

“The Mediator of the New Covenant”

(Part 2)

Heb. 9:15-28

- INTRO. - The old saying goes, “There are two things that are certain in life: taxes and death.” Well, some might be able to evade taxes, but no one can ever evade death.
- The passage we will be looking at today is well-known because it contains that phrase, “it is appointed unto men once to die, and after that comes judgment.”
- There are few things for *sure* in this world, but that divine appointment is absolutely certain. But that warning is in a wider context (here) so we need to work our way through it.
- Heb. 9:15-28 focuses on the role of Jesus as “the Mediator of the New Covenant,” and we started going through it last Sunday. This passage can be divided into four parts, and we saw the first two last time. The first thing is:

I. THE SECURING OF THE STIPULATION (vv. 15-17)

- Look with me (again) at v. 15, “And for this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, in order that since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were *committed* under the

first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.”

- This is addressing the subject of the OT saints. People often wonder how the OT saints were saved – and the answer is, they were saved the same way we are – by the death of Christ on the cross. They were saved by looking *forward* (in faith) to the Lord’s Messiah, in the same way that people today are saved by looking *back* (in faith) to His atoning work.
- We’re all saved the same way – through faith in the finished work of Christ on the cross. The difference is, that those who are OT saints were looking *forward* while we are looking *back*. In other words, you *could* say that Christ’s work on the cross was retroactive.
- *Here* we see that part of Christ’s work as the Mediator of the new covenant, is to provide the “promise of the eternal inheritance” to those who committed transgressions under the first covenant.
- Go on to v. 16, “For where a covenant is, there must of necessity be the death of the one who made it.” This is written as a statement of what is obvious. It is like saying, “Everybody knows this.”
- Everybody knows that, for a covenant like this to go into effect, the one who made the will has to die. Look at v. 17, “For a covenant is valid *only*

when men are dead, for it is never in force while the one who made it lives.”

- This kind of “covenant” was like a “will.” Everybody knows that a will does *not* go into effect until the one who made the will dies. As long as he is alive, he can alter the will, or even annul it – but once he is dead, the will becomes settled.
- And the point (in this section of Hebrews) is that *death* is required to bring the testament (the covenant) into effect. There *has* to be the shedding of blood. It is death that secures the stipulation of the will.
- The one who made the covenant has to die before it goes into effect – and that becomes the theme of this chapter – Christ died in order to establish the new covenant. In order for us to experience the blessings of the new covenant, there had to be a death.
- But there is a second element we also see in this passage, and that is the element of:

II. THE SYMBOLISM OF THE SPRINKLING (vv. 18-22)

- We looked at this last time as well. In vv. 18-22 the author ties in the need for *blood* by going back to the old covenant. Before any worship could ever take place in the earthly Tabernacle, everything had

to be purified, and that was done through the sprinkling of blood.

- This is all based on an account in Exodus 24:3-8. On Mount Sinai, when the Israelites agreed to obey the laws of God, Moses took the blood of a sacrifice and sprinkled it on the people and on the “book of the covenant” (the scrolls that contained the law).
- You *could* call this a “blood covenant” because the sprinkling of the blood is what sealed the covenant. And Moses declared to the people, “This is the blood of the covenant which God commanded you.”
- But the main point (as we see in v. 22) is that the blood of the sacrifice is what purified (or cleansed) the Tabernacle. Without blood there is no cleansing.
- Over and over again in Scripture we see where the covering of sin always required the sprinkling of blood. We see it very clearly in the Levitical priesthood and the constant sacrifices of animals in the Tabernacle.
- And, of course, *we* understand that all this is pointing to the ultimate sacrifice of Christ on the cross. The blood that was shed under the old covenant was never adequate and never permanent.

- But the blood of Christ was absolutely sufficient to atone for sin forever. Again, everything in the old dispensation was a picture (a symbol) of the ultimate atoning work of Christ.
- The sprinkling of blood on the people was a symbolic cleansing of their sins. He's going to tell us (later on) that the blood of bulls and goats was always inadequate to deal with sin, but from the beginning, the blood of a sacrifice was intended by God to point us to the ultimate death of Christ on our behalf.
- The atoning work of Christ on the cross is absolutely sufficient to permanently cleanse and purify us forever. Nothing else ever needs to be added to that. When Jesus Christ washes away our sins, He does an absolutely perfect and eternal work. But let's move on (now) to a third aspect being addressed (here) and that is:

III. THE SUPERIORITY OF HIS SACRIFICE (vv. 23-26)

- Look with me at v. 23, "Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these."
- The "copies," the articles of the Tabernacle (and later the Temple), had to be cleansed with blood –

so the greater "heavenly things" also had to be purified with "better sacrifices."

