

Hebrews 10:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.

Analysis

The law had only 'a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things.' A shadow provides outline but no substance. The law pointed to realities fulfilled in Christ. The repetition of sacrifices 'continually year by year' proves they 'can never...make the comers thereunto perfect.' If they worked, the sacrifices would cease. Continuation proves inadequacy.

Historical Context

The Day of Atonement came every year (Leviticus 16), testifying that last year's sacrifice was insufficient. This endless cycle demonstrated the old covenant's inability to perfect consciences or remove sin definitively.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does understanding OT sacrifices as shadows help you appreciate Christ's perfect sacrifice?
2. What does Christ's single sacrifice accomplish that thousands of animal sacrifices could not?

Interlinear Text

Σκιὰν γὰρ ἔχων ὁ νόμος τῶν μελλόντων ἀγαθῶν
a shadow **For** **having** G3588 **the law** G3588 **to come** **of good things**
G4639 G1063 G2192 G3551 G3195 G18

οὐκ αὐταῖς τὴν εἰκόνα τῶν πραγμάτων κατ'
and not **the very** G3588 **image** G3588 **of the things** **year by year**
G3756 G846 G1504 G4229 G2596

ἐνιαυτὸν ταῖς αὐταῖς θυσίαις ἃς προσφέρουσιν
G1763 G3588 **the very** **sacrifices** **which** **they offered**
G846 G2378 G3739 G4374

εἰς τὸ διηνεκὲς οὐδέποτε δύναται τοὺς
continually G3588 G1336 **never** **can** G3588
G1519 G3763 G1410

προσερχομένους τελειῶσαι·
the comers thereunto **make**
G4334 G5048

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 8:5 (Parallel theme): Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.

Hebrews 9:11 (Good): But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;

Colossians 2:17 (Parallel theme): Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.

Hebrews 9:23 (Sacrifice): It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

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