

# Hebrews Chapter Nine (vv.15-28)

The Superior Sanctuary: vv.1-10: The Worldly Sanctuary; vv.11-14: The Heavenly Sanctuary.

The Superior Sacrifice: vv.15-22: How Much More Shall the Blood of Christ?

vv.23-28: Who Through the Eternal Spirit Offered Himself.

## How Much More Shall the Blood of Christ? (vv.15-22)

The shed blood of the Lord Jesus has: **cleared** our **consciences** from the burden of sin (v.14); **given** us a capacity to **serve** the living God (v.14); established the **new covenant** and testament with its eternal **inheritance** (vv.15-21); **redeemed** the OT saints (v.15) and provided **purification** and **forgiveness** of sins (v.22).

*15 And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise(d) of eternal inheritance. [16 For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. 17 For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.]*

It is as a consequence of the shed blood and 'death' of the Lord Jesus that He has become the **Mediator** of the new covenant. A mediator is 'one who stands between two parties' with a view to producing peace (cf. Job 9.33). His death has not merely established the new covenant, but granted all those who are 'called' (cf. 3.1) the 'promised eternal inheritance'. There is a general call to all men in the gospel (Matthew 11.28), but not all men respond. Here, those who are 'called' are those of any generation who heed the word of God and respond in faith (the spiritual seed of Abraham). This **eternal** inheritance is ours already, but will be fully realised in a coming day (Ephesians 1.11, 14). *Is it possible that those who lived under the old covenant can enjoy the eternal inheritance associated with the new covenant? Yes!* The 'redemptive' sacrifice of the Lord Jesus is **retrospective** as well as **prospective**. It reaches **backwards** as well as **forwards!** Animal sacrifices could never pay the full price of sins committed under the old covenant, but the sacrifice of Christ has. In the OT the cross was yet future but God would provide in Christ a full redemption, and, knowing this, He was able in righteousness to 'pass over' the accumulated transgressions of those past ages (Romans 3.25).

The mention of an 'eternal inheritance' causes the Apostle to make a short digression (vv.16-17) and employ an alternative meaning of the Greek word *diatheke* ('testament' or 'covenant'). This word occurs **17** times in Hebrews and basically means 'settlement'. This 'settlement' can be in the form of a **covenant** whereby God graciously brought His people into special relationship with Himself *or* it could take the form of a **last will and testament** in which property is bequeathed upon the death of the will-maker ('testator'). This is the sense in which the word is used in vv.16-17. A covenant is in force while the parties live, but a **will** only comes into effect when its maker dies. The new covenant is both a covenant and a will. On the ground of the death of the Lord Jesus the benefits of the eternal inheritance can be given. *This is seen in picture in Moses. He was the mediator of the first covenant, but it wasn't until immediately after his death that Israel entered their earthly inheritance (Deuteronomy 34, Joshua 1).*

*18 Whereupon neither the first testament 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 of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, 20 Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. 21 Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. 22 And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.*

The writer now emphasises **why** Christ had to shed His precious blood and die (vv.14-15). The first covenant was 'inaugurated' or 'put into effect' through the shedding of animal blood (v.18, Exodus 24.1-8). The sprinkling of blood on the altar, book and people brought them into covenant relationship with God on the basis of sacrifice and reminded the people of the penalty of breaking God's law (Exodus 21.12, 15 etc.) as well as the divine means of purification. In fact, as a general rule under this covenant, purification and forgiveness came by blood alone (v.22)<sup>1</sup>. *Leviticus 17.11: For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.* How much more then shall the precious shed blood of Christ establish a **better covenant** (promises not precepts), effect **purification** that touches *heaven* as well as earth and provide **complete forgiveness** for sins (v.23, 26)?

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<sup>1</sup> 'almost all things' (v.22) suggests that some things were cleansed without blood. This could refer to: an impoverished Israelite who was permitted to bring **flour** for his sin offering (Leviticus 5.11-13), cleansing by **water** and **fire** (Exodus 19.10, Numbers 31.22-23) or even **jewels** (Numbers 31.50) and **incense** which was used to make atonement (Numbers 16.46-47).

