

HEBREWS

10:1-25

Introduction

You have already been “perfected forever” but you are not yet fully perfect.

The word the Bible uses to explain this is “sanctified,” used twice in this chapter, in verses ten and fourteen. “Sanctified” means *set apart* and refers to a process you go through:

1. You were sanctified in the past the moment you accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior.
2. You are being sanctified in the present as you submit to the control of the indwelling Holy Spirit and walk in the power of God’s Word.
3. You will be sanctified in the future when Jesus comes for you and you are in His presence forever.

You were “perfected forever” in the past and you will be fully perfect in the future. You’re encouraged you to *press forward* and make progress in the present.

We’ll organize our thoughts around two points: #1 God Witnesses To You That You Are Perfected Forever, and #2 You Witness For God By Pressing Forward.

#1 God Witnesses To You
That You Are Perfected Forever
(v1-18)

Scholars typically use the words *position* and *practice* to help you understand the three aspects of biblical sanctification. Jesus Christ is in heaven. When you accept Jesus Christ you immediately share all the benefits of His **spiritual position** in heaven. One day He will return for you and you will share the bliss of His **physical position** in heaven. In the mean time the help of your spiritual position and the

hope of your future physical position encourage you to make **progress** in the **practical** areas of your present life on earth.

The Hebrew Christians were about to renounce and repudiate their position! They were planning on returning to the Jewish sacrificial system in order to relieve themselves from persecution. They would be returning to an obsolete ritual involving endless sacrifices that kept them out of the presence of God instead of remaining in a new and living relationship with the Savior that brought them into the presence of God.

To make his point the writer compares the **sacrifices** with the **Savior**. Two words summarize this section: *Remind* and *remit*. The sacrifices reminded you of your sins day-after-day and year-after-year whereas the Savior remitted your sins once-and-for-all.

In verses one through ten you see that the sacrifices **reminded** you of your sins.

Hebrews 10:1 For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect.

Hebrews 10:2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins.

Hebrews 10:3 But in those *sacrifices there is* a reminder of sins every year.

The “law” refers to the Law of Moses which ritualized the entire Old Testament practice of offering sacrifices for sin. The sacrifices were always a “shadow of the good things to come” and not the substance. They were always a type and, therefore, temporary. The very fact that they were offered “continually” established that they had no permanent effect. “Every year,” and “year by year” refer to the annual Day of Atonement when the Jewish high priest would offer sacrifice for the sins of the entire nation. No matter how glorious it was that he could stand for a moment each year in the presence of God, he always exited and the whole process began again. It was a “reminder of sins every year.”

On an individual basis the animal sacrifices could not “purify” your heart or remove your “consciousness of sin.” “Consciousness of sin” refers to your understanding that you are guilty of sin and have no right to be in God’s presence. The blood of animals gave you a

temporary *covering* to stand before God but it did not *cleanse* you to remain in the presence of God.

Hebrews 10:4 For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.

“Take away” is a descriptive metaphor. It means to strip away a soiled garment that clings close to your body. It’s a picture of you standing before God. From heaven’s perspective you are dressed in filthy rags that need to be stripped away... But you have nothing of your own to cover your nakedness. You must be given a heavenly garment. And you **are** given one – the righteousness of Jesus Christ – when you trust Him for your salvation.

The “blood of bulls and goats” was thus only a temporary system until God, in the fullness of time, fulfilled His promise to send His Son into the world.

Hebrews 10:5 Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: *“Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me.*

Hebrews 10:6 *In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure.*

Hebrews 10:7 *Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come - in the volume of the book it is written of Me - to do Your will, O God.’”*

The quote is from Psalm forty. It is a prophecy that the Savior would “come” to be God’s final sacrifice instead of and in fulfillment of all the animal sacrifices. He would come, and He “came,” in a “body... prepared” for Him. This is what we call the incarnation in which God became flesh and dwelt among us.

