Verses 1-4 ➢ THE SACRIFICES OF THE LAW COULD NEVER REDEEM A PERSON

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. 2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. 3 But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. 4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.

The writer of Hebrews continues his contrast between the shadows of salvation in the Old Testament Law represented by the Tabernacle, furniture and sacrificial animals and the substance of salvation in the New Testament Grace of Jesus Christ. These items, by their very nature and purpose, could never permanently take away sins only cover (make atonement) for them. Note again what John tells us in John 1:14-18 and what the Apostle Paul tells us in Ephesians 2:4-10.

Another point made here is the repetitive nature of the animal sacrifices they were offered over and over. This implies that these sacrifices were insufficient to cleanse the worshippers of sin. They had no power to save us. It took the once-and-for-all sacrifice of Jesus Christ to put an end to all future blood sacrifices because His one-time sacrifice was not only necessary, it was sufficient because He was God with flesh on!

It was Benjamin Franklin who said, ÒOur new Constitution is now established, and has an appearance that promises permanency; but in this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes.Ó But it was John Stossel who recently said, ÒGive me a break — They say taxes are inevitable ...like death. At least death doesn’t come every year.Ó

The animal sacrifices were like taxes they never ceased. But those who come by faith to Jesus Christ for redemption die to self once and are evermore saved. To them who are thus saved, Òto those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvationÓ the last verse of the last chapter {Hebrews 9:28}.

In the wonderful sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, is found not only the atonement¹ of sin but its remission² as well. {See also vv. 16-18}. What is the difference?

Atonement of sin has to do with a covering for sin making us so that God does not see our sin but His righteousness in us as we come to Him by faith. Atonement has been described as Òat-one-mentÓ because God Òcovers our sinsÓ. See for example Psalms 85:2; Romans 13:14; Galatians 3:27; Philippians 3:8,9; Revelation 3:5, 18; 7:9,10.

¹ Atonement  [3722 kaphar (kaw-far')] a primitive root; to cover (specifically with bitumen, pitch); figuratively, to expiate or condone, to placate, pacify, reconcile or cancel. To cover it with pitch within and without. See Genesis 6:9-14 where this same word is translated ÒcoverÓ
² Remission  [859 aphasis (af'-es-is)] release from bondage or imprisonment, freedom; (figuratively) pardon; deliverance, forgiveness, liberty. From a word that means Òsend forthÓ
Remission of sin has to do with the release from bondage that the forgiveness of a penalty or debt brings. The idea of the word remission is that of the pardoning of a crime. This occurred when a prisoner completed his sentence and a certificate or sign was given to him stating simply, PAID IN FULL and he was released as if he had never committed the crime. In the Old Testament this aspect of salvation is seen in Jeremiah 31:31-34; 33:7-9.

In the spiritual context then, remission refers to the forgiveness of a person’s sin-debt (letting them go as if they had never been committed). See for example Romans 4:4-8 (vv. 1-16); Colossians 2:6-14; Titus 3:3-7.

Verses 5-9 ➤ JESUS CHRIST’S SACRIFICIAL OBEDIENCE Establishes the New Covenant

5 Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: “Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me. 6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin you had no pleasure. 7 Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come-- in the volume of the book it is written of Me-- to do Your will, O God.’ ” 8 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), 9 then He said, “Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.” He takes away the first that He may establish the second.

This passage begins with a quote from Psalms 40:4-8 and is in the context of a person making the LORD their trust. Note that salvation comes through belief of the heart and not through performing external works even those rituals and sacrifices that were required by the Law (the Old Covenant). This has always been the case; see for example Genesis 15:6; Psalm 119:9-11; Galatians 3:13-29; Romans 10:1-11. If the heart is not in it, God cannot and will not accept it.

False worship is based on personal pride in one’s self-effort or any other idol. This kind of hypocritical worship is graphically described in Zephaniah 1:1-6. You see, even under the Law just by bringing sacrifices and offerings to the LORD will not be acceptable if brought with the wrong heart attitude, one of pride and stubborn rebellion. See for example 1 Samuel 15:18-23.