### **Who Through the Eternal Spirit Offered Himself (vv.23-28)**

**23** *It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.* **24** *For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:*

As vv.21-22 have shown the earthly tabernacle and all associated with it had to be purified by the blood of animal sacrifices. The tabernacle was God's dwelling place and therefore must be marked by holiness. However, the very presence of sinful people around the tabernacle was a defiling influence which needed to be cleansed (cf. Exodus 33.7, Leviticus 16.16, 19). Not just the earthly pattern, but also the heavenly reality needed cleansing too. This could only be effected with 'better sacrifices', i.e. the precious blood of Christ. 'Sacrifices' is in the plural to emphasise the different **aspects** of the sacrifice of Christ. His one sacrifice fulfilled all the various OT offerings (cf. Isaiah 53.9, 'deaths'). *GH Lang: The temporary copies of the heavenly things could be so purged by temporary sacrifices. The eternal reality must be cleansed by an eternal sacrifice. The sacrifice made by Christ extends its cleansing energy throughout the heavens. Why do the 'heavenlies' need cleansing? **First**, this is not God's immediate presence, but the outer courts of heaven which have been defiled by the presence of Satan and other spiritual wickedness (see Job 1.6, 15.15, 25.5, Ephesians 6.12). **Second**, the earthly tabernacle required constant purification due to its association with sinful people. It may be that the purifying of the heavens is necessary because of **our** connection and association with them. **Third**, FF Bruce suggests: 'while ritual purification is adequate for the material order, which is but an earthly copy of the spiritual order, a better kind of sacrifice is necessary to effect purification in the spiritual order.'*

Christ has now entered into 'heaven itself' (v.24), the true sanctuary and dwelling place of God, and 'shines' or is 'emphasised towards the face of God' for us. He is there in all the acceptability of His Person and efficacy of His work at Calvary. *David Gooding: Israel's High Priest on the Day of Atonement appeared in the presence of God as representative of the people who waited outside. If their High Priest was accepted, it meant the people he represented were accepted. If he was rejected, they too were rejected. God has accepted Christ. He is our personal representative. All believers can know this very moment that they are already accepted, and will ever remain so, at the highest level of God's heaven.*

**25** *Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others;* **26** *For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the ~~world~~ (ages) hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*

The sacrifice of Christ is perpetually effective and calls for no repetition. This contrasts the High Priest of old who entered into the Holiest *once* a year (v.7), *every* year (v.25). Further, the High Priest entered into the holiest with the blood of the bulls and goats; Christ has entered into heaven in virtue of His own precious blood. If the sacrifice of Christ was inadequate and called for repetition, then He would have had to endure suffering and death unnumbered times since the foundation of the world. But, this is absurd. It is divinely appointed unto all mankind **once** to die (v.27, Genesis 2.17) and that because of sin (Romans 5.12). The Man Christ Jesus was also divinely appointed **once** to die but on behalf of the sins of others (v.28). This He did once for all 'in the end' or 'completion of the ages'. This may refer to the end of the OT period (Galatians 4.4, Hebrews 1.2) but is more likely suggesting that Calvary is the centre-piece of time. *The cross was ever in view in the eternal counsels of God in the past. It is ever before Him and always will be, in ages to come. The ages have reached their goal and end in Him.* At the appointed time, Christ 'was manifested' (1 John 1.2) or 'brought into view' in order to 'put away', 'set aside' or 'abolish' the root matter of **sin**. Calvary will eventually result in a new heaven and new earth wherein is no sin.

**27** *And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:* **28** *So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.*

Judgment is assured for all (Acts 17.31). The lost sinner will face immediate judgment in death (Luke 16.19-23) and await future and final judgment at the Great White Throne (Revelation 20.12). Believers are not subject to these judgments! Christ has been once for all 'offered', the passive voice suggesting that He was offered up in accordance with the will and purpose of God. At Calvary the Lord Jesus bore the judgment due to others for their sins. Note. This Scripture does not say He bore the sins of **all**. Bearing sins is 'to take up and away from another and bear as a burden upon oneself'. It is only the believer who can say 'Christ bore my sins'. Without the faith that links us to Christ, a man will bear the burden and judgment of his own sins in the Lake of Fire. With our sins forgiven, we have a great hope. We are 'looking for Him'. Our characteristic attitude is that of waiting eagerly for Christ. The particular appearing here (third in the chapter) is His Second Advent. The word 'appear' is *optanomai* which means 'to appear with dramatic suddenness' (Matthew 24.30) and is never used in relation to the rapture. This second visible appearance of the Lord Jesus will be 'without sin', i.e. not to deal with the sin question as He did at His first appearing. Rather it will be for the purpose of salvation and in great glory (Revelation 1.7). Then He will be fully manifested and vindicated. As believers today, we await salvation from the **presence of sin**. For believers during the tribulation there will be salvation for Israel **from their enemies**.