

Christ Is Superior to the Old Covenant

“Eternal Redemption for Us”

Hebrews 9:1-14

One of the most precious doctrines in the Bible for fallen man is the doctrine of redemption. “No word in the Christian vocabulary deserves to be held more precious than Redeemer, for even more than Saviour it reminds the child of God that his salvation has been purchased at a great and personal cost, for the Lord has given himself for our sins in order to deliver us from them” (Baker’s Dictionary of Theology).

The text before us gives us more about how our redemption was obtained, and why it was necessary that the Son of God come to earth, live as He did, and die for us as our Great High Priest, paying the final, ultimate sacrifice so we can be forever justified before the Father.

The focus in these verses is on the Tabernacle - both the earthly and the eternal (heavenly) and compares the two to show why a new “covenant” was necessary (a subject that is repeated throughout the book of Hebrews).

I. A TABERNACLE MADE ON EARTH - VS. 1-5

- A. We covered most of the material found in these verses when we studied the first few verses of chapter eight (8).**
- B. The first two words of verse one (1) - “then verily” go back to 8:5 and pick up the topic of the Tabernacle from there.**
- C. “The first covenant” - the basis of the purpose of the Tabernacle - had “also” (among its laws)**

“ordinances of divine service” for the priests to perform in their daily administration, “and a worldly sanctuary” (a sanctuary of this world as compared to the heavenly one spoken of in 8:2).

- D. Verse two (2) gives the details of what is called in the Exodus 26:33 “the holy place” - the sanctuary outside the veil.**

Exodus 26:33

³³ And thou shalt hang up the vail under the taches, that thou mayest bring in thither within the vail the ark of the testimony: and the vail shall divide unto you between the holy *place* and the most holy.

- E. Verses three and four (3-4) give details of what is called in the verse from Exodus “the most holy,” or “the most holy place” in Exodus 26:34.**

Exodus 26:34

³⁴ And thou shalt put the mercy seat upon the ark of the testimony in the most holy *place*.

- F. Verse five (5) makes a couple interesting comments.**

1. “And over it [the Ark of the Covenant] the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat”

There is much speculation on these created beings, some bordering on fantasy rather than biblical teachings. In the Bible, cherubim serve as powerful, high-ranking angelic beings who are closely associated with the presence and holiness of God. Their primary purposes include:

- a) They were guardians of sacred spaces - God

placed them in the Garden of Eden to guard the way of the Tree of Life.

Genesis 3:24

²⁴ So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

- b) They are seen as carriers of God's Throne - In passages like Ezekiel 1 and Ezekiel 10, cherubim are described as living creatures that support and transport God's throne, symbolizing His divine authority and omnipresence.
- c) They are symbols of Divine presence (which is the reference in our text in Hebrews 9) as they "shadowed" the Ark of the Covenant, representing God's presence among His people.

Exodus 25:18-22

¹⁸ And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat. ¹⁹ And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: even of the mercy seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof. ²⁰ And the cherubims shall stretch forth *their* wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces *shall look* one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be. ²¹ And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. ²² And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which *are* upon the ark of the

testimony, of all *things* which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.

- d) They are heavenly worshipers - Cherubim are often depicted as worshiping and serving God, reflecting His majesty and holiness. Revelation 4:6-8 describe the "four beasts" that worship God both day and night in heaven and comparing their description to that of Ezekiel's vision of the cherubim (Ez. 10:1-22), they can be seen as cherubim.

Revelation 4:6-8

⁶ And before the throne *there was* a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, *were* four beasts full of eyes before and behind. ⁷ And the first beast *was* like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast *was* like a flying eagle. ⁸ And the four beasts had each of them six wings about *him*; and *they were* full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which *was*, and is, and is to come.

The word for "mercyseat" (ἰλαστήριον) is only used one other time (Rom. 3:25) where it is translated "propitiation." As used here in reference to the Old Testament covering for the Ark of the Covenant, it shows that the mercy seat pointed to the cross and the blood of Christ that was shed for the payment that was required for man's sins.

