

## Hebrews 10:1-6

### “We preach Christ crucified”

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#### I. Introduction

The focus of chapter nine was on the necessity of Jesus’ death, whereas the focus of chapter ten is not on the necessity of the cross but rather on the superiority of the cross of Jesus. Through out church history it seems as though over time the emphasis upon Jesus sacrifice on our behalf loses its popularity even among evangelicals. The story is told an old church in England that had the scripture verse 1 Corinthians 1:23; “We preach Christ crucified”, carved in an arch over the entrance to the church proudly proclaiming its identity. For many year’s great bible teachers came and went under that banner doing just that. But over time a new generation began to come though the church that considered Jesus’ death as not significant for salvation. The preachers taught that what was important was Jesus life not His death, that salvation came by people following Jesus earthly example. Ironically some ivy began to grow along the right side of the arch and completely covered the word “*crucified*” and all that could be read was “*We preach Christ*”. As time went on and many more years passed two things happened at about the same pace, the preachers that came to teach no longer saw the necessity of Jesus being preached and adopted a social gospel; while at the same time the ivy grew over the word, “*Christ*” and the only words that could be read were “*We preach*”! The final outcome if the church continued upon its course would be that the only word left would be “WE”. That is always the inevitable outcome of a church that stops preaching “*Christ crucified*”

it ends up only being about **US!** Two things are the aim of the first 18 verse of chapter ten that emphasize the superiority of the cross of Jesus:

1. Vs. 1-6 Three failures of the old sacrifices
2. Vs. 7-18 Seven superior traits of Jesus sacrifice

## II. Vs. 1-4 They failures of the old sacrifices

Vs. 1 Under the first covenant the priests were continually busy. It has been estimated that at Passover alone over 3000 lambs would be killed turning the Brook of Kidron red with their blood. But no matter how many sacrifices that were made they were completely ineffective to accomplish the plan of God. More importantly the old contract was never designed to implement the plan of God; it was only a shadow of the reality, a photo of the real image. The blood of bulls and goats is not the blood of Christ and because of this it could never take away sin. In the first four verses the author mentions three complete failures of the old covenant's sacrifices:

1. Vs. 1 **They can not bring access to God:** "*A shadow....can never...make those who approach God perfect.*" The greatest limitation of the sacrifices is that as faint symbols all they can do is reflect the form. Only the High Priest once a year could go into the presence of God; even with all those sacrifices he could never bring anyone with him. The blessings and promises were only pictures and because of this they could never be realized. Before Jesus' finished work on the cross no one could get closer to God, we were always going to be outside the door! The word "perfect" in this verse means to bring to completion and the author is saying that even with all the religious effort in which the High Priest served offering each and every day sacrifices year after year he could never complete the task of bring people closer to God. The reason for this is that these sacrifices were never intended to do so, their purpose was a picture not to make people perfect. The Hebrews had taken that which purpose was a picture and made it a religion! The very fact of the "repetitive picture" should have been all they needed to reveal to them that it could never accomplish what they had "believed" it could! It's repetition, every day, year after year was proof of it's ineffectiveness to accomplish making people closer to God. It's simple math if you multiply anything by zero the answer is always going to be zero! You can repeat the process every day year after year and you will never be able to change the answer. This revelation of the writer to his readers must have spawned a

