

Leviticus & Hebrews: The Necessity of the Cross

Lesson 13: The Lamb of the Cross

Key Verse: *But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) ¹² he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. ~Hebrews 9.11-12*

[Texas Parks and Wildlife](#) has asked us all to take down our bird feeders, to stop feeding ducks, and to remove bird baths in Texas. This dramatic call to action is the result of the rapid and easy spread of the fatal "bird flu". It is inconceivable and unacceptable to realize that (fellow) birders will miss out on the delightful surprise and drama of colorful migratory birds splashing and feeding in our own backyards and landscapes! But it is necessary to stop the bird flu's contagion and its resulting death. Every time Jesus told his disciples that they would one day be without Him, they too could not believe they would miss out on the delightful surprise and drama of His miracles, His theological rejection of the Pharisees, and even the intimacy of His friendship. But the **Lamb of God**, Jesus, had to be the final sacrifice to God. Just as the sacrificial animals were killed by the worshipper in order for the blood to atone for the people's sins, **the Cross** was the instrument Jesus used to release His stainless blood in this final act of atonement for His people. As inconceivable and unacceptable to humanity it is, this is the only way to stop the contagion of sin and its costly separation from Presence with God (death). Through the Lamb of the Cross, the temporal nature of the temple sacrifices were finished. Now God's people are eternally secure in the Presence of God.

Lamb of God, who took my sins away. Lamb of God, who took Your Father's just wrath in full on my behalf. Lamb of God, who willfully submitted to an unjust penalty of separation from Your Heavenly Throne, AND Your Father's Presence. Thank You.

Hebrews 9.1-28 Now even the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly place of holiness. ² For a tent was prepared, the first section, in which were the lampstand and the table and the bread of the Presence. It is called the Holy Place. ³ Behind the second curtain was a second section called the Most Holy Place, ⁴ having the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron's staff that budded, and the tablets of the covenant. ⁵ Above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail. ⁶ These preparations having thus been made, the priests go regularly into the first section, performing their ritual duties, ⁷ but into the second only the high priest goes, and he but once a year, and not without taking blood, which he offers for himself and for the unintentional sins of the people.

⁸ By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the holy places is not yet opened as long as the first section is still standing ⁹ (which is symbolic for the present age). According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper, ¹⁰ but deal only with food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until the time of reformation.

¹¹ But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) ¹² he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. ¹³ For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, ¹⁴ how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

¹⁵ Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant. ¹⁶ For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established. ¹⁷ For a will takes effect only at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive.

¹⁸ Therefore not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood. ¹⁹ For when every commandment of the law had been declared by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, ²⁰ saying, "This is the blood of the covenant that God commanded for you." ²¹ And in the same way he sprinkled with the blood both the tent and all the vessels used in worship. ²² Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.

²³ Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. ²⁴ For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are

Jesus, the sacrificed Lamb of God, has “opened the way for earth to ascend into heaven. In contrast to the former covenant’s approach to God at an earthly mountain of this creation...God’s people now enter the heavenly realm by faith (Hebrews 12.18-24).”²

“In the new earth there is no temple in the sense that *God* through Jesus is humanity’s temple; there is no temple in that sense that *humanity* is God’s dwelling place; and there is no temple also because the *cosmos*, cleansed and consecrated, it finally the house of God, the context and stage for humanity’s endless engagement with God. The end is life with God in Eden.”³

“What sort of communion and joy will they experience who see His face, who dwell in the blessed light of His countenance, whose foreheads bear His own sacred name? The fellowship with God we taste in the present age, through our union with Christ, must only be increased to the fullest measure and degree possible in the eschaton (the new creation), when all flesh itself will be spiritual and, as it were, *spiritized* – when we will know beyond our present understanding the joys of divine hospitality, know that by the Spirit we dwell in the Son and through the Son in the Father, and that by the Spirit the Father and Son indeed dwell within us and sup with us.”⁴

Doctrine: The Cross~ (Hebrews 9.11-12) “In receiving the wrath of the Father on the cross, Christ was able to make atonement for His people. Christ carried, or bore, the punishment for the sins of human beings. He atoned for them by accepting the just punishment due for those sins (Matthew 1.21; 1 Thessalonians 1.10). The Old Testament covenant pronounced a curse upon any person who broke the law of God (Deuteronomy 30.15-20). On the cross, Jesus not only took that curse upon Himself, but He became ‘a curse for us’ (Galatians 3.13). He was forsaken by the Father and experienced the full measure of hell on the cross.” (Mark 15.34)⁵

9. What does 1 Corinthians 6.19-20 and 7.22-24 teach us?

To understand the necessity of Jesus’ atoning death through His blood shed on the cross, we must first understand what God teaches us as the failure of the first Adam (Genesis 2.7). God’s duties assigned to the first Adam (Genesis 2.15) are exactly what God later assigns to His priests: ‘to worship and obey [God]’.⁶ Thus, when Adam chose to join Eve in her rebellious (sinful) decision to eat of fruit of the tree of wisdom (Genesis 3.6-7), his expulsion from the Garden of Eden was as an “excommunicated priest”⁷ (Genesis 3.22-24).

