

Christ's Once-for-All Sacrifice

Lesson Scripture: Hebrews 9:23–10:25

Focus Scripture: Hebrews 9:23–10:4, 11-14, 19-25

Key Verse: Christ did not enter a sanctuary made by human hands, a mere copy of the true one, but he entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.

Hebrews 9:24

HEBREWS 9:23–10:4, 11-14, 19-25 (NRSV UE)

Hebrews 9:23–10:4

23 Thus it was necessary for the sketches of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves need better sacrifices than these.

24 For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made by human hands, a mere copy of the true one, but he entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.

25 Nor was it to offer himself again and again, as the high priest enters the holy place year after year with blood that is not his own,

26 for then he would have had to suffer again and again since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to remove sin by the sacrifice of himself.

27 And just as it is appointed for mortals to die once and after that the judgment,

28 so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

10:1 Since the law has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered year after year, make perfect those who approach.

2 Otherwise, would they not have ceased being offered, since the worshippers, cleansed once for all, would no longer have any consciousness of sin?

3 But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sin year after year.

4 For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

11-14

11 And every priest stands day after day at his service, offering again and again the same sacri-

HEBREWS 9:23–10:4, 11-14, 19-25(KJV)

Hebrews 9:23–10:4

23 It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:

25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others;

26 For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

10:1 For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.

2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.

3 But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year.

4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

11-14

11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:

fices that can never take away sins.

12 But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, “he sat down at the right hand of God,”

13 and since then has been waiting “until his enemies would be made a footstool for his feet.”

14 For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.

19-25

19 Therefore, my brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus,

20 by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain (that is, through his flesh),

21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God,

22 let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

23 Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful.

24 And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds,

25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;

13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.

14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

19-25

19 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,

20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;

21 And having an high priest over the house of God;

22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)

24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

KEY TERMS

- **Consciousness** – Moral awareness that leads to judgements of right or wrong actions.
- **Sanctuary** – A special place that is consecrated or set aside for worship.

INTRODUCTION

This is a continuation of our studies covering the transitions from the earthly tabernacle and the rituals that were required of the ancient Hebrews. Those rituals, as we have previously discussed, included animal sacrifices and other rituals that were limited in their ability to effect forgiveness and

reconciliation. Both were essential for “the Holy Nation” that God expected to live in the “priestly kingdom” that he planned for his people (Exodus 19:5b-6a). We will explore more deeply the coming of Jesus Christ, the high priest of the new covenant, who differed from the Levitical priests in many ways.

TELLING THE BIBLE STORY

The New High Priest and Heavenly Tabernacle, Hebrews 9:23–10:4

Israel, as they were prone to, and in spite of God’s love for them, broke their covenant with God again. Consequently, God offered to make a new covenant with them. His law, under the new covenant, would be written

on the people's hearts, and Yahweh would again reign supreme as their God. In this manner, God intended for every individual to personally "know him." He also promised to "forgive their iniquity and remember their sins no more" (Jeremiah 31:31-34).

In this lesson we will explore more deeply the coming of Jesus Christ and his role as the high priest of the new covenant. Consider our **Key Verse**, Hebrews 9:24, to be a bridge that will lead to new discoveries about how blessed we are to be included in this new covenant. Let us never forget that "we owe it all to Jesus!" Our scriptures for today give detailed descriptions of the ways in which Jesus differed from the Levitical priests. One of the most significant differences for us to comprehend is the fact that Jesus, once and for all, sacrificed his own blood instead of the blood of animals to remove sin and grant eternal redemption to believers.

Hebrews 9 begins with descriptions of the earthly tabernacle and its limitations as well as the limitations of the sacrifices and rituals performed by the priests. This was all a "foreshadowing" of the heavenly sanctuary that Jesus entered on our behalf. Hebrews

9:9-10 tell us that the gifts and sacrifices under the old covenant could not "perfect the conscience (or heart) of the worshiper." Instead, they dealt "only with food and drink and various various baptisms," regulations for the body imposed until the time comes "to set things right." The timing for setting things right coincided with the coming of Jesus Christ, who offered spiritual cleansing and deliverance that could not otherwise be achieved.

