

# Elementary

*The Lord called Moses and spoke to him from the tent of meeting  
(Leviticus 1:1 ESV)*

*“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.  
(Matthew 5:17-18 ESV)*

*I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no different from a slave, though he is the owner of everything, but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father. (Gal. 4:1-2 ESV)*

## **What Does The Law Teach Us About Jesus?**

**August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021**

**Hebrews 10:19-25**

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### **Introduction:**

Good morning! Today we are concluding our series in the book of Leviticus and, for our final sermon in this series I would like you to turn with me in your Bibles to the book of Hebrews.

You may think it odd to end a series on Leviticus in a book that is not Leviticus. Perhaps it is. However, the book of Hebrews – arguably more so than any other book in the New Testament – picks up the elementary principles that we uncovered in the Law and masterfully lands them on the person and work of Jesus Christ. The book of Hebrews essentially teaches us how we should read Leviticus on this side of the cross.

The book of Hebrews teaches us that if you are not seeing and delighting in Jesus as you read the book of Leviticus, then you’re reading it wrong! And, to be clear, Jesus said the same thing! He said:

**You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me (John 5:39 ESV)**

If you read the book of Leviticus and your inclination is to say, “Hey, that sounds awesome! We should go back to observing the feasts and practicing the ceremonies and worshiping at the temple and following the diet,” then you’ve MISSED IT!

“Well, who would ever think that, pastor?” Answer: Lots of people! This happens all the time. It happened in Galatia, where a group called the Judaizers rose to prominence. They tried to convince the new converts that, in order to be saved, they needed to put their trust in Jesus AND follow the Mosaic law. Paul wrote to them and explained:

Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. <sup>24</sup> So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. <sup>25</sup> But **now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian,** <sup>26</sup> for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. (Galatians 3:23-26 ESV)

Paul says: “The law was our guardian UNTIL Christ came! And he HAS come! So, in spite of what these clever teachers in your city are spouting, DONT GO BACK!”

As we wrap up our series in Leviticus, I want to give you a strong warning: Don’t listen to the voices that will try to convince you that you need to return to the Mosaic Law in order to be saved. Don’t give an inch. This false teaching didn’t die in Galatia. It continues to pull people in under the guise of being a purer form of Christianity.

In general, it tends to pull people in who have grown bored with the gospel. It tends to pull people in who like the idea of being the ones who dug deeper and found the REAL truth. It tends to produce people who look down their noses at everyone who doesn’t follow the Jewish calendar that we studied in Leviticus 26, and who look down their noses at everyone who doesn’t follow the food regulations of Leviticus 11, and who look down their noses at anyone who doesn’t observe the Sabbath, and who do all of that in spite of that fact that the Apostle Paul clearly said:

Therefore **let no one pass judgment on you** in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. <sup>17</sup> These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. (Colossians 2:16-17 ESV)

Why are we ending our Leviticus series in the book of Hebrews? Because I want to make sure that we take away from the law what we are supposed to take away as Christians. You shouldn't leave this series saying, "Boy, it sure would be fun to re-enact the Day of Atonement!" You should walk away from this series saying, "Wow! The law was good and helpful, and it served its ultimate purpose gloriously! It prepared me to see and savour Jesus – the one who came not to abolish the law but to FULFILL IT! The law is good, and Jesus is BETTER!"

In fact, you've heard me say this before, but "Jesus is Better" could be the subtitle for the book of Hebrews. It presents us with a blueprint for how our contemplation of the law should drive us into praise and adoration of Jesus.

In the book of Hebrews, you can find numerous examples of how Jesus fulfilled the law. While it wouldn't be wrong to survey a number of those passages, we're going to adopt a different approach this morning. We're going to zoom in on one text – a case study of sorts – to demonstrate how our deeper understanding of the law should necessarily lead us to a deeper worship of Jesus.

To that end, look with me to Hebrews 10:19-25. Hear now God's holy, inspired, inerrant, living and active word to us today.

<sup>19</sup> Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, <sup>20</sup> by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, <sup>21</sup> and since we have a great priest over the house of God, <sup>22</sup> let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.<sup>23</sup> Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. <sup>24</sup> And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works,<sup>25</sup> not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.  
(Hebrews 10:19-25 ESV)

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

What we find in this amazing passage is a case study in how our understanding of the law shapes the way in which we see and savour Christ.

