

Title: Eternal Redemption – Secured!
Text: Hebrews 9.1-14
Theme: Pure
Series: Hebrews #22
Prop Stmt Only Christ can purify your conscience

Read Text:

Exodus – 12 chapters getting out of Egypt; 3 crossing the Red Sea; 3 dealing with details of living in a wilderness; 5 laws; 16 details about the tabernacle. The tabernacle was a miniature model of the Garden of Eden that was, and the eschatological temple that will be. The tabernacle was a small reflection that pointed back to the world as it was originally designed and it pointed to the world that was yet to come. The OT tabernacle represented creation and God's purposes for it. The holy of holies was the place where heaven came down to earth. It was the place where the glory of God had come to rest. But, instead of filling the earth with his glory he was in a tent. In fact, he was in the back room of a little, two-room tent. (later a Temple) Why? In the Garden of Eden, there were no altars for sacrificing animals, no basins to clean the hands of the priests, no curtains to separate the people from the holy place and no incense and no veil to hide the glory of God. God was completely accessible. Now, instead of filling the garden, he confined himself to the back room of a tent. This was not how it was supposed to be! But, the tabernacle was a step in the right direction, for now.

But there is more to this divine building program than looking back to the original creation. This tabernacle looked forward. It looked forward to the day when Eden would be restored. It looked forward to the day when the glory of God would fill the entire earth. It looked forward to the day when earth and heaven would be one, where God would live with and enjoy his people and they would live forever. But how could that be? How could the earth be restored? How could earth and heaven become one? How could God dwell with people when these people had become so rebellious and so dirty and sinful? The answer to that tremendous tension and that ultimate question is not fully addressed by the tabernacle, but the clues to that answer are engraved and embroidered and designed in her furniture. Packed into that tabernacle were items and symbols that not only reflected the different aspects of the universe, but they also at the same time pointed to Christ. When Christ came, he replaced the tabernacle because he was the means of fulfilling all that the tabernacle pointed to. He was the holy of holies, walking and talking, eating and sleeping, living with and enjoying his people. He was the priest who offered the greatest sacrifice and he was the greatest sacrifice that was made. He was the incense that provides the worshipper with the covering to be able boldly approach the throne of God – the Mercy Seat! He was the bread of heaven, and the light of the world. It all pointed to him. So, when he died on the cross for our sins and cried out with a loud voice that the payment was done, the price had been paid, "It is finished!" we should not be surprised that the enormous veil that blocked access into the holy of holies was ripped down the middle. Not only did this symbolize that God was no longer in a room, in a city, in a nation, but was going into all the world, this also meant that now, through Christ, every single one of us has direct access to God.

Beloved, have you any idea what you have in Christ? Do you realize the incredible treasure that is yours to be able to go directly to God because of Christ? This treasure is only possible because Christ alone is able to purify your conscience. Your best efforts cannot clear your conscience because your good is never good enough. That is damning!

Some of you live with an overwhelming fear of failure. The pressure to perform and the expectations to succeed feel like an enormous weight, that instead of motivating you, they immobilize you with fear. When you were a child, your parents and others pointed out things in which you succeeded and praised you. It felt good, but it was like drinking salt water. The praise drove you to do more, to get more praise, and the more that you did, the more you raised expectations, which, quite honestly, is not that difficult to do in high school. High schools give out awards for being able to tie your shoes. Have you ever sat through an awards assembly? Then comes reality! College! And you just went from the kiddie pool into the deep end. And what is worse, teachers don't give you an "A" for bringing in an extra box of Kleenex or wiping down the board at the end of class. They don't even care if you show up for class. And what was rather easy all of a sudden became difficult, and what is worse, you are afraid that you cannot meet all of the expectations. What do you do when you know that your very best is not good enough?

