

## Commentary on Hebrews Chapters 9, by Chuck Smith 10.13.24

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### October Memory Verse, 1 Thessalonians 4:15-16 (NKJV)

<sup>15</sup> For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep.

<sup>16</sup> For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

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In the eighth chapter of the book of Hebrews, he makes mention of the prophecy in Jeremiah where God said that in those days He was going to make a new covenant with the people, not like the old covenant which was written on the tables of stone. He was going to write His law on the fleshly tablets of their hearts. Now, in the declaration that God is going to make this new covenant, it means that the first covenant would be set aside in order that He might establish the new covenant.

When Jesus took the emblems of Passover, He said, "This cup is a new covenant in my blood which is shed for the remission of sins" ([Matthew 26:28](#)). So, the old covenant had the remission of sins through the offering of sacrifices by the priests and on the Day of Atonement by the high priest. But God has established a new covenant, not written on the tables of stone, but God writes His law right on the fleshly tablets of our hearts. So the first covenant has been set aside that God might inaugurate this new covenant through Jesus Christ.

So going on still in chapter 9, carrying over the thought of chapter 8, he is still talking about this new covenant relationship that we have with God and contrasting it with that first covenant that was under the law. Remember the covenant under the law, God said, "And if they will do them, they shall live by them." The first covenant of the law was, "If you will obey Me and all of these statutes, then I will be your God." And the first covenant was established on man's obedience and man's faithfulness. The new covenant is established on God's faithfulness, the work that God has wrought for us through Jesus Christ. The old covenant failed, not because it was not good, not because it did not declare the truth, but it failed because man was weak and did not live by it. The new covenant is established forever, because it is the covenant that is predicated upon God's faithfulness, and surely God is faithful.

Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary ([Hbr 9:1](#)).

So in that first covenant God established with Moses, he was to build the tabernacle, and they were to have sacrifices offered within the tabernacle, and there was to be the worship of God there within the tabernacle by the priests.

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For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the showbread; which is called the sanctuary [or often called the holy place in the Old Testament] (Hbr 9:2).

So, first of all, in this tabernacle, this tent that was made, it was forty-five feet long, and thirty feet wide, and fifteen feet tall, sort of a box-shaped tent, not a pitched tent like we usually think of, more box-shaped, fifteen feet from the corners tall and forty-five feet long and thirty feet wide.

Now, the inner part of the tent was divided into two sections. As you first entered into the tent from the veil that faced towards the east, the first thing that you would come upon in this room, it was thirty feet long and fifteen feet wide, over on your right-hand side would be a table, the table of showbread. On the table were twelve loaves of bread. One loaf representing each of the tribes of Israel.

Before you, and in front of the veil that went into the next room in the tent, there was the altar of incense where the priest would come and offer the incense, which was representative of the prayers of the people. He would offer them unto God.

On the left-hand side, as you came in the veil of the first tent, or the first room within the tent, there was this lamp stand with seven branches out of it. It was lit. There were little cups of oil and they would put the wicks in the oil and it was the light in this portion of the tent. These things are all representative of things that are in heaven. So in the menorah, or the lamp stand, with seven cups coming out of the one branch, you have the symbol of the seven-fold or complete working of the Holy Spirit. You have, of course, the altar of incense. So he talks here that in the first part of it the candlestick, the table with the showbread, which is called the sanctuary or the holy place.

Now after then you went into the second veil, it was called [the Holy of Holies, or translated here] the holiest of all; it had a golden censer, and the ark of the covenant that was 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 (Hbr 9:3-4);

This Ark of the Covenant surely would be an interesting artifact to find. I don't know if I'd want to touch it if I found it. But within it they preserved a jar of the manna that God fed their fathers with in the wilderness. They also preserved Aaron's rod that budded, whereby God affirmed Aaron's family to be the high priestly family, the Aaronic order established. Then also (and this is what I would absolutely love to see) the two tables of stone upon which God put the Ten Commandments. Oh, wouldn't that be an exciting thing to behold? And so this was in the Ark of the Covenant, and it was the basis of the covenant of God with the nation; their obedience to the law and to the priesthood service under Aaron the High Priest.

