

Study #10: Come to the Party

In chapter 10 the long crescendo of Hebrews begins to gather together, picking us up and carrying us forward into ... life in God.

Read Hebrews 10:1-18

1. "The law is a shadow," goes with "the tabernacle is a copy"... both having to do with what is less than full reality. The difference isn't between physical and spiritual, or real and ideal, it's between the present system and the coming-into-being system. (Both the temple sacrifice and Jesus' sacrifice are bloody and fully physical). What picture do you get of the psycho-spiritual state of worshipers in the old system, versus that of the new system? (vv. 1-4)
2. Do people experience those old and new states today? How?
3. Verses 5-10 say that the law (which was never God's desire) is supplanted by "doing your will." Isn't the law God's will? What point is intended here?
4. "Sit down" (verse 12) is what you do when you are done working and at rest. (Remember "enter God's rest?") What does this say about Jesus, and why does it matter?
5. What is the fate of the Temple? (verse 18)

Read Hebrews 10:19-25

6. Finally! We are invited in. What qualifications do we need as we "draw near" and enter the Most Holy Place?
7. How does the author go from the individual "drawing near to God" and the emphasis on church? (verse 25) What does church have to do with it?
8. For people being persecuted, attending church is making yourself a visible target. Is there anything comparable in our environment that might deter people from attending church?

Read Hebrews 10:26-31

9. Tom Wright notes that the Old Testament sacrifices were explicitly meant to cleanse from accidental or unavoidable sin. Intentional sin was always subject to stern punishment. This section also seems to warn against blatant, deliberate sinful rejection of the gospel. Since we hardly ever talk about God's judgment, it's uncomfortable. What do you think of God's judgment? How does it shape your understanding of what's being offered here in Hebrews 10?

Read Hebrews 10:32-39

10. How would you describe the Hebrews' experience of faith in Christ? Why should they remember it?
11. Do you have any experiences comparable to these that you need to remember?

12. In urging the Hebrews to persevere, what does the author offer in the way of encouragement and motivation?

Hebrews 10:1-18 New International Version

Christ's Sacrifice Once for All

10 The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. 2 Otherwise, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. 3 But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins. 4 It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

5 Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said:

“Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me; 6 with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased. 7 Then I said, ‘Here I am—it is written about me in the scroll— I have come to do your will, my God.’”[a]

8 First he said, “Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them”—though they were offered in accordance with the law. 9 Then he said, “Here I am, I have come to do your will.” He sets aside the first to establish the second. 10 And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

11 Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. 12 But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, 13 and since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool. 14 For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

15 The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First he says:

16 “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.”[b]

17 Then he adds:

“Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more.”[c]

18 And where these have been forgiven, sacrifice for sin is no longer necessary.

Footnotes

Hebrews 10:7 Psalm 40:6-8 (see Septuagint)

Hebrews 10:16 Jer. 31:33

Hebrews 10:17 Jer. 31:34

Hebrews 10:19-25 New International Version

A Call to Persevere in Faith

19 Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, 25 not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Hebrews 10:26-31 New International Version

26 If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, 27 but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. 28 Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29 How much more severely do you think someone deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified them, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know him who said, “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,”^[a] and again, “The Lord will judge his people.”^[b] 31 It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Footnotes

Hebrews 10:30 Deut. 32:35

Hebrews 10:30 Deut. 32:36; Psalm 135:14

Hebrews 10:32-39 New International Version

32 Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you endured in a great conflict full of suffering. 33 Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated. 34 You suffered along with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions. 35 So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded.

36 You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. 37 For, “In just a little while, he who is coming will come and will not delay.”[a]

38 And, “But my righteous[b] one will live by faith. And I take no pleasure in the one who shrinks back.”[c]

39 But we do not belong to those who shrink back and are destroyed, but to those who have faith and are saved.

Footnotes

Hebrews 10:37 Isaiah 26:20; Hab. 2:3

Hebrews 10:38 Some early manuscripts But the righteous

Hebrews 10:38 Hab. 2:4 (see Septuagint)