This should have been no surprise to a Jew or to the Hebrew Christians. The Old Testament often declared God’s displeasure with animal sacrifices (Isaiah 1:11; Jeremiah 6:20; Hosea 6:6; Amos 5:21,22). God was seeking the heart of the worshipper, not the blood of the beast. He always wanted relationship and not ritual. Now that the relationship was established, it was ridiculous to return to ritual.

It is accurate to say that “in the volume of the book it is written of Me...” The entire Old Testament is about the coming of the Savior. He’s there in prophecy, in poetry, in types, in metaphors – in every conceivable way. The phrase “volume of the book” literally refers to the knob on the end of the roller of the manuscripts of Scripture. **The whole Bible is about Jesus!**

Hebrews 10:8 Previously saying, “Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them” (which are offered according to the law), Hebrews 10:9 then He said, “Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.” He takes away the first that He may establish the second.

All the way back in the time of King David God was already telling them that the system of animal sacrifice would end when the Savior came into the world. Now that He had come they should not turn back.

And there was no need to turn back to animal sacrifices:

Hebrews 10:10 By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*.

“We have been sanctified” is a past event. It is our **permanent position** as believers. It was made possible by the “once for all” sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross. It is secured the moment we trust Jesus Christ as Savior. It has nothing to do with maturity or merit; it’s all because of Jesus.

This does not mean you don’t sin. You are painfully aware that you do sin. **It means that your sins do not change your position.** You and I can stand before God with no condemnation for our sins. They have all been judged at the Cross of Jesus Christ. Instead of being reminded of my sins I am reminded of my Savior.

My Savior, Jesus, has remitted my sins:

Hebrews 10:11 And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.

Hebrews 10:12 But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God,

The work of the “priest” was never done. He never sat down. We’ve learned in previous chapters that Jesus is now our High Priest. He **has** “sat down” with regard to His work of offering a sacrifice for sin.

Hebrews 10:13 from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool.

Hebrews 10:14 For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.

There is a time of “waiting” between the ascension of Jesus into heaven and His return from heaven to establish His physical rule on

the earth. It's this waiting that gives us trouble as we seek to walk with the Lord in the present.

We are not waiting alone or without help! Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to dwell within us Who would be our Comforter and Helper.

Hebrews 10:15 But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after He had said before,
Hebrews 10:16 *"This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,"*
Hebrews 10:17 *then He adds, "Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more."*
Hebrews 10:18 Now where there is remission of these, *there is* no longer an offering for sin.

If you are a Christian then the Holy Spirit "witnesses" within you; He *testifies* about God to your "heart" and "mind." Rather than struggling to keep the rituals of an external code of "laws" you are strengthened to enjoy a relationship of love by His indwelling testimony.

One of the things that the Holy Spirit especially testifies about is the "remission" of your sins. "Remission" means *forgiveness*. God does not "remember" them against you. Jesus died for your sins and God no longer holds them against you. They cannot condemn you because Jesus bore all their condemnation for you once-for-all on the Cross.

You are already "perfected forever" in that you are forever free from the penalty your sins deserve. You will be perfect when you are with Jesus and are forever free from the very presence of sin. In the present you are waiting... And you should respond to the present pressures of waiting by *pressing forward*.

#2 You Witness For God By Pressing Forward (v19-25)

It is our desire to always emphasize what God has done for you rather than what you must do for God. This emphasis is both *logical* and *theological*.

It is logical to emphasize what God has done for you because love is always a better motivator than law. I want to please God because His love constrains me, not because His law commands me.

It is also theological to emphasize what God has done for you. Much of the New Testament was written this way. For example: Both the Book of Romans and the Book of Ephesians open with several chapters emphasizing doctrine before they speak of duty; of belief before they suggest behavior; of your position before they scrutinize your practice.