This text is only for those of you whose best, is not good enough. For those of you who have it all together, and you are perfect, you can ignore this sermon, because this text is for the rest of us. This text is a great encouragement because it reveals to us how complete and perfect our Savior, Jesus Christ, really is. The text breaks down into 2 parts. The first part (verses 1-10) focuses upon the Tabernacle, while the verses 11-14 show us how Christ fulfilled the Tabernacle and provided us with something that the Old Covenant system could not give.

1. **The Limits of the Old Covenant** (1-10)

9.1 informs us as to what these verses are going to be addressing. I call it the rules and the rituals. The rules are the "regulations for worship" and the ritual refers to the pieces of furniture that were in the tabernacle which was "an earthly place of holiness." By calling the tabernacle (v.1) "an earthly place of holiness" the AH is helping you see the contrast between that and "the true tent that the Lord set up" in heaven (8.2). The Old Covenant Tabernacle is a model of what is in heaven. But, because it is a model (a small imitation of the real thing) it is limited in its scope and limited in its effectiveness. The AH's goal is to point out that the Old Covenant system that was centered in the tabernacle only provided limited access to God and limited cleansing from sin. He first focuses upon the tabernacle itself and the pieces of furniture that were used in its rituals.

A. **The Place was limited** (2-5)

Verse 2 speaks of the first room and verse 3 speaks of the Holy of Holies. The text then focuses upon the furniture that was in those rooms. After going through those, he comes to the most holy piece in the most holy place where we are reminded that in the inner

room (holy of holies) was the Ark of the Covenant, which housed the covenant. The tablets that contained the 10 commandments were kept there along with an urn that kept some manna and Aaron's staff that budded as a sign from God indicating that his position as the high priest could not be challenged. The entire picture spoke of separation. The AH did not spend much time on this (see end of v.5) and since I just preached through the book of Exodus in preparation for Hebrews, I will not repeat all of that now.

B. The Practices were limited. (6-10)

Only the priests could go into the 1st room and only the high priest could go into the Holy of Holies and even that was only once a year on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16). On that day, he would first go in with a censer that had burning incense so that the smoke would function as a protective covering, shielding him from the glory of God that rested on the Mercy Seat of the Ark of the Covenant. In that first trip he would sprinkle the blood of a bull that had been killed as a sacrifice for his own sins. On the second trip, he would offer the blood of a goat that had been slain as a sacrifice for the sins of the people. Then he would leave and would not return for another year. There was no sitting down and talking with God as the big guy upstairs sort of thing. Again, the law made it clear that sin is extremely serious to God.

v.8 – the way into the holy place is not yet opened. This is where many religions that claim to be the way, get stuck. If you will notice, that many times a religious system divides people up between those who are on the inside and know all of the secrets and the common person who is left on the outside, looking in. For example, the Mormon religion was founded upon a man named Joseph Smith who claimed that starting in 1823 an angel (Moroni) appeared to him and revealed to him another testament. This revelation was inscribed on golden tablets. Two guys representing the Mormon religion were explaining this to me one day when I asked them if they had ever seen these tablets. Of course they hadn't. And I said, "do you know why?" Because they don't exist. But no one can tell you that, because the whole thing would fall apart, so they tell you that only the guys at the top can handle the secrets. Many of you were not raised in the Mormon religion, but you were raised in a version of Christianity that had the same dynamic. Only a special set of people could handle the secrets. You confessed your sin to them. Only they could touch the bread and the cup, only they could understand the Bible, only they could wear the special clothes and perform the special ceremonies. What do these ceremonies scream? They scream that the way to God is blocked! That is NOT God's intention. The OT covenant did block the way to God so that people would understand that they could not go to God apart from sacrifice. But, the Old Covenant system was never the end, it was a temporary system awaiting its fulfillment in Christ. What people must understand is that it is not working! (9-10)

They cannot "perfect the conscience of the worshiper." That is, the worshiper never has the satisfaction that his sin has been once and for all, finally and eternally dealt with. He lives with the nagging sense that he will have to come back time after time after time with sacrifice after sacrifice, hoping that what he gives is good enough, but realizing that if it was good enough then he would not have to keep coming back. This is the tough

truth that I must face. My good is not good enough and my good will never, ever be good enough. God put the Old Covenant system in place to make us aware of this critically important truth, but he did not leave us there. These laws were imposed “until the time of reformation” speaking of the time when God would correct the system.