Note that God will not accept false worship or sacrifice and can see through this sham. This truth is described in Isaiah 1:10-20; 66:1-4; Jeremiah 6:19,20; Malachi 1:10-14; 2:1,2, 11-16; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18.

Jesus Christ’s sacrifice takes away the first {Old} Covenant so that He might establish the second {New} Covenant. We literally stand upon the promise of salvation in Christ Jesus!

3 Establish [2476 histemi (his’-tay-mee)] to stand or standing (and most often translated so), used also in various other applications (literally or figuratively): abide, appoint, bring, continue, covenant, establish, hold up, lay, present, set (up), stanch, stand (by, forth, still, up).

Hebrews Chapter 10

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Verses 10-18  JESUS CHRIST SACRIFICE PERFECTS FOREVER THOSE WHO ARE BEING SANCTIFIED

10  By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.
11  And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. 12  But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, 13  from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. 14  For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified. 15  But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after He had said before, 16  “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,” 17  then He adds, “Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.” 18  Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.

That will was God’s Will which was dead-set on becoming a sin offering (see Luke 22:39-44) has also sanctified us, that is, set us apart⁴ for the work of sharing the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ (see Ephesians 2:4-10; especially v. 10). The process of sanctification is described by the Apostle Paul in Romans 12:1,2; Philippians 4:1,2.

As in verses 1-4, the contrast between the quality and quantity of the sacrifices under the Old Covenant and the One sacrifice of the New Covenant is again stated. That is, the sacrifices under the Law were repetitive, they continued year after year. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ once-and-for-all secured total and permanent forgiveness of sin!

Note also the honor bestowed upon the Son for this sacrifice and suffering. He sat down at the right hand of God and is now waiting before all His enemies are made His footstool (i.e., this will occur at the Restoration⁵ of all things. See Isaiah 45:22,23; Acts 3:17-26; Romans 14:11,12; Ephesians 1:7-23; Revelation 5:11-14,11:15). This theme was first mentioned in Hebrews 1:13, again in Hebrews 2:5-8 and is based on a quote from Psalms 110:1. Paul describes the practical implication of this truth for Christians in Philippians 2:1-11.

Here again is stated the direct connection between the fact that where sins are truly forgiven there is no longer any reason for any more offerings or sacrifices. Jesus’ blood sacrifice canceled the debt of sin and through the blood He shed on the cross we can be made spiritually alive.

The fact that our sins are paid in full and the sin debt has been canceled means that all-further sacrifice is pointless. ÊFor by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified”.

In verses 16,17 the writer of Hebrews again quotes from Jeremiah 31:31-34 as he did in Hebrews 8:8-12! For those who trust in this sacrifice, Jesus has not only covered their sin, but canceled it out as well. God has permanently removed the guilt of sin from all those who received that forgiveness by faith. Evidently, this is a very important concept.

A person who places their faith in Jesus Christ will have their sins against God remembered no more. Hallelujah-Amen! See also Psalms 32:1,2; 103:11,12; Isaiah 43:45; 1 John 1:7 and Romans 4:6-8.

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⁴ sanctified [37 hagiazo (ha-ghee-ad'-zo)] to make holy, i.e. (ceremonially) purify, cleanse or consecrate. To separate from profane things and to dedicate to God.

⁵ See Note (4) in Chapter 9 Hebrews notes.
The Superiority of Christ's Power

Verses 19-25  
Jesus Christ Allows Us to Have Complete Intimacy with God the Father

19 Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, 21 and having a 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 confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 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.

The chamber behind the second veil in the earthly tabernacle was called the Holy of Holies and it was where the of the Ark of the Covenant with its "mercy seat" was placed. Into this chamber only the High Priest could go and then only once a year {on the Day of Atonement or Yom Kippur; see supplemental notes on chapter 9}.

However, because of the redeeming value of Jesus blood sacrifice, we have access to the heavenly tabernacle. Thus, through our prayers, we can confidently go to the very throne of God described in Revelation 11:19; 15:5 where Jesus is seated and making intercession for us. Compare this to Hebrews 4:15,16:

For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

The blood of Jesus' sacrifice, representing eternal life, gives us "boldness" to enter the holiest {place} of ALL into the direct presence of God! The word translated for boldness here is made up of two Greek words, "pas + rheo" meaning all utterance or speech. It conveys the idea privileged and immediate communication. It is the same word used in 2 Corinthians 3:12. This is contrasted with the aloof relationship the Persian kings had even with their own wives {e.g., Esther 4:11}. Jesus Christ offers us the 'golden scepter' every time we come to the throne. We can speak our mind freely before Him what an awesome privilege!

