

Text: Heb 9.11-14

We are looking at Heb 9.1-4, broken up into three pieces. There is a major structural organization of the text that I've emphasized through the last two messages:

Read Heb 9.1-14

On the one hand, the first covenant ... (1)

On the other hand, Christ appeared ... (11)

Under the first covenant, we looked at:

The Place of Worship (1-5)

The Way of Worship (6-10)

What words can you think of to describe the worship of the first covenant, the Old Mosaic Covenant?

Inadequate

Symbolic

Earthly

External

Temporary

Individuals in the OT had to look beyond the physical elements of the first covenant for a fruitful relationship to God. We know that some of them had a personal relationship, but it wasn't as full as God intended in the New Covenant.

One of the arguments of the author of Hebrews is, "Why would you go back to that?"

Another argument, though, is this: "Why would you give up what you have gained?"

That brings us to the "on the other hand" section.

On the other hand, Christ appeared, and that makes all the difference.

Proposition: The New Covenant in Christ's blood enables a life of pure service to our eternal God.

I. Through His entrance of the greater tabernacle (11-12)

A. Recall the old entrance into the old tabernacle

1. The ordinary priests daily: trimming the lamp, offering the incense
2. The ordinary priests weekly: changing the shewbread
3. The High priest yearly: Day of Atonement

Never adequate, always repeated, day after day, year after year

B. Christ's appearance as high priest

Some of the descriptions in our passage are a little hard to understand: but we can discern this:

1. Where he entered: the more perfect tabernacle
 - a. This tabernacle is the "greater and more perfect one"
 - 1) It is not made with hands (*i.e.* by men)
 - 2) And it is "not of this creation" (*i.e.* heavenly)
 - b. We know that the earthly tabernacle followed a pattern revealed to Moses
 - 1) Stephen:

Ac 7.44 ¶ "Our fathers had the tabernacle of testimony in the wilderness, just as He who spoke to Moses directed *him* to make it according to the pattern which he had seen.

2) Author of Heb:

Heb 8.5 who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned *by God* when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for, "SEE," He says, "THAT YOU MAKE all things ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN WHICH WAS SHOWN YOU ON THE MOUNTAIN."

3) Exodus:

Ex 25.40 "See that you make *them* after the pattern for them, which was shown to you on the mountain.

- c. What is heaven, the throne of God, like?
 - 1) Not physical
 - 2) Place of the presence of God
 - 3) The tabernacle/temple imitated something of what Moses saw of God on his throne
 - 4) The Holy place and holy of holies speak to the place where only God dwells
2. What he entered with: His own blood
 - a. This refers, of course, to his sacrifice on the cross
 - b. It isn't necessary to think of a two-part redemption
 - 1) Christ dies on the cross
 - 2) Christ takes his own blood into heaven
 - 3) Heaven isn't a physical place anyway
 - c. Rather, the cross work translated to offering his own blood in the presence of God
3. What he accomplished: eternal redemption
 - a. Entered once
 - b. Accomplished redemption forever (eternal redemption)
 - c. This is the important thing: the OT priests entered again and again — he entered once, and it was done
4. What that makes him: the priest of the good things that have come
 - a. The verb is in a tense that means the good things to come have already come
 - b. When he entered, they were future
 - c. Now that he has entered, they are present

These terms describe the Lord's work from our point of view

They belong to every believer

II. Through His offering of the greater sacrifice (13-14a)

- A. He entered the holy place “not though the blood of goats and calves” (12)
1. The language is the language of comparison
 2. The OT priests never entered without animal blood
- B. The effect of the blood of goats and bulls (13)
1. Additional offerings are added in this verse
 - a. Mostly the passage has meant the Day of Atonement and the work of the high priest
 - 1) The reference “blood of goats and bulls” in v. 13 seems to point to this ritual
 - 2) “goats and calves” v. 12 may be wider in scope, the other offerings as well, but certainly Day of Atonement
 - b. Here is mentioned the “ashes of a heifer”
 - 1) A fairly obscure reference: Numbers 19, “the red heifer” offering
 - 2) Involved taking a perfect red heifer as a sin offering
 - 3) Slaughtered outside the camp, some of the blood sprinkled in the tabernacle
 - 4) Body of heifer completely burned up
 - a) With cedar wood
 - b) Hyssop (marjoram, acc. to Bruce)
 - c) And a scarlet thread
 - 5) The ashes gathered and stored outside the camp
 - 6) Used to make holy water for purifying uncleanness (ashes mixed with water)

“Anyone who contracted ceremonial defilement through touching or approaching a dead body was to be cleansed by being sprinkled with water containing some of the ashes of the heifer.”¹

¹ F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, Rev. ed., The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 215.

