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MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

Sermon

Analysis of Hebrews: Chapter 9 & 10



Part 15/23

God's Last Word: An Exposition of Hebrews By Derek Prince

We have arrived at Page 9/4. We have just completed a study of verses 16 and 17. We'll begin with a quick reference to verses 16 and 17, then we'll go on with the rest of this chapter and we move then to chapter 10 tonight without fail. I'm reading now from the New American Standard, I'm not bothering with the translation from Greek.

> "For where a covenant is, there must of necessity be the death of the one who made it. For a covenant is valid only when men are dead, for it is never in force while the one who made it lives."

We pointed out in the last session that there's a certain confusion in English because the same word in Greek—and incidentally, the same word in Hebrew—is translated two different ways. It's translated "testament" and "covenant." We all understand that a testament or a will is only valid when the person who made the will died. But when we are using the word covenant, our thinking doesn't go that way because we don't think in line with the Bible. I pointed out to you that the Bible very clearly brings this out all through. I did mention last time specifically that when I first began to study the Bible in Hebrew— which is a good many years ago now—I had a system by which I used three different colors: blue, green and red. How many of you can remember what the blue was for? Covenant, that's right. Covenant is followed by green, which is sacrifice, which is followed by red, which is shedding of blood. And what does the shedding of blood speak of? A life laid down. I'm not really sure how many of you are with me. I think we'll go that route just once more quickly by way of review.

A covenant requires a sacrifice. A sacrifice requires the shedding of blood. The shedding of blood speaks of a life laid down. We have the same principle already in the book of Genesis: where there is a covenant there must of necessity be the death of the one who makes the covenant. But the death, in a certain sense, at that point in God's ongoing revelation was symbolical. We looked at this in two covenants that God made with Abraham. One in Genesis 15, which God calls "a" covenant, and the other in Genesis 17, which God calls "My" covenant. We pointed out that the first one corresponds to the covenant that God made with

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Israel at Sinai, the covenant of the Law which brought Israel into the Promised Land but did not guarantee them permanent possession and which promised nothing to Abraham.

The second covenant is the one that was made through the Lord Jesus Christ and it promises, first to Abraham and then to his descendants, everlasting possession of the land and it has a change of name for Abraham. His name was changed from Abram to Abraham. Sarah's name was changed from Sarai to Sarah—the change of name indicating something that God did in them. Then, it promised Abraham an heir of his own body, who was Isaac. It was sealed by the rite of circumcision, which is the key to the blood. It's, in a sense, a mystery because there's no life at that time laid down. It's God's way of foreshowing that ultimately the blood of that covenant would come from Abraham's own descendant, the one who in Galatians 3 is called the "seed of Abraham," that is, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now we're not going to dwell on that, but we're going to move on. We're going to read verses 18–22. I'm going to translate them from the Greek to the best of my ability. It will not be a polished translation but it will probably help you to get a grip on what's being said. Beginning at Hebrews 9:18:

> "Wherefore not even the first [understood] covenant was inaugurated without blood."

Why is the "wherefore" there? Because where there is a covenant there must be a death and so the blood speaks of the death. You see? See that "wherefore"? I've said this so many times I'm embarrassed but it's really important. Whenever you find a "wherefore" or a "therefore" in the Bible, stop and ask what it's there for. Otherwise, you'll miss the connection. The connection is between the life laid down and the blood.

Verse 19:

> "For when every commandment according to the law had been spoken by Moses to all the people, taking the blood of calves and bulls, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, he sprinkled both the scroll and all the people, saying, 'This is the blood of the covenant which God has commanded you.'"

Notice the covenant has to have blood because it has to have a sacrifice. Verse 21:

> "Also the tabernacle and all the vessels [or instruments of service] likewise he sprinkled with blood. And we may say, everything according to the law is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness [or remission]."

We're going to pause there. It should have been the blood of calves and of goats. I got one word wrong there, it doesn't make any difference to our present study.

Going back to our note outline, chapter 9:18–20. Accordingly, the first covenant—at Sinai—was sealed by the blood of sacrificial animals. Those were the lives that were laid down. The blood sprinkled on the book and the people bound the people to the covenant. Everything that was involved in the covenant had to be sprinkled with the blood.

And verse 21, likewise the tabernacle and its utensils were sprinkled with blood and thus incorporated in the covenant. You see, everything in the covenant had to be sprinkled with the blood. Where there was no sprinkling of blood, the covenant was not valid.

We look for a moment, keep your finger in Hebrews 9 and look for a moment at Matthew 26:28. We need to read verse 27. This is at the Last Supper of Jesus with His disciples.

> "And He took a cup and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you...'"

Notice "all of you." Everybody involved in the covenant had to be sanctified by the blood.

> "... for this is My blood of the covenant, which is to be shed on behalf of many for forgiveness of sins."

