

Hebrews 9:6-15

In our last lesson, as you may recall, we were studying the tabernacle in the wilderness.

The tabernacle, or tent, was a portable building erected in the midst of the tribes of Israel.

This very special building was described for us in Hebrews 9: 1-5: **"Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.**

² **For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary.**

³ **And after the second veil, the**

tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all;

⁴ Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant;

⁵ And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly."

In our last lesson, we found that these articles of furniture and the contents of the ark revealed some very beautiful types and shadows of Jesus Christ, and also pictured His work of salvation, and His present employment as Our Great High Priest.

We will not go over this material again,
and, indeed, we must leave the
tabernacle altogether, because the
writer of Hebrews concluded his
description of it in V 5.

He did this in order to launch into a
description of the priesthood itself.

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V 6-7 **"Now when these things were thus
ordained, the priests went always into
the first tabernacle, accomplishing the
service of God.**

**7 But into the second went the high
priest alone once every year, not
without blood, which he offered for
himself, and for the errors of the
people."**

V 6 says, "--**the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God.**"

The priests in the old economy had to go continually into the tabernacle because the work was never finished.

If they went today, they would be going again tomorrow, and the next day, and on and on.

The very repetition of this service meant that it was not sufficient, that one time would not do.

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On the other hand, Christ went only once into heaven and completed the work of salvation.

Man was reconciled to God, and fellowship became a reality.

However, that was not possible before
Calvary.

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In the old economy, the common people never
went into the sanctuary.

This tabernacle was only meant for the
priests who were engaged in the service
of God.

So, God's presence was not accessible to the
common man.

But in Christ, we are brought nigh unto God.
In fact, the book of Revelation teaches us
that each Christian is a priest, and so
should be personally engaged in the
service and worship of God.

Revelation 1:5-6: **"And from Jesus Christ,
who is the faithful witness, and the
first begotten of the dead, and the
prince of the kings of the earth. Unto**

him that loved us, and washed us from
our sins in his own blood,

⁶ And hath made us kings and priests
unto God and his Father; to him be
glory and dominion for ever and ever.
Amen."

So, as we learned in our last lesson, the
proper place for every believer is at
the golden altar of incense.

There we have the privilege of offering our
prayers and praises to the Father.

There they are made acceptable to God by our
Great High Priest, Jesus Christ.

However, even though each believer is a
priest, there are certain ones who are
called to full-time ministry as
shepherds of His flock.

It is their responsibility and privilege to be engaged "**always**" in "**the service of God.**"

But, even these individuals are not to intrude into the office of Christ our Great High Priest.

Unfortunately, some have done this, adding man-made ordinances to those set down by God, and placing themselves in Christ's office as mediator, and lording it over men's conscience.

This should not be, "**For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.**"

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So each believer can, and should, go as far as the golden altar of incense, offering his prayers and praises by Christ.

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V 7 **"But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people."**

Our Great High Priest entered heaven itself, and not just once a year.

He is continually there as our Mediator.

He went in once, and has never come out.

In fact, He will be there continuously until He comes in the clouds of heaven to receive the redeemed.

Hebrews 8:1 says, **"--- We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens."**

That's where Jesus is today.

And only He could have entered heaven in His own name, in His own right, and by His own merits.

And this entrance into heaven was portrayed each year by the high priest.

For a few moments then, let's go back to the Old Testament times and check the path of the High Priest as he entered the tabernacle.

On the Day of Atonement when he walked to the Holy of Holies, he proceeded on a prescribed path.

First of all, he must pass through the outer sanctuary, and then proceed through the veil.

Likewise, Christ, on His journey to the throne of heaven, passed through a holy life and a violent death, a violent

death that was pictured for us by the rent veil.

V 7 tells us that the high priest of old entered the Holy of Holies **"not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people."**

Christ entered heaven as our Mediator in the power of His own shed blood.

For **"Without the shedding of blood there is no remission."**

In His position as the Son of God, Christ could have taken His rightful place in heaven at any time.

But without the shedding of His blood, He could not have entered heaven as our Mediator and Great High Priest.

And without His sacrifice, none of us could have been admitted into God's presence as we presently are, nor would there

have been a place for us in heaven in the future.

V 7-8: **“But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people:**

⁸ The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing.”

This very limited access declared the solemn fact that the way into the immediate presence of God had not yet been made possible, nor could it be so long as the first tabernacle had any standing before God.

Actually, the tabernacle did not so much provide a way to God as it showed that the way was blocked.

First of all, the Israelite could not go beyond the first entrance, that is, the outer entrance to the courtyard.

When they brought a lamb for sacrifice, they would put their hand upon it in an act of identification, but they could proceed no further.

Only the priest could take the lamb into the courtyard to be slain on the brazen alter.

Yes, the front gate was a barrier, not an entrance, to the average worshipper.

And the priest had his boundaries also.

He could go into the sanctuary to accomplish **"the service of God,"** but this was as far as he could go.

The priest must stop outside the veil to the
Holy of Holies.

He never saw the arc of the covenant or the
mercy seat in their place in the Holy
of Holies.

