

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MARCH 29TH–30TH, 2025 // HEBREWS

ONLY A SHADOW (HEBREWS 10:1–4)

ONLY A SHADOW, BUT NOT THE REALITY (V. 1A)

A shadow is a visual representation or outline of an actual object. It does not have any real substance or form to it.

- The “law” (the old covenant with the sacrificial system) was simply a shadow. Through the sacrifices, Israel simply saw the shape of what was to come. The law pointed ahead to the reality of the Messiah (Jesus).

UNABLE TO PERFECT THE WORSHIPER (V. 1B)

The sacrifices were symbolic and preparatory. They could not offer real, permanent, lasting forgiveness from God, they just pointed to it.

- The sacrifices offered under the old covenant were unable to cleanse the people of Israel from their sin permanently.
- How do we know that? Because they had to be offered continually year after year!

IF IT WORKED, WHY REPEAT IT? (V. 2A)

If a mechanic truly repairs your car, would you need to keep bringing it to his shop every week to have him work on it?

- If the sacrifices were able to “perfect the worshipers” and truly make them right with God, why did they have to continually offer sacrifices year after year?
- These were only shadows, not substance.

CONSCIOUSNESS OF SIN (V. 2B)

If all God wants from His people is religious observance of some rituals, wouldn't religious observance be enough to remove “consciousness (feeling of guilt) of sin”?

- Is someone truly free if they're inwardly tormented?
- What is needed is the cleansing of our imagination, memories, and inner selves from the stain of our sinful choices and behaviors.

AN ANNUAL REMINDER OF SIN (V. 3)

At Yom Kippur each year, the Jewish people were to examine their thoughts and actions, reflect on their rebellion and where they fell short, and seek repentance and reconciliation with God.

- Every year, the sacrifices offered to cover their sins served as an annual reminder that their sins were very much still there (just like last year).
- It served as a reminder of remaining sin.

COVERING, BUT NOT REMOVAL (V. 4)

The Hebrew word for atonement is “kophar,” which means to “cover.”

- Yet, animal sacrifices could never take away sins.
- Hebrews 9:26 says that Christ came for the “removal of sin by the sacrifice of Himself.”
- There is a difference between our sins being temporarily pardoned and permanently erased: Jesus has come to completely remove sin.

MAKING MINIMUM PAYMENTS TO AVOID DEFAULT

Practicing religion and religious observances (rules, rituals, and good works)...

- Only treats the symptoms, but not the disease. It tries to manage sin through good behavior, but it cannot change the heart.
- It depends on human effort and can never give true assurance. We always fall short and are left wondering, “Have I done enough?”

THE DEBT HAS BEEN PAID IN FULL

Your guilt before God is erased. You do not have to carry the weight of your past mistakes anymore (Romans 8:1).

- You are not defined by your failures. Your identity is now in Christ, not in what you have done wrong (2 Corinthians 5:17).
- You do not have to earn God's forgiveness. It has been freely given through faith (Ephesians 2:8–9).

SANCTIFIED THROUGH THE OFFERING (HEBREWS 10:5–10)

SOMETHING MORE (VS. 5–8)

Psalm 40:6–8 is quoted in vs. 5–8 to show that God wanted more for His people than for them to see the animal sacrifices as sufficient in and of themselves.

- When it says that God did not “delight in whole burnt offerings and sin offerings,” that does not mean these things contradicted God's will in any way.
- Old covenant sacrifices and offerings could not ultimately bring about the forgiveness of sins.
- These observances, at times, became empty routines for Israel (Isaiah 1:11).
- Religious ritual and observance that is not driven by faith and obedience to God means absolutely nothing to God. Works without faith are meaningless in the eyes of God.
- Something more was needed. Jesus declared His willingness to enter our world and do the will of the Father by offering the body prepared for Him.
- In the incarnation, Jesus' body was perfectly prepared and suited to live as fully man and fully God. Only Jesus' body could be offered as a perfect sacrifice for our sins!

AWAY WITH THE FIRST TO ESTABLISH THE SECOND (V. 9)

In perfect obedience to the Father's will, Jesus came and offered Himself as the perfect, ultimate, and final atoning sacrifice.

- What happened when He did that? He took away the need for the Old Testament sacrificial system.
- The era of the law is over. Jesus fulfilled it and we do not need to sacrifice goats and bulls.