Over this were the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy seat (Hbr 9:5);

Now again, these are all a model of what the throne of God in heaven is like, surrounded by the cherubims.

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And he said,

we cannot speak at this particular time about these things. Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God (Hbr 9:5-6).

Daily the priests would go into this first part of the tent. Once a week they would change the loaves of bread on the table of showbread. Daily they would change and fill the oil in the cups and trim the wicks, and so forth, because God wanted that this light should burn before Him continually. Then they would come and offer the prayers of the people, these little golden bowls that they would have incense in. And when they had lit the fires and all for the sacrifices outside, they would take live coals, or burning coals out of the fire, put them in these little bowls of incense. And then they would go in, and these little bowls were on chains and they would go in and they would swing this incense before the altar there. It was a symbol of the prayers of the people ascending before God. And this they did daily.

There were a certain number of sacrifices and types of sacrifices that had to be offered every day. And then, of course, during the day the hundreds of people that would come with their various types of sacrifices to offer unto God. So the priest was kept busy all day long in these offerings unto the Lord, as well as the regular times of prayer when he would go before the Lord and all.

You remember in the gospel of Luke, it tells how that the father of John the Baptist, Zacharias, was a priest after the course of Abia. It was his duty at this particular time to offer the prayers and the incense before the altar of the Lord. Usually the priest would serve one month out of the year. They had a good thing going. Then the rest of the year they would go back to their homes and be with their families. While Zacharias was offering the incense before the altar of the Lord, Gabriel appeared unto him and informed him that his wife, Elizabeth, in her old age, was to bear a son. He was to be the forerunner of the Messiah.

So you can read a little bit about the service of God there within this holy place which was outside of the Holy of Holies.

But into the second [that is the holiest of all, or the Holy of Holies] went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people (Hbr 9:7):

The Holy of Holies where man met God was off limits to everyone except the high priest. He went in there only one day a year, the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur. However, with no tabernacle or no temple, **they have changed Yom Kippur from the Day of Atonement to the Day of Reflection**. But the high priest would go in only this one day and he would go in twice in the one day.

He would, first of all, have to bathe. And then he would offer an ox for his own sins as a sacrifice for his sins, and he would go into the Holy of Holies with the blood of the ox

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that he had sacrificed for his own sins. And he was to sprinkle, then, the blood on the mercy seat in a special order. Seven times in front of the mercy seat and put it on the corner and all, and there was a regular routine. The sixteenth chapter of Leviticus tells about the Day of Atonement and the things that the high priest had to do on that day. Having offered, then, the blood of the ox for his own sins, he would go back outside, bathe, change clothes, and then they would take two goats and they would cast lots on the two goats. The one upon which the lot fell was to be slain and offered before God for the sins of the nation. The other goat was to be led by one of the priests out into the wilderness area and turned loose.

They would confess the sins of the nation on these two goats. The one would then be slain and the high priest, for the second time, would go into the Holy of Holies and he would offer, then, for the sins of the nation on this one day the first goat upon which the lot had fallen. The other goat being led into the wilderness having the sins confessed upon it, led into the wilderness turned loose to run free. To get lost, really. The idea is the sacrifice for sins, the putting away of sins by the sacrifice. But then, actually, the separation from our sins, the goat being turned loose and disappearing into the wilderness. God has put away our sins and they're not to be remembered again. And so the two goats, the one being slain, and the other being turned loose into the wilderness.

"Now into the second, the Holy of Holies, went the high priest alone once every year and not without blood which he offered first for himself and then the second time for the sins of the people."

The Holy Spirit was thus signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was still standing (Hbr 9:8):

As long as the tabernacle was there and standing, the approach to God directly by man was impossible. This bore witness to the fact that man just could not come directly to God. There was this heavy veil that separated man from God.

It is significant that when Jesus was crucified, we read that this veil in the temple was torn from the top to the bottom. God ripped the thing. Had man ripped it, it would have been from the bottom to the top. But God ripped the veil at the death of Jesus Christ, signifying that the way into the presence of God is now available for all man. You and I can come now into the presence of God through Jesus Christ, this glorious sacrifice for our sins. And we can enter ourselves right into the very presence of God through His work on our behalf. And so as long as the first tabernacle stood, the Holy Spirit was signifying that the way into the holiest, into the very presence of God, was not yet manifested or open to man.

