

# Hebrews

Series 2

## Lesson 11

### “Hebrews Chapter 10”

**Objective:** To explore the ancient text of Hebrews in order to understand how this product of the mature early Christian movement interpreted Christological understandings. In doing this it is the aim of this study to encourage, enable and inspire people to live a more Christ-centered existence.

It is also the hope and the design of this material to provide materials for the use of small groups as well as in Sunday morning Bible classes. A new section has been added at the end that can be used either with the family or with a small group.

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**Materials:** The Bible, Commentaries, journal articles, dictionaries, the internet and other resources as may be appropriate.

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#### Procedures

1. To explore this text first as it would have been understood by its original audience, in its original context.
2. Next we will hope to understand more fully the nature of our God and in so doing comprehend his call upon our existence in order to fulfill our destiny as image-bearers.
3. We will seek to find practical guidance in these ancient words that will empower, enlighten and inspire us as we live in a twenty-first century world dominated by a focus on self and the individual. We are called as God’s people to live in community as a people that unleashes His compassion in a world filled with pain and suffering. God is the only hope for a better world.
4. Provide a sheet to take home as a reminder of what has been examined and to provide additional opportunities for consideration of God’s word and application in our daily living out of our eternal destiny beginning now.

As we come to chapter 10 the first 10 verses will complete the exposition regarding the high-priestly ministry of Jesus and the interpretation of Jeremiah 31. This section (1-10) is divided into two parts: 1. The first part (verses 1-4) contrasts the Old and New as shadow and reality. 2. The second part contrasts the Old sacrifices with the decisive sacrifice of Jesus using a citation from Psalm 40 (verses 5-7) and then an interpretation of that text in verses 8-9. The ineffectiveness of the levitical sacrifices that was covered in 9:1-10 is then repeated in 10:1-4 and the superior achievement of Christ's sacrifice, that was covered in 9:11-14 is repeated in 10:5-10. It is important for modern readers not to be put off by the high degree of repetition here so that they miss the point.<sup>1</sup> The writer picks up his previous point, adds additional reasoning as he moves toward his conclusion of this line of thought in verse 10.

The imagery of shadow and reality comes close to the type of language that can be found in the writings of Plato, who has a tri-level schema of understanding. Plato spoke of the reality as being reflected in the image, or "true form," which then is reflected

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<sup>1</sup> Edgar Mcknight and Christopher Church, *Hebrews-James*, in the Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary series (Macon GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2004), p. 219.

in the shadow. The Book of Hebrews does not have this tri-level schema, but a schema that depends upon a form of Platonism that equates the “true form” with the reality.<sup>2</sup> The readers have been

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<sup>2</sup> “Plato (c. 429–347 BC) was a Greek philosopher, an Athenian citizen of high birth who founded the Athenian academy. He was one of the young men who shared with his teacher Socrates in the search for the basis of individual and communal life and conduct. At the basis of Plato’s worldview lay a conviction that behind the multiple instances of each of the phenomena in the world of experience there exists an archetype or Form. These Forms are visible only to the “mind’s sight,” not to the “body’s sight” (*Symposium* 219A). Each Form is the reality. The instances of the Forms are derivative and weakened images. Plato assigned the title “being” to Forms in their collective character. The title “being” suggests intelligibility and stable self-identity. The realm of “becoming” contrasts with the realm of “being.” “Becoming” indicates instability and changeability and hence cannot be the object of proper knowledge.

The Myth of the Cave is the most memorable of the dialogues setting forth his worldview and his ideas on “the ascent of the soul to the intelligible realm” (*Republic* 517b). In the Myth of the Cave, Plato’s Socrates likens those who are unenlightened to people living in a cave who from their childhood have had their legs and necks chained and are forced to sit on benches staring at the back wall of the cave. The chains prevent them from seeing one another or looking behind them. Behind the captives is a low wall with people “passing along the wall carrying all sorts of vessels, and statues and figures of animals made of wood and stone and various material, which appear over the wall” (514c). The light from a fire behind the statue bearers casts the shadows of the moving statures onto the wall of the cave in front of the captives. The captives observe these shadows. When the people talk as they go by parading the statues, their voices are echoed by the cave, and it is the shadows of the replicas that seem to the captives to be talking.