Romans 3:25

²⁵ Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

2. "Which we cannot now speak particularly" - "besides what met the eye in the sanctuary, there were spiritual realities symbolized which it would take too long to discuss in detail, [the] chief subject at present being the priesthood and the sacrifices." (J-F-B)

II. A TABERNACLE MARKED BY LIMITATIONS - VS. 6-10

A. Verses six and seven (6-7) recap the duties of the priests on a daily basis and the high priest on the Day of Atonement.

1. "Now when these things were thus ordained" - points to what follows. Once the Tabernacle (earthly) was set up, the priests were then able to offer the sacrifices and gifts for the people as the Law designed.
2. "The first tabernacle" is not referring to the Old Testament tabernacle as a whole but is speaking of "the sanctuary" of verse two - the holy place. The priests entered there at least twice a day "accomplishing the service of God" - to do the things they were ordained to do, such as offer sacrifice, burn incense, and light the lamps."
3. Verse seven (7) references the duty of the high priest on the Day of Atonement when he would take the blood into the Holy of Holies and offer it for a covering of the sins of the people, including himself, making atonement for them for that year.

The final phrase of the verse shows both the limitations of the Old Testament sacrificial laws

as well as the fact that the blood that was sprinkled over the mercy seat covered all their sins, even the ones they didn't know they had committed. It points forward to the complete forgiveness of sins that was provided through the blood of Christ.

"For transgressions of which they were not conscious: there were so many niceties in the ritual worship of the Jews, and so many ways in which they might offend against the law and incur guilt, that it was found necessary to institute sacrifices to atone for these sins of ignorance. And as the high priest was also clothed with infirmity, he required to have an interest in the same sacrifice, on the same account. This was a national sacrifice; and by it the people understood that they were absolved from all the errors of the past year, and that they now had a renewed right of access to the mercy-seat" (Clarke).

B. Verse eight (8) follows a colon at the end of verse seven (7), indicating not only a connection between the two, but also a qualification to it.

1. "They Holy Ghost this signifying" - connects the reference to the Holy of Holies ("the second") in the previous verse with what is to follow.
2. "That the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest"
 - a) "The way into the holiest of all" - the way to be eternally justified and in right standing with God and have the guarantee of eternal life with Him in heaven, the absolute "holiest of all" places.

- b) "Was not yet made manifest" - the final sacrifice had not been made while under the old (or first) covenant.
- c) "While as the first tabernacle was yet standing" - the Old Testament structure and the works it represented - there was something more necessary for entrance into the "holiest of all." The work wasn't finished until Jesus paid our debt on the cross with His own blood.

C. Verses nine and ten (9-10) give further explanation on the point just made - it was all a type ("figure") of what would be done in the future (what has been done for us in the past).

1. We know that the old covenant with its sacrifices and gifts were limited, were insufficient to make the sinner perfect before God - the blood of Christ, as we'll see in the book of Hebrews, did.
2. The "conscience" is used here as a contrast between the old and the new and brings up a marvelous point! The old covenant and the first tabernacle's sacrifices could only alleviate the grief and guilt of sin for a time, but it could never remove it. When Christ hung on the cross and finished the work of our redemption, there is never again the guilt and despair of the conscience to plague the child of God.

Ethel R. Taylor, in her hymn, "Calvary Covers It All" wrote in the chorus the following lines that so aptly describes this blessing.

"Calvary covers it all, my past with its sin and

stain; my guilt and despair Jesus took on Him there, and Calvary covers it all."

3. Verse ten (10) begins with two words in our Bibles that are in italics - "which stood" - because they are drawn from the first two words of verse nine (9) - "which was," and refer to the end of verse eight (8), to the "first tabernacle" that "was yet standing."

The laws and regulations for all the various ceremonial things that had to be done were "imposed on them until the time of reformation."

