

2) "Let us hold fast ..." (v.23).

The readers of the epistle were being tempted to forsake their confession of Jesus Christ by going back to the Old Covenant worship.

3) "Let us consider one another ..." (v.24-25).

As we fellowship with God in the New Covenant we also fellowship with others in the local assembly. It seems that some of the wavering disciples had been absenting themselves from the fellowship of the assembly. It is interesting to note that the emphasis here is not on what a Christians gets from the assembly, but rather on what he can contribute to the assembly.

Faithfulness to the assembly of the church encourages others and provokes them to love and good works.

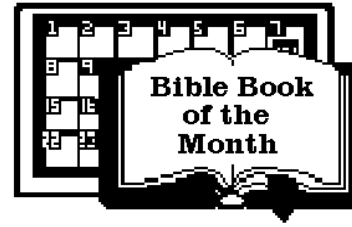
The three great Christian virtues are evidenced here: **faith** (v.22); **hope** (v.23); and **love** (v.24).

SUMMARY

The major theme of Hebrews is "God has spoken ..." And our response should be, "How an I responding to His Word?" When the nation of Israel refused to believe and obey His Word, God chastened them. The writer uses this fact (ch. 10) to warn us against sin and refusing to hear God.

Questions:

1. What is the great contrast made in the book of Hebrews?
2. Why were the Old Covenant sacrifices inferior?
3. Why is the sacrifice of the New Covenant "better"?
4. Why did Jesus come according to Hebrews 10:9-10?
5. Why does the sacrifice of Christ not need to be repeated?
6. Why three-fold invitation is given in chapter 10?



Hebrews

Lesson #4

The "Better" Sacrifice

Text: Hebrews 10:1-31

Introduction

The tenth chapter of Hebrews emphasizes the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ, in contrast with the imperfect sacrifices that were offered under the Old Covenant. Our Lord's superior priesthood belongs to a better order--Melchizedek's and not Aaron's. It functions on the basis of a better covenant-- the New Covenant-- and in a better sanctuary, in heaven. But all of this depends on the better sacrifice.

1. Christ's Sacrifice Takes Away Sin (10:1-10)

Sin is man's greatest problem. Religion is of no value if it cannot deal with sin.

1) The need for a better sacrifice 10:1-4. Why were the Old Covenant sacrifices inferior? After all, they were ordained by the Lord. For ages many sincere people brought their offerings to God and were blessed. But their sacrifices were "a shadow of good things to come" and not the reality itself.

The sacrificial system was a type or picture of the work our Lord would accomplish on the cross. This meant that they system was temporary, and could accomplish nothing permanent. The very repetition of the sacrifices day after day, and the Day of Atonement year after year, pointed out the entire system's weakness.

If the worshippers under the Old Covenant had been "once purged" they would never again have had to offer another sacrifice. So the annual Day of Atonement did not accomplish "remission of sins" but only "reminder of sin." The annual repetition of the ceremony was evidence that the previous year's sacrifices had not done the job.

True, the nation's sins were **covered**; but they were not **cleansed**. There was a desperate need for a better sacrifice because the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sins.

2) The provision of the better sacrifice (10:5-9). It was God who provided the "better" sacrifice and not man. The word **sacrifice** refers to any of the animal sacrifices and **offering** covers the meal and the drink offerings. Each of these typified the sacrifice of Christ and revealed some aspect of His work on the cross (see Leviticus 1-7).

Twice the writer stated that God "had no pleasure" in the Old Covenant sacrifices (vs. 6, 8). This didn't mean that the old sacrifices were wrong, or that the worshippers received no benefit from obeying God's Law. It only means that God didn't delight in such sacrifices apart from the obedient hearts of the worshippers. No amount of sacrifices could substitute for obedience (1 Samuel 15:22; Psalms 51:16-17).

Jesus came to establish the Father's will. This will is the New Covenant that has replaced the Old Covenant. Through his death and resurrection, Jesus Christ has taken away the first covenant and established the second (vs. 9-10). The original readers of Hebrews would get the message, Why go back to sacrifices that are inferior?

2. Christ's Sacrifices Need Not Be Repeated 10:11-18.

Again the writer contrasts the old covenant high priest with Jesus Christ, our great High Priest. The fact that Jesus **sat down** after He ascended to the Father is proof that His work was completed (1:3, 13; 8:1). The ministry of the priests in the tabernacle and temple was **never done** and **never different**: they offered the same sacrifices day after day. This constant repetition was proof that their sacrifices did not take

away sins. What tens of thousand of animal sacrifices could not accomplish, Jesus accomplished with **one sacrifice forever!**

The phrase "sat down" refers us again to Psalm 110:1 "Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." After his resurrection Jesus ascended to the right hand of God and sits in the place of exaltation and victory. (See also 1 Corinthians 15:24,25).

The Old Covenant worshipper could not say that he had "no more consciousness of sins" (10:2). But the New Covenant worshipper **can** say that his sins and iniquities are remember *no more* (v.17).

3. Christ's Sacrifice Opens the Way to God 10:19-39

No Old Covenant worshipper would have been bold enough to try to enter the holy of holies in the tabernacle. Even the high priest entered the holy of holies only one day a year. The veil that separated the holy place from the holy of holies was a barrier between people and God. Only the death of Christ could tear that veil away (Mark 15:38) and open the way into the *heavenly* sanctuary where God dwells.

"Let us draw near ... Let us hold fast ... Let us consider one another ..." (10:22, 23, 24-25). There is a bold three-fold invitation given to those with "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." This boldness rests on the finished work of Christ. He opened into God's presence a "new and living way" (v.20) ["recent, fresh"]. It is "living" because Christ "ever liveth to make intercession" for us (7:25).

1) "Let us draw near ..." (v.22).

As the priests did under the Old Covenant, so much we prepare ourselves spiritually to enter into this fellowship with God. The Old Testament priest went through the application of the blood on the Day of Atonement and washed his body in the laver before the Sanctuary before entering. Some see in this a figure of baptism, wherein the blood of Christ cleanses us from sin as we enter into the kingdom of God (the holy place) on our way to heaven (the holy of holies).