Which was a figure [that is the tabernacle] 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; Which stood only in meats and drinks, and in divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of [the change] the reformation [that is that was wrought by Jesus Christ]. But Christ being come a high

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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; 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 (Hbr 9:9-12).

The contrast is the high priest had to go in every year to offer first the offerings for his own sin, and then to offer for the sins of the people. And every year he had to do this. But Jesus once went into not the tabernacle made with hands, but entered into heaven itself, of which the earthly tabernacle was just a model. He entered into heaven itself and not with the blood of goats or of calves, but with His own blood He entered into that presence of God, having obtained eternal redemption for us. And so with His own blood He was then both the sacrifice and the sacrificer. He was both the offering and the one who offered.

Now you would bring your offering to the priest, he would offer it for you. Jesus became both; the offering itself, and the one who offered the offering unto God in entering into the presence of God with His own blood, and thus, redeemed man.

For if the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, would sanctify it to the purifying of the flesh: 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? (Hbr 9:13-14).

As he points out the weakness of the sacrifices made by the priests is that they could not really give us a clear conscience. They were a reminder of our sins. And the fact that they had to do it every year made us constantly conscious of our guilt. But Jesus Christ has now purified our consciences in that He has once and for all entered in to make an atonement for us with His blood, thus having offered Himself without spot.

When they brought a lamb to God, God wouldn't accept the castoffs. Here is an old cow. It's about ready to die. Let's see if we can get some good out of it. Let's give it to God. It is tragic, really, that so many times man wants to give the castoffs to God. "I can't use it anymore. I might as well give it to God. It's no good around here."

God wouldn't accept the castoffs. He said when you offer a lamb it has to be without spot. Now a spot was an inherent defect in the lamb. It also had to be without blemish. A blemish was an acquired defect. The lamb born with spots was a genetic thing. A lamb with blemishes that was the result of an encounter with a wolf, or falling down a cliff or some getting caught and blemished. The lamb that was offered had to be both without the inherent defects and without acquired defects; without spot and blemish. Peter said, "For we are redeemed not with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, from our empty manner of life, but with the precious blood of Jesus Christ, who was a lamb without spot and without blemish" (1 Peter 1:18-19). It can really only be said of Jesus that He was without spot. He was born without the sinful nature. He had no inherent sin in Him.

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It is an interesting thing that they have discovered that the gene factors that make up the blood in a child come basically from the father. Therefore, the gene factors creating the blood in Jesus Christ, coming from the Father, came directly from God and was not spotted by the inherent defectiveness in man. Jesus not only was born pure, but He remained pure. He was without blemish. And so He only could qualify as a sacrificial lamb. You see, you could never qualify as a sacrificial lamb before God. We were born with spots, but even if we weren't, we have acquired blemishes, and thus, we would not be fit to be a sacrifice for sin. But Jesus, without spot or blemish, offered Himself to God that He might cleanse your conscience from the dead works that you might serve the living God.

Now there are people who are still trying to please God with their works. They are still seeking to offer God the works of their hands. Unfortunately, that is exactly what the Jews are doing today. On the Day of Atonement, there are no sacrifices for sins. There are no offerings. There are no lambs that were slain. There are no goats or bulls. But what they do is sit in their homes and reflect upon their lives and upon all of their good works. And they reflect also on their evil connivings. But as they reflect, they pray that God would accept their good works and overlook their evil. And as long as their good works could overbalance their evil, they feel comfortable. Jesus Christ has purged us from these dead works that we might serve the living God.

And for this cause he is the mediator of the new covenant (Hbr 9:15),

Now the high priest was the one who was the mediator in the Old Covenant, but Jesus is the mediator of the new covenant.

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 (Hbr 9:15).