And you see there the blood of the seed of Abraham that was implicit in Genesis 17 is brought out into the open. But all through we have this principle: wherever there's a covenant there must be a sacrifice. Wherever there's a sacrifice there must be bloodshed, which speaks of a life

laid down. That's an abiding, unchanging principle all through the Bible.

Looking at the note outline for chapter 9, verse 22. Wherever there has been sin, blood is required for cleansing and forgiveness, signifying a life laid down. There are two examples which you could turn to. Ezekiel 18:20. We'll only read the first little sentence of verse 20. It says in my translation:

> "The person who sins will die."

I say in my translation because the Hebrew word is actually the word for "the soul": "The soul that sins, it will die." The word soul is often translated "person" throughout the Bible, but the root word is soul. Wherever there has been sin, the soul has to die. And you remember what we said last week? The life of the soul is in the blood. The death of the soul is represented by the blood. That's the unvarying penalty and consequence for sin. That's very, very important. It's totally universal. The soul that sins, it shall die. There's no other possibility. We need to grasp that.

Now in the New Testament, a very familiar verse, I'm sure, to many of you. Romans 6:23.

> "For the wages of sin is death ..."

That's right. So wherever sin has been committed, justice—God's justice—absolutely requires death.

There is no forgiveness of sins without the shedding of blood because the penalty has to be paid.

We sometimes in our current culture misunderstand justice. We think justice is simply making sure that innocent people are not punished. That's part of it, but it's not all of it. Justice is equally making sure that the guilty are punished. God's justice cannot permit anybody guilty to go unpunished. There has to be a penalty paid, there has to be a life laid down; therefore blood has to be shed.

Now the mystery of the gospel and the secret hidden wisdom of God which He kept hidden from ages and generations is Jesus Christ became the substitute for every sinning soul and He laid down His life. He poured out His blood on the cross.

I used to be a professional logician and I'm always blessed by the complete logic of the Bible. Logic is like a computer. If you put the right thing in you'll get the right thing out. Of course, there's always the possibility of human error. But as far as a computer is concerned, if it's working it just produces the right result. When you feed all the facts that we have looked at tonight into the computer of logic, the conclusion is settled. There is no other possibility. Some people think, it seems to me, that the Bible is a very fanciful, mystical sort of book. There is much that's mystical in the Bible but basically it's founded on perfect logic. Actually, the way to get results from God is to take His Word and apply it with perfect logic.

It's also the way to stir the devil up, let me tell you that. You may sometimes wonder, What did I do that got everybody mad with me? The answer may be simply you took God at His Word and acted on it. That stirs up everything everywhere.

But what I want to emphasize is don't be afraid of being logical. I personally believe the most successful teaching and preaching ministries are basically logical. God is logical. He cannot deny Himself, He's never inconsistent.

Now we're going to go on with chapter 9, verses 23–26. I will translate it first and then we will look at it. Hebrews 9:23–26.

> "There was necessity therefore that on the one hand the copies of things in the heavens be purified with these things [that's the blood of bulls and goats], but the heavenly things themselves with greater sacrifices [or better sacrifices] than these. For Christ [or the Messiah] did not enter into the sanctuary that was made with human hands, which are mere copies of the true ones, but into heaven itself, now to appear [or be revealed] before the face of God [or in the presence of God] on behalf of us; nor that He should offer Himself many times, as the high priest enters into the Holy of Holies each year with blood that is not his own. Since it would then have been necessary for Him to suffer many times since the foundation of the world; but now as it is once at the consummation of the ages for the putting away of sin through the sacrifice of Himself He has been manifested."

It seems a strange sentence but that's the order in which it comes. In a way, it's more emphatic. Let me say it again.

"But now as it is once at the consummation of the ages for the putting away of sin through the sacrifice of Himself He has been manifested."

Let's look at the outline. We come back to something that the writer of Hebrews is so very fond of which is one of his comparisons. This is not one of the major comparisons, this is a summary of a previous comparison. He reiterates the comparison between the two tabernacles and the two covenants. There are four points as I state them here. In verse 23 the earthly sanctuary was cleansed by the sacrifice of animals, but the heavenly by the sacrifice of Christ.

In verse 24 Christ did not enter a manmade sanctuary, but heaven itself.

And also in verse 24 Christ is not confined to a tiny compartment of the tabernacle. That compartment, the Holy of Holies, was ten cubits every way. It was fifteen feet wide, long and high. A very small area for it to be the goal of everything that the high priest did. Jesus didn't enter into a fifteen foot cube. He appeared before the very face or presence of God Himself as our representative, on behalf of us.

Then in verse 25 Christ did not make yearly offerings that never finally dealt with sin, but once, at the consummation of the ages, by offering Himself, He fully and finally removed sin.

You'll notice that there's a tremendous emphasis on the word "once" all the way through. Once for all, once, once, once. He only had to do it once.

