

## ROMAN CATHOLICISM IN LIGHT OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

### **XVI. Catholicism's Insufficient Sacrifices Versus Christ's Sufficient Sacrifice**

(Hebrews 10:1-18)

#### **I. Introduction**

- A. A number of our Church members have come from Roman Catholic backgrounds, and they often seek support in Biblical truths that counter the strong, errant indoctrination they faced in their past.
- B. The epistle to the Hebrews was written to counter the errant traditionalism of first century Judaism that was similar in theological thrust to much of Catholicism, so we study Hebrews for edification in this matter.
- C. The author of Hebrews in Hebrews 10:1-18 contrasted the Aaronic high priest's impotent sacrifices with Christ's sufficient sacrifice. The passage thus counters Roman Catholicism's belief on man's need for continual sacrifices of Christ in the Mass, so we view this passage for our insight, application and edification:

#### **II. Catholicism's Insufficient Sacrifices Versus Christ's Sufficient Sacrifice, Hebrews 10:1-18.**

- A. The Catholic Church teaches a need for repeat and insufficient sacrifices of Christ in the Mass to enter heaven:
  1. Catholicism holds that Christ's single death on the cross will not get one into heaven, for "purgatory is" necessary "to cleanse one of imperfections, venial sins, and faults," and that "'purgatorial punishments' may be relieved by the offerings of the living faithful, such as Masses . . ." (Ibid., s. v. "Purgatory")
  2. As for the Mass, the Roman Catholic Church teaches that "(t)he Mass, wherein the body and blood of Christ" exists, is "the same offering that took place on the cross at the crucifixion of Christ . . ." (Robert C. Broderick, ed., The Catholic Encyclopedia, 1986, s. v. "Eucharist, Celebration of.")
  3. However, the Catholic Church then claims that "the priest can never give assurance that the soul for which he has said mass is out of purgatory. He . . . has no criterion by which that can be known. Hence the offerings may be continued for years . . ." (Loraine Boettner, Roman Catholicism, 1978, p. 186)
  4. Thus, the Roman Catholic Church views Christ's historical death on the cross as insufficient to purge the sinner of his sin, that Christ's sacrifice on the cross must be repeated in a humanly unknown number of Masses with no gauge for determining when any particular person can escape purgatory and enter heaven.
- B. However, Hebrews 10:1-18 ESV contrasts the sufficiency of Christ's death on the cross with the insufficiency of the Old Testament Aaronic sacrifices, and by application, the insufficiency of any other sacrificial system:
  1. The Mosaic Law had only a shadow of the good things to come and not the true form of those realities, so that it could never by the same sacrifices that were offered each year perfect the worshipers, Hebrews 10:1.
  2. Had those offerings sufficiently atoned for sin, there would not have been any need for them to be repeated, and those sacrifices under the Law only kept reminding the people of their sin, for the blood of sacrificial animals could never take away man's sins, Hebrews 10:2-4.
  3. For this reason, when Christ came into the world, He said that the Father had no desire in the sacrifices and offerings of the Aaronic priesthood, but that God had prepared a body for Him to give as a satisfactory sacrifice in God's view, Hebrews 10:5-6. For that reason, Christ said that He had come to do the Father's will just as it is written in Scripture, Hebrews 10:7 (citing Psalm 40:6-8).
  4. In making these statements, it is evident that God was abolishing the first inadequate Aaronic priestly sacrificial system to establish the second effective order with the sacrifice of Christ, Hebrews 10:8-9.
  5. Thus, by God's will, we are **sanctified** through the **one historical** offering of Christ's body "**once for all**" (*ephapax*, Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 330) **on the cross**, Hebrews 10:10.
  6. Though the Aaronic priests stood daily offering repeat sacrifices that could never take away sins, Christ by the offering of His one historical sacrifice for sins on the cross then sat down at the Father's right hand, His work of redemption being complete, and He currently awaits for His foes to be made a footstool for His feet, Hebrews 10:11-14 with Psalm 110:1.
  7. The Holy Spirit testified to this truth in Jeremiah 31:33-34 when He predicted the New Covenant promise that God would put His laws in the hearts of His people, writing them on their minds, and their sins would be removed from God's memory as the issue of sin would have been fully addressed, Hebrews 10:15-17.
  8. Where there is such **forgiveness** of sins, there is **no longer** any **need** for an **offering** for sin, Heb. 10:18.

**Lesson:** *Contrary to the Aaronic sacrificial system and, by application, to the Roman Catholic system of the Mass, the high priestly ministry of Jesus Christ with His "once for all" single death on the cross fully handles our sin.*

**Application:** *May we joyfully rest in Christ's "once for all," finished, sufficient sacrifice on the cross for our sin.*