- a) The Greek word for "reformation" (διόρθωσις, diorthōsis) means "making straight," "correcting," or "bringing improvement." It signifies a complete transformation and rectification of what was previously insufficient.
- b) The "time of reformation" is the era of Christ's atoning sacrifice and the establishment of the New Covenant, in which:
 - (1) The sacrificial system is fulfilled in Christ's one-time sacrifice (Hebrews 9:12).
 - (2) Access to God is no longer mediated by the Levitical priesthood but through Christ, our High Priest (Hebrews 9:11).
 - (3) Worship is no longer dependent on external regulations but on spiritual renewal through the Holy Spirit (Hebrews 9:14).

III. A TABERNACLE MORE PERFECT THAN THE EARTHLY - VS. 11-14

A. In its service - vs. 11

"But Christ being come an high priest" - points back to verse 9 and the first tabernacle and that the service of the high priest could not make the one coming perfect, "But Christ," our perfect High Priest, can.

1. "Of good things to come" - this comes up again in Heb. 10:1.
 - a) Fulfillment of the Promises - Under the Old Covenant, the law, sacrifices, and earthly tabernacle pointed forward to something greater. The "good things to come" represent the fulfillment of God's promises in Christ (Hebrews 10:1).
 - b) Eternal Redemption - Unlike the temporary atonement provided by animal sacrifices, Christ's sacrifice brings permanent forgiveness and salvation (Hebrews 9:12).
 - c) Access to God's Presence - Through Jesus, believers have direct access to God without the need for an earthly high priest or repeated sacrifices (Hebrews 4:16, Hebrews 10:19-20).
 - d) The Blessings of the New Covenant - This includes:
 - (1) A transformed heart (Hebrews 8:10)
 - (2) Forgiveness of sins (Hebrews 8:12)
 - (3) Eternal inheritance (Hebrews 9:15)
 - (4) The hope of heaven (Hebrews 11:16)
2. "By a greater and more perfect tabernacle" -

goes back to verse eight (8).

- a) This is the comparison we have seen between the earthly and the heavenly tabernacle.
- b) The heavenly where Christ is entered (consider it to be heaven, or the heavenly realm) is exponentially greater than the earthly, and to be "more perfect" isn't to be taken that there could be one even better than that; it is to be viewed as to be without imperfection of any kind.
- c) "Not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building"
 - (1) This goes back to Heb. 8:2 and is referring to the same thing we saw there just a few weeks ago. This isn't speaking of the human body of Christ (John 1:14 - "dwelt among us") nor is it the church as the body of Christ. Within the context, it's referring to the perfect, eternal, heavenly tabernacle which God made and not man.
 - (2) "Not of this building" - the word for building (κτίσις) is one that means things made, formed, or created. As used here in the word "building," it points to the things that man can make, form, or create. It's not of this temporal existence, in other words.

B. In its sacrifice - vs. 12

A sacrifice of His own blood that was offered in the Holy Place of that eternal, perfect tabernacle.

1. The first part of the verse prepares the comparison for the second in a way that all the Hebrews to whom this letter was written or read would understand and held real value to them.

- a) "Neither by the blood of goats and calves" - these were the animals of whose blood the high priest would take into the Holy of Holies on that one day of the year (the Day of Atonement) to atone for the sins of the people for that year. For study purposes, take the time to read Leviticus chapter sixteen (16) for the background of this.

"It is not meant that the sacrifices of the Old Covenant were useless, but only that when they were regarded as meritorious in themselves – apart from the faith, and the grace of God, by which they could be blessed to sincere and humble worshippers – they could neither purge the conscience, nor give access to God." (Cambridge Bible Notes)

- (1) The blood of a young bullock ("calves") was offered for his (the high priest's) own sins.

Leviticus 16:3

³ Thus shall Aaron come into the holy *place*: with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering.

Leviticus 16:11

¹¹ And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin offering, which *is* for himself, and shall make an atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin offering which *is* for himself:

- (2) The blood of a goat was offered for the sins of the people.

Leviticus 16:9

⁹ And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the LORD'S lot fell, and offer him *for* a sin offering.

