

Hebrews 9:11-28

Last week we concluded with how the *fleshly ordinances* (those performed with elements of the natural, which were symbolic at the present time for the reality they were pointing to) were going to give way in the coming *reformation*. And obviously we are talking about the coming of Jesus. Which by the time of the book of Hebrews had been written was already accomplished. So as we come into **verse 11** (which we read last time but did not dig into), he now starts with these two words, that when combined are so powerful- “*But Christ*”...

¹¹ But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. ¹² Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.

As we have discussed several times now, His body is the more perfect tabernacle (Rev. 21:22, 9:24). And everything that has been instituted in the form of a building in which the work of the priest and the sacrifice and offers were made, *has always been pointing to this reality*.

- In a sense this falls into the **near** and **far** fulfillment principle of prophecy. While **1)** some prophecy has only one direct fulfillment, **2)** others have a **near** fulfillment (which are most commonly found in Jesus first coming), **3)** while still holding out on a portion of **far** fulfillment in the future. **4)** And then we can have an unfolding component of prophecy.
- For example (based on last week’s study), **1)** when Jesus came bodily into the world to die as the substitutionary sacrifice for our sin, His body was the tabernacle *not made with human hands*. For the Holy Spirit placed Jesus into the Virgin Mary’s womb. **2)** And what we see here (and will hear more of today) is when Jesus ascended back into heaven, that is the Most Holy place (remembering in the pattern shown Moses the Most Holy Place is the portion of the tabernacle the high priest could go into just once a year). **So this location** (not just the person of Christ, at this time, **is also the true tabernacle made without human hands**). And **3)**, we know there is going to be a physical temple in the millennial kingdom (the 1,000 year reign of Jesus upon the earth) that God will build, and not man. But **4)** in the eternal state (as we spoke about last week), *God Almighty and the Lamb will be its temple* (Rev. 21:22).
- The point being that in the amazing plan of salvation and reunification (because God saved us for eternal relationship with Him), **this current state we are in is not the end of the road**. Sure, we are so blessed and free because of the work of Jesus. And truly, until you have surrendered your life to Him, nothing else is going to save you. **But this is not as good as it gets, because Gods plan is still unfolding**. And nothing can stand in the way of it coming to fruition- nothing!

This takes us now to the next point we should gather here, and that is that this is an *eternal* plan based on *eternal redemption*. And as with the other studies in *Hebrews*, this brings us to another major theological truth which some in the church have struggled accepting. It can be stated as a question; “**did the work of Jesus cover my sins past, present, and future?**” In short, because we are going to really dig into this in **Ch. 10** and come back to it a few more times today, **the answer is Yes!** Eternal means *eternal redemption* is eternal. And that is not possible if your next failure can somehow blot you out of the Lambs Book of Life (1 John 1:8 & 2:1, Rom. 5:20).

¹³ For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, ¹⁴ how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Blood means death here. Not a partial withdrawal for ceremonial purposes. Otherwise, there would have been a lot of bulls and goats walking around with bandages on, wearing a sticker that said, “I gave blood”.

- What it is saying is Jesus *offered* His very life on our behalf. He was the offering. Not part of Him, but all of Him. His whole life. **And that He offered it means no one took it from Him. He willingly laid it down for you.**

With so many questioning the reason for their existence and the meaning of life, one answer alone speaks past the biological and scientific pursuit. And its that God made you for Himself. And with that understanding, clarity just keeps on coming, because now you can answer the questions as to **1)** why you are here, **2)** the meaning of life, **and a new one, 3) am I truly cherished by anyone**. The God of creation loves you so much that He would choose to take on flesh, to come into the world and die in your place, that He might redeem you to Himself. You might still have some questions. But I hope you will check these ones off your list.

Now returning to the point of our *eternal* redemption (because God thinks it's so important we understand this reality), He deals with the logical conclusion that it had to be an eternal God (*eternal Spirit*- a term used nowhere else in the NT) in order to make an eternal covenant. Otherwise, how could He keep it eternally?

- Think of it this way. If I have an uncle who is just loaded and He invites me and my family to live as long as we would like in his guest house on the back forty of his ranch in Aspen, but then he dies and his immediate family inherits the property, my situation is unsure at best. So when he said “as long as we’d like”, that was, **1)** as long as he is alive **2)** and we are still in good standing with him. Either of those change (and since death is inevitable, we know one of those will surely change), then there is absolutely no guarantee we can actually live there as long as we’d like. As a matter of fact, we can be out on the curb at a moment’s notice.
- But God’s plan is eternal because **He is eternal, and so is His salvation**. So when He tells us that “*being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:6)*”, we can rest assured that His eternal plan, made by His eternal power, in His eternal state, is our eternal hope. And that is a hope that will be fulfilled. In one sense He is going to complete it. And at the same time (because God stands outside of time) it’s already finished.