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The Role of the Conscience, Hebrews 10:1-4

Consciousness is the dominant theme in Hebrews 10:1-4. Along with the presence of God's laws in our hearts and the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives, consciousness emerges as an essential criterion for determining whether we are living in accordance with God's

will. The conscience is like a personal monitor that alerts us when we sin or stray from the path God has for our lives. When we sin, however, each one of us is empowered to humbly approach God directly to confess our sins, ask for and receive his forgiveness. 1 John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive our sins

and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Believers are urged to respond by daily seeking and maintaining close relationships with God. Since we know the truth now, we have no reasons to continue in sin!

The Call to Trust Jesus and Persevere, Hebrews 10:11-14,19-25

The messages, in these scriptures, may seem repetitive, in some cases. However, gaining deeper understandings about

Jesus justifies repetitive messages. To live in the new life that Jesus made available to us, we all need to become life-long learners. We are to be reminded that because of Jesus, we can approach God with confidence, and that his death on the cross was symbolic of passing through the curtain of the old tabernacle. Knowing that Jesus is our high priest, we are encouraged to approach God with “full assurance of faith,

with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water” (v. 22). More stark differences between Jesus Christ and the Levitical priests are presented in verses 23-28. Jesus is an incommensurably superior sacrifice, who is worthy of entering the presence of

God only one time, on behalf of humankind, instead of year after year as the Levitical priests did.

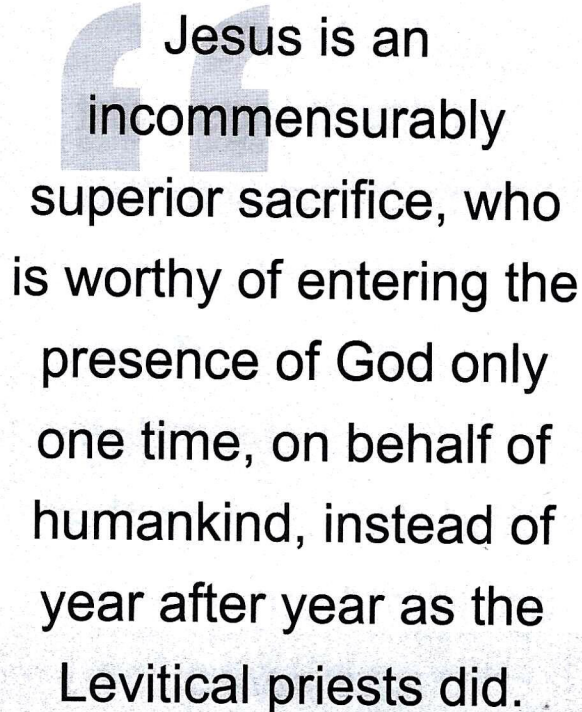
Notice the strong encouragement to persevere in faith, grow stronger from memories of past struggles, and to be encouraged as we await the rewards that Jesus promised. The writer of Hebrews closes this portion of the scriptures by encouraging “togetherness” among believers. Reaching out to each other, seeking to grow together

and working together are emphasized. How do you see these actions reflected in your own life? In your family, your church, and your community?

SANKOFA

Neither our human struggles nor our successes can ever compare with Jesus Christ. However, perseverance is a trait that usually distinguishes those who succeed

with their visions/goals from those who do not. In addition to perseverance, holding fast to one’s faith, reaching out to others, gaining empowerment from past struggles and other similar actions (Hebrews 10:19-25) are evident in the lives of many who have devoted much of their lives to fighting



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discrimination, social/political injustices, and inequalities. The effectiveness of the Montgomery, Alabama bus boycott is one example. Success did not come easily, nor did it come quickly in this case. However, it eventually led to a 1956 Supreme Court ruling that laws supporting segregation on buses were illegal. This boycott was a major catalyst for the broader Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's.

