

Christ's Better Sacrifice
Hebrews 9:23-28

So hopefully as you know, the Book of Hebrews was written to a group of struggling Hebrew believers, who under a great persecution, were in danger of turning away from Christ and returning back to Judaism.

And how did the author of this book counter this danger? The author countered this particular danger by focusing on Christ's superiority. So what have we seen so far?

We have seen the author setting forth the superiority of Christ to prophets, to angels, and to Moses and now we are seeing him setting forth the superiority of Christ's priesthood over all other priesthoods. So how has the author been seeking to demonstrate this particular superiority so far within our study?

The author began by focusing on Christ's appointment as high priest according to the order of Melchizedek (Hebrews 5:1-7:28) and now he is focusing on Christ's superior high priestly offering (Hebrews 8:1-10:18). This segment can be divided into 3 parts.

The first of those parts being: The superiority of Christ's high priestly ministry (Hebrews 8:1-6).

The second of those parts being: The superiority of the New Covenant (Hebrews 8:7-13).

And the third of those parts being: The superiority of the New Covenant Offering (Hebrews 9:1-10:18).

And it is this part that we are now examining. So how did the author begin to develop this particular part involving "The superiority of the New Covenant Offering?"

The author began by initially focusing on the Old Covenant tabernacle, describing it and its provisions for worship (Hebrews 9:1-10). And why did he begin in this way? He began it in this way in order to set the stage for what he was going to say about Christ's ministry in the heavenly tabernacle

or in other words “the greater and more perfect tabernacle” (Hebrews 9:11-10:18).

So as this author began to explore Christ’s ministry in the heavenly tabernacle or in other words “the greater and more perfect tabernacle” what did he communicate first?

The first thing that the author communicated was this: that Christ had not entered that greater and more perfect tabernacle through the blood of goats and calves but through His own blood having obtained eternal redemption (Hebrews 9:11-14). And what was the second thing the author communicated? The second thing the author communicated was this: Because Christ has entered into this greater and more perfect tabernacle through His own blood and not through the blood of goats and calves, having obtained eternal redemption, He is now the mediator of a New Covenant (Hebrews 9:15-22).

This is where we were that last time we were together. So what now will the author do as he continues to seek to establish the superiority of this New Covenant Offering? This is what the author will do. He will be answering this question: Why was Christ’s sacrifice of His own blood the “better” sacrifice (Hebrews 9:23-28)? And what is the answer to this question? It is a three-fold answer. And where is it contained? It is contained in Hebrews 9:23-28.

SO WHAT IS THE FIRST PART OF THIS THREE-FOLD ANSWER?

The first part of this three-fold answer is this: The sacrifice of Christ’s own blood was better because it cleansed the heavenly tabernacle thus making it possible for Him to represent us before God in the heavenly tabernacle (Hebrews 9:23-24 cf. Leviticus 16:15-16).

So now let me read for you Hebrews 9:23-24 and see if this is not so. And what do these verses say? They say this, “**Therefore**” or in other words in light of what had just been said at the end of verse 22. “**Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins**” then something can be concluded. And what is that? Let us continue to read, “**it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens (or in other words the Old Covenant tabernacle and the things associated with the Old Covenant tabernacle) to be**

cleansed with these...” (Or in other words **“these”** bloody Old Testament sacrifices that had been described earlier in Hebrews 9:21).

Now it is important for us to note that what is in view here is not the cleansing of the people but rather the cleansing of the Old Covenant tabernacle and the things associated with the Old Covenant tabernacle.

And now having established this point what will happen? The passage will now go on to speak of the necessity for a similar cleansing of the heavenly tabernacle and the things associated it.

So now let us read the end of verse 23 and see if this is not so. And what does it say? It says this, **“But the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.”** So what is this saying? It is simply saying this: that just as the Old Covenant tabernacle and the things associated with the Old Covenant tabernacle had to be cleansed with blood in order to make it possible for the Old Covenant priests to represent the people of God before God in the Old Covenant tabernacle, the same thing was true of the New Covenant tabernacle as well.

It also had to be cleansed with blood so in order to make it possible for Christ to represent us before God in the heavenly realm or in other words in the heavenly tabernacle.

Was this because the heavenly tabernacle was impure or the things associated with the heavenly tabernacle were impure in and of themselves? Of course not! Rather it had everything to do with its inevitable association with sinful people when Christ entered into the heavenly tabernacle in order to represent them before God. Or in other words the heavenly tabernacle needed to be protected by blood very much in the same way as the earthly tabernacle needed to be protected by blood as recorded for us in Leviticus 16:15-16 thus providing assurance of the effectiveness of the high priests offerings on behalf of the people.

The only difference between the sacrifices that were offered up to cleanse the Old Covenant tabernacle and the sacrifices offered up to cleanse the New Covenant tabernacle was that the New Covenant Tabernacle and the things associated with the New Covenant tabernacle had to be cleansed with

“better sacrifices” or in other words **“better blood”** which we can see at the end of verse 23.

And whose blood was this **“better blood”**? It was Christ’s blood! How do we know this? Let us now read verse 24. And what does it say? It says this, **“For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, (or in other words the earthly Old Covenant tabernacle) a mere copy of the true one, but (rather He entered) into heaven itself, (And how did He get there? Not through the blood of goats and bulls but rather through His own blood that is how He got there and for what reason? Let us continue to read...) now to appear in the presence of God for us.”**

The offering of the blood of goats and bulls had cleansed the earthly tabernacle each year on the Day of Atonement but the blood of Christ had done far more when He offered it up on the cross of Calvary. It cleansed the heavenly tabernacle, and it is in this sense that I believe we can say, based on the words of this author, that Christ's sacrifice of His own blood was better. **SO HOW ELSE IS CHRIST'S SACRIFICE OF HIS OWN BLOOD BETTER?**

Christ’s sacrifice of His own blood was the better sacrifice because once He entered into the heavenly sanctuary His entrance was once-for-all (Hebrews 9:25).

So how do we know this? Let us begin with verse 25. And what does it say? It says this, **“nor was it that he would offer Himself often (or in other words ‘have to leave and come back’) as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood that is not his own”** (or in other words with the blood of goats and bulls.) This was not His experience after he offered His own blood. His experience was quite different. When He offered up His blood He stayed once-for-all.

So what is the significance of the phrase “the consummation of the ages?” The designation of Christ’s death as “the consummation of the ages” was meant to emphasize the fact that the cross of Christ was the focal point of redemptive history (Hebrews 9:26).

Christ's sacrifice of His own blood was the better sacrifice because it guarantees His reappearance from the heavenly tabernacle (Hebrews 9:27-28).

CONCLUSION

May God give us the grace to understand the significance of the death of Christ as symbolized by His blood and may that understanding cause us live for Him who died for us.