Do you get it now? Everything in the tabernacle was designed to make you aware of how much cleansing you needed and how the sacrifice of an innocent offering in your place was needed for your forgiveness. But, the tabernacle could never provide that in any final sense. Its regulations only provided for temporary relief. It spoke to our need of access to God, but never gave us access to God. But, it does provide this great help. It makes us aware that we have a problem that we cannot solve. And we must know that.

Notice the opening of v.11 – “But when Christ appeared...” BAM! Now that’s a game-changer – right there. Oh, this is good! This is really good. And here is where I am taking this (just giving you a heads-up). There are some of you who have not come to faith in Christ yet. You may think you have. But, the truth is, you have been trusting in your efforts, your moral standing, your religious observances or sense of being better than others. And yet, you still have this nagging sense of wonder, if your good is good enough. It isn’t. What’s worse – it isn’t even close. But, the good news is that Christ’s good is more than good enough. His life for you and his death for you is sufficient for you. You desperately need to trust in him alone as the one has offered up in your place himself as your sacrifice so that you could be forgiven and declared righteous in the eyes of God. I desperately want you to get that.

But, here is where else I am flying this plane. Many of you have trusted in Christ alone as your Savior, but you are like the person that I described at the beginning who lives with the pressure of performing for the approval of others. Is your good, good enough for them? Is your good, good enough for yourself? Again, the reality is, probably not. But, when you come to faith in Christ, there is a glorious exchange that takes place. He takes your sin and gives you his righteousness. That means that while your good is not good enough, his is. And that’s all that matters. That is what sets you free from the bondage of performance expectations. You, my beloved are accepted by God in Christ. Let’s see why.

2. The Sufficiency of Christ (11-14)

Here is the big idea of these verses. Christ is the total package. He is a better priest (v.11) who serves in a better tabernacle (v.11) and offered a better sacrifice (v.12) that secured, once and for all, your redemption – forever, which brought a better guarantee (13-14) and a better result (13-14).

A. **A Better Priest** (11)

There are so many parallels between the Old Covenant sacrificial system and the work of Christ on the cross. If, for example, all that you do is read the book of Leviticus without looking ahead to Christ, you will cover a lot of detail about sins, sacrifices, ceremonies

and other related laws. But, when you read that in view of what happens in the NT, you are amazed. God thinks of everything! That means that Christ covers everything! Here, in this section, the AH focuses upon one aspect of Old Covenant life in the nation of Israel by pointing out the parallels between the Day of Atonement and the sacrifice of Christ. These verses serve as a triumphant summary of his argument. Christ is the greatest priest – ever. To the original audience of his book he is showing that under the Old Covenant, the high priest not only had to offer multiple sacrifices for the sins of the people, but he had to offer multiple sacrifices for his own sins. This is particularly poignant on the Day of Atonement, when before the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies to offer the blood for the sins of the people, he had to first enter the Holy of Holies to offer the blood from a sacrifice for his own sins. Do you see the point? Christ never offered a sacrifice for his own sins because Christ had no sins to atone for. He is the greatest priest – ever. (“of the good things that have come”) speaks of all of the benefits of Christ’s priesthood.