And this brings us to the next powerful point (because he just keeps packing them in here). And that is one I told you we would come back to this week, since we passed over it last time (9:9). And that is how only the work of Jesus in our place can truly *cleanse the conscience*. The logical question might be, what really is the conscience? The word comes from a combination of two Greek words which convey “with awareness in oneself”. In **Rom. 2:15** it speaks of a gentile without God doing what is right, and then goes on to describe him this way, “*who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them*”. That’s a fairly great description of the conscience. And it’s a huge problem for the evolutionists because they can’t explain why we have one (but that’s another conversation 😊).

- And the bible tells us there are different states our conscience could be in. **1)** **1 Tim. 4:2** tells us we can have a **seared conscience** which is past feeling. And in that example, it was bible teachers who started preaching a false gospel **but didn’t care anymore** (likely because of what it netted them). We can see examples in men like Pharaoh (**Ex. 8:15, 32, 9:7, 9:12 & 9:34-35**) and Herod Antipas (**Mark 6:14-29 & Luke 23:8-12**) **who just stopped paying attention to their conscience and ultimately couldn’t feel conviction any longer** (see also the warning in **Heb. 3:7-11**). **2)** You can also have a **defiled conscience** (**Titus 1:15**). And I’m betting none of us need examples because we have all been there at some point in our lives (but if you want some, see **Gen. 42:21 & 2 Sam. 24:10**). And this is the state of the conscience being addressed here and in **verse 9** from last week.
- It’s this state that religious rituals can do nothing about at all. As a matter of fact, **no matter how you approach this on your own, you cannot get past the defiled conscience**. And if you can, you have a seared conscience and are past feeling. That’s not a better condition. As a matter of fact, that is the definition of a sociopath. And since our sin is against God and Him alone (because all things and people were created by Him and for Him), it’s Him we need to clear our *conscience* before. King David poured out this truth in his confession before God in **Psa. 51:4**. And these Jewish believers who were considering turning back to a religious system that could only bring conviction needed to be reminded of this. And so do we.
- Folks, **3)** there is only one way this problem of a defiled or even seared conscience can be resolved, and that is to have it **purified** (here in **verse 14**), cleaned (**10:22**) or cleared (**13:18**). **Which is all accomplished together in receiving the death burial and resurrection of Jesus (1 Pet. 3:21)**. **4)** And then you are to protect it (**Acts 23:1, 24:16**). **5)** And to protect the conscience of those who are weaker in the faith (**1 Cor. 8:7, 10, 12, & Rom. Ch. 14**).

Folks, as followers of Jesus, we can and should occasionally recount what Jesus saved us from so that we can **1)** celebrate the death of our old nature, **2)** bring us to the place of gratitude and worship, and **3)** so we can share our testimony (or more accurately the testimony of Him saving us). But if you are still bound to your past, you are denying an essential piece of the finished work of Jesus. He cleansed that garbage from you. Receive it.

¹⁵ *And for this reason* (that Jesus had offered Himself) *He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death* (He did not swoon or somehow survive the cross. He died. If He hadn’t, you and I would be in big trouble), *for the redemption of the*

transgressions under the first covenant (for Israel couldn't keep it, so He has another way to redeem them), *that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.* ¹⁶ *For where there is a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.* ¹⁷ *For a testament is in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives.*

Let me start by asking a quick question. Should we call the divisions of the bible the Old and New Testament, or the Old and New Covenant? Well, a testament, covenant (verse 15), and a will are the same Greek word (*diatheke*) and fairly synonymous. But here is the one difference we should note; **1)** a **covenant** is between two or more parties, **2)** while a **will** is one party dictating all the terms of who and what they want to give an *inheritance* to.

- Which means in the most accurate sense we would say it's the Old Covenant (an agreement between 2 parties- God and Israel) and the New Testament (like a last will and testament- where it really is all on Gods side and terms).
- So now we go back to your uncle who said you could stay on his land as long as you want, yet then dies, but has placed the whole 40 acres in his will to you. But in our world, there's still a potential problem. **1)** The direct heirs contest the will, **2)** find some corrupt mediator and cut them in for a portion if they can somehow overturn it, **3)** and there's a chance you are still out on the street.
- But here's the thing, this is not only Jesus' will (he is the *testator*), in which He has promised and intended to give an *eternal inheritance* to you, because He was resurrected on the third day and then ascended into heaven to be **the mediator** of the will, there is no scenario where someone can subvert His plan and desire for you.