The phrase "at the consummation of the ages" in a way, from our human standpoint, is somewhat surprising, because nearly two thousand years have elapsed and we haven't come to the end. But viewed from God's perspective, as you know, in 2 Peter 3 it says, "One day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." By that scale of reckoning there have been two days since that great event.

You could compare for a moment, if you wish, the opening verses of Hebrews, Hebrews 1:2.

> "God in these last days has spoken to us in the person of His Son."

"In these last days." You can go further back if you like, we could turn there for a moment. Don't forget to keep your finger in Hebrews 9 and turn to Acts 2:16–17:

> "...this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel: 'And it shall be in the last days,' God says, 'that I will pour forth of My Spirit upon all mankind.'"

Peter was referring to what had just taken place on the Day of Pentecost. Peter, like the writer of Hebrews, says from that time onwards we're in the last days; we're at the consummation of the ages. The word "consummation" means bringing everything to its conclusion together. I think God's plan for the ages is like a symphony and I am no musician. But basically there's a sort of general principle, as I understand it, in a symphony. There are certain themes that are worked out. When you get to the end all the themes recur and are brought together in one grand and usually rather noisy climax. That's how God is working toward the consummation of the ages. All the themes that have been going on in redemption's history will be brought to their fulfillment at this consummation.

If you care to analyze it, you'll find that everything that was started in Genesis is consummated in the book of Revelation. That is another example.

Just one other thought. One of the emphases of the writer of Hebrews is that of removing sin. It's not just that Jesus paid the penalty for sin but He removed sin so that when the process is complete God is never going to be vexed with the faintest trace of sin anywhere in heaven or on earth. As I understand it, and this is my personal opinion, there will be one place where there will be sin and that will be in the lake of fire. That's God's incinerator. But that's neither in heaven nor on earth. It's in outer darkness, you understand. Sin will have been forever banished from God's universe by the sacrifice of Jesus.

That, I believe, we saw pictured in a particular part of the ceremony for the Day of Atonement. How many of you can recall? There was one unique feature of the sacrificial ceremonies of the Day of Atonement which spoke of removing sin. That was what? The scapegoat, that's right. The scapegoat carried their sin away and never came back again.

There's so many aspects to the sacrifice of Christ but this is one that's very seldom spoke about but it's here emphasized in Hebrews.

> "Going on now to the last two verses of chapter 9, that's verses 27 and 28. And

> inasmuch as it is appointed to men once to die and after this judgment..."

Let me point out there—that really sets aside any theory of reincarnation. Man is appointed to die once and after that, not reincarnation but judgment. If you don't make it the first time there's no second chance.

> "... so also [the Messiah], having been offered once to take away the sins of many..."

Notice the phrase "to take it away."

> "... for the second time without sin will appear, to those who are eagerly awaiting Him unto salvation."

Basically, that's the same way it's translated in the NASB.

Let's look briefly at the note outline, verse 27 and 28 on Page 9/5. Humanity has two universal appointments: death, then judgment. I've said to people many times, "You may fail to keep every appointment in your lifetime but there will be two you will keep." Christ has two corresponding appointments: first, to offer Himself once for sin; second, to appear without sin for those who are waiting for Him. I always think it's timely to emphasize that one of the conditions spoken of throughout the New Testament of being ready for Christ's return and being accepted by Him when He does return is being eagerly awaiting His return.

I know there are different eschatological views which means, if you don't understand it, different views of the way things are going to end. But, whatever your eschatology, it should leave you with this attitude: eagerly awaiting the return of Jesus Christ. And if the choice were such, and I'm not sure that it is, I'd rather have the wrong eschatology and the right attitude than the right eschatology and the wrong attitude. It's the attitude that's going to count.

Also, I have to say, my personal opinion is it's going to take Jesus in person to clear the mess up! I think the church has got a lot to do but there are some things that God has reserved for Him to do. When you begin to contemplate the vast extent of human misery in the world today, ten million people every year dying of starvation just to start with, the cruelty, the ignorance, the sickness; I think our hearts are somewhat impervious if we don't long for the return of Jesus. That's the way I see it.

We're going on to chapter 10. We have to turn to our outline to begin with, this is a very significant chapter. As you'll see if you've got the outline on Page 10/1, this chapter contains one passage of solemn warning, two passages of practical application, one passage of comparison and three "let us" passages. It's got more combined in it than any other chapter.

Let's turn back to the place where we looked at this initial outline, that will be on your outline on Page 0/2. Maybe you thought you'd never need it again. Well, you see, that wasn't so! Page 0/2, there are a whole series of summations. For instance, on the upper half of that page there are passages containing solemn warnings. We had already done three of those passages last year. Now we're going to be looking in chapter 10 at the fourth. In fact, chapter 10 really almost concludes with the fourth. Okay, that's number four, chapter 10:26–31. See that?