Through the living way that Jesus Christ has made to the Heavenly Tabernacle, we have permanent and direct access to God and we can come expressing our innermost thoughts and feelings. And we can do this confidently because of the sacrifice of our LORD and Savior, Jesus Christ. It is as it were that we are on a first name basis with Him {John 10:1-4, 27-29}. This should not seem too surprising since by faith in Christ's sacrifice we become children of God! This is the idea found in Romans 8:14-17; Galatians 4:4-7; Revelation 2:17.

This is entirely a new way compared to the Tabernacle/Temple rituals under the Old Covenant. This way is living, not dying, by grace, by works and makes us spiritually alive to God. The letter {i.e., the Law} kills but the spirit {i.e., Grace} makes alive. Note what 2 Corinthians 3:2-6 says

You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men; clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart. And we have such trust through Christ toward God. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

[6 boldness [3954 parrhesia (par-rhay-see'-ah) ] outspokenness, i.e. frankness, bluntness, confidence, freedom [in speech]. See also 2 Corinthians 3:12 to get more understanding of this word.]
Here too, like in the earthly Temple, was a veil that our High Priest, Jesus Christ, went through. This ÏeilÖ was the flesh God chose to clothe Himself with to atone for sin and redeem us to Himself as John describes in John 1:14:

Înd the Word became flesh and ìweldï among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.Ô

It has been said that Jesus Christ is God with flesh on or God wearing a Ïnan-suitÔ. See also notes on Hebrews 2:14-17.

**FOUR AREAS OF EXHORTATION FOR A CHRISTIAN:**

v. 22 (1) **SANCTIFICATION.** *Draw near to God with a true heart in full assurance of faith.*

*We can do this because we are forgiven, washed and cleansed from all sin.*

v. 23 (2) **FORTIFICATION.** *Persevere and hold fast their faith without wavering* {without staggering like a drunken man}.

*We should do this because God is faithful!*

v. 24 (3) **EDIFICATION.** *Understand/Comprehend one another within the Body of Christ.*

{Believers are to build each other up and help one another remain accountable for their faith}.

*We should do this because Jesus is returning and we will give an account.*

v. 25 (4) **CONGREGATION.** *Not forsaking assembling together for worship.*

{Believers are to continue to meet together for worship & fellowship}.

*We should do this because Jesus is returning and we will be worshiping Him together.*

On this last point we need to remember that there are no Ïone rangerÔ Christians in ChristÔ Body Ï His Church. Those who say that they donÔ need to come together for corporate worship are also saying, ÏI donÔ want to be accountableÔ. That is not pleasing to the Father and not honoring to the LORD Jesus Christ who desires unity and love in the fellowship. A person who does not Ïlove the fellowshipÔ of Christians and desires to meet with them needs to reexamine his/her profession of faith.

The last two exhortations have to do with *expectation* of the LordÔ Return and is based on the ÏBlessed HopeÔ we have in Christ Jesus. He is not finished with us yet. We have been *sealed* with the Holy Spirit {Ephesians 1:13,14; 4:29-32; 2 Corinthians 1:21,22; 5:5} and are awaiting the *redemption of our bodies* {a new, resurrected body; Romans 10:8:23-25}.

What is Ïthe DayÔ in verse 25 referring to? Well a study of the way this phrase is used in the New Testament will help in determining the answer. Refer to 1 Corinthians 3:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:4; 2 Thessalonians 1:10; 2:3; 2 Timothy 1:18; 4:8. *The Day* is that time period during which Lord consummates His promises to both the Church and Israel. It is the restoration or restitution of all things at the end of this present age. Refer also to NOTE [4] in Chapter 9 Hebrews notes.

