

## Hebrews 9:16-28

“An Unavoidable, Inescapable Appointment”

Having taken a little break from the book of Hebrews through the holiday season as of late you may be a little hazy as to the context that we're coming upon as we enter into the 2<sup>nd</sup> ½ of this particular Ch. and To keep it brief the writer has been encouraging his readers with the reality of the advantage of having Christ as our great heavenly high priest as opposed to anyone or anything, or any system that man has to offer on this earth (specifically the reference has been to the law and the Levitical priesthood, rituals and rites).

The priesthood of man upon the earth is temporary, the priesthood of Christ is eternal, the priesthood of man served in shadows, in copies of that in which Christ serves, which is the heavenly reality. The priesthood of man would vary in its quality, you may have a good high priest, then (when he died) you may have a corrupt high priest, the High Priesthood of Christ is consistent. He's compassionate, always for you, never against you, never too busy for you, always available to you, continually interceding for you. The priesthood of man, through rituals and regimen was only able to conform you outwardly to a system. The Priesthood of Christ is able to *transform* you *inwardly* by the power of His word and the person of His Spirit. Everything about Christ is greater, it's better; it's to our advantage on every level. with man as the high priest, he was a sinner himself, in need of a sacrifice before even *he* could approach God. and The sacrifices he offered didn't even cleanse his own conscience, didn't even change him inwardly, much less the one whom he would perform a sacrifice on behalf of. But Jesus wasn't a sinner; He didn't need to deal with any sin issue in His own life before He was able to deal with it in the lives of others.

He entered into the Most Holy place (not in an earthly tabernacle made with man's hands) but into the heavenly reality. and Not with the blood of goats or calves, but with His own blood having become the perfect sacrifice for the sin of the world, the Lamb of God with out spot and with out blemish. and As we'll touch on today He didn't have to offer Himself often; the job of the priest was never done under the Levitical system. No matter how much sacrificing he did, he'd always have to do more, why? Because his sacrifice was insufficient to deal with the sin dilemma, it made a temporary covering at best but could in no way cleanse a man completely, eternally. Christ's sacrifice was perfect, paid the sin debt in totality, cleanses you and me eternally. Therefore His sacrifice was once, for all.

This is really the thrust of where we were at when our time came to a close the last time we were here in Heb Ch 9. Recognizing the fact that the blood of Christ does way more than cover our sin temporally, but rather it *cleanses* us of our sin *eternally*, now look at Vs 15 (read).

## Vs15

Jesus has become the Mediator of the new covenant. The covenant whereby God has said to mankind that if you will simply believe in the work of My Son Jesus Christ on your behalf, Him doing for you what you could never do for yourself (that is remedy the sin dilemma for yourself much less everyone else in human history) I will grant you, accredit you His righteous standing in My sight. If you will believe in the atoning work of Jesus Christ upon the cross, Him being delivered up for our transgression, raised for our justification, you'll never perish but have everlasting life. That's the covenant God offers to mankind, it has nothing to do with man, everything to Him therefore unlike the old covenant, it cannot fail. and Jesus has become the *Mediator* of this covenant.

As you know it's the job of the mediator to arbitrate in order to bring 2 parties together. In this case sinful man, and a Holy and Righteous God, Jesus bridges the gap between us that we might be reconciled to God. The bible tells us that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.

Here in Vs 15 we read that Jesus is the Mediator of the new covenant (by means of death) for the redemption of the transgressions under the 1<sup>st</sup> covenant, (why) that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. and It's this idea of the death of Christ, and through His death we receive the promise of the eternal *inheritance* that leads the author here into this portion that we're considering today. Because after all you don't receive an inheritance apart from death, you don't inherit something from someone while they live; you inherit it after they die. and Sometimes things can get sticky regarding an inheritance; people fight over what exactly was meant and who gets what and all that. and Because the person isn't alive to mediate, it can get ugly. But such is not the case with Christ, He died to inaugurate, or initiate the covenant, but then rising from the dead, He serves as the Mediator as well.

## Vs16-17

So to sorta underscore his emphasis on the necessity of the death of Christ, he states the obvious, and that is that while a person is living their testament (as in last will and testament) is with out power. and It's not until they've died that it's "activated" or set in place.

Now this word, "testament" being used here is the same word that's been translated "covenant" there in Vs 15. The reason for the change being the context, in Vs 15 the word is used in the "religious" sense, here in Vs 16 it's used in a "legal" sense. But a covenant and a testament are practically identical in that there's an agreement between 2 parties. However whereas with a covenant there's room occasionally for negotiation, (you and I hash things out till with both agree) with a testament such is not the case. with a testament the way things are going to be are already in place, and in writing, all you have to do to receive the benefits is to agree with the conditions. If you don't receive the conditions you get nothing, if you accept them you get everything intended to go to you.

