

Hebrews 10:11-14

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Earthly priests make animal sacrifices again and again, yet they cannot take away sins. Christ, in one sacrifice, covered sins forever. Christ now sits on a throne at the right hand of God. His work of atonement is complete.

The contrast between Christ and the earthly priests continues, showing the inferiority of the earthly priests while emphasizing the superiority of Christ as our true High Priest. Levitical priests are described as standing every day to minister the same sacrifices continually: *Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins* (v 11). In contrast, Christ has *sat down at the right hand of God* (v 12), because He completed His work. The earthly priests' work was never finished. Prior verses note that the Levitical priests had to continuously offer sacrifices that would *never take away sins*, whereas Christ offered *one sacrifice for sins for all time* (v 12).

The picture here is of earthly priests, under the law and Old Covenant, working every day and making sacrifices every year. Christ, by contrast, made one perfect sacrifice, and now sits because His sacrificial work is finished. The earthly priests' sacrifices did not result in the removal of sins forever, but Christ's did.

For Christ, the picture continues. He is now reigning at the right hand of the Father. He sits in anticipation of the future when He will defeat His enemies once and for all. He is *waiting from that time onward until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet* (v 13), an illustration of total submission from all people toward Christ when He rules the earth as King one day. That, of course, also means Jesus now holds the position of Judge. The Pauline Author will soon make a related point about judgement.

This image of enemies being made a footstool is taken from Psalm 110:1, the same psalm that depicts the Davidic priest-king (Jesus) as a priest after the order of Melchizedek, eternal and righteous. Jesus Christ has fulfilled the priestly words of this psalm.

As our high priest, superior to all earthly priests and earthly practices, *by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified* (v 14). The word *sanctified* means to be set apart. In this instance, the reference is to those who have believed in Jesus and are set apart to be in the family of God. His accomplished work lasts forever for those who believe in Him; there are no further sacrifices that need to be made to satisfy God's judgment of sin.

However, there is a part of Psalm 110 that is yet to be completed. The enemies of Jesus have been defeated but are not totally subjugated. That will include Satan and the demonic host. Although we wait for that day, it is a certain outcome, and will come to pass as surely as the portion of Psalm 110 that has already been fulfilled.

Christ's sacrifice was superior, as is His priesthood, for the sake of those who believe in Him. We are made righteous before the throne of God forever, through Christ. Verse 14 says *for by one*

offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified, again emphasizing the goal of perfecting (“teleo”) or finishing our sanctification. This is the spiritual journey of faith throughout our lives as believers, and only Christ’s better sacrifice has made our sanctification and fulfillment of faith possible. It takes faith to look ahead to the rewards of a future glory while enduring difficulty in this life (Hebrews 11:6).

The superior priesthood and the superior sacrifice create both a certainty of belonging in the family of God, as well as an accountability for what we do with the great gift. As the Pauline Author will soon point out, continuing to rely on what has been displaced will trigger that accountability.

Biblical Text

¹¹ Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; ¹² but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³ waiting from that time onward until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet. ¹⁴ For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.