We've just been speaking about your position. The writer summarizes it in verses nineteen through twenty-one:

Hebrews 10:19 Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus,
Hebrews 10:20 by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh,
Hebrews 10:21 and *having* a High Priest over the house of God,

Once a year only the Jewish high priest would timidly approach God by going through the thick veil into the holy of holies in the earthly tabernacle with the blood of a beast that could never substitute for your sins. **Now** there was “a new and living way” to approach God. Jesus offered Himself the final sacrifice for sins, entered the tabernacle in heaven, and is sat down there as the High Priest over all the house of God – Jew and Gentile alike. Believers go through the “veil” into the very presence of God with “boldness.” It would be ridiculous to go back; you should instead press forward.

Pressing forward often involves suffering. Remember – you are waiting for the Lord to return. Your past and future perfection are assured... But the present can be awful.

Still, you have all the *help* and *hope* you need to make progress. The writer encourages you to press forward in your witness in three areas, all introduced by the exhortation, “Let us.” They describe your *confidence*, your *confession*, and your *consideration*.

Your confidence:

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

The Jewish high priest was required to bathe before he approached God with blood to sprinkle on the altar. In contrast, you and I approach God through the blood of Jesus. Our “hearts” have been

“sprinkled from an evil conscience.” We are conscious of our sins, but our conscience should no longer condemn us because Jesus has taken upon Himself all the condemnation we deserved.

Our “bodies” have been “washed with pure water.” On the night before His crucifixion Jesus went around to wash the feet of His disciples. Peter initially refused until Jesus told Him he would have no part with Him. Then Peter wanted a bath! Jesus replied,

John 13:10 Jesus said to him, “He who is bathed needs only to wash *his* feet, but is completely clean...”

We always go on to talk about foot-washing and the daily cleansing from the defilement of sin we pick up in the world. That’s valid, but notice Jesus says you are already “bathed” and are “completely clean.”

These are objective truths, derived from your position in Christ. Because of His once-for-all sacrifice for your sins, you are seen by God as “perfected forever.”

As to your present practice, you may or may not have a “true heart in full assurance of faith.”

Let’s look at your heart for a moment. In First John 3:20 you’re told that your heart can “condemn” you. God is greater than your heart; He does not condemn you. But your heart can condemn you, and it does when you know that are not right with God. Get right and come with a true heart!

As for faith, you read in Romans that “whatever is not of faith is sin” (Romans 14:23). If you are engaged in questionable liberties, you won’t have a “full assurance of faith.” Give them up and enjoy God.

Then James explains that “faith without works is dead.” When you’re sloughing-off in your spiritual service it’s hard to have “full assurance of faith.”

Your position is sure and secure... But whether you experience it in practical ways is up to you.

Your confession:

Hebrews 10:23 Let us hold fast the confession of *our* hope without wavering, for He who promised *is* faithful.

“Confession of your hope” is your spiritual determination while you wait. You can either “hold fast” or you can “waver.” “Hold fast” means to *hold down*; “waver” is a word used of a structure blown away by wind. When the storms of life blow against you, you can hold down or be blown away! You’re encouraged to hold fast because God is “faithful.” Because He is faithful you can expect His help and you can be empowered by the hope that He will fulfill His “promise” to bring you to complete perfection in the future.

Your consideration:

Hebrews 10:24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works,
Hebrews 10:25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

“Assembling” is a technical word used of a distinctly Christian gathering. The “manner of some” means that some of the Hebrew Christians had already “forsaken” the meetings of the Church and returned to the Temple. They ought to continue meeting with believers because the “day” was “approaching.” This might refer to the return of the Lord; but in context it probably refers to the day of judgment Jesus had predicted that would come upon Jerusalem and the Temple.

You should consider other believers to “stir up” in them “love and good works.” “Love” has to do with their *attitudes*, “good works” with their *actions*.

If these Hebrew Christians were not to forsake assembling despite intense persecution, how much more should we be meeting together when we enjoy the freedom to do so!

Church is not always about you. It’s about you *considering others*, to encourage **their** love and their good works.

Your confidence... your confession... and your consideration of others... Together these are a witness to others of your walk with God.

Conclusion

You were “perfected forever” in the past and you will be fully perfect in the future. These encourage you to *press forward* and make progress in the present.