So in reality this is in reference to the “last will and testament” (if you will) of Christ. We’re talking about the inheritance you receive through the death of Christ, there are things that Jesus has “willed” to you and me (being found in Him) and they’ve been recorded for us, all we have to do is agree to the condition. and There’s only one, we’ve already went over it, we don’t *do* anything, we trust in what He’s *done*. If we’ll simply surrender our heart to Christ by faith we become an heir to the inheritance.

Well, what are some of the things that Christ has willed to us who believe? What are some of the things that have been written, and recorded in His will? Hey, 1<sup>st</sup> and foremost the bible teaches that we (as mankind) are all guilty of sin and we’ve fall short of the glory (that is the perfection) of God. But Christ has willed us *forgiveness*, we’re enslaved, He’s willed us *freedom*. We have worries, anxieties, sorrow, but Christ has willed us *peace*, the wages of sin is death, but Christ has willed us *everlasting life*. We’re covered in the rags of sin, He wills us to be robed in His righteousness, we’re but empty vessels. He’s willed us to be filled to the overflow with His Holy Spirit. Everything about this earth is perishing, it’s fading away, He’s willed us an incorruptible inheritance, one that does not fade away.

We read in 1 Peter 1:3-4, “*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,*”

Everything about this testament, the will of Jesus for you and me is enormous and it’s eternal, forgiveness, freedom, peace, purity, life, righteousness, incorruptible and undefiled. and In order for it to come into effect, Christ had to die because a testament is in force *after* men die, not before. That’s a simple truism recognized all over the world, in every culture.

Something else it underscores is that the life of Christ could never save anyone. Christ led a holy, sinless, completely righteous life. Yet for all the good deeds He did, all the people He healed, or raised from the dead, the incredible teachings that He gave, none of that could save anybody. Salvation was predicated upon His death, it wasn’t until He died that His will was put into place. You might say that He died to save us and He lives to keep us saved.

Vs18-22

There are just a couple of things that I want to draw to your attention out of this entire section. One being the fact that the word, “blood” is mentioned 6 times in the portion of scripture that we just read. In these 5 Vs the author brings up blood 6 times. That should be saying a couple of things to you and me, #1 the enormity of the importance of the blood regarding the covenant that God has made with mankind, and #2 the fact that God is “deadly serious” about our sin and what it cost Him to provide the solution to our sin dilemma.

But with this idea of a will being enforced through death the author points out here that not even the 1<sup>st</sup> covenant was put into place apart from death, apart from the shedding of blood. Virtually every aspect of the sacrificial system under the law was touched by blood in some way or another. The book itself, the people, the tabernacle, and all the vessels of ministry. The blood was applied to it all. and If the old covenant was set in motion and put into place through the shedding of the blood of a lesser sacrifice (that of calves and goats). Then we can expect the new testament to be set in motion and put into place through the shedding of the blood of a greater sacrifice. Remember it's a better covenant, based upon better promises; therefore it's imperative that it be represented by a better (in fact perfect) sacrifice. So the blood of the covenant is crucial, it's non-negotiable.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> point that this bringing up of the blood to the forefront of our attention does for us is to show us the deadly sincerity with which God deals with our sin. Our salvation wasn't cheap, oh it's free that much is for sure, but don't be deceived it was *anything* but cheap. The bible says, "...you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." 1 Peter 1:18-19 and In demanding the purchase price of blood God is painting for us a very vivid picture by which He's seeking to communicate to us that sin destroys human life. People think God is a giant "kill joy" in the sky. But the fact is He loves us and is seeking to save us from effectively destroying ourselves. It's like when your child chases a ball out into the street with out paying attention and nearly gets hit by a car and so you pick them up, place them over your knee and commence to instruct them as to why it is that they're to *never* run out into the street with out mom or dad there to make sure things are ok. It's not because you don't want them to have any fun it's because you don't want to see their life come to an end. and God is seeking to communicate to you and me that sin destroys life, and it cost the life of His own Son that we might receive the *remission* of sins.

Which brings me to the other thing that we want to draw out of this section here and that is this statement here at the end of Vs 22, "...and with out the shedding of blood there is *no* remission." You do well to underline that, or memorize that, somehow draw attention to that because it's an emphatic statement to which there are no exceptions. In the book of Leviticus God had said, "*For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.*" Lev 17:11 Apart from the shedding of the blood of God's only begotten Son there would be no atonement available for our souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul. Or to understand that another way with out shedding of blood there is *no* remission.