So, let's turn our attention to this text and ask the question:

## How Does The Law Prepare Us To See And To Savor Jesus?

This passage doesn't unpack everything that the law pointed forward to in Jesus, but it does bring us to the heart of what we need to see before closing the chapter on our Elementary series. In this passage, the author shows us two ways that the law has prepared us to see and savour Jesus. First the law prepares us to see that:

### 1. He is the sacrifice

The author to the Hebrews tells us that we now have confidence to enter the holy places. Why? Because of the blood of Jesus.

Now, you probably had a vague understanding of what that passage meant the first time that you read it. However, there are some details that you might have missed. It talks about holy places and blood and a curtain – all of which you can only understand if you have taken the time to read Leviticus. Thankfully, we've spent the last few months doing just that! So, let's apply some of the things that we've learned and become better Bible readers and better worshipers.

The “holy places” here refers to the holy of holies. It was the throne room of God where the ark of the covenant was kept. The high priest was the only one who could enter and only after he had made the ceremonial sacrifices for his sin and for the sin of his people. But once that blood was shed, once a year on the Day of Atonement, the high priest was briefly allowed to enter in through the curtain and into the glorious presence of God.

Now, the author to the Hebrews points back to THAT – that one day when one man could enter into God's presence and only temporarily and only after following a precise sacrificial ritual – and he says, “Now, WE – that is, ALL OF US – have been invited behind the curtain! ANYTIME! That intimacy with God which was reserved for the high priest – and that only once a year – is ours! Anytime we want it!”

Why? Because of the blood. The blood of Jesus accomplished what the blood of rams and goats only pointed forward to.

Think back to that Old Testament ceremony. Why was it that the high priest was only allowed to enter briefly? The sacrifice had been made. Wasn't that enough? In verse 1 of Hebrews 10, we're told that those sacrifices were never enough. We read:

For since the law has but **a shadow** of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near. (Hebrews 10:1 ESV)

We see this language all over the New Testament. The law was a SHADOW. It was pointing forward and preparing categories in our hearts and minds to recognize the One who was to come, but it was never meant to be understood as the ultimate solution. In fact, there was a deficiency that was BAKED INTO THE CAKE of the sacrificial system. As he explains in verse 4:

<sup>4</sup>For it is **impossible** for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. (Hebrews 10:4 ESV)

The Israelite worshiper who had just offered a bull for a sin offering and was walking home with blood on his robes was probably thinking something along the lines of: "Praise God that I'm forgiven!! But... why did that work? How did the death of a bull make atonement for my sin? And, if it did make atonement for my sin, then why do I need to come back again next year?"

How could an animal settle the debt for a man? Answer: It couldn't.

Old Testament and New, the blood of an animal was never sufficient to wash away the sins of a man. Why then the sacrifices? Because they pointed forward in faith to God's ultimate solution.

The whole sacrificial system was designed by God to prepare us to understand what John the Baptist meant when he pointed at Jesus and declared:

Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! (John 1:29b ESV)

The ceremonies and the feasts were designed by God to prepare us to understand what Jesus meant when he picked up the bread and the cup from the Passover celebration and said:

**"This is my body**, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."<sup>25</sup> In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, **"This cup is the new covenant in my blood**. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." (1 Corinthians 11:24b-25 ESV)

The whole repetitive – year after year, sacrifice after sacrifice – system was ordained by God to prepare us to marvel at Jesus’ words when he cried out from the cross: “IT IS FINISHED<sup>1</sup>!”

Matthew writes:

And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit.

<sup>51</sup> And behold, **the curtain of the temple was torn in two**, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split. (Matthew 27:50-51 ESV)

Think about that curtain in the temple for a moment: God was the one who told Moses to install that curtain. It was designed by God to symbolize our separation from His presence.

But here’s the amazing thing: God’s plan for that curtain was always to TEAR IT DOWN! God installed that visible demonstration of our separation from His presence so that He could visibly, powerfully, GLORIOUSLY RIP IT IN HALF!

It was an object lesson. It was instituted in order to prepare us to see and marvel at Christ. The animals were sacrificed, and their blood was sprinkled on the curtain, and the high priest was allowed to sneak through once a year behind a veil of smoke. But when Jesus’ blood was shed – when the ultimate sacrifice was made – the curtain was finished. Because the sacrifices were finished. Because the way back to the Father was opened. How? By the BLOOD OF JESUS!

It is only when we understand the law that we are enabled to see just how glorious and powerful this passage is. The law introduced us to the sacrificial system, but the sacrificial system was designed by God with one chief aim – to prepare us to recognize and place all of our trust in Jesus Christ – the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. He is THE sacrifice!

