

THE CRITICAL QUESTION OF THE LAW | VV. 1-2

- The Law did not, nor does it, provide substance, only shadow. Now that the substance has come, the shadow should never become the focus or basis of theology or practice.
- The word **image** is *eikona* (icon, or image). The Law is a shadow, **not the very image**, and certainly not the substance.
- Grammatically, the heart of verse 1 is "The Law can never perfect those who draw near."
- Once perfected (v. 1), the worshipers would not have the *imperfection* of a consciousness of sins because, as a perfect being, there would be no sins. The point: the sacrifices *did not cleanse nor perfect* the worshipers.

THE CHANGING OF THE WILL OF GOD | VV. 3-9

- The "perpetual sacrifice" of the Mass in Roman Catholic theology gives the same reminder, and thus, by implication, the sacrifice of Christ is also said to have a failure to "perfect."
- The blood of bulls and goats could, under the Law, cover (atone) sins but could not "take away" (lit: cut off) sins. Today, the blood of bulls and goats cannot even cover, because the dispensation (management) of the Law is over. A sacrifice today, even if the Temple was built, would only be the death of an animal. So spiritual benefit would be derived.
- Verses 5-7 quote Psalm 40:6-8 (from the Septuagint). Psalm 40 is a Messianic Psalm, prophetically speaking Christ's words. By these words we can confirm that the sacrifices of the Law were written with Christ in mind.
- Verse 9: God takes the first *what* to establish the second? Since it is neuter, it cannot be the first *sacrifice* or *offering* (v. 5, both feminine), nor can it be *the Law* (v. 8, masculine). Possibilities include:
 - A body - v. 5
 - Burnt offerings - v. 6, 8
 - God's will - vv. 7, 9
 - The Law - v. 8
 - The blood - v. 4
- In the context of verse 10, the only viable interpretation is *God's will*. Verse 10: His first will was that the blood of bulls and goats would atone for sin, but this is not His current will. The first was taken away because it could not take away sins (v. 4), and something permanent was needed. In order for God to establish His second (and current) will, the first necessarily needed to be removed

THE PERMANENT WORK OF SANCTIFICATION | VV. 10-14

- To be sanctified implies that the sin is "taken away." Thus, that which could not be done by sacrifice (v. 4) is done in the body of Jesus Christ.
- It is important to realize that our sanctification is not a slow process that comes through our obedience (to the Law, or to anything else). We are sanctified because Christ, in His body, took away our sin. This is illustrated and magnified in vv. 11-14.
- Verse 14 (the perfection of those who are sanctified) completes the problem opened in v. 1.

LIVING BETWEEN THE COVENANTS | VV. 15-17

- Because the New Covenant has not yet been established (Christ is waiting, v. 13), there is a need for an interim solution to sin. The old covenant is not valid and the new covenant has not been established, thus Christ as the *mediator* [middle Man] of the two covenants is essential. Anyone trying to be saved by either the old or the new covenant today will find themselves without hope. One is gone, the other not yet given.

A NEW DISPENSATION | V. 18

- Note: v. 18 really belongs with vv. 19 and following. The NASB break is in the wrong place.
- These words are descriptive of the dispensation in which we live. The Hebrew people were being told that continued sacrifice in the Temple was fruitless. Remember that the book is written to encourage the Jewish people to recognize Christ as their Messiah. It is their last chance.
- Being descriptive of this dispensation, we must ask: what offering for sin is available today? Being none, we must rely on the "once-for-all" sacrifice of verse 14.