

**HEBREWS 28
(Hebrews 10:1-10)**

**THE SUPERIOR MINISTRY OF JESUS
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INTRODUCTION

Most recently we have been studying the superiority of Christ's priesthood to the Levitical priesthood. And even though it seems quite obvious that the priesthood of Jesus is better, it wasn't so obvious to the Jews.

The Jews thought their priesthood was end-all of all priesthoods. After all, God ordained their priesthood in the Mosaic Covenant. God had established their priesthood. And therefore, how could any other priesthood ever be better than that?

You see, the Jews thought the Mosaic Law was the end-all of all religious systems. This was it. This was the true God's religion. This was what religion was all about. Yes, we know we are sinners, but God has made a way out for us. All we have to do is obey this Mosaic Law. All we have to do is drag our lambs and goats to the tabernacle and slaughter these animals every day, day after day, year after year, and we are ok.

And they became so self-righteous under the law. They supposed that because they made a token bow to the law, that they were ok. They thought because they had a priesthood, they were ok before God. And they trusted in those Mosaic rituals.

And when Jesus came, offering himself as a priest, they rejected him because they already had priests. Why do we need a priest, we already have many priests. And, we have a high priest.

And so, the writer of Hebrews has offered many proofs to establish that Jesus is a better priest than those old Levitical priests.

1. He is better because he is after a better order.
 - a. Remember, the Jewish priests were Levites. You had to be born a Levite. Furthermore, you had to be a son of Aaron. So, it was purely by birthright that you were a priest.
 - b. Also, the Levitical priests died.
 - c. The Levitical priests were sinners themselves.
 - d. Jesus is not a Levitical priest, he is a Melchisedecian priest.
2. Jesus is a better priest because he ministers in a better place.
3. Jesus is a better priest because he has a better sacrifice.
4. Jesus is a better priest because he ministers in a better covenant.
 - a. The Mosaic Covenant was a covenant of works
 - b. The Mosaic Covenant was a ministration of death. (2 Cor.3:7)
 - c. The Mosaic Covenant was temporary. (Gal.3:19)
 - d. The Mosaic Covenant was shadowy. (Hebrews 10:1)

Now we are going to see some contrasts here in Hebrews 10.

- I. There is a contrast between the law which was shadowy and the new age which is the substance.

Example: A shadow is not the real thing. A shadow is a semblance of the real. It gives you an idea of what the real thing is. But it is not the real thing.

Example: If I hold my hand out, it will cast a shadow on the floor. Now the shadow is not the real thing. It is a dark picture of the real thing.

Likewise, the law was a shadow.

Note: When the writer of Hebrews uses the word law here, he is referring to that Old religious system under Moses.

And he says that religious system called Judaism, was a shadow.

Now in order to have a shadow, you must have something of substance that casts a shadow. Does a shadow have a shadow? No, because a shadow is a wisp of nothingness. A shadow has no substance. A shadow is a mere form of something else.

And the law was a shadow of that true religion which was to come.

Look in verse 1. The law is a shadow of good things to come.

Now when it says the law was a shadow of good things to come, we are not talking about things to come from the point of view of the writer of Hebrews. If the writer of Hebrews wrote in AD 40, we are not talking about things after AD 40. We are talking about things to come with respect to the time of the law.

The law was given around 1500 BC and the law ended with the coming of the seed. (Gal.3:19) And during the time of the law, it was a shadow of good things to come. That is, good things which would come after the period of the law.

Now, obviously, what came after the Mosaic Law was Christ. By definition, the coming of Christ is what marks the ending point of the law system. So, Christ and Christianity and the things of Christ were the good things to come. The new priesthood, the new sacrifice, the new form of worship – all of these things were the new things to come.

And the law was a shadow of these things.

Example: Picture a light shining on Christ. And the light shining on him casts a shadow back into the Old Testament. And all of these things in the Old Testament were shadows of Christ.

Now looking at the shadows, sometimes it was difficult to make out all the details of the real substance. They had a much dimmer picture of Christ than we do because we are not looking at the shadows, but we are looking at the real Christ.

For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. (v.1)

So here is the conclusion with respect to the sacrifices under the law. They could not make the comers perfect. If you came to the temple with a sacrifice, it could not make you perfect. That is, it could not cleanse you of sin.

Isn't that the whole issue? Isn't that why they had priests – because they were sinners? Isn't that why they brought sacrifices – because they were sinners?

And here is the final analysis. Those animal sacrifices could not atone for sin. They could not make you perfect.

Why could they not make the comers perfect? Because they were wisps of nothingness. They were shadows. Those old animal sacrifices were mere shadows cast by that true sacrifice of a coming time.

