

Bible Study Fellowship WordGo Scripture Notes

Hebrews Chapter 10

Shadows of Future Sacrifice – 10:1-4

The tabernacle, Solomon's temple and its later versions pointed to a coming Savior. The sacrificial system functioned as a shadow appearing to generations in anticipation of Messiah. **Shadows signal the presence of a greater reality.** A shadow commands belief in an actual object and light. These physical realities create the shadow's shape. These former shadows are understood in light of the reality of the blood of Jesus Christ. The blood of animals was a shadow of:

- The **personal responsibility** each sinner bears for sin.
- The **horror of death** sin brought to creation.
- The **tragic death** of innocence through the first sin.
- The **just penalty** God pronounced for disobedience.
- The **just wrath** sinners face for offending our holy God.

Relating with God through the former patterns produced another shadow of the future reality. New life with Jesus Christ through His new covenant was also coming. **Christ's superior sacrifice of Himself delivered a cleansed conscience, redemption from sin, true freedom and eternal inheritance.**

Prophecies of Future Sacrifice – 10:5-18

The word, "therefore," at the start of verse 5 signals another switch in focus. The author recaps the message about these shadows and how their substance was revealed when Jesus Christ appeared. The Old Testament references remind listeners that **God prophesied His grace would fully arrive in the Messiah.**

Hebrews 10:7 references Psalm 40:6-8. Jesus Christ brought forth a new day and new covenant for all of God's creation. **Jesus Christ fulfilled God's promised provision for salvation.** He perfectly obeyed His Father's will. For example, we see His complete submission in the Garden of Gethsemane. His blood perfectly removes all past, present, and future sin.

The now familiar phrase "once for all" highlights the finality of Christ's finished work. His resurrection proves His sufficient sacrifice. How could the offer of an animal be considered a worthy response to such a great salvation? Why would anyone look elsewhere or demand Jesus Christ stand up again and do more than He has already done? He is seated to signal the initiation of the new covenant.

The author mentions Jeremiah 31:33-34 here to teach that the Holy Spirit proves the value of Jesus Christ's work to believers. **God based His new covenant vows on His own character, not on people's performances.** The repetition emphasizes there is no longer a requirement to offer sacrifices for sin.

What is the proper response? We are to turn away from the former shadows by turning to the object of our salvation – the life-giving, light-giving body of Jesus Christ.

Warnings to Live in Light of Christ's Sacrifice – 10:18-39

Three summaries of new covenant truths are offered:

- Believers possess **confidence** before God as brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ.
- Believers share **intimacy** with God and one another because Christ's blood cleanses us from sin.
- Believers show **abundant life** indwelt by the Spirit in union with the Great Priest Jesus Christ.

The heavenly reality of Christ's location, position and life is the new and living way for those with faith. **Believers dispel darkness and discouragement through Christ.** The warning is to obey God's words. They are also warned to reject the ways of those who shrink back, disobey or disassociate from other believers when times are hard. How might taking these warnings to heart change your thought life and behavior?

Four positive actions are commanded to guide believers through difficult circumstances.

- Let us **draw near** to God.
- Let us **hold steady** to the hope we profess.
- Let us focus on **encouraging** one another toward love and good deeds.
- Let us keep **meeting together**, even more often when things are hard.

One injunction warns those tempted to abandon the new and living way: **do not throw away your confidence.** The consequences for turning back on a profession of faith are clear. It is sin to deliberately and consistently deny God, disobey His Word or disassociate from His people. Selfishness and arrogance are the roots of these sins. The author invokes old covenant curses to warn those who:

- **Trample** the Father's Son underfoot.
- treat the Son's substitutionary death that cleansed them as **unholy**.
- **Insult** the Spirit of grace.

These warnings expose the grave danger of deceptive phrases like "backsliding," "finding oneself" or "youthful distractions." **This warning against offending God intends to shake the wayward to their senses.** Truth about sin should move us to repent and return to God and His people. In the end, those who walk away and never return prove that they were never believers. What sacrifice is left for such prideful people? The writer warns all who will hear that the only thing to expect when insisting on your own way and living how you see fit is a "fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God." (10:27)

It is crucial to remember the letter's context. These words address brothers and sisters - believers.

These words are for the good of believers temporarily shaken by fear of persecution and by grief over the loss of their Jewish identity and community. The message's purpose is to encourage endurance among those who may be distanced, but can never be lost. The author counsels them to recall former

times when God proved faithful. These same believers were once strong in obedience and worship despite great persecution. By God's grace, they will be again.

God-given faith provides confidence in a new identity and ability to persevere. Do not shrink back. Instead, return to the new and living way. God is faithful to keep His covenant, so believers are saved and have nothing to fear. Jesus Christ represents His brothers and sisters in heaven until His physical return with them to earth. No one and nothing can overcome Him.