**Bethel Christian Fellowship**

**Fair Lawn, NJ**

**Hebrews (28): The Book Of Better Things**

**“The Superior Sacrifice,” Part Two**

**Hebrews 10:1-18**

**July 14, 2024**

Anyone who reads the book of Hebrews should have no problem understanding what it means to be a Christian. From the very beginning, our author has been describing genuine believers in a number of significant ways. Here’s but a sampling of the things that are true of every member of the New Covenant community:

1. They are God’s house, His children, and His people (2:10, 13; 3:6).

2. They are spiritually united with Christ (3:14).

3. The have faith (4:3; 6:12; 10:22, 38-39).

4. They have hope (6:11, 18; 7:19; 10:23).

5. They have love (6:10; 10:33-34).

6. They enter God’s rest (4:3, 11).

7. They persevere (3:6, 14, 6:11; 10:23).

8. They approach the throne of grace with confidence (4:15-16).

9. They know God (8:11).

10. His laws are written on their hearts (8:10; 10:16).

11. Their consciences have been cleansed from the guilt of sin (9:14; 10:22).

12. Their sins have been forgiven and will be remembered no more (10:10, 14, 17).

Of all those remarkable truths, the one truth upon which all the others rest is the last one. It’s the one our author is emphasizing as he draws his exposition of Christ’s high priesthood to a close (10:1-18). Our sins have been forgiven and are remembered no more!

As we may recall from last week’s study, he began this tenth chapter by explaining why the Old Testament sacrificial system was inadequate (10:1-4). The very fact that these sacrifices were repeated year after year proved that they could never cleanse the human heart of sin’s guilt and condemnation. If they could, they wouldn’t need to be repeated. In fact, the only things those sacrifices did well was to *remind* the people that their sins had not yet been forgiven – and that God *still remembered* those sins!

In the next paragraph our author used Psalm 40 to explain how Jesus achieved what the Old Testament system could not (10:5-10). In verses 6-8 of that Psalm, David acknowledged that it wasn’t just the sacrifices of bulls and goats that God desired, but obedience from a willing heart. Our author saw this kind of obedience as *typified* in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. Thus, when Christ came into the world, He submitted to His Father’s will and offered up His body as a once-for-all sacrifice for sin. In so doing, He took away “the first” (the Old Covenant of Moses) in order to establish “the second” (the New Covenant of Christ).

In the verses before us today, our author presents his concluding evidence for the superiority of Christ’s sacrifice (vv. 11-18). First, he points to the exaltation of Christ as the proof that the sacrifice Jesus made is perfect; for after He offered up Himself as a sacrifice, He *sat down* at the right hand of God (vv. 11-14). Then he points to the witness of the Holy Spirit, as he once again quotes from Jeremiah 31. There God promised a *complete* forgiveness of sins, and that He would remember those sins no more (vv. 15-17). The conclusion logically follows: a sacrifice for sin is no longer necessary (v. 18).

**A. The Exaltation of Christ (10:11-14):** “*Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices which could never take away sins. But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God. Since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool, because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy*.”

Once again, our author cites the endless repetition of the Old Testament sacrifices as having the same effect; they could never take away the guilt of sin! By way of contrast, Christ’s once-for-all sacrifice accomplished what those sacrifices could not do. A further contrast then follows, which proves that the sacrifice Jesus offered was perfect. Under the Old Covenant, “*Every priest stands*;” but Christ ascended into heaven and “*sat down*” in the presence of God. No Old Testament priest *ever* sat down, because his work of offering up a blood sacrifice never ended. But Jesus has “*sat down at the right hand of God,*” where He waits for His enemies to be made His footstool, just as Psalm 110: 1:1 had prophesied. Therein lies the proof that His work was completed (Cf. 1:3, 13; 8:1).

