

**Text: Heb 9.1-28**

Today our message is my promised “big picture” sermon on Hebrews 9. I spend so much time on details that sometimes the big picture of what our author is saying can be lost.

The title for today is:

**The New Day of Atonement**

The Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) is a major day in the Hebrew calendar. It is a *fast* day, not a *feast* day. We’ve referenced it numerous times in this chapter.

The author does refer to various other aspects of Hebrew worship in the chapter, but the big background theme is the Day of Atonement.

Before we get into the message, though, we should go even bigger with a quick summary of the Book of Hebrews to this point.

Hebrews 1 introduces the exalted Son, seated at the right hand of the Father, far above angels.

Hebrews 2 begins by calling us to pay attention to the Son (and his apostles) because of the Son’s exalted position. Then it shows how God brought the Son into the world as a man, to free fallen man from death.

Hebrews 3 compares Jesus to Moses, with faithful Moses leading true worship of God through the Law, but many who followed Moses failed to enter rest because of hardened hearts.

Hebrews 4 expands on the failure to enter rest, but shows how Jesus, better than Moses, enables entrance into the true rest that remains. “Therefore let us draw near...” Heb 4.16

Hebrews 5 moves to the comparison between Jesus and Melchizedek, with a brief interlude dealing with spiritual immaturity and its consequences, straddling chapters 5 and 6.

Then the rest of chapter 6 and 7 are occupied with the role of Jesus as a priest after the order of Melchisedek, with chapter 8 concluding, “we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.”

The rest of chapter 8 introduces the New Covenant, which makes the Old obsolete.

That brings us to chapter 9, where we will spend our time today. I won't read the whole chapter now, but just two verses:

Heb 9.11-12

**Proposition:** In Jesus, the New Covenant replaces the Old, with permanent far-reaching benefits for all who believe.

As we begin, just a note about organization. The author tackles his topic from several angles, not in a directly logical progression. But he is aiming for what the New Covenant does for us, and why that is so much better than the Old.

## I. The Contrast of the Old and New Covenants

### A. The Old Covenant (1-10)

1. Regulations (1a)
2. Sanctuary (1b) [Tabernacle, then Temple]
3. The Holy place (2)
4. The Holy of holies (3-5)

Notice the lengthier description of the Holy of holies – used only once a year, on the Day of Atonement — this is the chief background of our chapter

5. The daily worship (6)
6. Yom Kippur (7)
7. God's interpretation of Yom Kippur (8-10) "the Holy Spirit is signifying..."

### B. The New Covenant (11-14) — "but when Christ appeared"

1. Christ entered a more perfect tabernacle (11)
2. Christ entered with his own blood (12)
3. Interpretation:
  - a. The blood of bulls and goats are sufficient for cleansing the flesh (13)
  - b. But the blood of Christ is more than sufficient for cleansing the spirit (conscience) (14)

The first part of the chapter is laying out this contrast, the OT Day of Atonement vs the work of Christ.

- This is the essence of the New Covenant
- The other trappings of Jewish worship form the context for the old Day of Atonement
- All of it forms the prelude for the New Day of Atonement in Christ

## II. The Centrality of the Blood

### A. Blood in the Old Covenant

1. Introduced in comparison to Christ (11-12)
2. “blood of bulls and goats” – general summary (13a)
3. “ashes of heifer” – red heifer offering, to make the water of sprinkling (13b)
4. Inauguration of the first covenant (15b-20) [Sinai]
5. Day of atonement (21-22 and throughout)

“The elements that all of these occasions share in common are the presence of blood and a profound religious conviction concerning the potency of blood to provide access to God, to consecrate, to cleanse, to inaugurate covenant, and to achieve purgation from defilement. In each case the ‘material’ character of blood is not in view but blood as a symbolic medium of power.”<sup>1</sup>

- In other words, not blood as such, but blood as the symbol of a substitutionary death.

### B. Blood in the New Covenant

1. His own blood (12)
2. The blood of Christ (14)

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<sup>1</sup> William L. Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, vol. 47B, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1991), 252.

3. Plainly: “the sacrifice of himself” (27)
4. And: “Christ ... offered once to bear the sins of many” (28)

The metaphor of blood speaks to the necessity of a substitutionary death. This is what Jesus offered for men.

### III. The Communion of Faith (15, 27-28)

#### A. United with him in the New Covenant (15)

1. He mediates the New Covenant: stands between man and God
2. His death enables the New Covenant: “since a death has occurred”
3. Those who have been called may receive

Who are the called? The Bible closes with this invitation:

Rev 22.17 ¶ The Spirit and the bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.

“the one who wishes” = “the one who is willing”

If you will, you can join the communion of faith, then you will be...

#### B. Waiting for him in the final Consummation (27-28)

1. Death and judgement are inevitable for man (27)
2. Death and judgement for saints are already accomplished in Christ (28)
3. Therefore, we eagerly wait for him

Our neck is stretched out, our head is turned upward, our Lord will come.

### Conclusion:

**Proposition:** In Jesus, the New Covenant replaces the Old, with permanent far-reaching benefits for all who believe.

“The author of Hebrews has shown that the Mosaic covenant involved a priesthood, a sanctuary, and a sacrifice. Through careful theological analysis, he has shown how Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of each of these

categories. He is a superior priest who is eternal; he serves in a heavenly sanctuary; and he has offered once for all a sacrifice which not only atones for sin but which cleanses the inward conscience of believers, something the old Levitical order could never accomplish.”<sup>2</sup>

Farrar sums chapter 9 up beautifully:

“We may sum up some of the contrasts of this previous chapter as follows.

- The descendants of Aaron were but priests; Christ, like Melchisedek, was both *Priest and King*.
- They were for a time; He is a Priest *for ever*.
- They were but links in a long succession, inheriting from forefathers, transmitting to descendants; He stands *alone, without lineage, without successor*.
- They were established by a transitory ordinance, He *by an eternal oath*.
- They were sinful, He is *sinless*.
- They weak, He *all-powerful*.
- Their sacrifices were ineffectual, His was *perfect*.
- Their sacrifices were offered *daily*. His *once for all*.
- Theirs did but cleanse from ceremonial defilement, His purged the *conscience*.
- Their tabernacle was but a copy, and their service a shadow; His tabernacle was *the Archetype*, and His service *the substance*.
- They died and passed away; He sits to intercede for us for ever at God’s right hand.
- Their Covenant is doomed to abrogation; His, founded on better promises, is *to endure unto the end*.
- Their High Priest could but enter *once* and that with awful precautions, with the blood of bulls and goats, into a material shrine; He, entering *once for all* with the blood of His one perfect sacrifice into the Heaven of Heavens, has thrown open to all the right of continual and fearless access to God.

“What a sin then was it, and what a folly, to look back with apostatising glances at the shadows of a petty Levitism while Christ the Mediator of a New, of a

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<sup>2</sup> David Allen, *Hebrews*, The New American Commentary 35 (Nashville, Tenn: B & H Publ. Group, 2010), 489.

better, of a final Dispensation—Christ whose blood had a real and no mere symbolic efficacy, had died once for all, and Alone for all, as the sinless Son of God to obtain for us an eternal redemption, and to return for our salvation as the Everlasting Victor over sin and death!”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> 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), 126.