The whole world of conscious experience of the captives is of the shadows of things rather than of the true things. If one of the captives is released and forced to stand up and go to the upper world, the captive would experience pain and distress. The Socrates of Plato insists that the Myth of the Cave must be compared with an earlier Analogy of the Sun and the Divided Line. The cave represents the world of opinion. The fire is like the earthly sun. The statues and puppets lit up by the fire are the objects of ordinary perception. The shadows on the walls are derivative copies mixed with the imaginings of ordinary people. Outside the cave represents the world of Forms, the intelligible world. These Forms have real being, and the highest Form (represented by the sun) is the idea of Goodness itself. The sun above is the source and cause of all visible things—all the way down to the shadows. Just so, the cause of all that is right and fair is Goodness. This Goodness provides truth and intelligence to all of the Forms and to the particulars that participate in the Forms.

It is tempting and possible to force the tri-level scheme of Plato onto Heb 10:1: “Since the law has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the true form of these realities. . . .” The three elements would be “these realities,” “the true form,” and “the shadow.” The ultimate reality (these realities) would be reflected in the “true form,” which in turn would be reflected in the “shadow.” The tri-level model of Plato is seen in Philo’s allegorical treatment of the construction of the tabernacle: “He saw with the soul’s eye the immaterial forms of the material objects about to be made, and these forms had to be reproduced in copies perceived by the senses, taken from the original draft, so to speak, and from patterns conceived in the mind” (*Life of Moses* 2.74). In Hebrews, however, the image is not sharply distinguished from the reality. The image, in fact, seems to be used for the reality itself. This is in keeping with later middle-Platonic thought where “image” comes to be used as a designation for the forms or ideas. Image is virtually synonymous with idea. In Hebrews, then, the “true form” is equated with “these realities” and both of these are contrasted with the “shadow of the good things to come.”” Edgar Mcknight and Christopher Church, *Hebrews-James*, p. 221.

prepared for the depreciation of law as shadow of the real; as previously the author of Hebrews has informed his audience that the law is founded upon a physical, or fleshly cult (7:11, 16). What is not expected in the description is that of the real as “the good things to come.” Despite the fact that this may be unexpected, this understanding of the real in temporal terms parallels the usage in Hebrews of the real in spatial terms. The author spoke of a “coming world” in 2:5, and will speak of it again in 13:14 where he reminds readers that “we are looking for the city that is to come.” It is the case that in this future time Christ will “save those who are eagerly waiting for him” (9:28). Despite this future element it is still the case that the “good things to come” may be in some sense experienced in the present time (6:4-5<sup>3</sup>) through what Christ has achieved.<sup>4</sup>

The shadow was seen in the sacrifices that were offered on the Day of Atonement year in and year out and yet the people did not come to maturity. If they had, there would have been no need for the sacrifices to continue. Had they become the type of people

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<sup>3 4</sup> **For it is impossible to restore again to repentance those who have once been enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, <sup>5</sup> and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, NRSV.**

<sup>4</sup> Edgar Mcknight and Christopher Church, *Hebrews-James*, p. 220.

that God called them to be there would have come a time when the sacrifices would have no longer been needed. Their moral compass would have pointed in the direction intended by God without a continued need for reorientation. Gary Selby gives more detail in his article than I can give here, but I will highlight a few points on the critical term **συνείδησις** (suneidēsis). In the earliest usage of this word it carried no special moral, or ethical significance with its primary sense being “consciousness,” or “self-awareness rather than “conscience.” Over time this changed and this word took on the meaning of moral, or ethical self-judgment in many cases. This meaning was determined by the context. Certainly, after the New Testament period this word possessed intrinsic ethical significance.<sup>5</sup>