So Christ has become the mediator. "This cup is the new covenant in my blood shed for the remission of sins," the New Testament. That by His death He has made the redemption for our transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, under the law. That we who have been called then might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. Now back in verse 12, we had eternal redemption, and now the eternal inheritance for those who are eternally redeemed. How glorious it is, this eternal inheritance. Peter said, "Thanks be unto God who has caused us to be born again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. To an inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled, and fades not away that is reserved in heaven for you. Who are kept by the power of God through faith" (I Peter 1:3-5). So this eternal inheritance that is ours in Christ.

Paul the apostle prayed for the Ephesians that they might know what is the hope of their calling. If you only knew the glories that God has in store for you in His eternal kingdom as you are the heirs of this eternal inheritance.



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Now where a testament is [or where there is a will], there must of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth (Hbr 9:16-17).

So a person who makes out a will, the will does not come into force until they die. They've made out their last will and testament. This is what I want done with my things after I'm gone. But that will does not come into effect, it does not have any force until after the person who has made it is dead. Then it comes into force. Jesus established the covenant, but by His death the covenant came into force, so that we are now in that glorious covenant. Christ having died, the covenant now comes in force. It is something that we now benefit from because of the death of Christ.

Now neither the first covenant was dedicated without blood. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and he sprinkled both the book and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament which God has enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged [or cleansed] with blood; and without the shedding of blood is no remission (Hbr 9:18-22).

What an important declaration! When Moses established the whole thing, he killed the calves, and he killed the goats. He mixed their blood with water and sprinkled the people, and he sprinkled the book, and he sprinkled the whole place to set it apart. "This is God's testament." It is now enforced by the blood that has been shed, a blood covenant. It was through the blood that everything was cleansed. The Bible speaks about the blood of Jesus Christ cleansing us from all sin. So these things, the testament then being enforced, the shedding of blood, it now comes in force. He said, "For without the shedding of blood there is no remission." That is, no remission of sins.

That is where I have great difficulty with the very devout Jews of the present day. I have no doubt or question of their sincerity. I believe that they do love God and I believe that they are very sincere in their worship of God. However, I cannot agree that by their works they can atone for their sins. That is totally against the scripture. So as I view it, they have one great problem. And that's the great problem that plagues all men, the problem of sin. What do I do about my guilt? If there is no temple, if there are no sacrifices, if there is no shedding of blood, then how are their sins remitted? Or how can they be remitted if without the shedding of blood there is no remission? So that, to me, is the great problem that every Jew would have to face, because they are not keeping God's first covenant that He established with them. Of course, they reject the second covenant, but they're not keeping the first. Thus, having set aside the law of God, they teach the traditions of men for doctrine, just as they were doing in Jesus' day. He said, "And you teach for doctrine the traditions of man," and the traditions of man is that your good works should atone for your evil. Just be better than you are evil, better than you are bad, and you'll be all right. But that is not what the scripture says. God established the ways by which their sins could be covered, and it was through the offerings.

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I think it's extremely significant that there have been no offerings for almost 2,000 years. Since shortly after the death of Christ, they ceased and have not begun again. They will apparently begin again in that seven-year period after the church has been taken out and God begins to work again with Israel. It would appear that their offerings and sacrifices will begin again, for the antichrist is going to come in the middle of that seven-year period and cause the daily oblations and sacrifices to cease. So they will establish a place of worship, and they will institute sacrifices again during that final seven-year cycle, which God has yet to accomplish on the nation of Israel. But right now they do not have a basis, scripturally, for the putting away of their sins.

It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these (Hbr 9:23).

In other words, this pattern down here, this model, it was important that it be cleansed in this manner; purified. But the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than that of calves or goats or lambs.

For Christ did not enter into the holy places that were made with hands (Hbr 9:24),

He didn't enter into temple, into the Holy of Holies there.

for these are only figures [or models] of the true; but he entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us (Hbr 9:24):

Our great High Priest there in presence of God representing us.

Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entered into the holy place every year with blood of others; For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation (Hbr 9:25-28).

And so Jesus came and He offered Himself as a sacrifice and then He entered into heaven itself that He might appear before God for us. His sacrifice was complete. That is why it only needed to happen once; once and for all. And so it's been appointed unto man once to die after that the judgment; so Christ once offered to bear our sins.