- Now, you and I might have a hard time understanding why *anything* in heaven would need to be cleansed, but there is a sense in which this was necessary.
- I can't be dogmatic about this, but I believe it is *not* so much that heaven needed to be cleansed, but that the hearts (and consciences) of those going there needed to be cleansed.
- Bruce writes, "What needed to be cleansed was the defiled conscience of men and women; this is a cleansing which belongs to the spiritual realm."
- In other words, what the author of Hebrews is contrasting is the earthly order and the spiritual order. Bruce says, "The argument of v. 23 might be paraphrased by saying that 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."
- We *know* that the biblical emphasis of the new covenant is that of creating a new heart in men. It is all about the transformation of the inner man. Since heaven is pure, those who go there also must become purified. I think that is probably a good understanding of the "heavenly things" here. It

refers to the entire heavenly, eternal realm, which specifically applies to the redeemed of God who will go there.

- But going back to v. 23, some have wondered why there is the use of the plural “sacrifices” there. We know there were many sacrifices under the old covenant, but only one sacrifice (the sacrifice of Christ) under the new.
- I agree with Hobbs that this is probably being used to express the general idea here, and that *all* the various sacrifices under the old system were fulfilled in the one (absolutely sufficient) sacrifice of Christ on the cross.
- But (again) we have the truth that the elements of the old covenant were “copies” of the reality to come in the new covenant. The things of the old economy were “sketches.” They were faint pictures of the ultimate sacrifice of Christ.
- Go on to v. 24, “For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a *mere* copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; nor was it that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood not his own.”
- In Christ’s earthly ministry He never went into the Holy of Holies in the earthly Temple. He was *not* qualified to do so because He was *not* from the

tribe or family of the high priests. (We’ve already seen this.)

- But He did something much greater than this – He entered into the real sanctuary – He entered into the true Holy of Holies in heaven. He went into the very presence of God the Father.
- The true “holy place” is far superior to the earthly one (as we have seen). Unlike the one on earth that was made by human hands, this one is *not* just a copy – it is the real thing. And this (of course) makes Jesus far superior to any earthly high priest.
- The word for “copy” (here in v. 24) is the Greek word “antitupos.” Of course, it is where we get the English word “antitype.” In this case, it points to that which is a mere figure of the real.
- The earthly Tabernacle (made by human hands) was only a shadow of the true sanctuary in heaven. But here we are told that Christ entered “into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God...”
- And notice – He did this “for us.” His appearing before God the Father was on our behalf. In fact, there is a real sense in which He took us with Him as He went. He ushered us into the very presence of God through His sacrifice. This is one of the main themes of this part of Hebrews. He has provided us full and eternal access to God.

- Spiritually (positionally in Christ) we are already in the presence of God in heaven. He has “blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ,” (as Eph. 1:3 declares). There is a sense in which believers in Christ are already in the very presence of God.
- But notice v. 25, “...nor was it that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood not his own.”
- We’ve already seen this. Every year the high priest (on the Day of Atonement) would have to go into the Holy of Holies and offer – *not* his *own* blood, but the blood of a goat – to atone for the sins of the people.
- And this was only after he had already offered up sacrifices to atone for his own sin. But Jesus Christ did *not* have to offer Himself “often.” He did *not* have to keep offering Himself over and over again because His one-time sacrifice was fully sufficient to atone for the sins of His people.
- Jesus sacrifice was a much better sacrifice, because He only had to offer it once and for all. His sacrifice never needed to be repeated. In fact, v. 26 tells us that if His sacrifice was *not* totally sufficient, it would end up in a ridiculous scenario – that of having to offer Himself over and over again from the foundation of the world.
- Look at v. 26, “Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.”
- If His atoning work on the cross was *not* sufficient to pay for all sin for all time, then He (like the sacrifices under the old covenant) would have had to offer Himself over and over again “often since the foundation of the world.” He would have to go back to the days of Adam and Eve and die over and over again.
- But He didn’t have to do that. Why? Because He was manifested once, at the “consummation of the ages” to “put away sin” once and for all. His atoning work was absolutely sufficient to deal with sin forever. His sacrifice never needs to be repeated.
- In fact, this heretical notion of His having to be sacrificed over and over again (in the mass) is completely unbiblical. Why do they continue to picture Jesus on the cross? Because they deny the truth that His atoning work is finished.
- John MacArthur says, “The theory of the perpetual offering of Jesus Christ is in absolute and direct opposition to Scripture.” This passage makes that clear! Any idea of the perpetual crucifying of

Christ or a continual re-sacrificing of Christ is diametrically opposed to the teaching of Scripture. It undermines the total sufficiency of the atonement of Christ.