SANCTIFIED THROUGH THE OFFERING (V. 10A)

We are set apart for the purposes of God and made holy (“sanctified”) not through our works, but through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ.

- There is tremendous freedom in knowing God did the work for us! Our responsibility is to believe upon Jesus and receive Him into our hearts and lives as Savior and Lord.

ONCE FOR ALL TIME (V. 10B)

Christ's sacrifice on the cross is definitive and sufficient. No blood sacrifice ever needs to be made again.

- Jesus' sacrifice does the work that many failed to do. The cross does not just point ahead to a coming forgiveness of sin, it offers us total, complete forgiveness and removal of our sin that cleanses and sanctifies us.

NO LONGER NEEDED (HEBREWS 10:11–18)

A PRIEST WHO SAT DOWN (VS. 11–12)

The work of the priest in the Tabernacle/temple was never done. Because of this, the priests could never sit down.

- The priests would have to offer the same daily, weekly, and annual sacrifices because the sin of the people was never fully dealt with and removed. It was only temporarily covered.
- But our priest is different—He sat down.
- After Jesus offered Himself as the one sacrifice for sins forever. He sat down at the right hand of God.
- In Mark's Gospel, when Jesus claimed the place at the right hand of God, the high priest regarded it as blasphemy. This was a claim to be equal with God (Mark 14:62–63)! This was precisely Jesus' point—He is fully God.

AWAITING HOLY RECOMPENSE (V. 13)

Christ is now at the right hand of God, but He is coming back someday to make His enemies His footstool (Psalm 110).

- Jesus is our great High Priest, but He is also our risen and returning King who sits in power and will return to judge all evil and evildoers.
- Those who refuse to receive His great sacrifice of love must face Him as a conquering King.

PROMISED PERFECTION (V. 14)

Through the priestly offering of His own body on our behalf, Jesus has perfected those whom He set apart and made holy.

- This does not mean Christians are perfect in their behavior. We will someday be in heaven, but we are not there yet.
- Christians are perfectly forgiven and made right with God because of Christ's sacrifice.

SUFFICIENT TO BRING FORGIVENESS (VS. 15–18)

Once again, Jeremiah 31:31–34 is quoted with the emphasis placed on the Holy Spirit being the true author of Scripture.

- Christ's sacrifice has inaugurated the New Covenant in which God's law is written on hearts and minds, not on tablets of stone.
- The New Covenant is about inner transformation; God changing our hearts from within.
- The New Covenant is also about total and absolute forgiveness of sins from God—a forgiveness so perfect that God can say He does not even remember our sins in light of Jesus' sacrifice.
- Because we have been given such complete, total, and perfect forgiveness through Jesus' work on the cross, there is no longer an offering needed for sin.

A COVERING OF LEAVES (GENESIS 3:7)

- Shame, remorse, regret, and a guilty conscience are uniquely and universally human experiences.
- Within all of us, there is a desire to cover and hide the broken, dirty, and dark parts of ourselves.
- We use religion, politics (particularly the demonization of the “other side”), civic action, niceness, and acts of service.
- It only treats the symptoms, not the disease. Fig leaves try to cover sin through good behavior, but they cannot change the heart.
- It depends on human effort and can never give true assurance. We always fall short and are left wondering, “Have I done enough?”
- It transforms us into judgmental, self-righteous monsters. If I am insecure about my fig leaves, I will be constantly comparing mine to yours.

A SUPERIOR SACRIFICE HAS BEEN GIVEN

- Through Jesus, God does not just cover your sin temporarily, He removes it permanently.
- You do not have to live defined by your failures or your achievements. Your identity and significance are now in Christ, not in what you have done (2 Cor. 5:17; Phil. 3:8–10).
- You do not have to earn God's forgiveness. It has been freely given through faith (Eph. 2:8–9).

JESUS WAS CRUCIFIED FOR YOU—STOP TRYING TO EARN WHAT WAS FREELY GIVEN AND RECEIVE IT.

- God has “held out his hands” to you (Romans 10:21). He has provided, protected, and made a way of salvation and redemption for you.
- Will you be too proud, apathetic, or unrepentant to bow the knee to Jesus as Savior and Lord?