

BY A SINGLE OFFERING

Hebrews 9:1-10:18

A personality assessment in 1992 revealed that our Elder board was split almost evenly between very detailed, analytical personality types and non detailed, action personality types. If you've ever worked on a team, you know differing personality types can really frustrate one another! But we need all types of personalities to function wisely.

I suspect the Preacher of Hebrews was a detail oriented, analytical type. He has spent four chapters explaining the changes in the priesthood, law and covenant with still a chapter and a half to go. The shift from the Mosaic Covenant to the New Covenant was a massive change in God's program. Our Jewish brothers and sisters in 65 A.D. believed the shift had occurred through Messiah but they were bitterly opposed by the Jewish community who rejected such an idea as an attack against Judaism. By his thorough treatment, the Preacher sought their objections and strengthen the confidence/faith of his persecuted brethren in the High Priesthood of Christ.

In 9:1-10:18 the Preacher continues to demonstrate the inadequacies of the Mosaic (Old) Covenant. The ministry of the Old Covenant took place in an earthly tabernacle that limited access to God to one man once a year; the ministry of the New Covenant takes place in the heavenly Tabernacle and opens access to God through the one man, Jesus Christ. Animal sacrifices under the Old Covenant had to be offered repeatedly because they dealt only with the external and could not take away sin; Jesus' sacrifice under the New Covenant was offered once for all because it purifies the conscience and takes away sin. The Old Covenant was a shadow and parable meant to reveal truths about God, the way of salvation and ultimately the Messiah; the New Covenant is the reality.

In Hebrews 9:1-10 the Preacher reviews briefly the earthly tabernacle and its worship. Repetition and separation characterized worship under the Old Covenant.

The Earthly Tabernacle: Repetition and Separation (9:1-10)

Hebrews 9:1-10 (ESV)

¹ Now even the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly place of holiness. ² For a tent was prepared, the first section, in which were the lampstand and the table and the bread of the Presence. It is called the Holy Place. ³ Behind the second curtain was a second section called the Most Holy Place, ⁴ having the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron's staff that budded, and the tablets of the covenant. ⁵ Above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail.

⁶ These preparations having thus been made, the priests go regularly into the first section, performing their ritual duties, ⁷ but into the second only the high priest goes, and he but once a year, and not without taking blood, which he offers for himself and for the unintentional sins of the people. ⁸ By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the holy places is not yet opened as long as the first section is still standing ⁹ (which is symbolic for the present age). According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are

offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper,¹⁰ but deal only with food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until the time of reformation.

The physical setup of the earthly Tabernacle emphasized separation from God. Common people could not enter the Tabernacle court. Levites could not enter the Holy Place. Common priests could not enter the Most Holy Place. Access to God was limited to the High Priest once a year and that not without blood. The gifts and sacrifices offered repeatedly in the earthly Tabernacle were inadequate to remove sin and bring people near to God.

The location and ministry of the New Covenant is far better than that of the Old.

The Heavenly Tabernacle: One Sacrifice, Complete Forgiveness (9:11-28)

Hebrews 9:11-14 (ESV)

¹¹ But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation)¹² he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.¹³ For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh,¹⁴ how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

On Resurrection Sunday 33 A.D. Jesus ascended, was appointed High Priesthood in the order of the Melchizedek, entered the Holy of Holies in the heavenly Tabernacle and offered His sinless human blood in payment for the sins of mankind. Unlike the blood of goats and bulls that only accomplish external, ceremonial purification, the blood of Christ purifies the human conscience of sin to serve the living God.

There is no comparison between the blood sacrifices offered under the Old Covenant and the blood sacrifice offered under the New.

The Old Covenant was mediated by Moses and inaugurated, not by Moses' blood, but by animal blood. In contrast, the New Covenant is mediated by Jesus and inaugurated by His blood.

Hebrews 9:15-22 (ESV)

¹⁵ Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant.¹⁶ For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established.¹⁷ For a will takes effect only at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive.¹⁸ Therefore not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood.¹⁹ For when every commandment of the law had been declared by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people,²⁰ saying, "This is the blood of the covenant that God commanded for you."²¹ And in the same way he sprinkled with the blood both the tent and all the vessels used in worship.²² Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.

A will is made by a man and only upon his death is the will enacted. Similarly, the Old and New Covenants were mediated through men and only by blood could they be inaugurated. The Old Covenant was mediated by Moses, a *servant in* God's house, and inaugurated by *animal* blood. The New Covenant was mediated by Jesus, a *Son over* God's house, and inaugurated by His *sinless, perfect, human* blood.

Under the Old Covenant the high priests had to repeatedly offer the Yom Kippor sacrifices in the earthly Holy of Holies. Under the New Covenant Jesus offered once for all the sacrifice that put away sin forever.