Philo wrote regarding the nature of **συνείδησις** (suneidēsis):

**Conscience, established in the soul like a judge, is never abashed in administering reproofs, sometimes employing sharper threats, sometimes gentler admonitions; threats, where the wrongdoing appeared to be deliberate; admonitions, to guard against a like lapse in the**

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<sup>5</sup> Gary S. Selby, “The Meaning and Function of Συνείδησις in Hebrews 9 and 10,” *Restoration Quarterly* 28:3 (1985), pp. 145-154.

**future, when the misconduct seemed  
unintentional and the result of want of caution.<sup>6</sup>**

In other places Philo describes the “conscience” **συνείδησις** (suneidēsis) as a “stern accuser” and speaks of the person who stands “convicted at the bar of his conscience.”<sup>7</sup> In this time the term **συνείδησις** (suneidēsis) was used more positively by Josephus referring to the witness of a man’s conscience as the guarantee of a reward for the obedient observance of the laws of God.<sup>8</sup> It is in this more positive sense that we find Paul using this word often, as the moral faculty that is in man to serve as a guide for life. It may be the case that a man’s conscience is improperly trained, it must not be violated, or it will cease to serve its function. The word **συνείδησις** (suneidēsis) is used five times in the Epistle to the Hebrews and four of those times are in chapters 9-10 (9:9, 14; 10:2, 22) with the fifth occurring in 13:18. The four occurrences in chapters 9-10 are the crucial occurrences and serve a critical role in understanding the letter itself. In Hebrews

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<sup>6</sup> F. H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker, trans., *Philo*, Vol. 1, in the Loeb Classical Library, vol. 226 (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1929, reprinted 1991), pp. 100-101, Section XLIII, 128.

<sup>7</sup> F. H. Colson trans., *Philo*, Vol. 9, in the Loeb Classical Library, vol. 363 (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1941, reprinted 2001), pp. 306-307, Section 7.

<sup>8</sup> H. St. J. Thackeray, trans., *Josephus, Against Apion*, in the Loeb Classical Library, vol. 186 (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1926, reprinted 1997), pp. 380-381, Section 218.

**συνείδησις** (suneidēsis) indicates “the conscience is the individuals’ personal cognizance of sin.” It is that internal awareness of sin, which for the author of Hebrews is contrasted with an external, or ceremonial defilement. It is therefore within man that the primary problem of sin and guilt resides; in the conscience. This factor will become an important point in the argument of Hebrews since the removal of the internal defilement will require a much greater, and a different cleansing than can be achieved by an external, ceremonial, act.<sup>9</sup>

The writer of Hebrews makes the affirmation that the state of a person’s conscience is integrally related to one’s ability to worship God. He also indicates that it is necessary (9:14) for the conscience to be cleansed. Finally, at 10:19-22, the place where **συνείδησις** (suneidēsis) is used for the fourth time “having had their hearts purified from a worthless (**πονηρᾶς**) conscience, let us draw near” into “the Holy Place” (10:19 - (**τῶν ἁγίων**)), that is into the presence of God.<sup>10</sup> “The necessity of a cleansed conscience is insisted upon throughout the letter. A conscience

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<sup>9</sup> Gary S. Selby, “The Meaning and Function of Συνείδησις in Hebrews 9 and 10,” *Restoration Quarterly* 28:3 (1985), pp. 145-154.

<sup>10</sup> Gary S. Selby, “The Meaning and Function of Συνείδησις in Hebrews 9 and 10,” *Restoration Quarterly* 28:3 (1985), pp. 145-154.

stained with sin is the one effective barrier to man's fellowship with God; a sacrifice which can remove this stain will be a truly effective sacrifice."<sup>11</sup> The sacrifice of Christ is of a different nature altogether from those offered under the Old Law. This difference is powerfully seen and anchored in the context of Psalm 40:6-8 (in the Septuagint). The nature of this sacrifice is linked with doing the will of God. The sacrifice of Christ is better in that it focuses on more than the external, in that it is from Jesus Christ as the Son of God, the human free from sin, but most importantly it is linked with "obedience" to the will of God. It is through this sacrifice that "we are sanctified...."

