

Hebrews 9B (2014)

- We just finished celebrating Christmas
 - So, it is appropriate in a way, that last week we studied at v.11 of Hebrews 9
 - In the first 8 verses of Chapter 9, the writer has used an analogy to explain the superiority of the New Covenant
 - His analogy will have two parts: the tabernacle and the sacrifices
 - In Chapter 9, we're looking at the tabernacle, it's design and purpose and even the way the Lord inaugurated it for service
 - The writer is explaining to his readers that each of these aspects of the Old Covenant was given to picture, or represent, Christ
 - They were part of an analogy that God designed to teach mankind about the need for a Savior
- I said it was appropriate to have celebrated Christmas this week, because in v. 11, the writer mentioned the appearing of Christ
 - Let's begin reading there...

Heb. 9:11 But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation;

- In v.11, the writer says everything God was doing in the Law and the Old Covenant changed when Christ appeared as our High Priest
- You remember that the heart of this letter revolves around the understanding that our high priest belongs to an order called Melchizedek
- The fact that Jesus comes as a priest in that order, and not the one given in the Law, means that the Law must change as well
- We stopped in v.14 last week, as the writer gave us the essential and most important difference between the Old and New Covenants

- While the Old Covenant tabernacle existed to permit a sinful people to remain in fellowship within the nation of Israel, the New Covenant goes much farther
 - It restores fellowship between mankind and God
- While the Old Covenant ensured that Israel could continue to receive earthly blessings in the land
- The New Covenant guarantees eternal blessings in the Kingdom
- The tabernacle sacrifices cleansed the body, but the New Covenant tabernacle cleanses the soul, the conscience
- With that, the writer now zeros in on this change in covenants, for after all, that's what this analogy is all about
 - We are in a Covenant with the Living God, but it's not the Covenant the Lord gave Israel at the mountain

[Heb. 9:15](#) For this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, so 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.

[Heb. 9:16](#) For where a covenant is, there must of necessity be the death of the one who made it.

[Heb. 9:17](#) For a covenant is valid only when men are dead, for it is never in force while the one who made it lives.

[Heb. 9:18](#) Therefore even the first covenant was not inaugurated without blood.

[Heb. 9:19](#) For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses to all the people according to the Law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people,

[Heb. 9:20](#) saying, "THIS IS THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT WHICH GOD COMMANDED YOU."

[Heb. 9:21](#) And in the same way he sprinkled both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry with the blood.

[Heb. 9:22](#) And according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

- The writer begins with "for this reason..."
 - That phrase directs our attention back to the previous passage
 - Because the Old Covenant tabernacle service and the priests who served in that place could not cleanse our conscience, something better was required

- So “for that reason,” Christ became a mediator for a New Covenant
- The writer is answering the question that some in Israel might have been asking at that time
 - The question was, “Why would God have replaced a covenant He created for Israel? Explain what’s wrong with the Old Covenant?”
 - The answer is, “because the Old Covenant doesn’t address the fundamental problem of sin barring us from Heaven”
 - To solve that problem, a new and better covenant was required
 - One that brought with it a better priesthood, a better sacrifice and a better tabernacle
- In the second half of the verse, the writer answers the next question, “What makes the New Covenant better?”
 - The answer begins with a death
 - The New Covenant is better because it provided a sacrifice to pay for all the sins committed under that first covenant
 - The New Covenant actually wiped away all the debt that Israel racked up under the Old Covenant
 - It’s like someone came along and offered to pay off all your credit cards at once
 - Look carefully at the second part of v.15
 - The writer says that Christ became a mediator of a New Covenant so that by a death, He could redeem the transgressions
 - The word “redemption” in that verse means to pay a ransom
 - And the word “transgression” is sin
 - So the sins of Israel under the Old Covenant were a debt to God that required repayment
 - And the wages of sin are death, so a human death was required
 - The Old Covenant tabernacle service never called for human sacrifice