Leviticus 16:15

¹⁵ Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the veil, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat:

2. "By his own blood"

- a) From Gen. 3:21 (first mention of blood being shed for the covering of man because of sin) to Rev. 12:11 and 15:3 and "the blood of the Lamb we find the most important and precious truth regarding our redemption: **the blood of Christ**.

Genesis 3:21

²¹ Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

Revelation 12:11

¹¹ And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

Revelation 15:3

³ And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.

- b) "His own" - the Greek word used here (ἴδιος) means a personal, private, unique ownership. There is another personal pronoun (αὐτός) that is more general and broader in scope. The same pronoun was used in John 5:18 when Jesus said that "God was **his** father," a claim that caused the Jews to want to kill Him because to them that was blasphemous.

John 5:18

¹⁸ Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.

- c) Our redemption rested on the blood of Christ - not just human blood, "but that it was human blood of a unique kind. It flowed in the veins of One who was as to His humanity, sinless, and as to His Person, Deity. And the combination of these two, sinless humanity, and Deity, made it unique, efficacious. It was the only sacrificial blood that could be sprinkled on the Mercy Seat in the heavenly Holy of Holies, the only blood which the High Court of Heaven would accept as atonement for human sin. It was this blood poured out on Calvary's Cross that gave Messiah access as High Priest into the Holy of Holies of heaven." (Wuest)

- 3. "He entered in once into the holy place" - points back to verse eight (8) and "the holiest of all."

Here's the principle we've seen already - once for all people and for all time.

- 4. "Having obtained eternal redemption for us"
 - a) "Having obtained" - seen as something that is already done. **"It is finished"** was His cry from the cross that shook the world and settled the matter forever!!
 - b) "Eternal redemption for us"
 - (1) "Redemption" - to release on receipt of a ransom. When Jesus entered the portals of

heaven to present His blood to the Father and sprinkle it on the heavenly Mercy Seat, it was the ransom required to release us from the debt owed on our sin.

Galatians 4:4-5

⁴ But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, ⁵ To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

Ephesians 1:7

⁷ In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

Colossians 1:14

¹⁴ In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins:

- (2) "Eternal" - αἰώνιος - for the eons of time unending (or, more precisely, for the ages outside the confines of time). One more time that our eternal security is taught in the Bible.
- (3) "For us" - these words are supplied by the KJV translators for clarity but are of great value for mankind. It was "for us" that the price was paid.

C. In its sanctification - vs. 13-14

I spent a good portion of a Sunday evening service back in July on the doctrine of sanctification when we studied the 17th Chapter of John (the Lord's High Priestly prayer) but I want to touch on the basics of it again here because it's important to our study of this text. (I've actually mentioned it in ten

separate messages.)

Sanctification is the **process by which believers are set apart for God and made holy** through the work of the Holy Spirit. It is a key doctrine in the Christian life and has three aspects:

- Positional Sanctification (past) - this occurs at salvation when a believer is declared holy and set apart for God.

Hebrews 10:10

¹⁰ By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*.

1 Corinthians 6:11

¹¹ And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

- Progressive Sanctification (present) - this is the ongoing, lifelong process of spiritual growth where believers become more like Christ.

1 Thessalonians 4:3-6

³ For this is the will of God, *even* your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: ⁴ That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; ⁵ Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God: ⁶ That no *man* go beyond and defraud his brother in *any* matter: because that the Lord *is* the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified.

Psalms 119:9

⁹ BETH. Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed *thereto* according to thy word.

John 17:17-19

¹⁷ Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

¹⁸ As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. ¹⁹ And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

- Ultimate (or final) Sanctification (future). This is seen in our glorification in heaven when sin will be completely and forever gone.

Philippians 3:20-21

²⁰ For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

²¹ Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

1 Thessalonians 3:12-13

¹² And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all *men*, even as we *do* toward you: ¹³ To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.

1 John 3:2

² Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

Justification deals with our standing with God and is a completed action in what God has done *for* us. Sanctification is largely what God does *in* us.

1. The figure - vs. 13 - points back to verse nine (9).

- a) "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer"
- (1) Refer to previous verse for the "bulls and goats."
 - (2) "Ashes of an heifer" - only found once in the Old Testament, in the book of Numbers, not part of the sacrificial laws for a sin offering in the book of Leviticus.

