The Book of Hebrews

Chapter 10

 Because of the length of this chapter, I will forego the intro, probably much to your delight, and get right into it.

 A] Hebrews 10: 1 through 4; (read)

 1] “*For the Law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never, with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach, perfect.”*

 All, right! Reread this sentence quietly to yourselves slowly, and with the proper punctuation. Notice a difference? Now take out all the descriptive words and the sentence reads, “For the Law can never make those who approach, perfect.” As we noted earlier, the law doesn’t make one perfect, all the Law does is set the limits or parameters for living. The Law can say, ‘if you do as the Law says, you can have a better life, a life of blessing’. The contrast showing how God wants one to live and in doing so, that one will reap God’s blessing in what he has or what he does.

 As a little recap, we have been talking about Jesus being superior in every way to the High Priests, the Law and the sacrifices. The Priesthood cannot make one holy, the Law cannot make one holy, and neither can the sacrifices. Jesus is the live, holy sacrifice, and ONLY HE can come to the Holy One being the true High Priest. Only He can be the true intercessor before God the Father.

 2] “*For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshippers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins.*

 If the Law and the sacrifices could have made the one making the sacrifice, absolved of their sin, by this work of substitutionary sacrifice, there would have been no need to the continuing of the sacrifices, especially concerning the high priest. But as we mentioned before, these are the ‘shadows’ of the real thing. The point here is as we study the Law, we are reminded that these sacrifices have to be repeated week to week or month to month or year to year. There was never an end to these sacrifices, was there? Right to the top man, even he had to make a sacrifice every year because he too, was a sinner.

 3] “*But in those sacrifices, there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.”*

 Because the sacrifices are a substitutionary act, and not the real thing. This act cannot take away anything except to have a lot of cooked meat. Obedience to the act of bringing the sacrifice held a lot more importance than the priests killing and burning of the sacrifice. When I bring my sacrifice, I am guilty and asking for forgiveness, and according to the Law, I bring my atonement sacrifice, but after the sacrifice is over, I still remember my sin----that never goes away, and my guilt never goes away, because I remember it. (And so, probably, does everyone else)

 B] Hebrews 10: 5 through 10; (read)

 1] “*Therefore, when He 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.’”*

 The writer now quotes Psalm 40: 6 and 7. Which goes to enforce what we just said. How do you suppose a judge feels when the same felon stands before him, pleading guilty, spending time in jail, and when he is out commits the same crime, and stands before the judge again, and this is repeated every few years. Did the sentence and time served do this fellow a bit of good? How did your dad or whoever had authority over you, feel about handing out punishment over your infractions?

 The Point the writer makes here is, the Psalm says that it is not the act of sacrifices and offerings that God needs or wants. For goodness sake, God owns it all anyway. It is the heart of man, He truly wants. Now at this point also the prophecy of Jesus comes up, in the statement ‘a body you have prepared for me’ meaning the earthly body Jesus was to have, which was to be used for the final sacrifice. However, in Psalm 40, it states it this way; ‘my ears you have opened’ meaning that in my servitude (David’s that is) when a servant has worked off his servitude and is a free man, but he wishes to remain in his servitude to the master, the master pierces the servants ear and this then tells the world that the servant, of his own volition, permanently belongs to the master. So, there is a bit of revisionism going on here. (Not sure why and can’t explain it) David is then saying, that he, David, wishes to remain under God’s aegis forever.

 2] “*Then I said, ‘behold I have come, in the volume of the book it is written of Me – to do Your will oh God.”*

 It is unclear what the Psalmist was saying, that this writer is conveying. The ‘(Gr) kephalidi’ actually referred to the knob ends of the scroll, and the whole description is kephalidi bibliou, and is literally translated ‘the scroll of book.’ But basically, I would venture to say it means, Christ has come according to the ancient written prophecies, and He has come to do the Will of God.

 3] “*Previously saying, ‘Sacrifice, and offering, burnt offerings and offerings for sin, You did not desire nor had pleasure in them’, (which are offered according to the Law),--”*

 The writer reiterates the above statement regarding the emptiness of the sacrifices which were according to the law, but the human aspect had negated them. Therefore, God had little use for empty atonement.

 4] “--*then He said, ‘Behold I have come to do your will, oh God,’ He takes away the first that He may establish the second.”*

 Again, repeating that the sacrificial part of the Law was over and He, Jesus, through His death and resurrection, is instituting the new way for the atoning practice.

 5] “*By that, will we have been sanctified through the offering of the Body of Jesus Christ, once for all.”*

 This IS doctrine: that through the shed blood of Jesus Christ, for which He was destined to do from the beginning, we have been made holy or set apart (sanctified) for God and God’s purposes. This is something the Law and sacrifices could never do. Does this all make sense now? How does a dead cow or goat lying dead and smoldering on a firepit take away any sins? Remember it is or was the attitude of the sinner who brought the sacrifice, not the animal or bird that counted in the atoning act.

 C] Hebrews 10: 11 through 18; (read)

 1] “*And every priest stands, ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices which can never take away sins.”*

 Can you picture it, priests lined up at their tables preparing sacrifices one at a time as the people are lined up at the gate with their various birds, or animals for sacrifice? And exactly what will killing these birds and animals do? Not much except to feed the Levitical clan, and assuage the pangs of guilt for their sins.

 2] “*But this man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool.*

 So, this Jesus, after He dies, rises, and ascends into heaven, and this occurs only one time, He then ‘sits’ at the right Hand of the father. Why does He sit? Is He tired from all His work of getting crucified? Of course not, He is also the Judge, right? And do judges stand during the trial? No, they sit.

