

**Sermon Series**  
**The Superiority of Jesus Christ**  
**December 26, 2021**

**Title: The Perfecting Sacrifice**

*Subject: The Law, Shadow, Sacrifices, Worshipers, Sins, Perfect, Conscience, Cleansing, Imputation, Confession, Faith, Ordinances*

**Theme Text: Hebrews 10:1-3 (ESV)** <sup>1</sup> 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. <sup>2</sup> Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? <sup>3</sup> But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year.

**Theme Illustration:** What we have in our text today are the effects of Christ's sacrifice. Last week we viewed the characteristics of Christ's sacrifice. The proof of the efficacy of His atonement is in the transformation of a sinner into a righteous, holy servant of the Lord fit for eternal life in the very presence of God and Christ.

In Chapter 9, the Holy Spirit demonstrated that Christ's once for all sacrifice has met all of God's demands for holiness and righteousness in atonement for man's violations thus confirming the New Covenant and its sufficiency to bind God's people, those who believe, to Him in an eternal relationship. This relationship includes acceptance and a promise to perfect each believer in conformity to God's moral law and a sharing in Christ's inheritance and glory. Our text shines a bright light upon the typological or shadowy nature of the whole mosaic covenant as temporary and incapable of achieving the perfection God requires.

The Old Covenant had a purpose in God's plan. It was a placeholder in time until the appointed time for the reality to be sent and accomplish His work.

**Galatians 4:4-5 (ESV)** <sup>4</sup> **But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law,** <sup>5</sup> **to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.** The fact that the sacrifices needed to be constantly repeated reminded Israel of the reality of sin in them and the need for a more effective permanent atonement which the required sacrifices are unable to procure. Thus, the Lord was promising to withhold His wrath and give them mercy until the fullness of time when the perfecting sacrifice was made by Jesus Christ.

***Read: Hebrews 10:1-4***

**Introduction:** Once again, the Holy Spirit draws our attention to a contrast between the typological **sacrifices** of the old covenant with the once for all sacrifice of Christianity. We have covered this extensively in past messages. We might want to ask, why does the Holy Spirit continue to drive this blessed truth home to us? Might the Holy Spirit be saying that the believer's confidence in the once for all sacrifice of Christ is essential to the life of faith? Again, this truth further impresses upon us the inadequacy of the old and the sufficiency of the new, to give us a perfect standing before God, and thus the privileges extended to us, including the privilege of drawing near to God as worshipers He accepts. The main thrust of this section of Hebrews is to confirm to the person of faith, the inestimable value of God's grace directed towards us in Christ. In other words, the Holy Spirit is testifying to us what our Holy Heavenly Father has done to meet our needs.

Micro five's us of the old covenant were incapable in themselves to satisfy the claims of our holy God. Thus, they were incapable of meeting the needs of old covenant worshipers. Those needs included being incapable of making peace with God. Were incapable of bringing peace to the conscience of the worshiper. Both sacrifices failed to make real atonement for sin, thus they could not cleanse the sinner or perfect the sinner before God.

***Transition:*** We'll examine three main elements of our text. Our first verse reminds us of the inadequacy of:

**1. The Effect: Hebrews 10:1-2 (ESV) <sup>1</sup> 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. <sup>2</sup> Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins?**

The Holy Spirit points out that the offerings of the old covenant were but shadows and the fact that they needed to be repeated was a declaration of their inadequacy. Every time a sacrifice was slain. It was a reminder that their sins were not expurgated or sent away eternally or permanently. There was no hint that any of those sacrifices could expiate their present or their future sins.

The sacrifices were animals, and thus it was impossible for them to placate the wrath of God or to procure God's blessing upon those who presented those sacrifices. From chapter 9 through the end of the letter, describe God's provision for what we experience as the normal Christian life. That life involves our status with God, privileges, walk, discipline, and our responsibilities under the new covenant. Chapter 9 demonstrated that full atonement has been accomplished and that we can draw near to God as a cleansed and accepted worshiper.

This text highlights the inadequacy of the shadow and its need to be repeated as a signal that the shadows were going to be fulfilled by the reality that will, by God's design, perfect the believer. Since they could not perfect the believer, it was a confirmation that sins were not expiated.