The author of Hebrews sets up for the understanding of the role of Christ as our High Priest providing true cleansing that once and for all removes that which separates us from God, which he describes in terms of a stained conscience. This is a once for all sacrifice that need not be repeated over and over again as it is a cure for sin and not just a treatment. At verses 16 and 17, this is

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<sup>11</sup> F. F. Bruce, "Kerygma of Hebrews," *Interpretation* 23:1 (1969), p. 12.



linked powerfully to the prophecy of Jeremiah 31:33-34.<sup>12</sup> Then at verse 18 to a statement that draws to a conclusion this section where it is stated in rather matter of fact language that the sacrifice of Christ is an effective sacrifice and brings “forgiveness” (ἄφεσις). There is therefore, “no longer an offering for sin. The multitude of offerings that were given under the Old Covenant were indeed ineffective in dealing with sin, they were dealing with the external only, but the offering of Jesus is so effective that once and for all sin is terminated, internally.

The final major section of Hebrews might be entitled “The Way of the Christian as the Way of Faith.” This section contains two sets of exhortations and warnings that call for faith and endurance (10:19-39 and 12:1-29). In between these sets of exhortations stands the examples that the author of Hebrews gives of faithful heroes and heroines from the past (11:1-40).<sup>13</sup> At verse 19 there is the great phrase “therefore” (οὖν), that seeks to draw together what has just been said in a way that points to the

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<sup>12</sup> <sup>33</sup> **But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.** <sup>34</sup> **No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, “Know the LORD,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.** NRSV.

<sup>13</sup> Edgar Mcknight and Christopher Church, *Hebrews-James*, p. 235.

future. The challenge is given that since these things are true “we” now have “confidence” (παρρησία) to enter into the sanctuary, the Holy of Holies of the heavenly realm, the presence of God through the “blood of Jesus.” The word used here for “confidence” (παρρησία - *parresia*) is a word that has a rich history and is a word of privilege. This was a word used by the Athenians to speak of their privilege as a right, as freedom to speak. We not simply able to enter the presence of God, we can do so confidently because of what Jesus has done.

This way was opened to us through the curtain (a reference to the curtain that separated the holy place from the most holy place in the tabernacle), which is the true curtain. This curtain is not acting as a point of separation, but it is acting as an opening allowing entrance (verse 20) into the presence of God. The force of the initial “therefore” continues as we come to verse 21 and we are reminded of our great High Priest (Jesus), who is over the “house” of God. At verse 22, we are then challenged to approach this house with a “true” (ἀληθινῆς) heart that is fully assured, a heart that is confident. This is because our “conscience” (συνείδησις) (suneidēsis) is now purified. Some would take what is

said regarding the bodies being washed with pure water as a reference to baptism. The meaning here, whether it is, or whether it is not a reference to baptism, is that the person is able to approach God with confidence; a confidence that they are purified inside and out because of what Jesus has done.

At verse 23 we have the second exhortation of this section that calls for the readers to “hold on tight” to the “confession,” or the “vow” of our hope without “wavering.” The message is that we are called to be “steady” people that do not swerve about from side to side. The basis for this confidence is anchored in the one who has made the promise, because he is faithful (πιστός). Our confidence comes from our trust in God not something inherent in us. We are steady because He is “faithful,” “trustworthy,” the epitome of what “steady” should be. Then we come to the third and final exhortation of this second section calling us to “provoke” (παροξυσμός) one another to love (verse 24). The word used here for “provoke” (παροξυσμός) is a word that could also be translated as “irritation,” or “exasperation.” It is also used to describe “a severe fit of disease.” This is an extreme word calling for extreme measures. We are to “irritate” one another to

“love and good deeds,” or “works.” A part of this provocation is connected to “meeting together” (verse 25). This is the context of this challenge to these early Christians and still, today, to us. If we fail to meet together, we fail to follow this command and we fail in our obligation to others. It is not about me, it is about having the attitude of Christ and to focus on others.

