

OFFERING OF THE BODY OF JESUS CHRIST

November 6, 2016

Hebrews 10:1-14

“. . . We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all . . . for by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” Hebrews 10:10, 14

When man sinned, God instituted a means whereby an innocent animal could be slain as a substitute for the sinner, providing covering for his guilt. God established this when He made clothing from animal skins to cover Adam's and Eve's nakedness (Genesis 3:21). Innocent beasts died, their blood being shed to provide covering for man's guilt.

As time passed and sin increased, so did the specificity of the God-given sacrifices. The phenomenon of God providing a sacrificial lamb was introduced when Abraham was instructed to offer his son Isaac (Genesis 22:8). There also was introduced the concept of the father offering his son, which would culminate in God offering His own Son as a sacrifice for sin.

Yet there was something God desired more than sacrifice. He affirmed this through the prophet Samuel, who rebuked King Saul when the king disobeyed God's command (I Samuel 15). God commanded Saul to destroy all of the Amalekites in divine vengeance for their hostility toward His people, Israel (see Exodus 17:8-16). Saul disobeyed, keeping their livestock for himself.

When he sought to defend his action by claiming that he kept the animals for sacrifice, the prophet exclaimed, "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (I Samuel 15:22).

King David, Saul's successor, recognized this when he wrote "sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire . . . burnt-offering and sin offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart" (Psalm 40:6-8).

The writer of Hebrews cites David's words as Christ's, illustrating Peter's observation that "the Spirit of Christ which was in [the Old Testament writers] did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (I Peter 1:11).

He states that "it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (Hebrews 10:4), then applies Christ's words from Psalm 40. Christ entered the world knowing that God desired obedience, not sacrifice: "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me . . . I come . . . to do thy will, O God" (10:5, 7). Christ's words as He faced crucifixion were, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matthew 26:39).

As the Son of God, Christ's infinite dignity and worth imbue His blood with a sin-cleansing power that beasts' blood could never provide. His sinless life provides the perfect obedience God desires. By offering His body as the ultimate sacrifice for sin, all of those for whom that sacrifice is offered are sanctified, once for all, and forevermore (Hebrews 10:10, 14).