Then passages indicating positive, practical applications, chapter 10 contains two, chapter 10:19–25 and 10:30–39. We'll look at them in due course.

Then passages of comparison, chapter 10 contains the sixth. That's on Page 0/3 and that's the comparison between the Levitical sacrifices and the sacrifice of Jesus.

Then in the middle of Page 0/3 it contains three "let us" passages. Number six, "let us draw near." Number seven, "let us hold fast" and number eight, "let us consider how to stimulate one another." So let's be on the lookout for these passages as we now go through.

Now I am going to translate the first four verses noting that from verse 1 through verse 18 we have the sixth comparison between the Levitical sacrifices and the sacrifice of Jesus. 1 through 4:

> "For the Law, having a shadow of the good things to come, but not the very substance of the things, by the same sacrifices which they offer yearly, continually [going on and on and on], can never make those who come to it perfect. Notice the emphasis on perfect, have you followed that all the way through? All right."

Since, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers would no longer have had any consciousness [or conscience] of sins, having been

purified once for all. But in them there is a remembrance of sins each year.

That's so important. Very, very important, you understand? Old Testament sacrifices did not put away sin, they reminded people of sin. That's why they always had to be repeated.

> "For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins."

Notice again the emphasis on take away.

Let's just look at the outline. Five weaknesses of the Levitical system. Number one in verse 1 it offered shadow not substance. I remember Bob Mumford saying once when he'd been away on a ministry trip and his wife Judy was waiting for him at the doorway, the light was behind her and a shadow was on the steps. But he said it never occurred to him to kiss her shadow when he could kiss her. It's amazing, isn't it, that people will go back to the shadow when they have the substance offered them. But the law has only the shadow.

The second point in verse 1 also is its sacrifices had to be offered endlessly indicating that the third point in verses 1 and 2, they could never make the offerers perfect. Bear in mind that the word perfect is related to the word for "an end." They never came to an end. Note the continuing emphasis on perfection. If you don't see that, you really will hardly understand where the writer of Hebrews is heading. He said perfection is what we're after and anything that doesn't produce perfection is not adequate. Otherwise they would no longer need to be offered.

Point number four in verse 3, they merely provided a yearly reminder of sins. Aren't you glad that you don't just have to remember your sins every year? As a matter of fact, without being uncharitable I hope, I have to say that was my experience as a teenager in the Anglican Church in Britain. I'm not saying it should have been but it was. When I went to church every Sunday morning I was reminded of my sins. I knew that when I went back next Sunday I was going to be reminded again. But I never got any assurance of forgiveness or release. So you see, it's very easy for Christians, or professing Christians, to slip back out of the New Covenant into something that really corresponds to the Old. I don't want to be critical, but I think that has happened to multitudes of Roman Catholics. Their whole system is really, in a sense, the Old Testament brought back again. I have many Catholic friends, I love them, but I think you'll find that if they are in that kind of system, they never have the sense of perfection. They never come to an end. They're never quite sure they've done enough. I think that's true of multitudes of religious Christians: Lutherans, Catholics, Methodists, even Baptists. If we don't grasp the fact that Jesus did it once for all and it does everything that's needed, we'll slip back into some kind of pale imitation of the Old Testament.

Now we're going on to verses 5–7 which is a contrast and God's remedy for this situation. It is mainly a quotation from Psalm 40. Are you with me? Verse 5:

> "Wherefore, coming into the world He says..."

Who's He? The Messiah, that's right. Jesus. Now this is the quotation from Psalm 40.

> "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You prepared for Me; in whole burnt offerings and offerings for sin You took no pleasure in. Then I said, 'Behold, I have come (in the volume of the scroll it is written concerning Me) to do, O God, Your will.'"

We might perhaps just flip back to Psalm 40 for a moment where you will discover something that is pointed out in your outline. Psalm 40:6–8, I'm reading the New American Standard.

> "Sacrifice and meal offering Thou hast not desired; my ears Thou hast opened; burnt offering and sin offering Thou hast not required. Then I said, 'Behold, I come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me; I delight to do Thy will, O my God; Thy Law is within my heart.'"

Notice that the writer of Hebrews does not quote the entire passage and, also more significant, he changes one thing. Did you notice that? Where we have in Psalm 40 "my ears Thou hast opened," the writer of Hebrews quotes "a body Thou hast prepared for me." Now it's one of the incidents where the Septuagint version, the Greek version, which the writer of Hebrews normally quoted, differs from the current received Hebrew version. And why I'm not in the position fully to explain to you.

I think we need to look now in your English version in Hebrews 10:5–7.

> "Therefore, when He comes into the world..."

That's the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah. The writer of Hebrews has no hesitation in applying that passage to the Messiah.