2. These offerings had some effect

- a. The people were “defiled” – made common, unclean, by various sins and even bodily functions
- b. The offerings “sanctify” (make holy, separate) “for the cleansing of the flesh”

“The blood of slaughtered animals under the old order did possess a certain efficacy, but it was an outward efficacy for the removal of ceremonial pollution.”²

C. The effect of the blood of Christ (14a)

1. “How much more...” — “the characteristic word—the keynote as it were—of the Epistle.”³
2. If the external sacrifices have *some* external efficacy (cleansing the flesh)
3. Then the sacrifice of Christ’s blood has much more effect (cleansing the conscience)
4. One obscure reference: “through the eternal Spirit”
 - a. Is it the Lord’s own divine Spirit, or the Holy Spirit? (not enough information to decide)
 - b. When Isaiah spoke first of the Servant of the Lord, he spoke of God “putting My Spirit on him” (Isa 42.1)

Isa 42.1 ¶ “Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one *in whom* My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations.

“It is in the power of the Divine Spirit, accordingly, that the Servant accomplishes every phase of his ministry, including the crowning phase in which he accepts death for the

² Bruce, 214.

³ F. W. Farrar, *The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews, With Notes and Introduction.*, Cambridge Greek Testament for Schools and Colleges (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1893), 119.

transgression of his people, filling the twofold rôle of priest and victim, as Christ does in this epistle.”⁴

5. For Christ’s blood to have an effect, Westcott notes the sacrifice must be
 - a. “Voluntary, not by constraint as in the case of the animal sacrifices of the Law.”
 - b. “Rational, and not animal”
 - c. “Spontaneous, not in obedience to a direct commandment”
 - d. “Moral, an offering of Himself by the action of the highest power in Himself, whereby He stood in connexion with God, and not a mere mechanical performance of a prescribed rite.”⁵
 - 1) That is, in his sinless perfection, providing an effective sacrifice of his sinless person
 - 2) As opposed to the High priest merely performing the functions of the ritual with no internal perfection

Jesus made no offering *for himself*.

III. For the cleansing of His servants (14b)

A. The whole effect of Christ’s sacrifice: the cleansing of consciences

1. The OT priest could serve God if he was “ritually clean”
2. But he could never approach God without blood, since his conscience was unclean

“‘Conscience’ (συνείδησις) is the human organ of the religious life embracing the whole person in relationship to God ... It is the point at which a person confronts God’s holiness.”⁶

⁴ Bruce, *Hebrews*, 217.

⁵ Brooke Foss Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 3rd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1903), 263.

⁶ William L. Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, vol. 47B, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1991), 240–41.

B. The object of redemption is service, not cleansing

1. We are very grateful for sins forgiven, for the indwelling and enabling Holy Spirit
2. Yet there is a purpose statement here: “to serve the living God”
3. Saved to serve: the verb relates to temple service
 - a. We are not the sons of Aaron
 - b. We are yet saved to serve in temple service
 - c. Saints are “kings and priests” before God: saved to serve

Allen: We are called to offer “one’s entire life lived out in service to God.”⁷

Conclusion:

Proposition: The New Covenant in Christ’s blood enables a life of pure service to our eternal God.

The first application of this teaching is to the Hebrews: Why would you go back on this? The only way to serve God is to serve through Christ. You can’t go back to Judaism.

The broader application is to us: What are we doing for Christ? How are we living our lives? Are we occupied with ourselves? Is our focus on getting more things for ourselves, or are we focused on glorifying Christ and making his name great?

⁷ David Allen, *Hebrews*, The New American Commentary 35 (Nashville, Tenn: B & H Publ. Group, 2010), 473–74.