- And please understand – when we observe the Lord’s Supper we *remember* His sacrificial death, but we do *not* have any notion (whatsoever) that He is being re-sacrificed in some way.
- But notice a couple more details about v. 26. The phrase, “at the consummation of the ages” means that the crucifixion of Christ marks the dividing point between the old covenant age and the new covenant age.
- The cross truly is the dividing point of the two ages. Since the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ we have been in the age of grace.
- And notice the phrase “has been manifested.” Some translations have the word “appeared.” The word is “phaneroo.” It is a perfect passive form of the verb “to manifest.”
- The idea is, that He never will appear again for this purpose. His purpose of putting away sin by the sacrifice of Himself is forever fulfilled. Of course, we know He will come again at the end of the age, but this verse says He will never have to appear again for this purpose of atoning for sin.

- And then notice (finally) that the word “sin” is singular. This is the word “hamartia,” which essentially means “to miss the mark.” And what is being communicated (here) is that Christ has dealt with the sin principle itself. He has dealt with *all* sin.
- Another way to think about this is that He has dealt with the sin of the OT saints all the way back to Adam, and He has dealt with the sin of the NT saints all the way up to the present day.
- Rather than having to go back and die over and over again from the foundation of the world, His one-time sacrifice is sufficient to deal with all sin since the foundation of the world.
- Oh, and one more thing, notice that it says Christ came to “put away” sin. He did *not* come to help us adjust to our sin, or to enable us to make the best of it. He came to do away with it. He came to remove our sin and our guilt.
- In the *past* He dealt with the *penalty* of our sin; in the *present* He deals with the *power* of sin; in the *future* He will deliver us from the *presence* of sin. And that leads us (finally) to:

IV. THE SALVATION OF HIS SAINTS (vv. 27-28)

- Look with me at v. 27, “And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this *comes*

judgment, so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time for salvation without *reference to sin*, to those who eagerly await Him.”

- He only had to appear once to deal with sin, but He is going to appear again a second time to complete the “salvation” (i.e. glorification) of those who are eagerly waiting for Him.
- And I am calling this “the salvation of his saints” (because I want to emphasize the positive side), but this also conveys the judgment of the lost as well.
- There is a divine appointment for every man, and 100% of us will keep this appointment! Apart from those who are raptured from the earth, every single one of us will die physically.
- And after we die, we will stand before God in judgment. No man will ever escape that ultimate accountability to God. Whether or not justice was carried out on earth – one thing we know for sure – it *will* be carried out in heaven!
- Of course, the Bible is clear – the judgment of the lost will be far different from the judgment of the saved. The saved will *not* be judged for their *sins*, but for their *service*. The saved may lose rewards, but they will never lose eternal life.

- The lost, on the other hand, will be judged for their sins because they are not covered by the blood of Christ. Ultimately they will stand before the Great White Throne and be condemned to eternal destruction.
- You know the old saying: “You can either be born once and die twice, or be born twice and die once.” If you are only born physically, you will die *both* physically, and in what the Bible calls “the second death” – an eternity separated from God in hell.
- But (of course) it is *not* God’s will that any should perish but that all should come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). This is why He sent His only begotten Son into the world to provide a way of salvation for us.
- And the Bible is clear about this – if you are born physically, and then born *again* spiritually, then you will only face physical death. You won’t have to suffer that second death. You will live forever in the presence of God in heaven.
- When man fell, God declared that he must die once – but there is no need for him to ever have to die twice! God has made a way for us to avoid that second death.
- That’s why Jesus told Nicodemus (in John 3) “You must be born again.” (John 3:7) “You must be born

spiritually; you must be born from above. If you aren't you will face the second death."

- So this verse gives both sides, but it ends up on the positive note that Christ – who has already appeared once to deal with our sin – will appear a second time to bring His own into the fullness of His salvation.
- Now, while it is true that every man has a divine appointment with death, the author of Hebrews seems to have a different point of application here. He is comparing the fact that it is impossible for men to die *more than once* (physically) with the fact that Jesus' sacrifice of Himself can never be repeated.
- He is saying, "Men only die once, and after that they face judgment – and in the same way Christ was offered *once* to bear the sins of many."
- By the way, notice it doesn't say, "to bear the sins of *all*." It says, "to bear the sins of *many*." *Not all* will be saved. *Not all* will experience the atonement of Christ on their behalf. Only those who put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ alone for salvation will experience that.
- But notice that last part of v. 28, "[Christ] shall appear a second time for salvation without *reference to sin*, to those who eagerly await Him." The word for "salvation" in this context means

"glorification." This is referring to the Second Coming of Christ.