- So that Old Covenant had no means to repay the debt required by the Law
- Furthermore, even if a human sacrifice were to take place, there was no human being who could qualify as a sinless sacrifice
- So the Old Covenant sacrifices could only cleanse the body, not the soul
- But the New Covenant offers a sacrifice capable of paying the ransom for all who are condemned by their sin under the Old Covenant
 - That sacrifice, of course, was Christ Himself on the cross
 - At His death, the New Covenant was established
 - And by it, a payment is offered to satisfy the requirements of the Old Covenant
 - This is the meaning of Christ's words when He declared He came to fulfill the Law
 - And who may enjoy the blessings of this New Covenant?
 - The writer says those who are called into faith by the Father are made part of this Covenant
 - The Covenant given to Israel was a parity covenant, that obligated both parties to certain performance
 - But the New Covenant is a suzerainty covenant, which means the covenant is granted by the greater to the lesser
 - There are no terms for the lesser
 - The lesser is simply the recipient of the greater party's decision to grant the covenant
 - We who have been called by God into grace have been granted the blessings of the New Covenant
- Now notice at the end of v.15, the writer says that those who are called into the New Covenant will receive an eternal inheritance
 - The idea is simple: every human being's eternal future has two possible outcomes
 - Either they will fail to enter into the New Covenant

- And so they must pay the wages of sin in their eternal death
- Or they will be called into the New Covenant by faith, so that Christ's death may pay that price on their behalf
- And then they will be able to share in Christ's inheritance in the Kingdom
- The writer has connected the death of Christ on our behalf with our receiving an inheritance
 - And we understand that connection from our everyday experience
 - We understand how a person might create a last will and testament so that after their death, people they love will receive a portion of their inheritance
- Well, the writer says you can think of what Christ did for us in the New Covenant as something similar
 - In vs.16-17, the writer reminds us that where there is a covenant, there must be a death to create it
 - And until a death occurs, the terms of the covenant aren't in effect
- The word for "covenant" in Greek is also translated "testament", as in a last will and testament
 - The terms of wills are established before someone dies
 - But, they only go into effect after a death occurs
- When the benefactor dies, those the person loves will benefit from the testament or covenant
 - So it was in the New Covenant and Christ
 - The New Covenant is like Christ's last will and testament, intended to bless those He loves

- Every testament (or covenant) works this way
 - The writer says in v.18, that even the Old Covenant worked that way
 - Before the terms of the Covenant could begin, and the people receive the blessings of that testament, something had to die
 - And in the case of that Covenant, God instructed Moses to sacrifice animals to put the terms into effect
 - The writer recounts that moment on the mountain, in Exodus 24, when Moses and the elders met with the Lord at the altar to establish the Covenant
 - They performed a sacrifice on an altar that Moses built
 - The blood of the animals was poured out into a basin
 - And that blood was sprinkled on the book of the Covenant and on the people
 - The blood signified that an agreement was in force, and that it could only be broken by death
- Once the tabernacle was built according to God's instructions, a similar ritual was required by God
 - The high priest took the blood of animals and sprinkled it at various places in the tabernacle
 - In particular, it was sprinkled on all the items inside the tabernacle itself
 - This ritual cleansed the items for use in the tabernacle service
 - And of course, after the tabernacle service began, there was a continual need for blood to be applied, because Israel continually sinned
 - Therefore, the writer says that all things had to be cleansed with blood, whether the tabernacle, the priests or the people themselves
 - Once again, the writer is making an analogy using the earlier tabernacle
 - The Old Covenant required the applying of blood to cleanse sin, because sin always requires a death

- But since this is an analogy, the blood of the tabernacle stands for something much greater
- So now, the writer is ready to explain how the New Covenant takes these details and improves upon them for our sake

Heb. 9:23 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.

- Just as what happened in the earthly tabernacle has also happened in the Heavenly tabernacle
 - On earth, the tabernacle had to be cleansed of sin before it could be ready for use
 - So has the tabernacle in Heaven been cleansed
 - Why would the Heavenly tabernacle need to be cleansed?
 - First, Paul tells us that there is wickedness beyond this earth

Eph. 6:12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

- Paul specifically says there is wickedness in the Heavenly places
- Of course, he's referring to Satan, who occupies both Earth and can visit the Heavenly realm, according to Job 1
- Secondly, the prophet Ezekiel tells us that Satan defiled the Heavenly sanctuary by his rebellion against God

Ezek. 28:12 "Son of man, take up a lamentation over the king of Tyre and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord GOD,

"You had the seal of perfection,
Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.