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7 The word translated Ïweldï [4637 SKENOO (SKAY-NO'-O)] which literally means to *set up a tent* and carries the idea of encamping, occupying, or inhabiting. The word is derived from another word that means ÏtentÔ.
Verses 26-31 ➢ REJECTION OF CHRIST’S SUPERIOR SACRIFICE WILL BRING ULTIMATE JUDGMENT

26 For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. 28 Anyone who has rejected Moses’ law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29 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? 30 For we know Him who said, “Vengeance is Mine; I will repay,” says the Lord. And again, “The Lord will judge His people.” 31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

If we sin willfully, He is talking about a greater accountability to God of a person after he/she has heard the Gospel {the knowledge of Truth} but rejected it. There is no forgiveness in any sacrifice other than Jesus Christ. Therefore, the sin of unbelief, after hearing the Truth, is the only sin that cannot be forgiven; it is the unforgivable sin spoken of by Jesus in Matthew 12:31,32; Luke 12:8-12.

Note how this rejection will affect those during the Tribulation period when the lawless one, man of sin or anti-Christ is revealed in 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12. It is the same one {Satan, the devil} who gives the lawless one his power, throne and great authority {Revelation 13:2} who has blinded the eyes of those who do not want to believe {2 Corinthians 4:1-6}. This is the battle we are in—a spiritual battle for the hearts of lost and perishing souls!

The judgment or more correctly the discipline of God, after the rejection of truth, is also true of Christians. As we will see in Hebrews 12:3-11 God will discipline His own children for that very reason; they are His children [no one loves and disciplines a child more than the parent]. Compare also John 15:1-12; 1 Corinthians 3:9-18; 2 Corinthians 5:7-11. Verse 31 says it all, “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God”. Compare Nahum 1:2-8.

The point is that whether a person is a believer {saved} or an unbeliever {lost}, there is NO OTHER SACRIFICE FOR SIN. Jesus Christ is it! Don’t wait for something else or something better; it’s already here in Christ! [Remember the truth found in Hebrews 6:4-6.]

The writer of Hebrews compares the sentencing a man to death on the basis of two or three witnesses found as stipulated in the Old Covenant {Deuteronomy 17:6} to that of the greater witness of the Word of God and Jesus Himself. In other words, a person will be condemned to eternal death on the basis of the Gospel witness of Jesus Christ if they refuse to repent and believe. See John 3:16-21; 5:31-47; 8:13-19; 10:24-38.

Thus, it is much worse {superior} punishment to trample “…the Son of God underfoot…” by counting as nothing the precious blood of the New Covenant by which a person is sanctified. This is an insult to the Spirit of God here called the Spirit of Grace.

Jesus Christ is the superior standard for the witness unto the condemnation of a man. And with Jesus is a much superior death also, it is eternal death; forever separated from God in the Lake of Fire, Hell.
Verses 32-39 ➤ The Just Shall Live by Their Faith

32 But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings: 33 partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated; 34 for you had compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven. 35 Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. 36 For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: 37 “For yet a little while, and He who is coming will come and will not tarry. 38 Now the just shall live by faith; but if anyone draws back, my soul has no pleasure in him.” 39 But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.

In this passage the writer of Hebrews is summarizing the practical consequence of what has been said up to this point [chapters 1-10]. Basically, the one who desires to be justified in God’s eyes must do it through faith.

The writer now appeals to the believer’s past understanding and knowledge of the LORD [illumination] and their past experience of enduring a large number of spiritual battles. Note that the word translated struggle or fight in verse 32 is denotes ἁθλος combat, a contest of athletes {refer also to note (8) and Ephesians 6:10-18}.

Part of this struggle includes the verbal and physical abuse (reproaches) heaped upon Christians by those antagonistic to the Gospel message. Christians and their message are put on public display and they are made fun of, mocked and insulted. (The KJV translates this word ἔμπλησεν a gazing stock). Note the meaning of the Greek word translated ἀφαίρεσις in verse 33.

Another aspect of the struggle included the suffering caused by identifying with those who were being mistreated and thereby becoming partners {companions} in both their suffering and testimony.

The writer of Hebrews is saying to remember these things and use these experiences as motivation to continue on in faithful endurance.