A shadow can do nothing. And those old sacrifices did nothing to make the comer perfect.

Proof that the Old Testament sacrifices did nothing

They offered them year by year.

If they had atoned for sin, then they would have discontinued.

Here is the nature of God's forgiveness. When he forgives, he forgives for all time. He forgives once for all. He casts sin as far as the east is from the west. He treats you as though you are righteous.

See Romans 3:6-8

1. God imputes righteousness. (v.6)
2. God forgives iniquities. (v.7)
3. God will not impute sin. (v.8)

This is true forgiveness. This is true atonement for sin. It is a complete and perfect atonement. And it makes a sinner perfect in this

sense. The guilt of his sins is gone forever. It purges his conscience of sins. Now it doesn't purge his consciousness of sins. The sinner is ever aware of his sins, but he is convinced of the forgiveness of his sins.

But let me ask this question. Could the law ever give the sinner a sense of being purged from the guilt of sin? And the answer is no, because they continually came back with sacrifices every day and every year.

So you see how ineffectual those sacrifices were under the law.

But there is a second contrast that you see in this passage.

II. There is a contrast between animal sacrifices and a human sacrifice.

In verse four we see the Old Testament type of sacrifice. It was the sacrifice of bulls and goats. This is what was sacrificed under the law. And the conclusion is that these sacrifices could not take away sins.

Now it seems silly to us, that anyone would suspect that the sacrifice of animals could take away the sins of a man. But you must remember that most of us were not brought up under the Mosaic Law. We were not instructed to bring animal sacrifices to the temple on a regular basis. And we live on this side of the coming of Christ. They lived on the other side of that great divide.

And I suppose that many of them thought that the blood of bulls and goats atoned for sin.

But do you think God was really satisfied by the blood of bulls and goats? Well, we now know from Hebrews 10:4 that he was not satisfied.

They should have known. (See Psalm 40:6-8)

David knew. David knew that what God really wanted was obedience. God wants a heartfelt, willingness to do his will. And the slaughter of dumb animals is not something that God desires.

God used it as a shadow, but he had no desire for the shadow.

If God was satisfied with the blood of bulls and goats as an atonement for sin, then there was no need to send his Son.

Notice verse 5. This is actually a paraphrase of Psalm 40. Now in Psalm 40 it was David speaking. But the apostle, under divine inspiration, interprets it as the words of Jesus.

Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me:

Now here is the point. God was not satisfied with animal sacrifices. Those were just types. What he is satisfied with is the complete obedience of a man. And if there is to be a sacrifice for the sins of men, then it must be a sacrifice of a man. And therefore Christ was fitted with a body.

Now let's compare the sacrifice of animals with the sacrifice of Christ himself.

1. Animals are inferior to human beings. Animals are so far inferior to human beings that there is really no comparison. To suppose that animals could step into the place of men and serve as a substitute is not logical nor reasonable. In effect, it is saying, "I know I am a horrible sinner Lord, but here, take this goat and punish it and let me go free. Be satisfied with the death of a goat Lord.

Example: It is kind of like telling your creditor, "I know I owe you one million dollars, but here, take this \$1.00 dollar bill and be satisfied with that."

You see, it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin.

2. Animals are amoral creatures. They don't have a sense of right or wrong. They have no consciousness of moral obligation. And so, the sacrifice of an animal is a worthless sacrifice. You are sacrificing nothing at all. There is no moral value there to substitute on your behalf.

3. Animals do not sacrifice themselves voluntarily. A lamb had no idea he was headed to the altar of sacrifice. He probably thought he was headed to his next feeding.

But the sacrifice of Jesus was so much more.

1. The sacrifice of Jesus was a sacrifice of infinite value.
2. The sacrifice of Jesus was a sacrifice of a perfect, moral creature.

There was righteousness in Christ. There was something in Christ of value to be transferred to the sinner. When an animal died, there was nothing of value to be imputed to the sinner. But when Jesus died there was infinite value. Because Jesus was perfectly righteous, he was able to serve as an acceptable substitute.

- a. Jesus took our sins on himself. (Our sins were imputed to him.)
- b. Jesus put his righteousness on us. (His righteousness was imputed to us.)

None of this was possible with an animal sacrifice.

3. Jesus walked willingly to Calvary. He willingly laid his life down for his people.

And all of this made his sacrifice much better than the sacrifice of animals.

III. There is a contrast between the repetition of the old sacrifices and the once for all sacrifice of Christ.

10:1	Year by year
10:1	Continually
10:3	Remembrance again; every year
10:10	Once for all
10:11	Standeth daily ministering; offering oftentimes
10:12	One sacrifice forever
10:14	One offering; forever
10:18	No more offering for sin