



[Hebrews 10:1-4](#)

(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. (2) For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. (3) But in those *sacrifices there is* a reminder of sins every year. (4) For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.

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[Hebrews 10:1](#) reflects upon the place the Old Testament offerings have in giving understanding of [Jesus Christ](#). The sacrificial laws only portrayed reality; they were enacted to depict something greater to come. What Leviticus 1-5 describes is the shadow of the good things; Christ is the reality.

Why could they not make a person perfect who believed in them and offered them? Why did One so great have to die so that we might live? An illustration from a dollars-and-cents perspective may help us understand. Can something of lesser value, an animal, equal the cost of something of greater value, a man? Is a bull, lamb, goat, or turtledove worth as much as a human being?

What if a person went into a store to purchase - redeem, compensate for, propitiate, expiate - an item costing a hundred dollars, but he offered to pay only fifty dollars? What would the owner say? Would he not say, "You don't have enough here to pay for this, so you cannot have it." So, he leaves and returns with a twenty-dollar bill. The owner says, "That still is not enough." Leaving again, he returns with a ten-dollar bill. It is still not enough. In the analogy, he must repeat this process continually, always attempting to use something of lesser value to receive something of greater value.

Consider, however, what [God](#) did. We are the item being purchased, and our redemption price - our cost to Him - is the expiation of our sins. God laid down a multi-

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trillion dollar note to redeem us: Christ. God gave the life of the Creator to pay the penalty for [sin](#). He did not offer a lesser being for us - an animal is not sufficient to redeem even one human. God came through with a payment that is not merely adequate to meet the cost of one person's redemption, but is so great it satisfies the cost for all the sins of the whole of mankind for all time! God met the total indebtedness of all mankind with one payment.

The last phrase of [Hebrews 10:1](#) says that the animal sacrifices did not make those who followed them perfect. In verse 2, the writer follows this with the question, "For then would they not have ceased to be offered?" He is providing evidence that no animal, no matter how unblemished, can pay the price of a man's sins because a human is worth too much. In verse 3, he proclaims that the sacrifices only reminded the people of how sinful they were and that their sins had yet to be paid for. In verse 4, he concludes that it is just not possible for any animal to pay for the sins of any man.

God simply will not accept the blood of an animal for the life of a man. The sacrificial law was a schoolmaster ([Galatians 3:24](#)), intended by God to instruct by putting people through the exercise of making the sacrifice. How much those making the actual offerings learned is unknown, but they are very effective teachers for those of us under the New Covenant, if we incline our minds to them and seek God's help in understanding. Above all, they teach us the value of Christ's sacrifice.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:

[The Offerings of Leviticus \(Part Six\): The Sin Offering](#)

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