Only the high priest could enter into that
Holy place, and even he could only
enter once a year.

So you see, the Holy Ghost was **"signifying,
that the way into the holiest of all
was not yet made manifest, while as the
first tabernacle was yet standing."**

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But now it is so different.

Jesus Christ can bring us into the very
presence of God.

By the value of His blood, our Great High
Priest can bring us right up to the
golden altar of incense.

And by the way, that altar now stands in the Holy of Holies, not in the sanctuary. There our worship ascends, mingled with the sweet savour of Christ's character, and is acceptable to God.

However, only Christ can bring us before His Father.

No elegant service or ceremony devised by man can do it.

And no other person can bring us into the presence of God.

As Christ said in John 14:6: **"no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."**

And this new freedom was instantaneous.

The very moment that Christ died on the cross, the types and shadows ceased to have any value before God, and the new covenant went into effect.

Heaven's gates were just waiting for God's Son to swing them open and restore the fellowship that had been lost in Eden. But until that great day had arrived, the Holy Spirit's message, set forth in the tabernacle, showed clearly that the way **"was not yet made manifest."**

The tabernacle in itself was not sufficient, but only pointed to a better way.

V 9-10 **"Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;**
¹⁰ **Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation."**

None of the gifts and sacrifices could give the sinner a clear conscience, or deliver him from the dominion of sin. They were only intended to serve a temporary purpose while pointing to a better sacrifice.

The earthly sanctuary had nothing to do with changing people's lives.

But, today, you can come to Christ, and He will give you a new life.

He alone can enable you to worship God in spirit and in truth, and make Him a reality in your life.

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In the next verse, we begin to look at the superior way, and at Christ Himself, the Superior Sacrifice.

V 11: **"But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater**

and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building."

In this age of grace, through Christ, these **"good things"** have already begun to appear.

And Christ is the High Priest of **"a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands."**

Man has built many beautiful places of worship.

Truly, in them there is much for us to admire.

The soaring architecture and beautiful stained glass windows make us look up in awe.

But, actually, they only minister to the physical side of man, not his spiritual needs.

The building we assemble in only has a limited purpose.

We need to realize that there is a real tabernacle in heaven, and there is a real High Priest there, and it is when we are there with Him that real spiritual worship happens.

V 12: **"Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us."**

I believe that this verse teaches us that Jesus literally presented His own blood in heaven.

If that is not what the verse means, then I do not know what it is saying.

"Neither by the blood of goats and calves" -
--that is literal blood that the writer is talking about---**"but by his own**

blood---and that is literal blood
also, which Christ shed on the cross.
Not only is He the true High Priest, but He
is the true and only acceptable
sacrifice.

John the Baptist tried to get people to
realize that truth when he said---
**"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away
the sin of the world."**

V 12 goes on--"**having obtained eternal
redemption for us.**"

Notice the words "**for us**" are in italics,
indicating that they are not in the
original manuscript.

They were added to smooth out the
translation, but they are not the
emphasis of this verse.

The emphasis is that Christ entered heaven once, and that He **"obtained"** eternal redemption.

He did it once, and He did it right.

He didn't have to keep on trying; He **"obtained"** it, once and for all.

And, it is His sacrifice that **"obtained eternal redemption"**.

Christ's perfect life can never save us.

You can follow His teachings to the best of your ability, and it will never save you.

It is the death of Christ, it is His redemption that saves you.

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V 13 **"For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh."**

The reference to "**the ashes of an heifer**"

brings us back to Numbers 19.

So let's turn to Numbers 19: 1-6 and see

what these verses tell us -- "**And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying,**

² **This is the ordinance of the law which the LORD hath commanded, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring thee a red heifer without spot, wherein is no blemish, and upon which never came yoke:**

³ **And ye shall give her unto Eleazar the priest, that he may bring her forth without the camp, and one shall slay her before his face:**

⁴ **And Eleazar the priest shall take of her blood with his finger, and sprinkle of her blood directly before**

the tabernacle of the congregation
seven times:

⁵ And one shall burn the heifer in
his sight; her skin, and her flesh, and
her blood, with her dung, shall he
burn:

⁶ And the priest shall take cedar
wood, and hyssop, and scarlet, and cast
it into the midst of the burning of the
heifer."

If we would read on, we would find that the
heifer was burned completely (you might
say it was cremated) and its ashes were
kept in a clean place.

When a man became ceremonially defiled
(usually by touching a dead body), the
priest would take the ashes, mingle
them with water, and sprinkle the
unclean person.

This purified him so he could be restored to fellowship in Israel.

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The red heifer has a particular symbolism here.

First of all, the fact that the heifer was burned to ashes has great meaning.

The ashes give the same testimony that our blessed Lord gave on the cross when He cried aloud, **"It is finished!"**

Yes, ashes give testimony to a fire that has ceased to burn, never to burn again.

They tell the story of full judgment that will never again burn against Christ or the redeemed.

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Secondly, the fact that it was a heifer, not a bull, is significant.

It was a female, and yet it was a picture of
Christ.

How could that be?

