

## Hebrews 9:16-28

### “Accepted sacrifice”

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#### I. Introduction

We go back now and focus a bit more of verse 15 where the sentence started with the phrase “And for this reason” which points back to what the writer had just wrote that “*Because of Jesus’ death He had become the mediator of a new and better contract.*” This contrast is between two contracts both of which as noted were not made with us gentiles or the church but with Jews. Further more the writer states that the fault of the first didn’t lie with the contract but what it had to work with, people as represented in the Jews. Looking at these two contracts we can see that:

- A. The **POINT** of the contract was still the same: **Too reconcile fallen humanity back to a righteous God.**
- B. The **TERMS** of the contract were still the same: **Ezek. 18:4 “The soul who sins shall die.”**
- C. The **MEANS** of the contract hadn’t changed: Hebrews 9:22 tells us that “*without the shedding of blood there is NO REMISSION.*” There can not be any reconciliation apart from the shedding of blood. But the problem lies, in what the writer will say in chapter 10:4 that “*It is **NOT POSSIBLE** that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.*”

**“If the point of both contracts were the same, and the terms of the contracts were the same, and the stated means of the contracts were ineffective in guaranteeing the stated aim of the contract; then how could the contracts ever be completed?”** The only way that to reconcile fallen humanity back to a righteous God is through shed blood and the way in which that had been done by order of God was through the blood of “bulls and goats” was deemed by God as “**impossible**” to execute the contract. That would mean that the terms stated: “*The soul who sins must die*”, would NOW be expected. The writer has explained to his readers that the “blood of bulls and goats” were only meant as a

temporary symbol of the permanent plan of Jesus that according to chapter 10:10 that His death was “**once for all**”. The reader’s problem would have been how to comprehend what they and their forefathers had practiced as the “means” to reconciliation if it was impossible to reconcile them back to God. Since God had ordained the animal sacrifice and required their forefathers to practice it to be reconciled to God what happened to those, who for hundreds of years had practiced this and then died? Did God make an exclusion for them? Did the blood of bull and goats work for them and if so why wouldn’t it work for the readers of this letter? This is the point of this section as the writer’s focus is **the threefold necessity of the Messiah’s death**.

## II. Vs. 16-17 A will and death

Vs. 16-17 First let’s address the readers concerns: First the question as to “**how the first Testament believers were saved**”: They were **saved on the same basis as believers today – “By the finished work of Christ”**. One of the first accomplishments of Jesus’ death was to redeem those who had believed in God under the first contract. He preached “liberty to the captives”. Jesus death was “**retroactive**”! Just as the symbol of the blood of bulls and goats **covered** symbolically the **people for the previous year!** **They were credited by faith with what Jesus, their promised Messiah, would one day do for them and all sinners**. In the truest since Jesus sacrifice had already been made in God’s mind long before it was made in human history, as we are told in Hebrews that it was finished from the foundation of the world! Here is where theses Hebrews were mistaken: *The Old Testament sacrifices were **NOT THE MEANS** to salvation, they were the **SYMBOLS** of **the perfect sacrifice of the Lamb of God** who would take away the sin of the world!* This is why what Paul wrote I 1 Corinth 1:23 was true of the Jews as they saw the Cross of

Christ as a “*stumbling block*”. It had nothing to do with their own Scriptures in which they ignored what God said in Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53. They instead preferred their own ideas about the Messiah and adopted their own religious ideals that took in works as a means to salvation! The first of *necessity of Jesus’ death*, is that:

1. Vs.16-17 **A will demands death**: As noted last week is that a “WILL’s” benefits, provisions and promises don’t come into effect until the person who made it DIES! The writer says that God gave an eternal inheritance to Israel but it was in the form of a contract or will. But it the first contract acted only as a “promissory note” until the provider of the note died. There is no mention of how or when the person will die only that He will. What happened with most the the Hebrews is that they took the “promissory note” as the true will instead of what it pointed towards. As such the writer pints out that the benefits, provisions and promises don’t come into effect until the person who made it DIES!