> "... he says, 'Sacrifice and offering Thou hast not desired, but a body Thou hast prepared for Me...'"

There's important emphasis on the body because it was the body that had to be sacrificed. Of course, in actual fact, if a person has ears, they must have a body. But it's certainly clearer when it says "a body Thou hast prepared for Me." And then it says:

> "... in whole burnt offerings [or holocausts] and sin offerings Thou hast taken no pleasure."

They did not do what was needed. This has been emphasized again and again throughout this epistle.

Then we have the words of Messiah spoken prophetically through David a thousand years before he came.

> "Then I said, 'Behold, I have come (in the roll of the book it is written of Me) to do Thy will, O God.'"

Let's look at our note outline now and just pick up the points. We've already dealt with the reason why the writer quotes Psalm 40 and how he applies it to the sacrifice of Jesus. I think it's important to notice the motivation of Jesus which is revealed in this prophetic Scripture. "I have come to do Thy will." We could look at just a couple of passages in the New Testament in the gospels that emphasize this. First of all, in John 4:34. This is after the conversation that Jesus had with the woman of Samaria at Jacob's well. The disciples came and offered Him food and He said, "I'm no longer hungry." So they said, "How come?" This is His answer.

> "Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to accomplish [or to finish is better] His work.'"

So the supreme motivation of Jesus on earth was to do the will of God and finish His allotted task.

That's brought out in Psalm 40, "Lo, I have come to do Thy will."

Furthermore, the will of God for Jesus was laid out beforehand in the prophetic Scriptures. Not only did Jesus uphold the authority of Scripture by His teaching but, in a certain sense, He did even more by His life because everything He did was done to fulfill the Scriptures. Let's look at just two significant passages in Matthew 26:24. Speaking about His imminent betrayal He says:

> "The Son of Man is to go, just as it is written of Him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed!"

There was no alternative for Jesus. He had to go because it was written. To me, that's the most emphatic way to acknowledge the authority of Scripture—is to obey it and say where the Bible says there's no alternative.

And then in the same chapter, Matthew 26:53–54. Just at the point of His arrest he said to His disciples:

> "Do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?"

He said for every one disciple I can have a legion of angels if I wanted it.

> "How then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen this way?"

So the ultimate determining force in the life of Jesus was the will of God revealed in prophetic Scripture. This is what's brought out by the writer of Hebrews: He came to do the will of God and the will of God was consummated by the sacrifice of His own body on the cross. That was the destination of His whole life.

Now we'll go on in Hebrews 10:8–10, which is the application that the writer of Hebrews gives to the passage he's quoted from Psalm 40.

> "Above when he says, 'Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor did you take pleasure in them (which are offered by the Law), He said, 'Behold, I have come to do

> Your will.' [In saying that, we need to put in] He takes away the first [that is, the system of offering sacrifices, sin offerings, burnt offerings] in order that He may establish the second.'"

Which is the will of God. And then he goes on:

> "By which will [or in which will] we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

Notice again the emphasis. It only had to be done once. What the Lord provided through the sacrifice of Jesus which was not provided by the Old Testament sacrifices, the key word there is "sanctify." True holiness. All that the sacrifices of the Law provided were external holiness, ceremonial cleansing. But the sacrifice of the body of Jesus provided true holiness. And that sacrifice only had to be made once.

So we go on now again in verses 11–14, we continue with this ongoing emphasis between the continually repeated sacrifices of the Levitical ceremonies and the one all-sufficient sacrifice of Jesus. I'm going to read now chapter 10:11–14.

> "And on the one hand every priest stands daily performing his duty and offering many times the same sacrifices, which can never remove sins ..."

Notice again the issue of dealing with sin so it never can come up again. Going on.

> "But this one [this priest, this man, I think priest is probably the best word to put in] having offered one sacrifice for sin forever, sat down at the right hand of God, henceforth expecting until His enemies are made the footstool of His feet. "

Let's turn to the note outline and just follow it through. At the beginning of Page 10/2 this passage further emphasizes the contrast between the endless daily sacrifices of the Levitical priests and the one all-sufficient sacrifice of Jesus. The Levitical priests continued standing because their work was never finished. It's a very remarkable thing, you will not read anywhere in any of these records of the Old Testament that a priest ever sat down. That's no accident. They never could sit down because the task was never complete.

Jesus, on the other hand, sits and not merely sits but sits enthroned at God's right hand because His work is complete. It remains for the Father to manifest in history His total victory. He is now waiting for the Father to make His enemies the footstool of His feet.

Now the writer of Hebrews quotes Psalm 110 I think for about the fourth time if I remember rightly. We will turn back there. I think one lesson we all need to get from this is thoroughness, go on and on until it's completely fixed in your mind. Repetition is not necessarily a bad thing. In fact, as a person who's been in the teaching profession, repetition is an almost essential part of the teaching.

We're reading now Psalm 110:1–5.