Ezek. 28:13 "You were in Eden, the garden of God;

Every precious stone was your covering:
The ruby, the topaz and the diamond;
The beryl, the onyx and the jasper;
The lapis lazuli, the turquoise and the emerald;
And the gold, the workmanship of your settings and sockets,
Was in you.
On the day that you were created

They were prepared.

[Ezek. 28:14](#) "You were the anointed cherub who covers,
And I placed you there.
You were on the holy mountain of God;
You walked in the midst of the stones of fire.

[Ezek. 28:15](#) "You were blameless in your ways
From the day you were created
Until unrighteousness was found in you.

[Ezek. 28:16](#) "By the abundance of your trade
You were internally filled with violence,
And you sinned;
Therefore I have cast you as profane
From the mountain of God.
And I have destroyed you, O covering cherub,
From the midst of the stones of fire.

[Ezek. 28:17](#) "Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty;
You corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor.
I cast you to the ground;
I put you before kings,
That they may see you.

[Ezek. 28:18](#) "By the multitude of your iniquities,
In the unrighteousness of your trade
You profaned your sanctuaries.
Therefore I have brought fire from the midst of you;
It has consumed you,
And I have turned you to ashes on the earth
In the eyes of all who see you.

[Ezek. 28:19](#) "All who know you among the peoples
Are appalled at you;
You have become terrified
And you will cease to be forever."''''

- If you look carefully at this passage in Ezekiel, you will see what the writer of Hebrews is talking about
- First, the writer says Satan was an angel created by God and perfectly made
 - Notice in v.12, we hear that Satan had the seal of perfection
 - He was full of wisdom and beauty
 - In v.15, he was blameless, at least for a time
 - And he was splendidly adorned in jewels, Ezekiel says

- Secondly, notice where Satan lived and how he served God
 - In v.13, he was in the Garden of Eden
 - Naturally, we assume this refers to the garden than Adam and Woman occupied
 - And of course, Satan was in the earthly Garden in Genesis 3
 - But if we look more closely at this passage, we see clues that suggest this Garden isn't the same one as that in Genesis 3
- For example, Satan was on the Holy Mountain of God
 - The Holy Mountain of God is Mt. Zion
 - Mt. Zion is the name for the Heavenly Jerusalem that exists in the Heavenly realm
 - The writer of Hebrews mentions this later in his letter in Chapter 12
 - And in Revelation 21, we hear that this Heavenly Zion will descend from Heaven to become our new dwelling place for eternity
 - Also notice that after Satan sinned, God cast him to the earth, to the ground
 - So it would seem that there is a Heavenly garden called Eden, which the earthly Eden represented
- Furthermore, notice that Satan served God as the covering cherub
 - The covering cherub refers to those angels whose wings covered the mercy seat on top of the Ark of the Covenant
 - We already know that the tabernacle given to Moses and Israel is a pattern of the one in Heaven
 - So now we know that the golden covering cherubs made for the earthly tabernacle are pictures of real cherubs who cover the glory of God in the Heavenly tabernacle
 - And the first and most glorious of those cherubs originally was none other than Satan himself
 - But then notice, in v.18, Ezekiel says that Satan profaned his sanctuaries