### III. Vs. 18-22 Forgiveness and blood

Vs. 18-22 The second point that the writer says regarding the necessity of Jesus’ death is that:

2. Vs. 18-22 **Forgiveness demands blood**: The shedding of blood is a symbol of death and were even seen in the covenant made with Abraham all of which point towards Jesus. In verse 19 the writer draws attention to the contrast that though both the Old Covenant as well as the New Covenant are sprinkled blood (Exodus 24:6-8 and Matthew 26:28) Moses did so with the blood of animals where as Jesus took up the cup saying, “*This is My blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.*” But saints it is good for us to be reminded that Jesus physical “blood” isn’t that which saves us, it’s His dying on the cross on our behalf that does. The pour out of His blood just symbolizes His actual death. With out this distinction than all that would have been necessary was Jesus giving up a pint on a blood drive! The purpose of the blood was to symbolize His sacrifice for our sins which brought about our cleansing from all sin and with this the truth that “*without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.*” The writer is drawing this conclusion to demonstrate that some of the Jews had focused upon the symbol instead of the person. For instance; the Law allowed a poor person to bring two quarts of fine flour if they couldn’t afford the lamb or even the turtledoves, (Lev. 5:6-7). This proves that such things were meant to be symbols that pointed towards Jesus’ death. The reason for this “*blood*” symbol is Lev. 17:11 where we are told that “*the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls*”. The penalty for sin is death and nothing but death (symbolized by the shedding of blood) can atone for our sin. We can gain forgiveness by self effort, if we could than Jesus Christ died in vain. Neither can we come into His Holy

presence by being “good Christians” reading our bibles and going to church. The truth is “forgiveness is the most expensive known to man” but cost has been paid for by the death of Jesus! There is no substitute! The reader of this letter is warned “never to presume or trivialize the grace of God!” God doesn’t forgive our sin by saying, “Since I love you so much, I’ll let this sin go.” God’s nature doesn’t let our sin slide, His holiness and righteousness demands payment by death and the only death that can pay for our sin is His only begotten Son Jesus. God’s great love doesn’t lead Him to “overlook” our sin, it leads Him to provide payment!

#### IV. Vs. 23-26 Once for all

Vs. 23-26 Again the writer reminds the reader that the earthly tabernacle was a “copy” of the heavenly one and all it had to offer was a symbol for the real thing. The “Heavenly tabernacle” offered “better sacrifices” which is the writer’s point. The animal sacrifices that some of the Hebrews were insisting upon were just a sketch, a faint picture of the shed blood of Jesus. Paul writing of this declared in Philip 2:9 that because of Jesus sacrifice “*God has highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name, that at THE name of Jesus EVERY knee should bow, of those in heaven, and those on earth, and those under the earth.*” The argument is plain, to which of the animal sacrifices did God the Father give this exaltation? Only Jesus satisfies what God’s holiness demands no one can come to the Father except through Jesus! Jesus presents us in Himself and this is why we are told that we are “*Accepted in the Beloved*”! Go the Father sees:

- Jesus’ *righteousness* instead of our *unrighteousness*
- Jesus’ *sacrifice* instead of our *sin*
- Jesus’ *payment* for our sin instead of the *penalty* for our sin

No person is declared “just as if they have never sinned” until they are placed into the death of Jesus! Further more Jesus didn’t enter the earthly tabernacle He went into the very presence of God the Father and when He did, He took us with Him as we are told in verse 24 that He did so “FOR US”! God’s satisfaction with Christ’s sacrifice doesn’t

depend upon a continual sacrifice, as we are told in verse 26 that “He would have to suffer often”. This should put to rest the heretical doctrine of the Catholic Mass where Jesus is perpetually offered as a sacrifice, instead of once and for all! To the Catholic Church Jesus is STILL being sacrificed where as the Bible teaches that we are to REMEMBER Jesus sacrifice NOT believe that it is repeated every week! This is why most Roman Catholic crucifix’s still have Jesus on the cross!

#### V. Vs. 27-28 Judgment and a substitute

Vs. 27-28 The third and final point that the writer says regarding the necessity of Jesus’ death is that:

Vs. 27-28 **Judgment demand a substitute**: All humanity will die, it is the one appointment that no one will be late for. But there is another appointment that we want to miss and that is “judgment”. We aren’t able to make atonement for sins, to pay what God’s righteous judgment demands the only thing we can do is trust on our only substitute, Jesus! Jesus die like all men but unlike all men He never faced judgment and instead took our sins, NOT His sins; as we are told in 2 Corinth 5:21 that “*For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*” In verse 28 is a reference that every Hebrew would understand and that is the relief that would experience on the “Day of atonement”. It happened when the High Priest would come out of the Holy of Holies. If he didn’t come out it meant that he did something wrong and that their sins remained, but if he appeared than they knew that the sacrifice had been accepted by God. The reference here is that they second coming will cause a greater sense of relief as they will look on Hi whom they have pierced and realize that His sacrifice was accepted!