Spiritual struggles ἀγωνία what kind of spiritual ἀνατολή we have undergone in preparation for the battle. What does this spiritual conditioning consist of? It includes praise and worship, prayer and fasting, meditating on God’s Word, remembrance and thankfulness of past blessings.

We are to remain faithful by remembering past spiritual battles and victories and not let them have been in vain. Romans 8:37 tells us that ἄνευ in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us! the battle has already been won!

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8 struggle [119 ἁθλος (ath-‘lay-sis)] A contest or struggle, a fight, combat, striving, hard trial. [From ἁθληοῦ to contend in the competitive games like the Olympics]. We get our English word athletic from this. Athlos was an athletic contest in the public arena.

9 confidence [3954 παρθένια (parhay-see-’ah)] all out-spokenness, i.e. frankness, bluntness, public witness or speech, by implication, assurance. Freedom in speaking, unrestrained in speech; speaking openly, clearly or frankly, that is, without concealment; cheerful courage, boldness; the deportment by which one becomes conspicuous or secures publicity.

10 spectacle [2301 θεατήριον (theh-at-rid’zo)] to expose as a spectacle: to bring upon the stage, to set forth as a spectacle, to expose to contempt. We derive our English word theater from this word.
The Superiority of Christ’s Power

The writer then gets personal as he commends those who publicly sympathized {had compassion} with him while he was imprisoned. Because of this they had their personal property confiscated. By being willing to sacrifice their possessions to aid a fellow believer they were showing true Christian LOVE {had compassion on me in my chains}, FAITH {joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods} and HOPE {knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven}11. They were maintaining their spiritual integrity, as we must also do!

We are not to throw off our confidence, literally our "out-spokenness" but to maintain a steadfast public witness of the Gospel message. The idea here is not to forsake our Savior and King, the Lord Jesus Christ. We are reminded that our previous struggles have already reaped a great reward in spiritual victory. You will recall that these truths describe the major theme that weaves it way throughout the book of Hebrews. This theme is promoted two ways: (1) consideration and remembrance {Hebrews 2:1; 3:1; 12:3} and (2) exhortation and consolation {Hebrews 6:17,18; 12:5,6; 13:20-22}.

Our faithful endurance will result in God’s purposes being fulfilled in our lives.

The phrase The just shall live by faith is a quote from Habakkuk 2:4 and is quoted by the Apostle Paul in two other places in scripture. The idea in the original language is a personal faith, real faith, one’s own faith. This faith, coupled with the consideration of former days and warnings not to neglect our great salvation, will lead to a life of spiritual endurance and perseverance.

Habakkuk 2:4 is quoted three times in the New Testament. In Romans 1:17 who are the just is stressed; in Galatians 3:11 the what shall live is stressed and here in Hebrews 10:38 the how by faith is stressed.

Hebrews 11:6 tells us that Without faith it is impossible to please God and note that it is by our faith that we overcome the world {1 John 5:4,5}. God has no pleasure in a faithless Christian.

Here is a major principal of scripture: If one wants to please God, he/she MUST do it through and by faith .... there is NO other way! It is by faith that we are saved, by faith preserved & kept and by faith that we endure sufferings. Cain’s sacrifice did not please God because it was without faith ... there was no blood shed in the process and it came from the ground which was cursed. Solomon's request for wisdom to lead such a great people "pleased" God because it was of faith! {1 Kings 3:3-15}.

As Christians, we have the blessed hope {Ephesians 2:1-22} and a life of faithful endurance is based on the knowledge that we shall be with Jesus and be like Him for we shall see Him as He is {1 John 3:1-3}.

The writer concludes this chapter with a word of encouragement {cp. Jude 1:20,21,24,25}:

But we are not of those who draw back to perdition12, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.

AMEN!

11 Note what Paul says about these three attributes in 1 Corinthians 13:13; And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

12 Perdition [684 apoleia (ap-o-’li-a)] complete ruin or loss (physical, spiritual or eternal); utter waste or destruction, refers to an irrecoverable loss. Note that the king of the demonic army from the Abyss is referred to as Apollyon= the Destroyer in Revelation 9:11. Both Judas and the anti-Christ are called the son of perdition The term is sometimes applied to Satan himself. See also John 10:10; 14:30.

Hebrews Chapter 10