> "The LORD says to my Lord..."

That's God the Father says to Jesus the Messiah. Jesus quoted this, it's recorded in all three synoptic gospels: Matthew, Mark and Luke.

> "Sit at My right hand ..."

And I want to point out you could read that dozens of times and never notice the importance of the word "sit." But when you come into the New Testament practically a whole chapter is devoted to the fact that He sits.

> "Sit at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet."

When Ruth and I were in Egypt a few years ago we made a little tour rather reluctantly and saw some of the things that tourists look at. One of the things we saw was a genuine footstool from the period of the Pharaohs and painted on it were the pictures of the nations that were his enemies. So every time he put his foot on the footstool he was putting his feet on his enemies. No doubt that was a biblical custom that was understood. So that's why it speaks here about His enemies being made a footstool for His feet. Verse 2:

> "The LORD will stretch forth Thy strong scepter [or the rod of thy strength] from Zion, saying, 'Rule in the midst of Thine enemies.'"

That, I believe, is what Jesus is doing now. On the throne He's at God's right hand, He is ruling. It's not that He's going to rule, He is going to rule but He is already ruling. He's never going to stop ruling for He must reign, it says in 1 Corinthians 15, until all His enemies have been put under His feet.

Somebody got very angry with one of my broadcasts unfortunately because I said He is ruling, He's not going to rule—which, of course, is not the right way to say it. And this lady wrote and said, "On the contrary. The devil is now ruling and Jesus is going to rule." So I stand corrected, but you understand what I'm saying, He is ruling, it's not something that is postponed to another age. Many, many Christians like that lady don't realize Jesus is already ruling. It's not simply reserved for the future.

Furthermore, He must continue to rule till all His enemies have been put under His feet. Whatever happens when antichrist is on earth will not change the fact that Jesus is ruling. I think it's so important for all of us to keep that continually in mind. He's on the throne; He's never going to abdicate.

Verse 3:

> "Thy people will volunteer freely [I prefer the correct translation will be 'freewill offerings] in the day of Thy [army']; in holy array, from the womb of the dawn, Thy youth are to Thee as the dew."

I don't want to dwell on that, but you'll find a beautiful alternative translation in the New International Version which says, "Thy young men shall come to Thee as the dew." Which is, I believe, what God is doing now. He's raising up an army of young people. Verse 4:

> "The LORD has sworn ..."

And you'll remember how many times already it's been emphasized in Hebrews that He not only said it, but He swore it.

> "The LORD has sworn and will not change His mind, 'Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.'"

That has been very fully unfolded already in Hebrews, hasn't it? See how much of Hebrews is related to this passage? Verse 5:

> "The LORD is at Thy right hand; He will shatter kings in the day of His wrath."

So when God's time of wrath comes He's going to deal with the rulers of the earth on behalf of Jesus. And He's going to deal with them with great severity. It says in the book of Revelation that Jesus ultimately will rule all nations with a rod of iron. The word for "to rule" in Greek is the same word that's translated "to shepherd." And a shepherd has a rod, so Jesus will shepherd the nations with a rod but it'll be a rod of iron because they need it.

Let's turn back to Hebrews 10:14. This is an important verse. It puts two things together in proportion.

> "For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified."

Notice again the theme of perfection. It only took one offering. It never has to be repeated, it's forever. He has done it. That's very important to understand.

But there's something else that's still going on. The tense at the end is the continuing present tense. He has perfected those who are being sanctified. The sacrifice is complete, the process of sanctification is still going on. This is a very traditional argument in the Christian church as to whether sanctification is a once-for-all experience or whether it's an ongoing experience. And in the Holiness movement and elsewhere, people are somewhat strongly divided on this issue.

I always like to have the best of both worlds. I believe it's both. I believe there is an instantaneous experience. I believe also there is a continuous outworking. But here the tense is very emphatically the ongoing present tense. He has perfected by His offering those who are being sanctified.

There might be some here tonight who are not here fully sanctified. And if that should be so, just take encouragement. The sacrifice is perfect, its outworking in your life may just take a little longer. Those of us who are more privileged will be patient with you! We have to be patient because if we weren't we wouldn't have been fully sanctified! There are those people who are so determined they've been fully sanctified that they used to lose their temper. But now they just have righteous indignation!

We're going on. Isn't that marvelous? Verses 15–18. What he's still dealing with is it was all done at the cross. You might think it's excessive to spend all this time emphasizing, but if you look through church history, I would say for most

of the major period of church history people did not realize this. This is the one thing that people fail to grasp. The people in the history of the church who really grasped that one sacrifice did it all forever are a small minority. So the Holy Spirit knew what He was doing when He took such pain to continue emphasizing it's done, it's finished, it never has to be repeated. I suspect that there are many of us who need to be more strongly assured of that because I think the devil often comes in and tries to undermine our confidence and the sufficiency of that one sacrifice. And if he gets us beginning to trust in something else then we probably become a victim of his.