This refers to the ceremonial cleansing ritual described in Numbers 19. This ritual involved the sacrifice of a red heifer, whose ashes were mixed with water and used for purification, **particularly for those who had become unclean by touching a dead body.**

- Numbers 19:2-6 - A red heifer without blemish was sacrificed, burned completely, and its ashes were collected.
 - Numbers 19:9 - The ashes were stored and mixed with water for purification.
 - Numbers 19:17-19 - When someone became unclean, they were sprinkled with water mixed with these ashes to be ceremonially purified.
- (a) The ashes of the red heifer could cleanse outward defilement but only Christ's blood cleanses inwardly and eternally.

NOTE: I'm not going to get into the discussion

that has become a focal point of much prophetic teaching on the subject of the red heifer and the need for one to be found before the Temple can be rebuilt. The ashes of the heifer is what is dealt with in this text and that's all I'm concerned with at this point.

- b) "Sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh" - this is what both the sin offerings represented by the "bull and goats" did for the sins of the people, as well as the ashes of the heifer did to purify those which became unclean.

The "if" at the beginning of the verse shows that this, in fact, did purify them but we'll see that it wasn't sufficient to do so to "obtain eternal redemption." It was just a figure or type pointing to the perfect blood that could.

2. The fulfillment - vs. 14

- a) "How much more shall the blood of Christ"

- (1) "How much more" - this is a term of strengthening magnitude.

- (2) If the earthly rituals and sacrifices could ceremonially purify the people, then in a far greater and more perfect way, the blood of Christ could forever do.

- b) "Who through the eternal Spirit" - I hold to the view that this is referring to the Holy Spirit and His work in and through Christ. Some consider it to be the divine nature of Christ, or the eternal power of His sacrifice, which both are true and taught in the Bible, but within the context here, it seems more natural to be referring to the Holy Spirit of God.

- (1) Shows the unity of the Trinity in salvation - the Father planned redemption, the Son accomplished it, and the Spirit empowered it.
 - (2) Demonstrates Christ's perfect obedience - Jesus, as the perfect Lamb of God, willingly laid down His life, not by human effort, but by divine power.
 - (3) Confirms the eternal value of Christ's sacrifice - because it was done through the Spirit, it is an eternal and sufficient sacrifice for all time.
- c) "Offered himself without spot to God" - He was a perfect sacrifice as required by the Law. He fulfilled all its requirements.

Matthew 5:17

¹⁷ Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

- d) "Purge your conscience" - back to verse nine (9). The blood of Christ cleansed us from all sin and purged (purified - same word as that for "purifying" in the previous verse) our conscience. It didn't just provide ceremonial cleansing for a period of time; it provided a complete removal of sin and cleansed our conscience of all its remnants. He made us new.
- e) "From dead works to serve the living God" - rather than serving sin (Rom. 6-8). The "dead works" are those of the Old Testament, the old covenant, and all the rituals and laws that had to be followed in order for God's people to have a right relationship with Him.

With the blood of Christ, all that was finished and we can now serve the "living God" with a pure heart.

Conclusion: From John Gillmartin: A Gideon friend recently told of how their well-known, pearl-white New Testaments were distributed to the Pacific Fleet prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor by the Japanese. He also told of how, on a later occasion, the evangelist Harry Rimmer was speaking to a meeting of believers interested in military evangelism. During the speech, Dr. Rimmer displayed his own personal copy of the white Pacific Fleet New Testament.

Following the meeting, a member of the audience tarried to show Dr. Rimmer another white New Testament, one given to his son prior to the bombing of the Hawaiian base ... one stained with blood. The man smiled and said, "Yes ... this little book is very precious ... it's stained with the blood of my son."

Dr. Rimmer paused for a moment, then held up his personal Bible and said, "God feels the same way about that Book. He loves [it] too. Its pages are stained with the blood of His Son."

He "obtained eternal redemption for us."