

Hebrews 10:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.

Analysis

Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. This verse continues quoting Psalm 40:6-8, concluding Christ's declaration of purpose. The emphatic "Lo, I come" (idou hēkō, iδοὺ ἥκω) expresses Christ's voluntary entrance into the world with determined purpose—"to do thy will, O God." This obedience stands in stark contrast to humanity's rebellion and even Israel's repeated covenant failure. Where Adam disobeyed, where Israel broke the law, Christ perfectly fulfilled all righteousness.

The phrase "He taketh away the first" (anairei to prōton, ἀναίρει τὸ πρῶτον) refers to the Old Covenant sacrificial system. The verb anaireo means "to remove," "abolish," or "set aside." God removes the first covenant—not because it was wrong but because it was preparatory, shadows pointing to substance. The sacrificial system served its purpose by revealing sin's seriousness, humanity's inability to save itself, and the need for a perfect sacrifice.

"That he may establish the second" (hina stēsē to deuteron, ἵνα στήσῃ τὸ δεύτερον) reveals God's redemptive purpose. The verb histēmi ("to establish") indicates permanent installation. The New Covenant, based on Christ's once-for-all sacrifice, replaces repeated ineffective offerings with one perfect, final atonement. This transition from shadows to reality, from repeated to completed, from insufficient to all-sufficient, marks salvation history's greatest turning point. What the law couldn't accomplish—making worshipers perfect in conscience—Christ achieved through His obedient self-offering.

Historical Context

The theological concept of one covenant giving way to another was revolutionary for first-century Jewish Christians. The Mosaic system had governed Israel's worship for nearly 1,500 years. The Temple still stood (Hebrews was written before 70 AD), sacrifices continued daily, priests ministered according to Levitical law. To declare this entire system obsolete (*palaioumena*, 8:13—"becoming obsolete") required extraordinary biblical warrant.

Psalm 40, attributed to David, expressed the principle that God values obedience over mere ritual (1 Samuel 15:22). The psalm's original context addressed the superiority of heartfelt devotion over formal sacrifice. The author of Hebrews, inspired by the Spirit, recognizes these words as prophetically spoken by the pre-incarnate Christ, declaring His purpose to fulfill what animal sacrifices could only symbolize.

The first-century church navigated immense tension between continuity and discontinuity with Judaism. Hebrews clarifies that Christianity isn't Judaism plus Jesus but the fulfillment that makes the old system obsolete. Christ didn't merely improve the sacrificial system—He replaced it. This wasn't abandoning Old Testament revelation but recognizing its goal: shadows find substance in Christ, types meet antitype, promises receive fulfillment. The book of Hebrews provided theological grounding for why Christians no longer offered animal sacrifices or maintained Temple rituals.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does Christ's perfect obedience to the Father's will encourage you when facing difficult obedience in your own life?

2. In what ways might you be tempted to add to Christ's finished work as though His sacrifice were insufficient?
3. What practical difference should the transition from Old to New Covenant make in your daily approach to God?

Interlinear Text

τότε	εῖρηκεν	ἰδού,	ἵκω	τοῦ	ποιῆσαι	ό	Θεός,	τὸ
Then	said he	Lo	I come	G3588	to do	G3588	O God	G3588
G5119	G2046	G2400	G2240		G4160		G2316	

θέλημά	σου	ἀναιρεῖ	τὸ	πρῶτον	ἵνα	τὸ	δεύτερον
will	thy	He taketh away	G3588	the first	that	G3588	the second
G2307	G4675	G337		G4413	G2443		G1208

στήσῃ

he may establish

G2476

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 10:7 (References God): Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.

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