Dr. Morales explains (pp. 180-184) that Adam’s “incompatibility” to find a “suitable helper” for himself through the animal kingdom (Genesis 2.18-20) alongside the first woman’s creation from the body of the first man (Genesis 2.21-25) “drives a stake into the heart of the Levitical cultus – for ‘it is not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins’ (Hebrews 10.4)...[in the tabernacle rituals] animals stand as substitutes...as established and therefore accepted by God. However, the converse is also taught by the text [Hebrews 10.4], positively: blameless Adam was the only true substitute possible to atone for the woman’s sin...Historically the church has

² Morales, p.259

³ Morales, p. 304

⁴ Morales, p. 305

⁵ Sproul, p.181

⁶ Morales, p. 53 “Here we note one more significant point, confirming such a view [Adam’s priestly role] of primal man: the verbs used to describe Adam’s work in [Genesis 2.15], translated most accurately as ‘to worship and obey’, are used together elsewhere in the Pentateuch only to describe the duties of the Levites pertaining to the tabernacle (Numbers 3.7-8; 8.26; 18.5-6). Adam is hereby depicted as the original high priest abiding in Eden, the original holy of holies.”

⁷ Morales, p. 55

understood the atonement of Christ's death as that of the last Adam [Romans 5.12-21] who accomplished precisely what the first Adam failed to do..."

The pattern for substitutionary atoning sacrifices prior to the institution and inauguration of the Levitical law in Leviticus is established through Noah (Genesis 8.20-21), Abraham (Genesis 22), Benjamin (Genesis 44.29-34), and Moses (Exodus 32.30-32). In each instance, God provides a resolution for sin, denying the worshipper the opportunity to offer themselves as the substitutionary atoning sacrifice. As this relates to the first Adam, Dr. Morales asks (pp.182-184), "...whether or not YHWH will accept such an act is not the point...but rather the gesture itself underscores the mystery of the divine purpose. So with Adam's fall, the theological possibility of his standing as an atoning substitute (intriguing as it is) is not the issue, but rather what sort of response would have been fitting as the son of God, the father of humanity, as the woman's husband?...Arguably the original audience [of the Levitical law] would have readily seen Adam's omission: What work, after all, does the high priest perform the only time he is allowed within the holy of holies, if not the work of atonement?"

10. Read Romans 5.12-21 in several translations (we highly recommend The Message and the Amplified Bible). Much praise can be offered to Christ as our superior "final Adam"! Which blessing of Christ as your "final Adam" has you praising God?

"Jesus did not die for Himself, but for us. His suffering was vicarious; He was our substitute. He took our place in fulfilling the role of the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1.29; Ephesians 1.7)...The Son did not persuade the Father to save those whom the Father was loath to save (Titus 3.3-7). On the contrary, both the Father and Son willed the salvation of the elect and worked together to bring it to pass (Acts 20.28; 2 Corinthians 5.19)."⁸

In the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John we get an intimate glimpse into the treacherous reality Christ faced in His incarnation, or humanity, when the time came for Him to die. In stark contrast to one another, Adam chose self-preservation over communion with God for himself and his bride. Jesus chose the Cross so that God's people will once again have communion with God and even more, so that His Bride (the church) will join Him in the new creation!

11. Read about how Jesus grappled with the price He was about to pay for your sins so that you may be at-one with Him *now* from Matthew 26.36-46, Mark 14.32-42, Luke 22.39-46, and John 17. How does your deeper and fuller knowledge of the Lamb of the Cross motivate your obedience to His commands and love for His law? OR – How does your deeper and fuller knowledge of the Lamb of the Cross inspire anticipatory excitement of His return to retrieve you to Himself (Hebrews 9.28b)?

⁸ Sproul, p.182

Your Scripture-Soaked Prayer: Re-read Hebrews 9. In truth, re-reading Hebrews 9 with a deeper understanding of the Lamb of God and the Cross (this week's deity and doctrine) from creation through Revelation, even into eternity, should inspire an eternal chorus of Holy! Holy! Holy! Begin your chorus now...

Lecture Outline:

Aim: True Christian hope rests in the promise of heaven.

- I. Pattern of Heaven (9.1-14) **T1:** True Christian hope is eternally secured by the sinless Lamb of God, Jesus Christ.
 - a. What is your heart whispering to you?
 - b. Are you living with your hope fixed on the short-term and temporal promises of this world? Or is your hope in the eternal inheritance secured for you by the sinless Lamb of God, Jesus Christ?
 - c. Which earthly hopes are you holding onto?
- II. Promise of Heaven (9.15-28) **T2:** True Christian hope is rooted in God's already fulfilled promises while eagerly awaiting those not yet fulfilled.
 - a. What is your greatest longing?
 - b. Is it for heaven? Or has your heart anchored itself on earth?
 - c. How does what Christ already accomplished on the Cross fuel your anticipation for the fulfillment of the "not yet" promises on the horizon?

Hughes, R. Kent, *Hebrews: An Anchor for the Soul*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015) pp. 225-243

Morales, L. Michael, *Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord?*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015) pp. 257-306

Phillips, Richard D., *Hebrews*, Reformed Expository Commentary (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2006) pp. 287-331

Sproul, R.C., *Essential Truths of the Christian Faith* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale Momentum, 1992)