- question: “Why did God go through all the trouble establishing faith symbols if they were not the reality?” There are three reasons that I see for this:
- a. **To reflect reality**: The purpose of a shadow is always to reflect the reality of the image. It causes you seek out that which has caused the shadow! It seems that God wanted Israel to look deeper into what was causing the shadow and not just begin to think the shadow was the reality! The sacrifices pointed towards the sacrifice of Jesus to come. **There is no doubt some in Israel through out their history who saw the shadow looked around to see the reality like**: Simeon in Luke 2:25-35 who was waiting for the “**Consolation of Israel**” and saw Jesus in the temple with His parents and taking Him up in his arms exclaimed, “My eyes have seen Your salvation which you have prepared before the face of all peoples, a light to bring revelation to the gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel.” Peter speaks of some of them in 1 Peter 1:10 saying that, “Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you.”
  - b. **To remind Israel of the penalty**: Through the sacrifices Israel was constantly reminded that the penalty to sin and rebellion was death. Death was going on each and every day for their sin, they were reminded that their sin caused death and that only death would be the remedy to sin, not religious works our being a “good person.”
  - c. **To recall the need to deal with sin**: Finally, God gave them the sacrifices as He had Adam and Eve as a “covering” for sin. A shadow is better than nothing at all and when offered with a right heart the sacrifices offered a “temporary” reprieve from the judgment of God. To not sacrifice was to be cut off from God and His people completely. They were temporal and only offered a covering and not a “cleansing” from sin and because of this they could never bring a person into the presence of God.
2. Vs. 2-3 **They can’t remove sin**: Removal of sin is what we need not just mere covering for sin. The sacrifices only temporarily covered sin without ever removing it and it only lasted until the next sin. In that sense they were like a prescription that relieves the symptoms temporarily but does nothing to aid in the cure. **The fact that you have to continue to refill the prescription is a constant reminder of to facts**: One, that **you are sick** and two, **that there is not cure possible with the medicine you are constantly required to take**! With every sacrifice there was a reminder of those **two facts** were sinners and nothing we are presently doing is changing this fact! **Those sacrifices didn’t erase sin they called attention too it!** Those sacrifices didn’t even ease the “conscience” that had sinned they reminded them that they were sinners! With every sacrificed animal was a greater awareness that they were “**incurably sick**” under the current prescription, they were just **temporarily masking symptoms**! In one sense this is a good thing as it is a warning system helping us avoid things that would cause us to further damage our lives. But as far as freeing us from the penalty or power of sin or delivering us into the presence of God the sacrifices could never bring us to the cure which is only in Jesus! Every sacrifice told the same story to every listening heart: That to draw near to God required a God-approved life be willing to lay down their life. The truth was the more faithful the believer the guiltier they

- felt as they were more aware of God's holiness and their own inability to stop sinning! They were caught between the knowledge of God's holiness and the knowledge of their un-holiness with at the knowledge of a remedy! David wrote if this in Psalm 51:3 where he said, "**My sin is always before me!**" The forgiven sinner is ever aware to their sin but they know that they are forgiven in Christ and have escaped the penalty and power of sin to enslave them.
3. Vs. 4 **They were only external: The heart of the problem is always a problem of the heart!** The sacrifices were external and offered only a temporary outward solution that never changed the real problem which is the heart of man. Sin is seen outwardly but originates inwardly and if the only treatment dealt with the outward then it only dealt with symptoms while ignoring the problem. That's why the author says, "*It's not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.*" There is no relationship between a person's sins and an animal this is why the writer elaborates further in verses 5-6 upon Jesus becoming the only perfect sacrifice they would be our cure not just temporarily alleviate our symptoms. There is are some even among the church that believes that: *Jesus died on the cross that they may be free to live free to live a self-indulge life.* Jesus bore all my pain and suffering, so now I don't need to ever endure pain, difficulty or heartache, and if I do then there is something wrong, because it's all about me! This a distorted narcissistic form of the Christian faith. **The truth is that Jesus died in order that I might be free to die with him to the self centered life, and he rose again so that I might live in His power and service to be a blessing!** The Christian will never know the blessing of the rising without the dying! Unless we willing lay down our lives we will never have them back again as He had designed them to be. This is exactly what Jesus said in Matthew 10:39 "*He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.*" Ah but the glorious thing is if we are continually dying with him, we will also be continually rising with him.

### III. Vs. 5-6 the necessity of Jesus crucified

Vs. 5-7 The Old Testament revealed the God's design, but in Jesus we see God's desire: "*When He (Jesus) came into the world, he said, Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure. Then I said, 'Behold, I have come in the volume of the book it is written of Me to do thy will, O God.'*" This is what God's real design was, He was never interested is the rivers of blood that flowed from the altar. All the blood of the animals slain never gave

the guilty conscience any rest. God's only interest in them was that they taught something, they pointed too:

**The necessity of a human body:** But just a man but one in which the human will continually chose to depend upon God to obey the God's word! That was what was needed and why we read the quote of Psalm 40:6-8. Prior to the incarnation Jesus paused on the threshold of heaven, and said, "*A body You have prepared for me.*" There in the womb of the virgin named Mary a human body was being formed, a body with nerve and muscle and sinew and hair and eyes and feet, growing through all the stages that the normal human embryo goes through. Within that body was a human soul with the capacity to reason, to feel and to choose. But in that human body, would never once act on its own, never once take a step apart from dependence upon the Father who dwelt within. Jesus said this in John 14:10 where He says, "*Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works.*" That's the principle that God has been after all along. When Jesus allowed this direction in from the Word of God in His life every temptation he endured, every problem that He experienced, He would go back to what God had said saying, "It is written"! That is what led Him too the cross, where He laid down His life. And by means of that sacrifice, we are now able to join Jesus in this victorious life that is God's original plan for man.