Well, 1 Peter 3:7 tells us that the female
is the "**weaker vessel.**"

Today, many will contest that statement, but
according to God's Word, that is true.

In the red heifer, we see that Jesus came
down to this earth, and, as a man,
experienced our physical weaknesses.

The Almighty Son of God got tired and hungry
just like you and me.

He asked the Samaritan woman for a drink of
water because He was thirsty.

And did you ever think of the fact that Mary
taught the Son of God how to walk and
talk, when He was a baby?

Yes, in His human body, He experienced our
weaknesses.

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Also the colour red was significant.

Isaiah 1:18, speaking of our sins, says

"though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

So the colour red speaks of sin, and the red heifer tells us that Christ was made

"sin for us."

Yes, while He was on the cross, He was made

"sin for us."

But the red heifer must be an animal upon which a yoke had never been placed.

And although Christ was made sin for us, He was never personally under the bondage of sin Himself.

2 Corinthians 5:21 says, **"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin."**

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And, as in all the animal sacrifices, the red heifer must be without blemish. That was necessary because it represented the perfect Son God.

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The heifer was led outside the camp and there slain before the high priest.

We see two significant things here.

Firstly, Jesus suffered "**outside the camp**" on the hill of Calvary.

No, He was never accepted to any great degree in the Royal City.

The palm leaves and shouts of "**Hosanna in the highest**" soon turned to "**Let him be crucified.**"

By the way, Hebrews 13:12-13 says,

"Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood,

suffered without the gate.

**13 Let us go forth therefore unto him
without the camp, bearing his
reproach."**

Secondly, the heifer was slain before the
high priest.

Jesus Christ is both the sacrifice and the
High Priest.

As our High Priest, He voluntarily offered
up Himself.

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And the blood of the offering was to be
sprinkled by the high priest before the
tabernacle seven times.

The number seven speaks of completeness.

Christ's sacrifice is a finished work, and
it is a completed work.

One sacrifice took care of all the sins of
all believers.

When Christ said "**It is finished,**" it was finished.

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And Numbers 19:6 tells us that cedar and hyssop were to be put with the sacrifice of the red heifer.

Whatever else this would symbolize, cedar and hyssop certainly represent the whole gamut of the plant kingdom.

In speaking of Solomon's great knowledge of botany, 1 Kings 4:33 says, "**And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall.**"

So Christ's great sacrifice was sufficient not only to redeem mankind, but to redeem creation as well.

Look for a moment at Romans 8:19-21.

By the way, the word "**creature**" in these verses really means "creation," so I will substitute that word here.

Romans 8:19-21: **"For the earnest expectation of the (creation) waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.**

²⁰ **For the (creation) was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope,**

²¹ **Because the (creation) itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God."**

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And we see that the ashes, when mixed with water, had the power to cleanse from the defilement of a dead body.

So the believer, who is often defiled by the old man, can have his soul cleansed by the washing of the water by the Word. Just as the ashes mixed with water cleansed the Israelite, so also the water of the Word, which is filled with Christ, cleanses us for service.

Also Hebrews 9:14 says, "**How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?**"

"**---purge your conscience.**" The believer, although saved eternally by the blood of Christ, is also in need of daily cleansing, and it is again the blood that cleanses.

1 John 1:7 says, "**But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have**

fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

V 9 of that same chapter says, **"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."**

Remember Christ's words to Peter--**"If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me."**

Yes we need to come to Christ for daily cleansing for fellowship.

So then, with all the past settled, and with daily cleansing available, we are free to serve the living God in the faith and power of a new life.

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V 15 **"And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the**

transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."

Christ is the mediator of the New Testament (or covenant), and we know He is the Saviour of all believers in this present day of grace.

However, in this verse before us, it is not the Bride of Christ that is being spoken of, but it is the Old Testament saints that are in view.

Notice the words, "**for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament."**

Those who were under the Old Testament (or old covenant) looked forward through the sacrifices to His coming as their Saviour.

We do not know how much they really understood, but it could have been considerable.

Remember what Jesus said to the Jews?

"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad."

So in some way that we do not completely understand, the Old Testament saints looked forward through the sacrifices to the coming of Christ.

The blood of bulls and goats never took away their sins, but only covered them until Christ finally paid the debt.

In other words, God *saved on credit* in Old Testament times.

They brought their offerings in faith, and when Christ finally came, He died **"for the remission of sins that are past."**

Romans 3:25

This truth is beautifully pictured in the circumstances surrounding the crossing of the Jordan.

The Ark stayed in the midst of the flood and held it back until Israel passed safely over.

Not one drop of judgment fell on them.

And how far back was that flood backed up?

Let's look at Joshua 3:15-17. **"And as they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water, (for Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest,)**

¹⁶ **That the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon an heap very far from the city Adam, that is beside Zaretan: and those that came**

down toward the sea of the plain, even the salt sea, failed, and were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho.

¹⁷ And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan."

Yes, the great weight of past sins way back to Adam were placed upon Christ, and He held back the judgment of God.

The sin of eating the forbidden fruit, and all the sins of the Old Testament believers were placed on Christ that day when He died for the sins of all who trusted in Him.

V 15 "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."