

April 6, 2025

## It Only Takes One or Christs Once-For-All Sacrifice

Hebrews 9:23–10:4, 11-14, 19-25

### Unifying Principle (Focus of Lesson)

People base their day-to-day lives on what has worked in the past. What if they were to learn that what worked in the past really didn't work? Compared to the effect of Christ's single sacrifice for sin, the repeated rituals of the Torah are found wanting. Christ's life and death seal God's covenant with us, put God's law into our hearts and minds, and guide us to live faithfully.

### Goals For the Learner

1. To recount the particulars and meaning of the OT's sacrificial code.
2. To meditate on the significance of Christ's once-for-all sacrifice for sins.
3. To persevere in confidence in our public witness to the transforming power of the gospel.

### Challenges For the Week

1. What is the role of the conscience in Hebrews 9–10, specifically in 9:9 and 10:1. The old covenant fails to deal with the conscience, leaving the worshipper imperfect (unable to approach God). Connect Jeremiah 31:31-34.
2. Draw a chart that compares the high-priestly service of Christ and that of the levitical priests.
3. What is your understanding of the Tabernacle curtain's purpose, Hebrews' use of *curtain* ("his flesh," v. 20), and the tearing of the curtain at the Crucifixion (Matthew 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45). The curtain no longer obstructs the Most Holy Place (Hebrews 9:3), allowing human access through Jesus's death into God's presence (see Jeremiah 31:31–34).
4. Watch the video "Sacrifice and Atonement" at [bibleproject.com](http://bibleproject.com). What knowledge and understanding does it portray?
5. Hebrews 10:22 alludes to baptism that cleanses "an evil conscience" and "our bodies" "with pure water." Ask your pastor or worship leader to discuss with you the connections between Jesus's death and resurrection and the efficacy of baptism in the believer's life. What understanding do you have or gain about this?
6. What is the author's purpose for writing to encourage the struggling church. How does the message of Hebrews encourage Christians today?

April 13, 2025 (Palm Sunday)

All You Need is Love or Christ the Atoning Sacrifice

1 John 2:1-6; 4:9-17

### Unifying Principle (Focus of Lesson)

Fake news breeds hostility and leads people to believe in lies. How can we know the truth? The truth of Christ's atoning sacrifice, as an expression of God's love, demonstrates itself in love among believers and for the world.

### Goals For the Learner

1. To identify the issues at stake in reminding the people of Christ's atoning sacrifice.
2. To be assured in the knowledge of God's love.
3. To exhibit God's love through a concrete act of loving one another.

### Challenges For the Week

1. Explore the internet for videos that expand on the lessons of 1, 2, and 3 John. What insights and revelations do they provide?
2. Review the heresies of the "anti-Christ" that John addresses—Gnosticism, Docetism, Cerinthianism. Use Bible dictionaries, internet resources, etc., to get a better understanding of these.
3. Think about false teachings that threaten the church's unity today. What are contemporary versions of the heresies John wrote against? How do church leaders affirm the church's unity in the love of Christ?
4. Review previous lessons concerning sacrifices offered for atonement, especially on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16) and Hebrews. What distinguishes John's use of the same concept?
5. Knowing God is evidenced by a heartfelt desire to obey God. What connections do you find between knowing (relational, loving) God and obeying (listening with an intent to love) God? What happens if you think you know God without obedience; obey God without knowing?
6. Compare today's reading with Jesus's new commandment (John 13:34-35). What is the sign of the new commandment in John 13? What is a meaningful alternative for the church in the twenty-first century to the foot-washing of Jesus's day?

April 20, 2025 (Easter)

They Couldn't Keep Him Down or Christ Dies and Rises to New Life

Matthew 27:39-40, 45-54; 28:1-10

Unifying Principle (Focus of Lesson)

People want their lives to have meaning. What meaning can we find? Matthew tells us that Jesus's death and resurrection find meaning in the Temple and the OT sacrificial teachings, leading to worship of the Risen One.

Goals For the Learner

1. To examine how the death and resurrection of Jesus borrow meanings from the Temple and Hebrew Bible's sacrificial system.
2. To rejoice in Jesus's resurrection.
3. To go and tell others how they can know the risen Christ.

Challenges For the Week

1. What does being loyal to God mean in the face of possible violent death.
2. Is this statement true? Jesus's purpose was to proclaim that the kingdom of God has come near, not to suffer and die. Faced with the choice of being loyal to God or suffering Rome's torture, Jesus chose God.
3. Watch the video "Sacrifice and Atonement" or "Temple" at [bibleproject.com](http://bibleproject.com). How effective is this portrayal?
4. Review various Christian teachings of the atonement: substitutionary atonement, the eschatological defeat of Satan, and participation in Jesus's death and resurrection. What are the significant differences and insights offered in each interpretation?
5. What is meant by Jesus's self-identification with the Temple as the holy meeting place? The Resurrection fulfills passersby's derision: "You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself!" (Matthew 27:40; cf. John 2:13-22). Note the significance of worship before the risen Christ, the "new Temple."
6. Put yourself in the shoes of the disciples on hearing the news that Jesus is alive. Now, imagine that the angel of the Lord is speaking directly to you today. How will you respond to the angel's words ("Come and see," "Go quickly and tell")?

April 27, 2025

Sing a New Song or The Lamb is Worthy

Revelation 5:1-10

### Unifying Principle (Focus of Lesson)

People make sacrifices for those they love. What sacrifices are to be lifted up for their lasting value? In Revelation, Christ, the “slaughtered lamb” sacrificed for the sin of the world, is lifted to the throne of God and is worthy of praise and honor forever.

### Goals For the Learner

1. To understand what makes Jesus the only one worthy to open the scroll.
2. To wonder at the paradox of the Lion and the Lamb.
3. To offer testimony of how their lives are different because of Jesus’s sacrifice.

### Challenges For the Week

1. Watch the video “Revelation part 1” at [bibleproject.com](http://bibleproject.com).
2. Dispel the idea that Revelation as apocalyptic (“uncover”) literature is a secret code that allows believers to decipher the time line of Jesus’s return. Instead, John’s Apocalypse is an exposé, a pulling back of the curtain to uncover the truth about the Roman Empire and all subsequent empires.
3. Research the practice of Christian worship across multiple cultural expressions and rejoice that the worship of God is a global phenomenon. The Lamb is “worthy,” an English word related to “worship.”
4. Note the importance of singing for the worship of God. Where can we hear the Lamb’s “new song” (Revelation 5:9) being sung in the world today?
5. Draw comparisons between the Passover lamb and Jesus as the slain Lamb with an eye toward God’s plan to bring justice to the world.
6. Sing hymns inspired by Revelation 9, such as Charles Wesley’s “Salvation to God Who Sits on the Throne.”