That’s the first lesson that we see applied in this text. The second is related. The law has prepared us to see and delight in the fact that:

## **2. He is the high priest**

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<sup>1</sup> John 19:30

In the same way that there was a deficiency baked into the cake of the sacrificial system, there was also a deficiency baked into the cake of the priesthood. The author to the Hebrews highlights two of these deficiencies in chapter 7. Flip back a few pages and read Hebrews 7:23-28 with me:

The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, <sup>24</sup> but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. <sup>25</sup> Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

<sup>26</sup> For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. <sup>27</sup> He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself. <sup>28</sup> For the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever. (Hebrews 7:23-28 ESV)

Can you spot the two deficiencies?

First of all, the high priests were physically weak. They died. They required constant replacing.

Second, they were spiritually weak. They sinned, every one of them. There was an inefficiency in the priesthood because, before they could go before God to make sacrifices for your sin, they needed to go before God to make sacrifices for their own sin. The priesthood was made up of fragile, sinful men.

But not anymore.

Now there is one high priest in the presence of the Father who will never be replaced. He never takes a sick day. He never takes a leave of absence. He never needs to waste a second making sacrifices for his own sin because he is perfect in every respect. There is no weakness in him. He is perfect forever.

Christian, Jesus is your high priest.

What does that mean? Well, here, it is helpful to draw from what we have learned in the law about the high priest. We learned, for example, that the high priest wore a breastplate with 12 precious stones in order to represent the 12 tribes of Israel as he ministered. He clothed himself in such a way that he could identify with his people. Well, in the same way, our High Priest has clothed himself in such a way that he can forever identify with us. Hebrews 4:15 says:

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. (Hebrews 4:15 ESV)

Jesus left his heavenly throne and clothed himself in human flesh and frailty. He knows our weakness. He understands our temptation. He is truly man. His hands and his side will forever be scarred with the wounds that he bore for us.

We learned also that the high priest prayed for his people. He went before the throne of grace and interceded on behalf of those that he loved.

So too does our High Priest pray for us. Paul tells us in Romans 8:34:

Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, **who indeed is interceding for us.** (Romans 8:34 ESV)

Christian, did you know that Jesus is praying for you? Well, he is! He is seated in the presence of your Heavenly Father, and he is ever interceding for you right now! Isn't that miraculous?

Once a year, the Israelites marvelled as a man – a weak and sinful priest – entered into the presence of God to pray for them. They watched with wonder, and joy, and reverence as their mediator entered on their behalf. How much more, then, should we look with wonder, and joy, and reverence, and awe at our great High Priest who is seated at the right hand of the Father to FOREVER pray for us?

The law prepared our hearts to understand that Jesus is the sacrifice, and that Jesus is the high priest. Are you seeing those realities afresh this morning? If you are seeing all of that then, our text says, there is a response that should follow.

If we believe these truths that we just unpacked, then our lives should reflect those realities. The author to the Hebrews leaves us with three responses to all that we have seen.

## How Should We Respond?

First, if Jesus is our sacrifice and if he is our High Priest, then we should:

### 1. Approach

Look again at verse 22:

let us **draw near** with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. (Hebrews 10:22 ESV)

If the Israelite could walk away from the sacrifice of a ram feeling assured of their forgiveness, then HOW MUCH MORE should you walk away from the cross assured of *your* forgiveness?

The lamb of God – the eternal Son – the Lion of Judah – the Godman Jesus Christ – graciously, purposefully, and marvellously surrendered his life as a substitute for yours. His perfect, sinless, atoning blood was shed for your sin. He declared “It is finished!”

He didn’t say, “It is started.” He didn’t say, “It’s just about done now.” If he had said any of that, then our approach to the Father would be very different. But, he said “It is FINISHED.”

Hear me this morning: Every time you stand at a distance from God feeling like you’re too dirty to be cleansed or too sinful to be forgiven, you are essentially saying to Jesus: “It is NOT finished. There is more that I need to do, Jesus. This mess is too big for you, Jesus. This stain needs more than your blood if it’s going to come out. I’m going to need to work this out on my own.”

So, let me ask you: Are you standing at a distance?

Listen: Did Jesus die on that cross for you? Then you are forgiven!

Did Jesus shed his perfect blood for your sin? Then you are redeemed!

Did Jesus declare that it is finished? Then I don’t care what the world says, and I don’t care what the accuser says, and I don’t care what your feelings say! IT IS FINISHED!

Therefore, brothers and sisters, LET US DRAW NEAR!