Some will perhaps not make it to the finish of the race because others left the race and failed to act as encouragers along the way. We are called to serve one another by “pestering” one another, not just for the sake of being irritating people, but for the purpose of challenging each other to “love” and “good works.” We cannot do this if we are not meeting with each other. So many times we have seen worship from the perspective of “me” when the whole point of worship is for us to see it from the perspective of “He” (God). Our times of meeting together are of crucial importance and in them we serve the mission of God as we serve others. We are called to be “encouraging” (*παρακαλοῦντες*). The word used here is from the same root that is used to describe the “Holy Spirit” at John 14:26.<sup>14</sup> What a profound and holy calling.

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<sup>14</sup> <sup>26</sup> **But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you.** NRSV.

We often fail to see the great honor and the great responsibility that God has bestowed upon the disciples of Jesus Christ. We are to do this even more as we see “the day drawing near.”<sup>15</sup>

The author of Hebrews then writes (10:26-31) some of the harshest and most frightening words in Scripture. These words are written as the reasoning for meeting together and “encouraging” one another. These words are addressed to those that willfully sin, those who have intentionally turned from the faith. This is not the first time the writer has strongly warned his audience (2:3; 3:12; 4:1; 6:4-8); this is a persistent theme warning against the possibility of apostasy. For such a person there is no hope, and no sacrifice for their sins. Their prospect is to be “eaten” (ἐσθίειν) by the “zealous fire” that is the fate of those who are “adversaries.” The goal of this warning is to cause the readers to distance themselves totally from this type of action. The present tense of the verb “to sin” (ἁμαρτανόντων) is appropriately translated by the NRSV as to “willfully persist in sin.” This indicates a continuous rejection of Christ. The sin of

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<sup>15</sup> This is a reference to the well-known day of the return of Christ who comes in judgment, cf. 1 Corinthians 3:12-13 - <sup>12</sup> **Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—** <sup>13</sup> **the work of each builder will become visible, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each has done.** NRSV.

apostasy, by its very definition requires a prior intellectual and/or faith experience and commitment.<sup>16</sup> Such a person has “received the knowledge of the truth.” They then turn their back on God and toss away their faith in Him and His way of salvation and therefore are ruined.

In verses 28-29, the writer uses a rhetorical technique that reasons from the lesser to the greater form. We have seen this same type of thing at 2:2-3.<sup>17</sup> The reference is given to a passage from the Old Testament (actually Deuteronomy 17:6).<sup>18</sup> The reasoning is that just as the New Covenant is a greater covenant than the Old Covenant so there should be the expectation of greater punishment for breaching this greater covenant than there was for the lessor covenant. They are guilty of “trampling on” the Son of God, “treating as common” (κοινὸν) the blood of the covenant, the very blood responsible for their “sanctification.”

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<sup>16</sup> Edgar Mcknight and Christopher Church, *Hebrews-James*, pp. 241-242.

<sup>17</sup> Edgar Mcknight and Christopher Church, *Hebrews-James*, p. 246.


<sup>18</sup> Deuteronomy 17:2-6 - **17:2** If there is found among you, in one of your towns that the LORD your God is giving you, a man or woman who does what is evil in the sight of the LORD your God, and transgresses his covenant <sup>3</sup> by going to serve other gods and worshipping them— whether the sun or the moon or any of the host of heaven, which I have forbidden— <sup>4</sup> and if it is reported to you or you hear of it, and you make a thorough inquiry, and the charge is proved true that such an abhorrent thing has occurred in Israel, <sup>5</sup> then you shall bring out to your gates that man or that woman who has committed this crime and you shall stone the man or woman to death. <sup>6</sup> On the evidence of two or three witnesses the death sentence shall be executed; a person must not be put to death on the evidence of only one witness. NRSV.