There are several implications from this. 1) The Old Covenant system is rendered obsolete by Christ. That means no more priests. 2) That means there are now, no more priests. Why would anyone go to a priest who, may be nice and may be well meaning, but who stands in the way of God, when you have the greatest priest who IS the way to God? This is what is so baffling to me. Christ has opened up the way to God, and so many religions in the name of Christ have blocked it by man-made ceremonies, traditional rituals and made up teachings that in the end deny the gospel. 3) When you become a follower of Christ, you become part of the family of God, the true church, which also means that you are part of his kingdom. You are a child of God and a child of the king. You are redeemed, justified, and adopted by the blood of Christ. You now have the only Priest that you will ever need, but, because you are saved by Christ, from the wrath of God, to the people of God, for the glory of God, you, now being in Christ, become part of his priesthood. You are at once a child of the King. That makes you royalty and part of Christ. That is why Peter calls us “a royal priesthood.” (1 Pet. 2.9) In the family of God, there are no more priests and non-priests. We all have access to God through Christ. If people understood the Bible, there would be no more priests, because they are obsolete, ineffective and a hindrance. Christ is a better priest who serves in a better place.

B. Serving in a better Tabernacle (11)

Christ serves in the dwelling place of God, of which the tabernacle was a model. The tabernacle was subject to the sins of the people. And not only could we go back and see that historically during the days of the Judges, the departure of God’s glory in Ezekiel, the destruction of the Temple by the Babylonians, but, within a few short years of the writing of Hebrews, the Temple in Jerusalem would be destroyed by the Romans, and to this day, it has never been re-built. I believe that it will be re-built one day, but understand this. When it is re-built, it will be done by people who reject Christ. Christ, rendered the tabernacle/temple obsolete. He is serving in a better sanctuary – right now, and one day, that sanctuary will come and fill the earth.

C. Offered a better Sacrifice (12)

v.12 says “not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood” Christ offered the greatest sacrifice because he offered up himself. The sacrifice of animals taught us very important truths. They taught us that sin is serious and that only the death of an innocent substitute could be offered in our place. We needed to know that and the Old Covenant system made that clear, but the Old Covenant system could not offer a sacrifice that ever sealed the deal. It could teach, but it could not finish. So, Christ “entered once for all into the holy places” – why was it once for all? Why did he not have to go back every year like the other priests? Because, his sacrifice was qualitatively infinitely superior. He offered up himself. Animal sacrifices could never satisfy the payment that human sin had occurred. But no human being before Christ could offer up a payment, because no human was innocent. Christ was both God and man. He was perfect and he became a man so that he could, as total perfection still stand in our place and fully and perfectly and completely represent us and be our innocent substitute. And when he did, he once and for all entered into the holy place and once and for all offered up the greatest sacrifice so once and for all and forever my God is reconciled, his pardoning voice I hear, he owns me as his child, I shall no longer fear. He sealed the deal! He paid the price. He settled the debt. It is done. It is over. No more priests. No more sacrifices. No more payments. There is nothing left for me to pay. There is nothing left for me to do. It is mine to believe and accept and stand on it and rejoice in it and bank on it, and await the consummation by living to spread this glorious news to all.

D. Secured our Redemption (12)

I love this phrase at the end of v.12. “Thus securing an eternal redemption.” Do you know what redemption means here? It means that Christ has bought back that which originally belonged to him. And, because he bought you back with his own blood, your redemption is eternal, it cannot be taken away. It is also secure. Nothing can ever separate you from the love of God. Your doubts, your fears, your struggles, your accusations, your past, and not even death itself. His death is the costly means by which your deliverance from the dominion of darkness has been won.

E. Secured a better guarantee (13-14)

“For if” (v.13) and “how much more” (v.14) are pointing out to us that if the sacrifices of the Old Covenant were effective enough to make someone ceremonially clean, how much more effective would the sacrifice of Christ, who “through the eternal Spirit” (I take that to be a reference to the Spirit’s messianic anointing of Christ as our King/Priest at his baptism) offered himself without blemish to God. Christ gave to the Father a perfect sacrifice that brings a perfect guarantee that our sins are dealt with forever.

F. Brought about a better result (13-14)

“purify our conscience” Now, we are cleansed inwardly. Now, we can worship confidently, serve whole-heartedly, witness joyfully and live securely.

Charles Wartian – a purified conscience