

SACRIFICE

THE LESSON: HEBREWS 9, 10

The Old Testament points us to Jesus in many powerful ways. Remember the story of the Passover? How about the story of the manna in the wilderness? And we've only just scratched the surface: there's much more! God gave Israel something else during that action-packed time: the law.

Now the law revealed to the people how to "love the Lord with their heart, soul, and mind, and how to love their neighbours as themselves". That's the summary that Jesus gave to us in the New Testament. But the Old Testament law was very complex. In fact, the people always fell short of fully obeying it. And so one aspect of the law was all about what the people should do when they messed up, in order to be in a right relationship with God again. It was a system of animal sacrifices offered by the priests on behalf of the people to "atone" for their sins.

Fast forward to the prophet Isaiah, still in the Old Testament. He talked about a person who would come to be a *perfect* sacrifice, when he said: "He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed".

The NT author of the epistle to the Hebrews spent four chapters on making it clear to readers that the OT sacrifices were just shadows or copies that pointed to something truer and more real: Jesus.

AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Each morning and evening, follow the prayer plan that you created for yourself.

(If you didn't make one, try saying the morning and evening prayers from the "Forms of Prayer to be used in Families", which begins on page 728 of the BCP. If you don't have a copy, you can look it up here: <http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer>).

Set aside a few moments when you pray, to quietly reflect upon this verse from scripture (Isaiah 53:4-5):

"Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows... he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed."

- AND/OR -

Take some time to pray through this collect, pausing to reflect after each phrase.

O God, who in a wonderful sacrament hast left unto us a memorial of thy passion: Grant us so to reverence the holy mysteries of thy Body and Blood, that we may ever know within ourselves the fruit of thy redemption; who livest and reignest with the Father in the unity of the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

(THE SECOND COLLECT FOR THE MAUNDY THURSDAY, BCP PAGE 169)

SACRIFICE

HEBREWS 9, 10: **THE PERFECT SACRIFICE**

9 ¹¹But when Christ appeared as a high priest... ¹²he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption...

10 ¹¹And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. ¹²But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. ¹⁴For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

¹⁵And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying, ¹⁶“This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds,” ¹⁷then he adds, “I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.” ¹⁸Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.