

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Hebrews 10: 01-07

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the bible again. This week, we are going to read Hebrews Chapter 10, and today we will read verses 1-7.

Christ, through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without blemish to God—this was God's good pleasure ordained before the foundation of the world. In time, the created Adam sinned, and sin entered the world through one man; death followed sin, and thus death spread to all men. Therefore, it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment. Here, we see that the wages of sin is death.

So how can the problem of sin be resolved? Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sins. In fact, God is omniscient—He certainly knew that Adam would sin. Therefore, God had already prepared the way of salvation: He determined to sacrifice His only begotten Son to redeem fallen humanity. However, in His wisdom and sovereign authority, God's plan of redemption would unfold according to His appointed time.

God first called Abraham out of fallen humanity and from Abraham raised up a chosen people, including both his physical descendants and his heavenly descendants. Among his physical descendants, Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot twelve sons, who became the twelve tribes of Israel, forming the Israelite nation.

During the time of Moses, God sent Moses to deliver the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt, through the Red Sea, and into the wilderness, where he received God's Law and the ordinances for the construction of the Tabernacle at Mount Sinai. When Moses and the Israelites completed the Tabernacle, God had a dwelling place on earth. Through Moses, God established the priestly service and ordained sacrificial offerings, allowing the high priest, once a year, to bear the sins of the people and enter the Most Holy Place, coming before

the mercy seat to meet with God. This initiated the period of Israel's service to God according to the Old Covenant.

Then, at the appointed time, God sent His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to the earth to establish the New Covenant with His own blood. On the cross, He accomplished the substitutionary redemption; after His resurrection and ascension, He entered the heavenly sanctuary and completed the work of reconciliation before the Father. Being accepted by God, He removed the guilt of our conscience, and we received the grace of redemption. This gave us the standing to come before the Father and accomplished the work of reconciliation.

From that moment, Christ, who is in heaven, began His priestly ministry in the heavenly tabernacle, interceding before the Father on behalf of the New Covenant saints. Jesus Christ has accomplished a great salvation for the saints under the New Covenant. Yet, some Hebrew believers failed to recognize this great salvation and instead shrank back into Judaism. The author of Hebrews sought to persuade these backsliding believers by referring to the priestly service and ordinances familiar to the Jews. Hebrews 10:1-18 compares the sacrifices of the Old and New Covenants, while verses 19-39 exhort and warn these believers.

Verse 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."

The Old Testament law, particularly the ordinances concerning sacrifices, was merely a shadow of the good things to come. These "good things" refer to the New Covenant established by Christ. Since these good things have already come, the law was only a shadow of them. Now that the New Covenant has arrived, the shadow no longer needs to exist. A shadow is not the true image of the object. The word "image" here conveys that, though not the essence itself, it represents the essence sufficiently—just as Colossians 1:15 states, "He is the image of the invisible God." The same Greek word is used in both verses. A shadow is not the true image. Since the greater reality has come, why cling to the shadow?

In fact, this is also a key principle we must grasp when reading the Old Testament today.

The Old Testament contains many types and foreshadowing of Christ, but a type is not the actual substance. Therefore, what is more important is to understand the New Testament revelation concerning Christ, and then use the vast amount of information in the Old Testament to supplement the truth of the New Testament. The Old Testament helps us understand the application of New Testament truths because the law is merely a shadow and has no real efficacy. The law clearly stipulated the regulations for the Day of Atonement sacrifices, requiring the people to observe the same ordinances every year, yet those who offered the same sacrifices annually could never be made perfect.

Verse 2: “For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins.”

This is a rhetorical question. If the sacrifices could make those who offered them perfect, then there would be no need to keep offering them. Would not the sacrifices have ceased long ago? The term “worshipers” includes both the Israelites who offered sacrifices and the priests who assisted them. If their consciences were cleansed through sacrifices, they would no longer have consciousness of sin, and if they had no consciousness of sin, they would not need to keep offering sacrifices. Here we see that the annual sacrifices were one thing, but the cleansing of the conscience was another. God’s intention is for people to receive a cleansed conscience, which requires the New Covenant, where the Son of God, by His own blood, accomplished eternal redemption. Before the New Covenant came, under the shadow of the Old Testament, the annual sacrifices could not cleanse the conscience.