They have also outraged the “Spirit of grace.” The fact that “Spirit” here is capitalized indicates that the translators perceive this as a reference to the Spirit of God. Some would see this as the Holy Spirit and link the verse here with what Jesus says regarding there being no forgiveness of sins for those that “blaspheme” the Holy Spirit (Mark 3:28-29; Matthew 12:31-32 and Luke 12:10).

The quotations cited here in Hebrews (10:30) are given to support the reasoning of the writer and come from the Song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32. They are introduced with the words “For we know the one who said,” indicating that the audience knows the character of God. They also know of God’s negative attitude toward sin. The first reference refers to Deuteronomy 32:35 and reads, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay”. It is not an exact quotation. Paul also uses this same passage at Romans 12:19 in the exact form used here in Hebrews.<sup>19</sup> The second of the quotations is from Deuteronomy 32:36 and is also to be found at Psalm 135:14: “The LORD will judge his people.” The idea behind both of these passages from the Old Testament is to be understood as “The LORD will vindicate his people.” In the Epistle of Hebrews

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<sup>19</sup> **Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.”** NRSV.



the warning is that they are to be “judged” by God.<sup>20</sup> This is perhaps an indication that such people are, because of their rejection of Jesus, now enemies of God and as such they can expect the judgment and wrath of God as His enemies.

The mood shifts dramatically starting at verse 32 as the writer challenges his readers to “recall those earlier days, after you had been enlightened.” The recollection then leads them to remember how in those early days they endured a hard struggle and also endured sufferings. At that time they were also (verse 33) exposed publicly to abuse and persecution and evidently they also stood alongside others who were so treated. Verse 34 indicates that they had compassion for those who were in prison and even “cheerfully” accepted the “plundering” of their possessions. They did this based on the fact that they knew they possessed something better, something that would last longer than mere possessions. The author pleads with them not to abandon their “confidence,” but to persist in their course of faith in God in order to receive the “great reward.” He calls upon them (verse 36) to have “endurance” in doing the will of God so that

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<sup>20</sup> Edgar Mcknight and Christopher Church, *Hebrews-James*, p. 247.



when they have endured to the end they might receive “what was promised.”

Then there is a quotation made up of a couple of Old Testament passages to bolster the author’s claims (Isaiah 26:20; Habakuk 2:3-4). This is the Scriptural support for continuing to do the will of God and enduring. This chapter ends with an awareness of two types of people: those “who shrink back and so are lost (ἀπώλειαν) and those who endure and are preserved. The word used here for “lost” has the meaning of “ruined,” or “destroyed.” These that are “lost” are contrasted with those who have faith and therefore “preserve their soul” (περιποίησιν ψυχῆς). What a powerful way to end this chapter, with a contrast that is stark and different, with those being “ruined” on the one side, and those whose “soul” is preserved on the other side. This is a powerful and provocative warning intended to call for faith and endurance as opposed to “shrinking back” and falling to “ruin” on the other hand. The writer calls upon his readers to be people of enduring faith who continue in their following of Jesus Christ. They are to be willing to endure suffering, loss of status and


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possessions in order to continue to be like their Great High Priest,  
Jesus the Messiah, the Son of the Living God.

# Synopsis

As this chapter begins the writer starts by speaking of the Old Law and its rituals as only a shadow of the good things and not the reality. He highlights the different nature of the New Covenant and its focus on the inside of man, where the real problem of sin resides rather than upon the outside. In this new way is the element of sacrifices that are truly pleasing to God: doing the will of God is the true sacrifice that is pleasing to Him. In the absolute obedience of Christ, to the will of God, we have the way of sanctification opened up to us and an example of what our lives as image bearers of God should be like.

