

A SERIES OF DEVOTIONS BASED ON THE BOOK OF HEBREWS

THE REAL THING -PART I

Hebrews 10:1-4 “The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. Otherwise, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins. It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.”

As the sky was clear and the sun brightly shined, the beautiful, tall, majestic tree cast a huge shadow. Looking at the shadow of this tree would never permit you to see the intricacies of the trunk, limbs and branches that gave it its character. You needed to see the real tree.

A shadow suggests indefiniteness, unsubstantiality. It is a mere indication that a reality exists. It is a bare imitation or rudimentary outline that in no way enables you to see the real thing.

The Old Testament ceremonial laws, the sacrificial system, the rules, and regulations the Children of Israel followed, the writer to the Hebrews here in chapter 10, says were only a “shadow of good things to come.” They provided the people of that day with a way for them to recognize their sins and need for forgiveness. However, they were not able to provide lasting forgiveness. Thus, they were at best like a shadow or outline of what God promised them His Messiah would provide for them.

If the Old Testament sacrifices had been sufficient, they would not have been offered over and over again. The Holy writer says, “the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins” if their sacrifices were sufficient. No, he writes, “It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.” (Tomorrow's devotion provides God's answer to how then do you receive His forgiveness)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, in Your love you provided atoning sacrifices to the nation of Israel that pointed them to the one You would send who would offer His one-time sacrifice for the remission of their sins and the sins of all people. Lead me to Jesus, Your precious Lamb You sent, to not only offer but be that sacrifice for me. In His name. Amen.

O Christ, You walked the road Our wand'ring feet must go.
You faced with us temptation's pow'r And fought our ancient foe.

No bread of earth alone Can fill our hung'ring hearts.
Lord, help us seek Your living Word, The food Your grace imparts.

No blinding sign we ask, No wonder from above,
Lord, help us place our trust alone In Your unswerving love.

When lures of easy gain With promise brightly shine,
Lord, help us seek Your kingdom first; Our wills with Yours align.

O Christ, You walked the road Our wand'ring feet must go.
Stay with us through temptation's hour To fight our ancient foe.
(LSB 424)

(Wuest) 'A shadow' suggests indefiniteness and unsubstantiality; a mere indication that a reality exists . . . The contrast is between a bare intimation or rudimentary outline that good things were to be given, and an actual presentation of these good things in an apprehensible form.

(Wuest) The fact that the sacrifices were constantly renewed, shows that the law possessed no more than a mere shadow of the coming good which was exhibited in those sacrifices. Expositor's quotes Davidson as saying in this connection; "No repetition of the shadow can amount to the substance."