - ii) When Samuel arrived, he asked why he had not listened to God.
        - iii) Saul replied, "I've kept the best of the animals for sacrifice."
        - iv) But Samuel said to Saul, "God wanted obedience, not sacrifice."
          - (1) It seems Saul was doing sacrifices for the wrong reasons. Sacrifices were for those who had disobeyed. They weren't to be sacrifices for sacrifices sake. God wanted obedience.
          - (2) On these grounds, God took the kingdom from King Saul.
          - (3) And David was anointed King.
            - (a) Now we can see what happens when you wait on the Lord.
            - (b) In the words of this psalm, "He drew me up from the pit of destruction, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure."
    - (e) What does all of that have to do with Hebrews 10? The point is that God wants obedience from the heart rather than sacrifice.
      - i) Like the illustration last week, we want our kids gladly wanting to do the things we have taught them not merely mimicking outward behavior.

- (1) Punishment is a way to pay for the wrongs that are done but it is not the desired outcome.
- ii) God desires heartfelt obedience not sacrifice.
- (4) This is the connection—It's obvious that we have not obeyed and are in need of a perfect sacrifice to pay our debt. But how can that much debt be paid and how can I be perfect to stand before God?
- b) If you read Psalm 40 you may have noticed that in the Psalm it says ear but in Hebrews 10 it says body.
  - (1) David asks that God would open his ear to hear God's instruction and obey but even he failed.
  - (2) The coming of Christ into the world finds its fulfillment in the incarnation.
    - (a) He takes on a body and nature like those he came to save. He did that as we've already heard—that he might be a merciful high priest who understands our weaknesses.
    - (b) But also, he takes on a body to be sacrificed. He stands in our stead as a man and was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities.
    - (c) In the words of Paul—he obeyed to the point of death, even death on a cross.
      - i) We needed perfect obedience to pay for our sins and we needed his perfect obedience to stand before God without dying eternally.
  - (3) The Lord did not desire nor take pleasure in the sacrifices but obedience.
  - (4) V. 9—Behold, I have come to your will.
    - (a) And in doing so, Christ takes away the first covenant in order to establish the second covenant.
    - (b) And in the new covenant, the will and pleasure of God (DON'T MISS THIS)—we have been sanctified!
    - (c) The “can never” of the old covenant gives way to what the new covenant has done. It is finished.
    - (d) How? How can this be? Notice the end of verse 10—through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.
      - i) The perfectly obedience Jesus paid our debt and secured our perfect righteousness if we believe.
- 4. Who, in their right mind, would neglect such a great salvation?
- C. Now our final point. We've heard how the OT sacrifices can never make us perfect and we've heard how the sacrifice of Jesus has made us perfect—we now get to decide if we want a standing priest or a sat down priest.
  - 1. Coming off the heels of Christ's once for all time sacrifice, verse 11 compares the priests of the OC with Jesus as priest of the NC.
    - a) Notice every OC priest stands daily offering repeatedly the same sacrifice which can never take away sins.
    - b) See the contrast. Verse 11—But when Christ (this one..this priest) had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God.
      - (1) So, you either want the one who will never finish the job or the one who has finished it for you forever.
      - (2) There's another reference to Psalm 110 and in particular verse one.
        - (a) The promised messiah of Psalm 110 finds him seated at the right of the majesty on High.
        - (b) There this priestly King is waiting for that time until his enemies should be made footstool for his feet.
          - (1) You can give your self to something that will never fix the enmity between you and God and when you stand before him after death, you will be crushed for rejecting such a great salvation.
          - (2) You will be a footstool under the pierced foot of Christ.
          - (3) He has made the way and you must receive it by faith. Look to Christ.
  - 2. Now we encounter a dilemma in verse 14. Let's read it and then take note of the problem.
    - a) For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

- (1) Is there a contradiction here? He has perfected for all those who are being sanctified?
  - (a) Which is it? What does this mean?
  - (b) Both are true. When God calls us through the gospel and he awakens us by his Spirit, we respond to the call by receiving the gospel by faith.
  - (c) God then responds to us with forgiveness and justification.
    - i) That is the first one in this verse—he has perfected for all time.
      - (1) That means we are in a right legal standing before God.
      - (2) Upon being declared righteous, he then begins a life-long process of sanctifying us.
      - (3) Year by year we are from one degree to another growing more and more like Christ.
      - (4) The fact is, all who have been made perfect ALSO are being sanctified.
      - (5) That means, if you are not being sanctified, then you may not have been made perfect.
        - (a) Can you see growth and change in you? If you are still the same person you were when you supposedly got saved, I'd have doubts that anything happened to you.
    - ii) There are some who think they can live however they want now that they are forgiven.
      - (1) They think willful, habitual sin doesn't matter.
      - (2) But if you've been saved, notice what it says there in verse 16—I will put my laws on their hearts and write them on their minds.
        - (a) This means you will want to do what God has written on your heart.
        - (b) You will order the vanilla ice cream that you love.
      - (3) These things the Holy Spirit testifies to us.
        - (a) And he adds—I will remember their sins no and their lawless deed no more.
        - (b) Where there is forgiveness of sins and lawless deed, there is no longer any offering for sin.
3. This Priest who sat down at the right hand of God who NOW no longer remembers my sins is worthy of our trust and praise.
  - a) Let me circle back to verse 12 for a second—when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins and verse 14 by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.
    - (1) In Revelation 7:9-10 it says <sup>9</sup> After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, <sup>10</sup> and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”
    - (2) How many are in that great multitude that no one could number?
      - (a) If all the bulls and goats could never save a single soul. If all the money in the world could not pay for our rebellion. If no level of self sacrifice could get us any closer to God than when we started.
        - i) One day those who rejected Jesus will stand in judgment and they will pay for their unbelief in the eternal flame and will never pay off the debt you owe.
      - (b) If our eternal suffering will not pay off our debt and if every animal was offered in sacrifice could never make us perfect, then what does that say about the worthiness of the single offering Jesus made for all time for all who are being sanctified?
        - i) So, when you survey the wondrous cross, can you fathom how much the blood of Christ was worth to save you?
        - ii) Why would anyone neglect such a great salvation?
        - iii) I want the salvation from the one who is seated who said, “It is finished!”
        - iv) And if you have received it by faith, the only thing you have to offer to God is praise.