

Mission Accomplished

Hebrews 10:1-10

Introduction

Chapter 9 ends with our eagerly waiting for Christ to appear not to judge us for our sin, but to rescue us. How possible? He accomplished the mission of His first coming. He finished what the law could not.

¹ For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near.

² Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? ³ But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. ⁴ For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

⁵ Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, "Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; ⁶ in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. ⁷ Then I said, 'Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.'"

⁸ When he said above, "You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin

offerings” (these are offered according to the law), ⁹ then he added, “Behold, I have come to do your will.” He does away with the first in order to establish the second. ¹⁰ And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

1. The Failure of the OT Sacrifices (1-4)
2. The Mission of the Messiah (5-7)
3. The Success of the Messiah (8-10)

1. The Failure of the OT Sacrificial System (1-4)

¹ For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near.

Shadow—outline or shadow of an object versus its “true form”—Gr, *eikon*
(Object lesson—early rough sketch on canvas to lay out what will eventually be a finished painting)

Shadow of good things to come—there would be no shadow cast without the object casting it; the point of the rough sketch is the finished painting.

The law “can never . . . make perfect those who draw near.”

Perfect—reach the goal, complete

Many in the world don't care to draw near to worship God. These are the ones doing so. But the OT law system did not do all that needed to be done, and it's obvious because the same sacrifices were continually offered every year.

If they had reached the goal for the worshiper, there would be no need for them still to be offered. What verse 2 explains.

² Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? ³ But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year.

Cleansed—just how far did the cleansing need to go?

Answer: No longer have any consciousness of sins—That's the goal (made perfect) but what does that phrase mean?

It's not referring to having no more awareness of our sinfulness. We do experience that even under the new covenant, and it's clear that the apostles did too—"chief of sinners," "in my flesh dwells no good thing." If you have a heart that desires to do right, you are keenly aware of your sins. In fact, the more you grow in Christ, the more sensitive to sin you become. So what is the text talking about?

“It refers to an assurance that the worshiper no longer stands guilty under the wrath of God” (Kruger, 245). I’m aware of my sins—I’m not ignoring them or treating them as if they don’t matter. It’s that I know they are taken care of. They no longer burden my conscience. Like the relief you feel when a broken relationship is restored.

In contrast, the OT sacrifices kept reminding the worshipers of their sins and the judgment they demand. They did not contradict the gospel. They pointed to our need for it.

“The message of the sacrifices was repeatedly, *You’re not okay. You are a sinner. Blood needs to be shed on your behalf*” (Kruger, 246).

The ongoing repetition proves that these offerings were not doing away with sin completely. Why not?

⁴ For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. Impossible—without power or powerless to take away/remove sins

Pretty obvious that animal blood could not remove human sin

So look at the evaluation of the old system:
Can never make us perfect

A continual reminder of sins every year
Impossible . . . to take away sins
All this spells Failure—that is, failure to
achieve the ultimate goal

If even the Old Covenant given by God could
not succeed in purging sin apart from Christ,
how much less any manmade religious rituals
or rules?

Ceremonies, symbols, and rules cannot free
your conscience from sin guilt. No one but
Jesus can merit the forgiveness you need.
Stop trying to earn it yourself!

To let go of Jesus to pursue some other path
to righteousness or another way to deal with
guilt—even going back to Jewish Levitical
law—is the road to failure.

2. The Mission of the Messiah (5-7)

⁵ Consequently, when Christ came into the
world, he said, "Sacrifices and offerings you
have not desired, but a body have you
prepared for me; ⁶ in burnt offerings and sin
offerings you have taken no pleasure. ⁷ Then I
said, 'Behold, I have come to do your will, O
God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the
book.'"

Consequently—The mission of the Messiah
was in answer to the inability of the law, in
particular the inability of the law regarding

sacrifices, to accomplish cleansing from sin and clearing of our consciences.

The law cannot sanctify us. Its moral demands expose our sin. They do not purge it. Further, even the blood sacrifices required by the law on account of our failure to keep the moral law cannot complete what we need. They reiterate our sinfulness and point to the need for a permanent cure. Their significance is their connection with the one sacrifice that would finally cleanse us.

But what should we make of this statement that God takes no pleasure in burnt offerings and sacrifices? Didn't God command these sacrifices?

Yes, but He makes clear, first of all, that they have no value unless they are from the heart and are backed by a life offered to God. The ritual itself is empty apart from heart and life reality—apart from these, the ritual turns into a mockery of God rather than worship of Him.

1 Samuel 15:22

And Samuel said, "Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams.