Mrs. Rosa Parks, who was mentioned in an earlier lesson, is best known for her role in starting the bus boycotts when she refused to give up her seat on a bus to a white man. However, she was not the first! Nine months before Mrs. Parks' refusal to give up her seat, Claudette Colvin, a 15-year-old black teenager at the time, was arrested in Montgomery for refusing to give up her seat to a white passenger. Ms. Colvin was later a witness in a Supreme Court case that was filed on behalf of her and four other women, who were charged with civil disobedience on Montgomery buses. The case, Browder vs. Gayle, went to the United States Supreme Court, and it was successful in overturning longstanding transportation laws that

discriminated against black people. Years later, in 2021, Ms. Colvin succeeded with a petition to have her arrest record expunged. According to Ms. Colvin, she and Mrs. Parks became friends, and Mrs. Parks became a much-needed mentor for her.

CASE STUDY

Civil rights attorney, preacher, and activist, Reverend Fred Gray's legacy personifies perseverance. As a matter of fact, Mr. Gray represented both Ms. Colvin and Mrs. Parks against charges brought by the Montgomery Bus Company, and he is credited with having been a significant force in guiding the ensuing civil rights protests. It was Rev. Gray who filed and successfully argued the previously referenced case of Browder v. Gayle before the United States Supreme Court.



**Civil rights attorney,
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Rev. Gray's life story is filled with inspiration! His father died when he was five years old. He was raised by his mother, whom he believes may have had a fifth or sixth grade education. However, he attributes his success in life to three things his mother taught him: One was to give Christ first place in his life, the second was to stay in school

and get a good education, and the third was to stay out of trouble. After completing high school, he enrolled in college at what is now known as Alabama State University, and he had to use the bus system every day. He became personally familiar with the bus system's discriminatory practices against black passengers, including one case wherein a black man was killed because of an altercation on a bus. These experiences convinced him to become a practicing attorney in Montgomery and "begin destroying everything segregated I could find." Many more of his accomplishments are cited in his autobiography, *Bus Ride to Justice*. He cites racism and inequality as two remaining issues to be resolved, but he also stresses the importance of "togetherness" in seeking change of this nature.

LIFE APPLICATION

This lesson has provided opportunities for us to gain deeper understandings about Jesus' sacrifice on our behalf as well as the benefits we inherited. This in-depth look at Jesus' sacrifice and the role of consciousness should be particularly freeing and motivating for efforts to continue inspite of our struggles and failures in this life. We have also briefly looked at fellow humans,

who made tremendous sacrifices to open doors to freedom and equality for everyone. The scriptures as well as the personal stories and historical events presented in this lesson emphasize the importance of following Jesus and the scriptures. How will you respond?

QUESTIONS

1. How do you personally relate to the knowledge of Jesus' once-for-all sacrifice?
2. In looking at the role of consciousness, what relevance do you see in the notion of "skeletons in your closet?"
3. How would you rate yourself on perseverance?

CLOSING DEVOTIONS

Closing Song: "Jesus Paid It All" (*AME Hymnal #271*). Repeat *The Apostle's Creed* in

unison.

Closing Prayer: Father, we come before you humbly, acknowledging our sins and asking for forgiveness. You are the source of our strength and the strength of our lives. We bless your name and praise you for loving us inspite of ourselves. Please bless us to internalize the new revelations in this

These experiences convinced him to become a practicing attorney in Montgomery and "begin destroying everything segregated I could find." Ride to Justice.

lesson so that we may be transformed and empowered to live as you intend. While we cannot compare our righteousness with that of Jesus Christ, we ask you to bless us

with perseverance to never quit striving to be more and more like him. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS

April 7-April 13

Monday	Isaiah 59:1-8 (Our Sins Have Hidden God's Face)
Tuesday	1 Peter 2:19-25 (Healed by Christ's Wounds)
Wednesday	John 3:1-15 (The Promise of Eternal Life)
Thursday	John 3:16-21 (God so Loved the World)
Friday	Romans 3:19-31 (Atonement Through His Blood)
Saturday	Romans 5:1-15 (Reconciled to God by Christ)
Sunday	1 John 2:1-6; 4:9-17 (Atonement Through God's Son)