Dear brothers and sisters, we must avoid repeatedly doing ineffective things, thinking that if we do more or persist long enough, God will see our effort and remember us. We may have had similar experiences—when we commit a grave sin,

we fear that God cannot forgive us, so we frantically do good deeds, hoping to balance our wrongs with merits. But this is not God's principle.

The Son of God, Jesus Christ, has already shed His precious blood for us, and only His blood is counted before God. No matter how great the sin, God can forgive, provided we confess our sins and apply Christ's precious blood. Of course, we should still do good, as that is the testimony a Christian should live out. However, the grace of forgiveness can never be earned by our good works. The grace of forgiveness is a free gift that anyone can freely receive. When we truly understand that God's free grace has forgiven our sins, this enables us to forgive those who have sinned against us.

Verses 3-4: "But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins."

The sacrifices offered on the Day of Atonement each year served as a reminder of sins. The author of Hebrews shares a similar understanding with Paul, as seen in Romans 3:20, "For by the law is the knowledge of sin." The law has no power to help people stop sinning; it only reveals their sins when they compare their actions against it. Likewise, when it was time to offer sacrifices, people were reminded of their sins. The sacrificial regulations temporarily covered sins, allowing people to come before God.

The blood of bulls and goats could temporarily cover sins but could not take them away. There are four reasons why animal blood cannot remove sin:

1. The life of animals is not equivalent to human life. Animals cannot be true substitutes for humans; therefore, the Son of God had to be born in human form to be our substitute.
2. The blood of animals could cleanse a person externally but not internally. External cleansing satisfied ritual requirements but could not remove the guilt in one's conscience.

3. The blood of animals had only temporary effectiveness, lasting one year, so sacrifices had to be repeated.
4. The blood of animals was merely a shadow of Christ's precious blood and could never have the same efficacy. Only Christ's blood can take away sin.

The next section, verses 5-7, is a quotation from Psalm 40:6-8. Psalm 40 is a psalm of David, and many psalms contain prophecies about the Messiah, collectively known as Messianic Psalms. In the New Testament, when introducing Christ, these Messianic Psalms are frequently quoted. Psalm 40 speaks of Christ's incarnation, making it a Messianic Psalm. If we compare the Hebrews account with our Old Testament text, we will notice some differences. These differences, which we will discuss below, arise because the author of Hebrews quoted from the Greek Septuagint rather than the Hebrew Old Testament.

Verse 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.'"

The phrase "when He came into the world, He said" is an introduction added by the author. The following quote is not something Jesus Christ directly said during His earthly ministry but was identified by the Holy Spirit as a prophecy of Christ's incarnation spoken through David in Psalm 40:6.

"Sacrifice and offering You did not desire," compared with Psalm 40:6, "Sacrifice and offering You did not delight in;" there is only a slight difference. Sacrifice refers to offerings involving blood, while offering refers to grain offerings, such as the meal offering.

The Old Testament law contained many sacrificial ordinances, and the priests continually offered sacrifices and offerings. However, this was not God's ultimate purpose. Thus, Psalm 40:6 states, "You did not delight in," while Hebrews states, "You did not desire nor have pleasure in them." Generally, *delight* reflects an emotional response, whereas *pleasure* is a matter of the will. Since God did not

desire nor take pleasure in sacrifices and offerings, they could never truly satisfy His heart.

What, then, does God desire and take pleasure in? Psalm 40:6 continues, “My ears You have opened.” However, Hebrews 10:5 states, “But a body You have prepared for Me.” On the surface, these two statements seem quite different, yet they actually convey the same truth, and their difference carries deep spiritual significance.