The last verse in this section is an extremely important one (v. 14). When the author says that “*Christ* ***has made perfect***(past tense) *. . . those who* ***are being made holy***” (present tense), he has in view two aspects of our salvation. First, we were made “perfect” when we came to saving faith in Christ. **Q.** In what sense? **A.** In the sense that God has forgiven all our sins and has declared us righteous in his sight. We now have a “perfect” standing before Him, and that will never change. It is “forever” and “for all time,” and there is nothing we can do to add to it or subtract from it.

However, those who have been “perfected” are “being made holy” (or “sanctified”) in the present. The term “holy” means “set apart” or “consecrated.” This is the life-long process of being *separated from* the pollution and defilement of sin, *and* of being *set apart* for the worship and service of the living God (Cf. 9:14). Such is the identity of all genuine Christians, who are members of the New Covenant community.

**B. The Witness of the Holy Spirit Through the Word (10:15-18):** “*The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First he says: ‘This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds.’* (Jer.31:33) *Then he adds: ‘Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more.’* (Jer. 31:34) *And where these have been forgiven, there is no longer any sacrifice for sin*.”

Because those words were spoken by the prophet under the inspiration of the Spirit, the author naturally quotes them as the words of the Holy Spirit. In chapter 8 he quoted them in order to prove that the Old Covenant was “obsolete” (8:13). Here he quotes them to confirm that the “perfection” of which he speaks (v. 14) is bound up with the promises of the New Covenant.

This covenant involves the implanting of God’s laws within our hearts, together with the enabling power to carry them out (regeneration). It also assures us that our sins will be forgiven and remembered no more. Under the Old Covenant, there was an “annual remembrance” of sins; under the New Covenant there is *no more remembrance* of them!

But what exactly does God mean when He says: “*I will remember their sins and lawless deeds no more*”? Since He is omniscient (all-knowing), He cannot *gain more* knowledge; nor can *He lose* any knowledge. He neither learns nor forgets anything, since He knows everything. Therefore, when God says that He “won’t remember” our sins, He means that He will never hold those sins against us; He will never bring them up and use them as grounds for condemning us.

Sam Storms has said it best when he writes: “**There is obviously a difference between ‘forgetting’ and ‘choosing not to remember.’** Forgetting is unavoidable. It happens by nature, not by choice. You can’t choose to forget. It just happens. It doesn’t require any effort to “forget” something. You get busy, distracted, tired, and things slip from your mind.

This is not what happens to God. God cannot forget in the literal sense of the term and certainly not in the same way you and I do. God doesn’t suffer from mental lapses. His mind is infinitely perfect and powerful. Rather, God willingly chooses ‘not to remember.’ Thus, it isn’t so much that the knowledge of our sins and lawless deeds has been erased from God’s mind. Rather, God promises to us that he will ‘not remember’ our shortcomings and sin. He will not remind *himself* of our failures. And he will not remind *us* of them. They play no part in determining or shaping our relationship with him. He will never throw them in our face or subtly drop hints about the ways we’ve failed.”

The author’s conclusion to all of this then logically follows (v. 18): “*And where these have been forgiven (our sins and lawless deeds), there is no longer any sacrifice for sin*.” Since the New Covenant guarantees that our sins will be completely forgiven, then no additional sacrifice for sin is ever needed! In the words of the old gospel hymn, “*Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe; sin had left a crimson stain, He washed it white as snow.*”

Once this wonderful truth grips our hearts, it can actually change our lives *and* our relationship with God. It causes us to draw near to the throne of grace with confidence, and to seek God’s help without any hesitation. It enables us to worship Him with joyful praise and thanksgiving. It encourages us to share our faith with the non-Christians that we know and love. It strengthens us to step up and serve others in the local church. It motivates us to read God’s Word and to spend more time with Him in prayer. It frees us to be forgiving toward others when they have wronged us. More than anything else, it encourages us to trust Him to solve the problems we face today, knowing that He has already solved our greatest problem – He has forgiven all our sins and will remember them no more!