- The word in Hebrew for “sanctuary” literally means “holy places”
 - Satan profaned the holy places
 - There are two holy places in the tabernacle
 - The Holy Place
 - And the Holy of Holies
 - Both of these places in the Heavenly tabernacle were defiled by Satan, Ezekiel says
- How did Satan come to defile the Heavenly tabernacle?
 - First, God says Satan was filled with violence, because of pride
 - Specifically, Satan took note of the abundance of his trade
 - “Trade” is a term in Hebrew meaning “merchandise” or “trade”
 - In this context, it refers to Satan’s trade as the covering cherub
 - He was the angel closest to the glory of God
 - He was assigned to cover it, to husband it
 - And because he was so close to God’s glory, he was filled with violence
 - What was supposed to be an honor to Satan, became a cause for him to rebel against God
 - He so loved seeing his privileged position next to the glory of God, that he began to think he was equal to God
 - This is the essence of pride: we so love what God has done in creating us, that we stop thanking Him and begin thinking of ourselves – we love ourselves more than we love Him
 - Secondly, Satan was corrupted by his own perfection
 - Satan started thinking he was inherently great and beautiful – even more so than God Himself
 - Notice in v.17, Ezekiel says Satan’s heart was corrupted by his splendor
- Next, what action did Satan take to pollute the Heavenly tabernacle?

- The answer to this question is a little less clear, but I think I see what he did
 - First, remember Satan's position as the covering cherub
 - His station was in the holiest place in the tabernacle
- Secondly, we know the tabernacle on earth is based on a pattern of the tabernacle in Heaven
 - And we also see that other aspects of Creation are patterned after things in Heaven
 - The temple mount is a representation of Mt. Zion in Heaven
 - And the Garden of Eden on earth appears to be a representation of the Garden of God in Heaven
- Therefore, to understand how Satan may have profaned the tabernacle in Heaven, we should ask: does Satan ever profane the earthly tabernacle?
 - The answer is most definitely
 - He does so on numerous occasions, but most notably, in the Abomination of Desolation described in Daniel and by Jesus in Matthew
 - This is a moment when Satan seats a man in the Holy of Holies and declares himself to be God
 - Satan accomplished this with Antiochus Epiphanies, shortly before Christ's birth
 - And he will repeat it again with the Antichrist in the Tribulation
- So by analogy, I believe Satan was a covering cherub who became convinced by his importance and beauty that he could be God
 - And so in a rebellious moment of violence and pride, Satan seized the mercy seat in the Heavenly tabernacle, declaring Himself to be God
 - And in doing so, he profaned the Heavenly tabernacle
 - We see the result of that act of rebellion in Ezekiel

- In v.16, the Lord says He cast Satan down from the mountain of God (in Heaven)
 - In v.17, we hear that Satan was cast to the ground
 - The Hebrew word for “ground” is the word for “earth”
 - And again in v.18, the Lord declares that Satan was cast down to the earth
- We know that Satan fell into sin prior to the events of Genesis 3, where he met with woman and seduced her to sin
 - So it seems that Satan was roaming the earthly Garden of Eden, because he had been cast out of the Heavenly Garden of God
 - Jesus described seeing this moment in the Gospels

Luke 10:18 And He said to them, “I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning.

- Therefore, the writer of Hebrews says that the Heavenly tabernacle was in need of cleansing before its High Priest could set up shop inside and begin His work
 - The cleansing was accomplished by blood, just as the earthly tabernacle was cleansed by blood
 - But this cleansing was done by the blood of Christ, which He delivered to that Heavenly tabernacle in His own body
 - Once Christ appeared in the tabernacle, He cleansed it from all unrighteousness as a preparatory step to His serving there
 - Just as the high priest of Israel had to cleanse the earthly tabernacle with animal blood before the tabernacle service could begin
 - It’s by the blood of Christ that the Heavenly tabernacle is restored and our High Priest is installed
 - Now that our High Priest is installed, the New Covenant is in effect
 - And now that it’s in effect, it’s perpetual and without end – it’s a suzerainty covenant that doesn’t depend on performance
 - In light of this, consider the question, “Can your works save you?”

- The thing that stands in our way is a defiled sanctuary that hasn't even been touched by human hands
- How does a human work on earth to solve that problem in Heaven? It can't.
- This shows, to an even greater degree, how far human works are from the real solution that reconciles us to God
- Which is the death of Christ alone and His blood applied in a Heavenly realm that we haven't even visited yet
- Next week, we'll finish looking at how that blood was applied