The word wall heater is a reference to the entire mosaic order or covenant God made with Israel at Sinai. A shadow has no substance but is a revelation of the form of what is being projected. The image that is being projected is Christ, who is the full and permanent embodiment of the good things to come, **Colossians 2:17 (ESV) <sup>17</sup> These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.**

**The good things to come. Refer to all the blessings and privileges that result from Christ's incarnation and work. The old covenant could not accomplish those good things.**

At this point, I need to reintroduce the meaning of the word “to perfect”. To perfect means to bring something or someone to the goal or completion of the condition, it was designed for. To perfect them refers to bringing to reality a satisfactory and final relationship between God and His people. That perfection is the unchanging acceptance and standing in favor and blessing of God which Christ secured for us. This perfection includes absolute conformity to God’s moral law. There is no guilt of transgression, plus a full and reward double obedience to God. What is now imputed to us by faith will become ours by possession.

Verse two reminds us that those old sacrifices needed to be repeated because the worshiper would sin afterward. The worshiper would then acquire fresh guilt. The answer to this issue is that a sacrifice must have infinite merit. Animals had no merit. The merits of Christ’s blood can provide a perpetual satisfaction to God. There are no additional sacrifices needed. The phrase, “no longer has any consciousness of sins”, does not mean that we are no longer aware of sins. No one is more painfully aware of sins than the regenerated soul. The phrase means that we are no longer under condemnation, **Romans 8:1 (ESV) <sup>1</sup> There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.**

If we believe that Jesus paid it all. How can we be fearful that we have future sins imputed back to us? This might cause us to ask this question. What about the sins committed after we have been justified? This text gives us the answer, **John 13:10 (ESV) <sup>10</sup> Jesus said to him, “The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you.”** The gospel informs us as to how we who sin every day may enjoy peace with God. It is by our daily confession of sins, judging the sins for ourselves. By that, the blood of Christ is constantly applied to us as we pray, forgive us our debts.

**Transition:** Now, the Holy Spirit brings us back to those repeated sacrifices and their:

**2. The Purpose: Hebrews 10:3 (ESV) <sup>3</sup> But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year.**

God prescribed those old covenant sacrifices to be repeated to remind people of their sin. Even under the law. The people were required to confess their sins in preparation for a new atonement for them. This continual remembrance confronted them with the curse of the law which had to be answered in the wrath of God which had to be appeased. Confession of sin is a duty also under the new covenant, but with a different purpose.

Confession of sins is not penancing for the guilt nor is it to pacify the conscience. Its purpose is to remind us that although Christ has removed the penalty for sin, we remain a sinner, and thus it is to incite us to greater watchfulness and to glorify God for His mercy, and to incite us to thanksgiving for the mercy and the grace of God.

**Transition:** Thus, our text reminds us of the old covenants:

**3. The Limitation: Hebrews 10:4 (ESV) <sup>4</sup> For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.**

We are informed that those animal sacrifices could not expiate sin. Thus could not perfect the worshiper. God did not institute animal sacrifice for that purpose. Those sacrifices were to cement to the conscience the only way sin was to be removed. These sacrifices demonstrated God's hatred of sin and what sin requires death.

No mere creature can satisfy the demands of an Almighty God. The highest Angel could never have made to God and adequate compensation for the tremendous wrong which our sin had done God, nor w repair of the loss of His manifest glory.

**Conclusion:** Unless Christ's sinless and holy humanity in which He performed His mighty act of redemption, been united in His deity, nothing else could have met the claims of God, nor merited eternal salvation for His people.

The divinely appointed ordinances of the old covenant had meaning and value. The same holds for our appointed ordinances, the Lord's table, and believer's baptism. They also represent blessed realities. However, they have no inherent power to remove sin, regenerate souls, or impart grace. No, only by faith, looking beyond the shadow to Christ, who is being projected, that the soul is blessed by grace. The shadow of the law was projecting Christ. Only the eternal merits of Christ could atone for our sins past, present, and future. Thus, it is true, **John 1:16 (ESV)** <sup>16</sup> **For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.**