The role of Christ as our Great High Priest is contrasted with that of the ancient High Priests who year after year, day after day, continued to offer sacrifices for sins. People were not released from the power of sin because of these sacrifices. Evidence of this is that the sacrifices did not stop. The conclusion then is they were not sufficient to perfect for all time those that have been sanctified for all time by the sacrifice of Christ. This New Covenant puts the laws of God into the hearts and minds and erases the remembrance of past sins from the memory of God.



The blood of Christ opens the way into the very presence of God as is illustrated by what was done year after year by the high priest (a shadow of what was to come). The challenge delivered to the audience is to be faithful, to continue to meet together, to encourage one another and to provoke one another to love and good deeds. They are challenged to recognize that the offering of Christ is the one and only way for sin to be forgiven and to recognize that even under the Old Law violation was punished. Punishment for spurning the blood of Christ means there is no longer a way to forgiveness and one can then only expect the vengeance of God.

The audience is challenged to remember how they began the race and to finish strong. They formerly endured hard struggles and suffering, their possessions being plundered and they had compassion for those in prison. The call of the author of Hebrews is for them to continue in the faith, to endure to the end, and not to shrink back lest they be ruined.

# Questions

1. What are some ways that you see a shadow as different from reality and what are some ways that it is similar to reality?
2. How do you think the sacrifice of animals served to cleanse people from sin?
3. What are some ways that people can train their conscience?
4. In what way were the annual sacrifices of the Jews a reminder of sin?
5. Why do you think God took no pleasure in burnt offerings and sin offerings (verse 6)?
6. How do you think doing the “will of God” is a sacrifice?
7. How does doing the will of God purify us from sin?
8. How would you describe the role that Jesus serves in our salvation in the context of obedience?
9. What do you think it means for Christians that Christ “sat down at the right hand of God?”
10. What role do you see the Holy Spirit performing in the “perfection” of those that follow Christ?
11. What do you think it means to have the laws of God in the heart?
12. How would you define forgiveness?



13. What do you think it means for people to enter into the presence of God?

14. What are some ways that we can “pester” one another to “love and good deeds?”

15. What do you think is the most important aspect of meeting together with other Christians? Why?

16. What do you think it means to turn your back completely upon someone?

17. Why do you think punishment is important?

18. Why is justice important?

19. What is the most important thing in all the universe to you? Why?

20. What do you think the writer of Hebrews would see as the most important thing in all the universe? Why?

21. How would you define “endurance?”

22. What does it mean for you to have faith?

# To Take Home

## **What is Important to know?**

It is important to know that we have a role to serve not only in our own salvation, but also in the salvation of others. Our meeting together should be focused upon God and upon others and not what I can get. It is also important to know that salvation takes place over time and it not just a single point. What are some ways that you continue to seek to do the will of God each day?

## **Where is God in these words?**

God is in these words in the role of covenant keeper. He acts as the one who opens a way for those who have been covenant breakers to enter into a new covenant, one that relies upon faithfulness to God and out of this comes obedience. It is not based upon total obedience on our part first. God bridges the gap for us. What are some ways that your faith in God has changed your perception of reality?

## **What does any of this mean for how I live my life?**

The words of Hebrews 10 challenge me to live my life for God and for others and not for me. It challenges me to have different goals and to spend my energies and resources in pursuit of those different goals. I am challenged to seek first the kingdom of God and righteousness rather than comfort, power, and control of my own destiny. I am called to trust God. What are some ways that your life demonstrates your trust of God?

## **What is the word of God calling us to do?**

The word of God is calling us to be people that trust God in all things and allow injustices in our life because we know that in Jesus Christ we have something far better than anything that we might lose in this life. God calls us to demonstrate our faith and trust in Him by the way that we live our lives each day. We are called to live by faith rather than by sight. We are called to be people of enduring and abiding faith that continue to do and be good in the face of all odds whether it be external, or internal. We are called by God to press ahead and to never shrink back. What is one of the most challenging things to faith today in America? Why?