We're going on then in verse 15.

> "And the Holy Spirit also bears testimony to us of this [that's understood], for after He has said ..."

And now He's quoting Jeremiah 31:33 which is probably the third time it's being quoted This writer did not mind repeating himself. I think I've said that already.

> "This is the covenant that I will make with them, after those days, says the LORD: Giving My laws upon their heart [or putting my laws upon their heart], and I will write them upon their mind, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will no longer remember."

Probably the word is iniquities. You remember what we said were the three kinds of wrongdoing? Sin, which is just failure to do what you ought to do. Transgression, which is breaking a known law. And iniquity, which is rebellion, having the attitude "I don't care."

Now God says He will remember them no more. So the writer of Hebrews now says:

> "Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any sacrifice for sin."

It's very logical. God has forgotten our sins. We do not have to go on offering sacrifice for them, isn't that true? So he's pointing out, and of course, he specifically has in mind Jewish people for whom the Old Covenant was the primary source of revelation. If God says He will forget our sins that means it's all over. We don't have to do any more about them.

Let me turn to my note outline for a moment, there's one rather important thing there. That's on Page 10/2, passage 10:15–18. For confirmation, the writer again cites Jeremiah 31:33–34. This prophetic Scripture is attributed directly to the Holy Spirit. That's important. He doesn't say the prophet Jeremiah, he says what? The Holy Spirit. For him there was no question that the Holy Spirit was the author of the prophet.

If you turn back for a moment to Hebrews 3:7 you'll find a similar use of an Old Testament quotation when he's quoting from Psalm 95.

> "Therefore just as the Holy Spirit says, 'Today if you hear His voice ...'"

Again, he doesn't say "the psalmist says," he says "the Holy Spirit says." It's very important especially in these days when so many professing Christians and even ministers are questioning the inspiration of Scripture.

Now we come to the fourth passage of practical application which is Hebrews 10:19–25. The words that I've picked out in this "let us" passage—it is also a "let us" passage—are "draw near," "hold fast," "assemble" and "encourage." I think they all go together. If we draw near to God then we have to hold fast what He's given us. And holding fast is strongly helped by assembling. We can't always do it on our own. Assembling should result in encouraging one another. So those are the four key words. Draw near, hold fast, assemble and encourage.

Now verses 19–21, I'll translate and then we'll look at the outline.

> "Having therefore, brothers, confidence [or boldness] for entry into the Holy of Holies in the blood of Jesus [or through the blood of Jesus], by a new and living way which He has inaugurated for us through the veil [that's the second veil that separated the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place], that is, His flesh [the veil is His flesh], and having a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, sprinkled in our hearts from an evil conscience and washed in our bodies with pure water."

I've gone a little further than I said I would but that's all right. Now, let's go to the outline. Verses 19–21. There are three encouragements to direct access to God. First of all, we have confidence in the blood of Jesus. That's basic and primary. If you do not have confidence in the blood of Jesus you will never have bold access to the presence of God. Now the word that's translated confidence or boldness is a word that I've spoken about before, it means in secular language "freedom of speech." It was a political word. Although it has a modified meaning here, I do believe it's very important that it's something we speak. I think the implication is we have to say it. It's not enough just to believe it. It says in Revelation that we overcome Satan by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of our testimony. That's the same thought. It's not enough simply to believe it but you have to say it boldly. Jesus has purchased for you the political right of freedom of speech which is, of course, guaranteed in the American Constitution. Ours is guaranteed by heaven's constitution. And never let the devil take away from you your right of freedom of speech. Do you follow what I'm saying? Say it, repeat it, boast about it. Don't ever be silent. Be very strong in your assertion of what the blood of Jesus has purchased for you.

Secondly, we have a new and living way through the veil. The veil no longer is a barrier. There's been a way opened for us through that veil into the Holy of Holies. To see this we'll just compare Matthew 27:50–51. This is on the cross at the climax of His agony.

> "Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom, and the earth shook; and the rocks were split."

So when Jesus yielded up His spirit on the cross, in the temple that very thick, heavy curtain was instantly split. It was split from top to bottom meaning it was done by God, not by man. So the death of Jesus opened up the way through the veil. But the writer of Hebrews says the real veil was His flesh which veiled His divinity. So that's the second encouragement of direct access, we have a new and living way through the veil.

I wonder if you can picture what that would mean to a religious Jew who knew that nobody could ever go through that veil except the high priest and then only once every year with blood and with incense and that anybody else who went through the veil would have died instantly. Put yourself in his position and then consider what it means to be told that you can go through the veil any time. I mean, it's breathtaking. I think sometimes the familiarity blinds us to the significance. You have access to Almighty God, direct personal access any time if you go the appointed way.