Psalms 51:16-17

16 For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. **17** The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

Micah 6:6-8

6 "With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? **7** Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"

8 He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

Amos 5:21-24

21 I hate, I despise your feasts, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. **22** Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; and the peace offerings of your fattened animals, I will not look upon them. **23** Take away from me the noise of your songs; to the melody of your harps I will not listen. **24** But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

But even sincere sacrifices and burnt offerings were not enough because they did not accomplish all that needed to be done. They did not cleanse the conscience. They did not give life. Rather, they pointed to the One who would do so. This is clear from the OT, as our text indicates.

Hebrews is quoting here from Psalm 40:6-8

⁶ In sacrifice and offering you have not delighted, but you have given me an open ear. Burnt offering and sin offering you have not required.

“You have given me an open ear” reads literally, “ears you have dug for me”—referring to the OT practice of a person’s willingly making himself a lifelong slave by having a hole bored in his ear. The writer of Hebrews makes an interpretative explanation of the OT text—to have ears you must have a body. God the Son was given a body so that it could be devoted in service to fulfilling God’s will). Reference to His incarnation.

Psalm 40:7

Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.’”

Jesus did God the Father’s will in everything. He was sinless. His incarnation—His coming—was to fulfill God’s will of making sacrifice for His people.

The OT Scriptures not only defined the perfection that Jesus the Messiah would achieve. They write of Him—"in the scroll of the book it is written of me."

John 5:39-40, 45-47

39 You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, **40** yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.

45 Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you: Moses, on whom you have set your hope. **46** For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. **47** But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?"

Psalms 40:8

I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart."

No lamb ever willingly, consciously laid down its own life. But Christ Jesus did so deliberately and purposefully.

Genuine obedience delights to do God's will. That was the pure obedience Jesus offered. If we obey the command but don't really want to, that's unwilling obedience. We call that hypocrisy.

“Your law is written within my heart” sounds like what God does for His people under the new covenant. Jesus makes that possible.

Jeremiah 31:33

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Many are confused about the mission of Jesus. He was a great teacher and prophet, but that was not His prime mission. There have been many teachers and prophets. He was good—in fact, perfect—unlike any other human being since the fall of Adam. But we needed more than just a perfect example who would continually remind us of our lack of perfection. The story of His birth inspires countless songs and joyful celebration. But His mission is more—to give Himself as a sacrifice to free us from sin, guilt, and death. He succeeded in His mission.

3. The Success of the Messiah (8-10)

⁸ When he said above, “You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings” (these are offered according to the law), ⁹ then he added, “Behold, I have come to do your will.” He does away with the first in order to establish the second. ¹⁰ And by that

will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Jesus has done away with the old covenant sacrificial system because He has fulfilled what it pointed to. He has established the new covenant that not only does away with our sin, but changes us from the inside out.

Because of His successful completion of His mission, we have been sanctified—referring to our being set apart to Christ permanently. Called positional sanctification. It's done. We've been transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's beloved Son (Colossians 2:13).

Acts 26:18

To open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.

Progressive sanctification is the ongoing process toward being more and more like Jesus that flows from our positional sanctification.

Romans 12:1

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a

living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. (compare Romans 6)

Our final sanctification—we usually call that glorification—is when God’s saving work in us is complete, making us sinless and immortal.

Philippians 1:6

And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion in the day of Jesus Christ.

The success of Christ in His mission changes us and changes how we respond to others. We freely forgive. That’s gospel living. To keep reminding people of their sins is the pattern of the old covenant not the new.

Ephesians 4:30-32

³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. ³² Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Let the success of Christ’s gospel mission free you from your relentless guilt. Let it motivate you to stop keeping a record of wrongs others have done you. How can you keep holding

their sin over their heads when God has forgiven you?

Conclusion

Christ's mission is accomplished! Think about the life and the joy this opens to you.

Reconciles you to God. Restores relationship with others. Humility, grace, long-suffering, forbearance, love—love like Jesus.

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Discussion Questions

1. In what sense did the OT sacrificial system fail, that is, what was it powerless to do? How did it succeed, given God's design for it?
2. How can we be aware of our sinfulness and at the same time be free from the conscious burden of them?
3. What are some ways (lists, ceremonies, symbolic gestures, rules, etc) that people try to reduce or get rid of their guilt apart from Jesus?
4. Why can even the most amazing or demanding activities of worship fail to impress God—or even amount to blaspheming Him?
5. Jesus delighted to do God's will. What is it that causes you to delight in doing

God's will? When have you found yourself reluctant to do so?

6. We often focus on what we call "progressive sanctification"—the process of becoming more and more like Jesus. In what ways is our "positional sanctification" strategically important? That is, the truth that "we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."
7. In what ways does the success of Christ's mission to cleanse our consciences from sin transform how we interact with others who sin against us?