

LSE 07-17-22

The passage I'd like to look at this morning is a good example of why it is important to look closely at the point the author of Scripture was making to his original audience to properly understand its meaning.

Hebrews 10:1-14

For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near. 2 Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins? 3 But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year. 4 For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. 5 Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says,

“Sacrifice and offering You have not desired,
But a body You have prepared for Me;
6 In whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You have taken no pleasure.
7 “Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come
(In the scroll of the book it is written of Me)
To do Your will, O God.”

8 After saying above, “Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You have not desired, nor have You taken pleasure in them” (which are offered according to the Law), 9 then He said, “Behold, I have come to do Your will.” He takes away the first in order to establish the second. 10 By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

11 Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; 12 but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God, 13 waiting from that time onward until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet. 14 For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.

Some people make the point from this that people living under the Law weren't really forgiven. There's a problem with that:

Leviticus 4

:20 He shall also do with the bull just as he did with the bull of the sin offering; thus he shall do with it. So the priest shall make atonement for them, and they will be forgiven.

:26 All its fat he shall offer up in smoke on the altar as *in the case of* the fat of the sacrifice of peace offerings. Thus the priest shall make atonement for him in regard to his sin, and he will be forgiven.

:31 Then he shall remove all its fat, just as the fat was removed from the sacrifice of peace offerings; and the priest shall offer it up in smoke on the altar for a soothing aroma to the Lord. Thus the priest shall make atonement for him, and he will be forgiven.

If we look closer at the point the writer of Hebrews was making, what looks like a contradiction actually makes perfect sense and it makes an important point that should be reflected in our remembrance of Jesus and His sacrifice.

The point of the whole book of Hebrews is that the new covenant is superior to the old. Chapter 9 had mentioned the old sacrifices many times, and the thought is continued in chapter 10. When it mentions taking away sin, it means doing so perfectly so that it is no longer a problem. The sacrifices under the Law couldn't do that, because people kept sinning (just like we do). Those animal sacrifices were what God had commanded to be done in order to be forgiven for those sins. But they could only take care of the past. That's why they kept having to be offered again and again.

Jesus' sacrifice was different and infinitely superior. His one sacrifice was effective for all sin for all time, including the future. That's the contrast the writer of Hebrews is drawing in chapter 10.

Every time the people living under the old covenant came to God (even the priests) they had to make new sacrifices for their sins. God did forgive them, but in a way that system always reminded them of their guilt. If that's how we think of the Lord's Supper we're missing the point. We live under a superior covenant that should be reminding us of His grace rather than our guilt. All of our sins have been forgiven if we are in God's grace. That was true last week, it is true this week, and it will be true next week - even though we have and will sin. Jesus overcame sin and death permanently. That's what we are celebrating this morning.

Prayer:

Precious Father, thank you for the sacrifice of Jesus. Thank you for His permanent victory over sin and death. Thank you that we get to live under a covenant where grace wins over guilt. Please bless the bread that reminds us today of Jesus' real physical body and the juice that reminds us of His blood; the blood that has washed away our sins. On our own we would be so unworthy, but thank You for making us worthy through Jesus' sacrifice. In Jesus' precious and holy name we pray, amen