 3] “*But the Holy Spirit also being witness to us, for after He had said before, ‘This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord; I will put my laws into their hearts and in their minds I will write them,’ then He adds, ‘their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.’”*

 Now our writer brings the Holy Spirit into this. And adds a quote from Jeremiah 31: 33. This essentially says, that this new covenant will put God’s LAWS into the hearts of men. And into their minds. If we would note all laws throughout the world are the same laws that God gave to man, just worded according to the culture. These are the laws of morality and right and wrong for any society to be successful.

 Next it says the sins and the lawless attitudes will not be remembered anymore. Only God can do this, but this is for those who are under this covenant. This new covenant is for those who come to Jesus and confess their sins and accept the sacrifice of Christ. They are the forgiven. Are you one?

 4] “*Now where there is a remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.”*

 So, as this is now in force, there is no longer any need for repetitious sacrificing. Sin sacrifices began with Abel and through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ on the cross, there is now an end brought to the sacrifices for sin, at the Temple. And remember the Temple ceased to exist shortly after this was written, I would guess.

 D] Hebrews 10: 19 through 25; (read)

 1] “*Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us through the veil, that is His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God,”--*

 At this point we are to be encouraged. We know that the sacrifices are finished, we know that Jesus is our new High Priest giving us access to the father through Jesus, Through His death and resurrection, that we have been sanctified (or set apart) for God’s purposes, we can BOLDLY approach the Father through the Son, our High Priest of the heavenly tabernacle.

 2] --”*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.”*

 We can go back to the beginning of this little letter and to the reasons for the letter, as the writer, having explained the changes made and is now giving encouragement from the pressures against them. He is, here, using the reference of the priests who enter the temple, must be sprinkled and washed, making them ceremonially clean before they are able to enter.

 The writer uses this illustration showing that our walking in complete faith, having made that profession of faith in Christ Jesus, and then the baptism, that is our washing, making us right and fit and holy to be able to enter the sanctuary.

 3] “*Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.”*

 The exhortation is: stand strong against these trials because you made your profession of faith and God, who is ever faithful, will keep His promises. Note, the writer includes himself in this exhortation. We all need reminders, that when we face our roadblocks in life, God is faithful to see us through whatever we face, don’t we?

 4] “*Let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”*

 There is strength in numbers, isn’t there? The writer here, tells them and us, that we need each other, that we cannot do this alone, that we must continue to assemble together. Lifting each other up, encouraging each other in agape love. We need each other for moral, spiritual and physical encouragement and strength.

 Friends, this is the commentary needed when someone tells you, “I don’t need church to be religious”. Yes, they do, because each one of us is in need of encouragement against the world today, NOT ONE OF US can ride this train all by ourselves.

 E] Hebrews 10: 26 through 39; (read)

 1] “*For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.”*

 Now the warning; If after all that has been written, and all that has been said. After gaining the knowledge of Salvation through Jesus Christ and God’s wondrous promises, , and after all that has been written about standing strong in the face of certain peril, you still crumple under the load, and go back to your evil ways, ie: the Temple worship, because you are weak, then get ready folks because you will lose. There is no sin sacrifice that you used to know. That is gone. What happens then, is you face the fearful judgment of God, and frankly THAT truly is something you DON’T want to do, is it? That fiery ‘indignation’ is the flames of hell prepared for Satan and his crew.

 2] “*Anyone who has rejected Moses Law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose will he be thought worthy, who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of Grace?”*

 How many do you suppose have made the confession of faith, but it was done for show, and going through motions of Christianity, literally deceives himself because he can never deceive God. Sinning against the Law of Moses just meant at the trial it took two or three witnesses, but the three witnesses with the judgment, in front of God, are the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and the deceiver loses. That judgment and resultant punishment is as described above, and one certainly does not want to go through that.

 3] “*For we know Him who said, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord.’ And again ‘The Lord will judge His people’. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God.”*

 What people forget too many times, is although we call God a loving God, we may call Him our friend, BUT God is a fearsome God, and it is best not to get too familiar with God because His righteousness is above all, and one does not curry favors with the Boss, that does not save you, only obedience. Even Jesus obeys His Counterpart, doesn’t He?

 4] “*But recall the days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings: partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated;--”*

 The writer again gives encouragement even after frightening them out of their skin, by having them remember that just a few years earlier, all the trash they faced on their conversion path. Illuminated was their receiving the truth of scripture. When they thus received, that is when the trials began.

 5] *“--for you had compassion on me in my chains and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods knowing that you have a better and enduring possession for yourselves in heaven.”*

 This kind of gives the hint, the writer may be Paul, and he intimates that in their newness of faith, was reflected in their ministrations to him and to each other during those times, and their loses to outsiders, because the promises of God were fresh in their minds.

 6] “*Therefore, do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the Will of God, you may receive the promise: ‘For yet a little while, and He who is coming will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith; but if anyone draws back, my soul has no pleasure in him.’”*

 The writer exhorts, ‘Don’t lose hope!’ you remember the promises, ‘suck it up buttercup!’ you need to have that endurance as you head toward the goal which are the promises of God. Get that second wind (if you will). Note, there is that promise? He IS coming back, just as He said.

 Now the important part of this statement, as he encourages his readers to stay strong, ‘the just shall live by faith’ meaning when we have been justified, we no longer lean on our own sufficiency, but on the Word of God. Our faith. And anyone who falls away through fear or doubt, has no place in His kingdom. That is a hard word, friends, but it all comes down to faith in Jesus Christ, doesn’t it?

 7] “*But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe in the saving of the soul.”*

 There you have it. The believer, the TRUE believer, does now take backward steps, we do not shrink in the face of danger, but we step forward in faith, knowing that God is our strength and because we have a greater promise than our adversaries.