Not feebly and fearfully but with a full assurance of faith! If I was trusting in my own righteousness then I would approach with fear and trembling, but I’m not approaching in my own righteousness. I’m approaching in JESUS’ righteousness, so I can draw near with my head held high! This ticket brings me right to the front row! This ticket gives me a backstage pass! When I

approach my Heavenly Father in prayer, I come boldly, and I ask with confidence because I come in the name of His Beloved Son!

Do you pray that way, Christian? Do you worship that way? Do you live each and every day in the knowledge that you can bring every single care and concern to your Father at any moment with absolute confidence? Because, according to God's word, you should. Jesus is the perfect sacrifice. Jesus is the great high priest. Therefore, approach.

And then, the text says:

## **2. Remain**

Look again at verse 23:

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. (Hebrews 10:23 ESV)

It is important that you have a right understanding of who Christ is and what Christ has done. It is important that your gospel roots go deep. Because there will be days when you will be tempted to waver.

On Thursday night, we gathered in this field to pray for our brothers and sisters in Afghanistan. You had better believe that there are some men and women in Afghanistan who are feeling the temptation to waver right now. They are wondering if they will survive to see the new year – if their *children* will survive to see the new year.

How does the knowledge of Christ as our sacrifice and our priest speak into that situation?

It speaks hope.

You see, after Jesus declared, "It is finished." the Father declared, "It is accepted." On the third day, Jesus walked out of his tomb and proved that death no longer has a hold on those who are

washed by his blood. In fact, to serve as an exclamation point, Jesus' tomb wasn't the only one that opened that day. In Matthew's gospel, we read:

And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split.<sup>52</sup> The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, <sup>53</sup> and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many. (Matthew 27:51-53 ESV)

How many times have you skimmed over those verses? How many times have you thought to yourself, "What was THAT episode about?"

When those tombs opened up, and those saints stepped out, God tangibly and powerfully declared that Jesus' sacrifice was enough! Everlasting life, a hope and a future, a new heaven and a new earth – ALL of the promises of God are "yes" and "amen" in Christ<sup>2</sup>! No trial or circumstance can ever unseat our resurrection hope because it was purchased with the blood of Jesus! No affliction can ultimately unseat us, because we have a great High Priest, and he is praying for us even now!

Therefore, in view of that sacrifice and in view of our High Priest, remain. Stand firm. Hold fast.

Finally, in light of all that we have seen, we should:

### **3. Encourage**

Look again at verses 24-25:

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works,<sup>25</sup> not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. (Hebrews 10:24-25 ESV)

Thus far we have discussed the personal benefits that come from seeing and savouring Christ, but here we are reminded that a right understanding of Christ and all that he has accomplished is a community issue.

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<sup>2</sup> 2 Corinthians 1:20

Let me be practical here: More often than not, when a person is struggling, what they need more than anything else is to have the gospel applied to their particular hurt. You feel like God doesn't love you? Let me point you to the cross where God showed His great love for us. You feel like you're too far gone? Let me remind you that the blood of Jesus is powerful to wash away EVERY sin. You feel like God doesn't hear your prayers? Well, first of all, He does. And second of all, Jesus is your High Priest, and He is praying for you RIGHT NOW! So, even if God didn't hear your prayers (which He does), He hears Jesus' prayers for you!

You feel like a failure as a parent? A failure as a husband? A failure as a business owner? A failure as a Christian? BEHOLD, the cross of Christ where the Son of God bled and died so that failures could be redeemed and the hopeless could have a bright hope and a future!

Now, obviously, you would want to say more than that, and you would want to say it with appropriate sensitivity, but the point is this: The more you see and savour Christ – the more you understand of how he has fulfilled the law and unlocked the blessings of God for His people – the more you comprehend of his death in our place and his intercession on our behalf – the more you will be able to apply gospel medicine to your weary brothers and sisters.

And can I tell you something? We need more medics. People are hurting. The church is a hospital for sick people so, to use hospital terms, we need as many people as possible who are equipped with the medicine of the gospel and who are efficient in their ability to apply it to the hurting people around them.

So gather. Stir each other up. Encourage one another. And all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Let the plight of our brothers and sisters in Afghanistan remind us that our earthly comforts can be stripped away at a moment's notice. We don't choose when the hard days will come. They just come. Therefore, it is so crucial that each and every one of us roots our hope in Christ – in his life, his death, his resurrection, his ascension, his intercession, and his coming return! If we see, and savour and delight in him, then we will stand, and we will be able to help our brothers and sisters to do the same. He is the sacrifice for our sin. He is our great high priest. He is the fulfilment of the law. And he is our life. Amen? Amen. Let's pray together.