

The Blue responses are Rex's, and the red remarks are Pastor Bills.

**TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
IHOP Bible Study Tuesday, March 18, 2003
Hebrews 10: 1 - 18**

This chapter and Chapter 12 and 13 we will take in two sections each. There is a lot of meat to chew on, and many wonderful images for faith development.

I. TODAY, READ VSS. 1 - 18. The once-for-all sacrifice. Happy landings. II. vs 1 Translate the word "perfect." (What does it mean?) Run this word through your human experience.

To be inwardly cleansed, completely at peace, at-one-ment.

It is helpful to remember that humans can never be "perfect." In the Gospels, one man calls Jesus "Good Teacher." Jesus response is right. "Do not call me Good, because only God is God. In our context, only God is Perfect At-One-ment.

Oh, yes! This I understand and affirm. The only place to push a bit is what it means to you to be inwardly cleansed. For me, one dimension of this "cleansing" is to be reawakened. It is interesting to observe middle aged men in jail respond to this message of awakenment. Just to know that they've been asleep to their spiritual resources all their lives is a real epiphany for them. Now, they understand what it means to keep themselves awake to enable them to have a peace in their life -- even in jail!

Next, in the context of this sentence, write a transliteration of this sentence; i.e., use your own words to re-write the sentence here.

The sacrifices offered by the earthly priests cannot bring atonement with God.

Super! Can you identify any of the "earthly priests?" Try TV used car salesmen; try vacation guides; try quasi-religious groups threatening us by "being left behind." "Earthly priests" are those who offer some kind of escape from reality, or they promote some kind of an illusion. They tell us a LIE. They practice the antithesis of At-One-Ment. II.

Notice in vs 3 -- there is a BIG BUT (always, it seems. . . .) First, translate the word "sin." If necessary call for the Lexicon thru your e-mail biblestudycoment@triumc.org and in the "subject line" write Lexicon.

Sin=antiatonement, estrangement from God, ourselves and the world.

Very good. Now, what happens to us when we get "estranged from God, self and world?"

"Estrangement" is an interesting word meaning "being divorced from something."

Estrangement is a "strange" experience, because it describes our living divorced from the Meaning of Life; this is why we feel strange. It is the experience of anti-atonement.

Second, compare these two parts of this paragraph.

The first part of the paragraph tells us that the earthly sacrifices cannot bring us to at-one-ment. The second part says these sacrifices continually remind us of our estrangement. Good! Yes, like the "earthly priests" described above, the earthly sacrifices were exercises following the LAW. Because the Law is impossible to fulfill perfectly, the sacrifices could not reconcile our human condition of divorce: estrangement, anti-atonement, etc. (The follow up is noted below in section V.)

III. vss 5 - 7 At this point, we will not study the quotation from Ezra, Jeremiah, Psalms and Matthew. Except to note, Paul is proof-texting again. Next time we study the Hebrew letter, we can delve into the theology and social comment of the major prophet Jeremiah, and the minor prophet Ezra. Remember Psalms are always poetry and music: both are intuitional and the language of the Holy Spirit. IV. vss. 8 - 10 Translate the word "holy" (This is a no brainer, OK? But the lexicon can help; I think?)

Free from sin or blemish.

Oops. Above you defined the "experience of SIN" as participating in anti-at-one-ment. Holy is being free from those things that separate us from neighbor, self and The Meaning of Life. Interestingly, the word "holy" literally means "Happy!" The connection between "happy" and being separated from the things that we do to create animosity in our relationships is pretty clear. To have a spiritual blemish, is to have a person "zit." To be free from spiritual zits, is to live the "clearasil life." (So to speak?!)

V. vss 11 - 14 As you read this section, be ready to supply your own meaning of the words "perfect" and "holy." Write a brief summary of the argument of which Paul is out to convince us here.

Again, Paul asserts that we have been made holy (see definition above) by Christ's sacrifice for all time.

Of course, you're on target here. Because the "earthly sacrifices" required by the LAW failed to bring At-One-Ment, it was necessary to provide a sacrifice that was an OBJECTIVE OTHER; i.e., something outside ourselves; something to which we relate, but was not us. This OBJECTIVE OTHER was Jesus Christ!

Because we live estranged, separated from each other, we live in a STATE of anti-Atonement. A "state" of being describe our human reality. We are irreconcilably estranged from each other. In a word, we are FATED to be what we are: for instance, male and female. Into this human condition we are born! This human STATE/FATE is why Christianity defines this relationship as "sinners," the state of anti-At-One-Ment.

The sacrifice of Christ on the cross provided an OBJECTIVE OTHER who DIED TO THIS WORLD, DEFEATED DEATH IN THE RESURRECTION AND WAS RAISED AGAIN. Now, our sinful (anti-At-One-Ment) state is defeated, the estrangement overcome.

Our necessary deed is for each of us to have a personal relationship to CHRIST. When males relate to CHRIST, and females relate to CHRIST, what we find in common is our RELATIONSHIP TO CHRIST. In this way those separated by FATE are Reconciled, or Justified, or Atoned. These three words describe the traditional means of our salvation: our AT-ONE-MENT. We find our unity in our relationship to the OBJECTIVE OTHER who is CHRIST.

VI. vs. 15 - 18 Translate the words "Holy Spirit." If necessary, I believe the lexicon has some help. Or, just do it yourself. (One day soon, I'll need to reorganize the lexicon so that it is alphabetized.) Watch out in vs. 17 for the words "sins" (oh yes....you've already got this one translated.) and "lawless." When you think of At-One-Ment, what do you intuit "lawless" might mean? Write your answer here:

For some reason I am unable to access the Lexicon. Rex, the reason who didn't have it, is that I keep giving you the wrong e-mail address. As above, the correct one is to e-mail to biblestudycomment@triumc.org and in the "subject" line write Comments Lexicon. Keith, our web master, tells me you now have your own copy. As I said before, one of these days, I get it cleaned up and reorganized.

Holy Spirit = God speaking to us.

U-m-m-m. Let's work on this a minute. While this is true, we need to run it through our gut. We know God speaks to us through the human experience of being At-One with neighbor, self and The Meaning of Life. No word need be said, other than the good they deeds achieve: the recipient feels good, and we feel good too.

"Holy" means happy, healthy, whole, genuine, authentic. Spirit means breath or power. So Happy Breath means to drink into ourselves At-One-Ment. Literally, this happens to us when WE CHOOSE to do things to achieve Wholeness or At-One-Ment.

Since United Methodists believe in Prevenient Grace — the grace that always goes before us; meaning, if grace is always a head of us, then there is no choice we make that is not empowered by the Happy Breath. Even the decisions we make to be naughty and horrible to others, God gives us the Happy Breath to do it. God is funny this way, The Meaning of Life preserves our freedom and free will.

Remember, God is only Love. This is how God is limited. Also, God is impartial, but "The reward is found in the deed itself." (Salmonite saying.) When we do good things, our reward is experienced as pleasure. When we do dumb things to hurt others, the reward is experienced as hurt. So, it is not necessary for God to punish us, since the deed itself punishes us. What God can do, is to "guarantee that every free choice has consequences — in the choice itself. The experience of this free choice we erroneously call it "The Wrath Of God." Wrath smath. Our human experience is only being Guaratee by The Guarantor.

Lawlessness = anti-at-one-ment. Excellent!

GOOD WORK, PEOPLE.

On to the last half of Chapter 10: vs. 19 thru 39.