- The concept of "eagerly awaiting Him" may be connected to the practice of the high priest on the Day of Atonement. Whenever the high priest would go into the Holy of Holies to atone for the sins of the people, they would wait eagerly for him to emerge because if he did anything wrong, God would strike him dead. They could hear the bells on his robe as he would move about in the inner sanctuary.
- But when he came out alive, there would be a great cheer from the people, because they would know that God had accepted the sacrifice, and that their sins were atoned for.
- In the same way, the Second Coming of Christ will be an eternal affirmation that the sacrifice of Christ was perfectly accepted by the Father. It is one more confirmation that the atonement of Christ is completely sufficient.
- Now, the resurrection was the *first* confirmation of that, but this will be a final confirmation of it (as He brings our salvation to its fullest measure). We already have confirmation that the atoning work of Christ was fully accepted by God – but this will be like the final and full expression of that.

- But notice that the HS (through the author of Hebrews) makes the point that when He comes a second time, He will *not* come to deal with sin. He has already done that at Calvary. The next time He comes, it won't be in reference to sin. It will be to glorify those "who are eagerly waiting for Him."
- Notice that there are three "appearances" of Christ in this passage. In v. 26 He appeared "at the consummation of the ages." That's when He died on the cross to atone for our sin.
- Then (in v. 24) we saw where He appeared in "heaven" before "the presence of God." And finally (in v. 28) He will appear again (some day) a "second time" on earth. That will be to glorify those who are eagerly waiting for Him. That is the "blessed hope" of every believer in Christ (Titus 2:13)
- As F. F. Bruce writes, "All the blessings which He won for his people at his first appearing will be theirs to enjoy in perpetual fullness at his second appearing."
- Our sin was dealt with decisively and forever at His first appearing. There is never a reason for that atoning work to ever be repeated. But He will come a second time to bring His salvation to its full and perfect culmination (to those who belong to Him).
- CONCL. – But in conclusion, let's go back to that divine appointment. Are you ready (at any moment) to stand before God? The Bible makes it clear that our life is like a vapor that quickly passes away. We have no promise of tomorrow. That's why the Bible always says, "Today is the day of salvation." You'd better *not* put it off to tomorrow because you might step into eternity today.
- Listen to the way the Bible describes the Great White Throne judgment: (This is Rev. 20:11-13), "And I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one *of them* according to their deeds."
- Now, it might appear on the surface that these are judged according to their works, but v. 15 says, "if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."
- It all has to do with whether your name is written in the book of life – and that takes place when you put your faith in Jesus Christ and receive Him as

Savior and Lord. You'd better make sure your name is written in that book!

- But ever for those whose names *have* been written in that book, there is coming a time of judgment after physical death. It is called "the judgment seat of Christ."
- Believers will *not* be judged in regard to sin (because our sin is fully covered by Christ). The Bible tells us that God remembers our sin no more – that it has been removed as far as the east is from the west. As one author wrote, "They are buried in the forgetfulness of God." From God's perspective, they do *not* exist anymore.
- But we *will* be judged in regard to our works for the purpose of rewards. This is what Paul was talking about in 1 Cor. 3:11-14. I'm sure you know this passage.
- It says, "For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is *to be* revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward."

- The "wood, hay, and straw" is that which represents the wasting of our time in fleshly, selfish pursuits. It is investing in that which is temporal – that which is going to burn up.
- But the "gold, silver, and precious stones" represent that which is eternal – the "fruit of the Spirit" – that which will never burn up.
- So the real question is, "How are we investing?" Verse 15 of 1 Cor. 3 says, "If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire."
- Do you really want to go into heaven by the skin of your teeth, with nothing to show for it? Don't you want to be able to stand before Christ and be able to show the dividends of your eternal investment? Don't you want to hear Him say to you, "Well done, good and faithful servant"?
- First of all, make sure you end up at the right judgment – and then make sure you have some gold, silver, and precious stones to present to Him.
- It's *not* about crowns – because we are going to lay all our crowns at Jesus' feet – but it is about being faithful stewards for Him (because He is worthy).
- MAKE APPEAL
- PRAYER