Hebrews 9:23–28 (ESV)

²³ Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. ²⁴ For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. ²⁵ Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, ²⁶ for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. ²⁷ And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, ²⁸ so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

Christ will appear (come) to earth twice. In His first coming He “put away sin by the sacrifice of himself”. In His second coming He will “save (deliver) those who are eagerly waiting for him.” Who will be eagerly waiting for their Messiah at the end of the Tribulation? Who will be threatened with annihilation by the Antichrist at the end of the Tribulation? Who will need to be delivered?

The Remnant of Israel.

Similarly every one of us lives once and then faces divine judgment. Like Israel, all of us need to be delivered. The Great White Throne Judgment has one verdict – guilty, and one destiny – the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:11-15).

Confess you are a sinner and rightly under God's condemnation. Accept the truth that the blood sacrifice of Jesus offered in the heavenly Tabernacle has paid the penalty for all your sins. Thank God for sending Jesus the first time to put away all your sin. Begin now to follow Christ by studying His Word, submitting to His leadership in your life, seeking a discipleship relationship with a more mature follower of Christ.

Old Covenant Sacrifices Remind Rather Than Remove Sins (10:1-4)

Hebrews 10:1–4 (ESV)

¹ For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near. ² Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? ³ But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. ⁴ For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

After sin offerings were made under the Old Covenant people would know their sin was covered, but they also left the tabernacle knowing they would be back with more sin offerings.

When we trust in the blood of Jesus Christ and it is imputed to our accounts, all of our sins are paid for past, present and future. There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. We know all our sins are paid for and forgiven. We won't be back with any other sacrifices. We have been completely saved from the punishment of sin. We have been declared righteous by God, justified, by the once for all sacrifice of Jesus which taken away all our sins. This is what is view in these verses. This is what the Preacher is describing as being made *perfect*.

At the same time we are also in the process of being delivered from the *practice* of sin. This process is called *sanctification*. Believers have 1) been made *perfect* and are 2) being *sanctified* through Christ. The Preacher brings these together in 10:14.

In 10:5-10 the Preacher points out that the Psalms anticipated the end of the Levitical sacrificial system.

End of the Levitical Sacrificial System Revealed in Psalms (10:5-10)

Hebrews 10:5–10 (ESV)

⁵ Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said,

“Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; ⁶ in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. ⁷ Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.’ ”

⁸ When he said above, “You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings” (these are offered according to the law), ⁹ then he added, “Behold, I have come to do your will.” He does away with the first in order to establish the second. ¹⁰ And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

As he has shown from Psalm 110:4 and Jeremiah 31:31-34 the changes in the priesthood, law and covenant were foretold in the Jewish Scriptures. Similarly, the end of the Levitical sacrificial system was in Psalm 40:6-8.

The will of God was that Messiah would shed His blood and as High Priest in the order of Melchizedek offer the once for all sacrifice that would pay the price of mankind's sin. Under the Old Covenant the priests had to constantly sacrifice animals and offer their blood which only temporarily covered sins, but never took away the penalty of sins.

Our High Priest is Seated Because His Sacrifice is Completed (10:11-14)

Hebrews 10:11–14 (ESV)

¹¹ And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. ¹² But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³ waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. ¹⁴ For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

Verse 14 brings together two aspects of our salvation that exist simultaneously. On the one hand we have been made *perfect* in our standing before God; all our sin is forgiven and He has declared us righteous in our legal standing before Him. On the other hand we are *being sanctified*, that is, we are becoming holy, set apart to God, like Christ as we submit to the Lordship of Christ and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Both conditions are true of the Christian: we have been made *perfect* and we are *being sanctified*.

In verses 10:11-14 the Preacher shows that the New Covenant promised in Jeremiah 31 anticipated perfection and sanctification.

The New Covenant Promises Anticipated This Dual Status (10:15-18)

Hebrews 10:15-18 (ESV)

¹⁵ And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying, ¹

⁶ “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds,”

¹⁷ then he adds,

“I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.”

¹⁸ Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.

The New Covenant promise that the law will be written on our hearts and minds describes *sanctification* (sanctification salvation). The New Covenant promise that our sins and lawless deeds will not be held against us describes *perfection* (justification salvation).

With this, the Preacher concludes his teaching on the priesthood of Christ.

His application to his readers and us is that we should stick with Jesus. He...

... mediates a better covenant.

... is High Priest of a better priestly order.

... ministers in a better place.

... offered a better sacrifice.

To Ponder

❓ In verse 9, the author refers to “the present age” and in verse 10, he speaks of regulations that are imposed “until the time of reformation.” How does the appearance of Christ as “a high priest of the good things that have come” change things?

❓ What happens after death in verses 27-28? What false teachings and false beliefs do verses 27-28 set straight?