Let us first examine what it means to have one’s ears opened. This refers to Exodus 21:1-6, which describes the law concerning Hebrew servants: If a Hebrew servant was bought, he could serve only six years and had to be released in the seventh year. Exodus 21:5-6 states, “But if the servant plainly says, ‘I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,’ then his master shall bring him to the judges. He shall also bring him to the door, or to the doorpost, and his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him forever.”

If a servant was free to leave but chose to stay out of love for his master, the master would pierce the servant’s ear at the doorpost. The servant’s ear and the doorpost would then bear the same mark, signifying that he was permanently bonded to the household and would serve the master forever. This was a voluntary decision made at the point of release. The servant willingly offered himself, and the master accepted him. The book of Hebrews directly reveals the hidden meaning behind this— “But a body You have prepared for Me.”

The Triune God had already established the plan of redemption in eternity. The Second Person of the Divine Trinity, the Son of God, willingly became the servant with an opened ear. He gladly carried out God's plan. This process is revealed in Philippians 2:6-8, “who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.” The only begotten Son of God came into the world and became

a humble servant—this is what it means when it says that God prepared a body for Him. The purpose was to offer Him on the cross.

Verse 6: “In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure.”

This is the last sentence of Psalm 40:6. Here, both burnt offerings and sin offerings are in the plural. In the Old Testament, the priests continually offered various sacrifices and offerings according to the law, but these could never truly satisfy God. This was not God's original intention—He did not delight in these things. This also reminds us that when reading the Bible, we cannot just look at the surface meaning of the text; we must understand the heart of God behind the words. Some things are God's perfect will, which He eagerly desires us to follow. Other things are God's permissive will—things He allows because of human disobedience, as if He is compromising and permitting people to act. If we understand that something is not part of God's perfect will, and we care for His heart, we will not do it. Therefore, when reading Scripture, we must have the guidance of the Holy Spirit so that we may truly understand God's will.

Verse 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.’”

This is from Psalm 40:7-8, "Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come—To do Your will, O God.’” The birth of Jesus Christ on earth was a magnificent beginning. This marked the difference between the New Testament and the Old Testament: the Son of God personally came to earth. He was determined to live according to the will of God, never deviating from it.

The first man, Adam, was placed in the beautiful and abundant environment of the Garden of Eden, yet he still failed to keep a simple command—not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. However, when the Son of God came into the world as a humble servant, He lived in a dark and perverse generation, yet He

declared in John 6:38, "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me." Everything He spoke and did was in complete obedience to the Father's will.

The last sentence, "In the volume of the book it is written of Me," was also added by the author. In Luke 24, on the day of the Lord's resurrection, He walked with two disciples on the road to Emmaus and explained the Scriptures to them. Luke 24:27 says, "And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." Unfortunately, the disciples did not record what Jesus explained.

In fact, the birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ—every major event in His life—had already been foretold by the prophets in the Old Testament. The entire Old Testament points to Christ. The 33 and a half years of Christ's life on earth were the most "unfree" life—every event, at every moment, had to align with the prophetic Scriptures. Therefore, in John 5:39-40, Jesus rebuked the Pharisees, saying, "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life." The entire Old Testament testifies of Jesus Christ, and the New Testament is centered on Christ as the gospel. The sacrifices and offerings of the Old Testament were only shadows, all pointing to Christ. When Christ came, He fully obeyed the Father's will, offering Himself once and for all to complete the work of redemption.

Let us pray together: Lord, how blessed we are to be born in the New Testament era! In the Old Testament, the worshippers repeatedly offered sacrifices, yet their consciences could not be at peace; their sacrifices only reminded them of their sins. But in the New Testament, because You obeyed the Father's will and offered Yourself to complete redemption, all who believe in You can receive salvation—complete salvation! What a great blessing this is! Help us to be people full of gratitude. Having experienced the grace of redemption, may we desire to gather each week with the saints to worship and praise God together, for the Lamb is worthy! Bless my church and my church life. We pray in the Holy Name of Jesus Christ.