¹⁸ *Therefore not even the first covenant was dedicated without blood.* ¹⁹ *For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water, scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people,* ²⁰ *saying, "This is the blood of the covenant which God has commanded you."* ²¹ *Then likewise he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry.* ²² *And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.*

This speaks of the steps that were necessary then to **ratify or activate the first covenant**. Which again was a bloody business, because God wanted them to remember the wages of sin was death.

- And I really can't imagine what it would have been like to make an agreement with God that you would keep **all** of the law. And then have a priest sling blood on you to make sure you understood the severity of sin, which the Law could do next to nothing about.
- But what those children of Israel could not see, but we now can, is that blood was foretelling of the coming Messiah who would not have his blood splashed on the outside of us symbolically. **But who would cleanse us from the inside out.** As we spoke about, **even cleansing the conscience.**

²³ *Therefore it was necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these* (the blood of bulls and goats), *but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these* (the blood of Jesus). ²⁴ *For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands* (speaking of the earthly temple), *which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;* ²⁵ *not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another—* ²⁶ *He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.*

If we were Jews living in that day, especially Jews who had received Jesus, upon hearing this truth we could have drawn to our remembrance the pieces of the temple which we had looked upon, **and then tried to understand how they could represent realities in heaven.** But the truth is **I think we have a better understanding today as gentiles than they did then.** That is if we are students of the bible, because we have things they did not. For example, at this time they didn't have the book of **Revelation**. Which also made **Daniel** become more clear. And if you were here last week, we peaked into some of these realities. I think it's so much fun to do so.

- And here's another one of them. The practice of sacrificing for the sin of the nation of the on the Day of Atonement happened year, after year, after year. Burning into the minds of the people **1)** not only the cost of their sin, **2)** but was also preparing the people for what should have been the greatest moment of their life, when Jesus came and died just *once...to put away sin* forever.
- And as we talked about in the last two teachings, the Lord even allowed the temple to be taken down in order to let the entirety of that old covenant pass away (8:13, 9:8). Meaning while those who had not come to Jesus would have mourned, having no way to make what they thought was atonement for their sin, **it**

would have delivered those in Jesus from having to witness the slaying of one more innocent animal on their behalf. Try to imagine the liberation of *conscience* that would have been.

- Which brings us to another issue I have with the leadership of the Catholic church (and I say leadership because I believe there are many Catholics who love Jesus, but have been guided by the leadership to participate in unbiblical things, and to misunderstand biblical truth. And this is one of them). And the more I evaluate their practices, the more it appears they have created rituals that mirror the temple sacrifices which God made *obsolete* (8:13). But in this case, it's worse. For they continue to go through the ritual of offering up Jesus when that was a one-and-done deal. We don't need any more copies and shadows **because the substance is Christ and the work is finished**. Past, present, and future (more to come next week).

²⁷ And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, ²⁸ so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.

There are some things in this life that are for one time only. And in addition to Jesus dying one time (and one time only), we too are going to physically die one time only. I'm actually grateful for this because that whole reincarnation nonsense in this fallen world seems overwhelmingly exhausting. When I die, I'm entering into paradise. And no one will ever make me leave, because I'm a child of the King!

- Now don't get jealous, you are too- if you want to be. The invitation has gone out far and wide. But you cannot join the party without receiving the King.
- For those who have, you should have every bit as much confidence and comfort in this coming reality as I do.
- But there is something else you should also have. And that's **eager expectation**. Because our King has promised He is coming for us. And when it says *apart from sin* (because that's been 100% dealt with) *for salvation*, this second part means our being removed from a fallen world and its present pains and trials.

You know these Jewish believers, under this immense pressure, really needed to go deeper in order to truly separate deception and misconception from reality. The only way they could anchor their faith upward into heaven more, was to go deeper in the understanding of what Jesus had really delivered to them.

- Then, regardless of if their faith in Him cost them their families, their livelihoods, and even their physical lives, they would not be shaken or moved.
- And it seems to me with the ever-increasing tensions the church is facing today, we need to hear this right now too. Folks, pass your past onto Jesus, let Him cleanse your *conscience* so you can passionately serve Him now, while we eagerly wait for Him to come and take us to be with Him.
- Does this describe and resonate with you? If not, here is another of the many invitations from Jesus to change course. What's keeping you from responding to His eternal invitation?