

Lesson Sixteen

(10:1-18)

THE FORGIVENESS OF SIN

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 which are continually offered year after year, make perfect those who draw near. ²Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered? If the worshipers had once been cleansed, they would no longer have any consciousness of sin. ³But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sin year after year. ⁴For it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins.

⁵Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said,

“Sacrifices and offerings thou hast not desired,

but a body hast thou prepared for me;

⁶in burnt offerings and sin offerings thou hast taken no pleasure.

⁷Then I said, ‘Lo, I have come to do thy will, O God,’

as it is written of me in the roll of the book.”

⁸When he said above, “Thou hast neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings” (these are offered according to the law), ⁹then he added, “Lo, I have come to do thy will.” He abolishes the first in order to establish the

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

¹¹And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifice, which can never take away sins. ¹²But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³then to wait until his enemies should be made a stool for his feet. ¹⁴For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified. ¹⁵And 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, says the Lord:

I will put my laws on their hearts,
and write them on their minds,”

¹⁷then he adds,

“I will remember their sins and their misdeeds no more.”

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

As your lesson synopsis on page viii indicates, this lesson concludes the section of the epistle that specially dealt with the two religious systems, that through Moses and that through Jesus. Contrasted both in explicit ways and through implicit facts, of these two systems, Christianity has been openly proposed as being the better (best!) of the two systems, and for a variety of reasons. Our immediate text continues that theme, with focus upon the superior sacrifice Jesus made, as well as the fact that it is also the only sacrifice that will be needed. Harold Lindsell in Harper's Study Bible headlines this text as the new covenant's "superiority and finality," which is a good way to view it.

The text itself readily divides into two sections, 10:1-10; 10:11-18. The first section deals with the nature of Jesus' sacrifice, "once for all," v. 10. The last section helps us see that fact through the use of Old Testament scriptures and the statement of facts.

10:1 — **shadow** — This metaphor has been repeated several times, not only because it was so, but because it was/is difficult for some to believe it.

good things to come — Now realized in the Christian system, especially in respect to forgiveness of sins.

it can never — The Greek text is emphatic about the point. In the current idiom, "There's no way . . ." The reason for its inability is stated in v. 2. Note v. 11, where the identical Greek construction is used.

V. 2 — **Otherwise** — Indeed, if the Mosaic law system had been at all able, then no other system would have been brought into being, 7:11-19; 8:8-13. However, God knew (what some people seem to dispute)

what he intended to do with the Old Testament system. Having done that, he introduced the new order called Christianity.

consciousness — The same term as in 9:9, 14, and better translated here.

V. 3 — **a reminder** — That is, the constant need to bring sacrifices simply but lucidly kept the fact of sin before the eyes of the worshipper. There was no effective sacrifice to be offered, and the discerning Israelite knew it. In fact, there was enough plainly taught, both by word and prophecy, for anyone to figure out that the "perfect" had not yet come. As ch. 11 makes evident, those discerning worshippers lived by faith in a redeeming system that God had promised, but was not the Mosaic system or any before it. See then the thought of 7:23-25.

V. 4 — Echoing the thoughts of 7:11, 19; 9:9, the idea of ability is again introduced. "It can never" in v. 1 translates the basic Greek term here translated "It is impossible." "Get the point!" the author says.

V. 5 — **Consequently** — Again the thought is made clear that God planned to bring Jesus into the world, together with the system built upon him, and thus every thing prior to his coming in point of time was but preparatory and also ineffective. As vv. 5, 6 and 7 tell us, quoting Psalms 40:6-8, never had it been God's plan for all man's sins to be removed by anything except the death of Jesus.

a body — This is Jesus talking, of course. Is it not astounding that he knew even before he came to earth what his purpose was, and yet he came?

V. 7 — **thy will** — Jesus brought this to light many times in his life, such as John 5:19; Matthew 26:39. Actually, to see Jesus in life was to see God in life, not only because Jesus was himself deity, but also because he determined to "learn" obedience even though a son, Hebrews 5:8-9.

V. 9 — **he abolished** — As chs. 7 and 8 detail for us, and 9:15-17 adds, God replaced a law system of Moses with the system that "is able" in Jesus. Now would be a good time to read Matthew 5:17; Luke 24:25-47; John 5:39; Romans 10:1-4.

V. 10 — **sanctified** — Cleansed from sin, which the law system could not do. Read John 17:19.

once for all — Because God chose to forgive sins only upon the basis of Jesus' death, that choice ruled out all other possibilities.

V. 11 — Placing the continued but ineffectual work of the Aaronic priests over against Jesus and his work, the conclusion is inevitable and sure: you who would be saved by law, you are fallen from grace, as we paraphrase Galatians 5:4.

V. 12 — **he sat down** — Signaling the end of his sacrificial work. The intercessory work then began, based upon his adequate sacrifice.

V. 13 — Paul has this thought also in I Corinthians 15:26. As Revelation

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brings out, the ultimate vanquishing of evil and all the forces thereof is sure. He who is triumphant is Jesus, the lamb slain, as it were, from the world's foundation, Revelation 5:7; I Peter 1:19; Ephesians 1:4.

V. 14 — **forever . . . those who are sanctified** — While the law system required constant offerings but with no sanctification, Christianity needs only one sacrifice, one time in history. Those whose lives were/are placed in Jesus' hands for a life-long process of sanctification, live forever.

V. 15 — As discussed on 3:7ff., the Holy Spirit's work through the writing of the apostles and holy men in the Old Testament gave said writing the quality of inspiration. Inspiration makes truthful documents, whether they are recounting events, thoughts or planning/prophecy.

V. 16 — A quote of Jeremiah 31:33. No longer would men need to worship and go away feeling still unclean, but rather could draw near to God.

V. 17 — The necessary part of any religion is stated here. Note here Titus 3:3-6.

V. 18 — **forgiveness** — The fundamental imperative that everyone must experience.

QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 16:

145. Express the thought(s) that is basic to this text.
146. Have you reviewed on paper the basic structure and argument in 1:1 — 10:18?
147. Give the reason(s) why Jesus' death was better than the death of bulls and goats.
148. When Jesus came into the world, what was his primary task?
149. How does the idea in 7:25 tie in with 10:1-10?
150. It seems that some ideas have been presented more than once. Why is this so, do you think?
151. Did you catch the point about the Old Testament priests "standing daily" but Jesus "sitting" at God's right hand?
152. If your past sins have been forgiven, did they need any more attention (as far as a sacrifice is involved)?