Let me just say I had a phone call yesterday from a Congressman which isn't usual with me, I don't have high political connections. He was so grateful for something that I had said to him which had changed the course of his life and blessed him that he said, "I'm only a Congressman but if there's ever anything I can do for you, you only have to tell me." That's nice to have a congressman; I trust I'll never need it. But just think if the President of the United States told you any time you want, just let me know, anything I can do for you, I'll do it. You'd be excited. But here we are talking about Almighty God. You have direct access to Him any time. It's so breathtaking that I'm afraid most Christians really don't appreciate it.

It's always blessed me that you can bow your head and close your eyes. You don't have to do that. But you can bow your head and close your eyes in the subway, in a car, on the beach and you are in the presence of Almighty God through the blood of Jesus. If we don't get excited about it we don't really believe it.

Going back to the outline. The third encouragement for direct access is that we have a great high priest to represent us. He's there as our personal representative. Just let's think about those three sources of encouragement. First of all, confidence freely expressed in the blood of Jesus. Second, a new and living way through the veil. Third, inside the veil to welcome us, represent us, a great high priest. But notice all the encouragement centers in Jesus. If you ever get off center you'll begin to question your acceptance, you'll begin to lose your boldness, you'll become uncertain and wavering. It's so very, very important that Jesus is never displaced from the center.

Now we come to the sixth "let us" passage which is verse 22.

> "...let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, being sprinkled in our hearts from an evil conscience, and being washed in our body with pure water."

There are what Andrew Murray calls the four requirements for the true worshiper. Let's look at them for a moment. They're all in the one verse. First of all, a sincere heart. We have to mean business, we cannot just use empty words,

we cannot cover up. We have to come to God with complete openness.

Second, full assurance of faith. We've got to be fully convinced that we have this right through Jesus of access into the presence of Almighty God.

Third, our hearts sprinkled by His blood from an evil conscience. I think this is where many people have a problem. Their conscience isn't really fully at rest. Believe me, if the devil can, just at any moment as you begin to approach Almighty God he'll try to remind you of something that would trouble your conscience. But you didn't do this, or think what you were. In some cases many people have told me that he will even project mental images, evil scenes from the past. If there's one point at which the devil will fight you it's at the point where you're just about to get into the immediate presence of God. And one essential condition is that your conscience is absolutely at rest, you're not in any way condemned.

Keep your finger there and turn to the famous 8th chapter of Romans for a moment. I regard this 8th chapter of Romans as being the climax of spiritual progress, in a certain sense, somewhat like the Holy of Holies. But it has an antechamber, a way in, which is verse 1 which says:

> "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

As long as we are under any kind of condemnation we can't get into Romans 8, which is the Spirit- filled life. And we cannot get into the presence of Almighty God. We have to have our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience. And if you have a battle, that's not surprising. I think the key probably is to look away from yourself and focus on Jesus. You see, the three encouragements that we looked at: confidence in the blood of Jesus, the way through the veil, the great high priest; they've got nothing to do with ourselves. The devil always tries to beat us down to the point where we're wondering if we qualify. Am I worthy? Am I holy enough? Have I prayed enough? Do I read my Bible often enough? All those are good things, but they're not relevant to that. None of them qualify you for admission to the presence of Almighty God, even if you did them all, all the time. Your only qualification is in the person and the work of Jesus.

Then, going back to the top of Page 10/3, the fourth requirement of the true worshiper. Our bodies washed with pure water. Now there are various ways of interpreting that. I'm not absolutely convinced I'm right but I think I am. I do believe that it means baptism. I believe that and I'm not thinking about whether the water was clean that you got baptized in because I got baptized in the River Jordan. And really, believe me, that is a very muddy stream. I quite understand Naaman when he said "The rivers of Syria are a lot better than the Jordan." From the external point of view it's absolutely true.

But I believe that going through the water in faith according to the Word of God purifies your body, sets it apart to God. Let's look for a moment in Acts 22:16 which is what Ananias said to Saul of Tarsus after he visited him in Damascus and prayed for him and he received his sight, got infilled with the Holy Spirit. Then Ananias said in verse 16:

> "Why do you delay? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name."

So there is a sense in which being baptized washes away our sins or sanctifies our body or sets our body apart to God. Those of us who are here on the platform tonight have all discovered by experience that if a person has been in the grip of Satan and involved in the occult, needed exorcism or deliverance from evil spirits, and receives deliverance, one almost essential requirement is to make sure you've passed through the waters of baptism. That's what separates you from Satan's kingdom.

See, Israel in Egypt was saved from judgment through the blood of the lamb. But they were not separated from Egypt by the blood of the lamb. They were separated by the water that they passed through. That was where the enemy was stopped, at the water. I personally do not feel free to offer full deliverance to a person that is not prepared to have his body sanctified by the water of baptism.

Sermon

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