I just want to hang out right there on that point for just a minute here because we live in a day and in an age whereby we're ready to believe just about anything but the significance of the need of the blood of Jesus Christ to deal with and cleanse us of our sin. People say things like, "Well, time heals all wounds" listen time doesn't heal the wound of sin. Only the blood of Jesus Christ will do that. People think that if they can just do enough good that will somehow and in some way make reconciliation for the bad, but no good work can change the fact that I've sinned, good morals don't atone for bad morals in the past or somehow cause God to wink at sin. So sin doesn't go away with enough time, good works or good morals don't provide a solution, I can't inflict pain upon myself and hope that somehow that's penalty enough. Sometimes people fall into the trap of thinking it all goes away when I die, and somehow death will do away with the penalty of my sin. But none of those things are in anyway even close to a sufficient solution to our sin situation. It's only by the blood of Christ that we receive the remission (that is the forgiveness) of our sin debt. Because apart from the shedding of blood there is *no* forgiveness, and we can't have complete (or perfect) forgiveness apart from a perfect sacrifice. and That's what God provided in the person of Jesus Christ The Lamb of God, who through the shedding of His blood, the laying down of His life, takes away the sins of the world. and Don't misunderstand this to think that all Jesus had to do was cut Himself and we would all be fine, no the phrase, "The shedding of blood" although literal is also synonymous with saying, "The sacrifice of life." Remember, "life is in the blood," and the wages of sin is death, sin demands a payment of death.

Vs 23-24

The idea here is simply this; it was acceptable for the earthly tabernacle, the earthly things, things made with imperfect man's hands to be "purified" with imperfect sacrifices. After all they were only copies, shadows (at best) of the reality. But such sacrifices were completely *insufficient* to purify or cleanse the heavenly reality after which the earthly was modeled. The heavenly reality demands a perfect sacrifice. and That's the place that Christ has entered, and here's the kicker, He's there...for us! It's not hard to believe that Jesus has entered into the presence of God, but to contemplate and meditate on the fact that He's there *for us*, representing and interceding for us is mind blowing.

Now the question comes up at this point, why would the heavenly things need purified anyway? 2 plausible explanations, perhaps both a feasible reality. Because people think that sin could never enter heaven, well that's not true. Sin separates us from God, but God doesn't flee from sin, what I'm saying is that God doesn't have to move out if sin has been made present. Jesus was the friend of sinners, yet He never sinned Himself. and Most people don't stop to think about the fact that sin originated in heaven. Oh, man sinned on earth, but Satan fell like lightning from heaven, and it was *after* iniquity was found in his heart that he was cast down.

God didn't do a preemptive strike knowing that Satan was going to sin so He removed him in advance. Satan filled his heart with pride, exalted himself in the presence of God, sin was found in him and God cast him out along with 1/3 of the angels who followed him. and To this day Satan has access to heaven and the bible declares that he accuses the brethren before God day and night.

So there *has been* sin in heaven, and therefore it seems logical to conclude that the blood of Christ has been applied to the heavenly things in order to bring that cleansing, that purifying power that's found therein to the heavenly things.

The other explanation is even simpler and that is that you and I have been made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ. and If the blood was necessary to cleanse the earthly things that man might commune with God, how much more the heavenly things. The bible is clear that we enter the Holiest of all (spiritually speaking, that communion with God) through the blood of Jesus. and So be it due to Satan's presence, do to our presence or perhaps a combination of both, the heavenly things as well have been purified by the blood of Christ.

Vs25-26

There it is right there, the purpose of His coming. Why did Christ come to this earth? To put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, He came to do a work on your and my behalf. His purpose in being here wasn't self-centered it was other's centered, even so we're to be other's centered in His name. and Notice the scriptures qualify His appearance to be, "at the end of the ages." From the time Christ appeared till the time He comes again is scripturally considered, "the last days," and *each* day takes us closer to *that* day when we will see Him face to face.

I think it's important to point out that though He appears in heaven for us He doesn't *offer Himself often* (or over and over again) for us. That work was once for all, it's finished. So His ministry in Heaven for us isn't one of continual atonement, it's one of intercession and defense on our behalf in light of the accuser of the brethren. and It's important to get a firm grasp on this principle, because the Roman Catholic practice of mass doesn't seek to *remember* what was done at the cross, it seeks to *repeat* what was done at the cross by believing in what's called "*transubstantiation*." and That's a fancy word that means when they partake of the bread and the cup regarding the communion service that they believe that, that bread and that cup actually become the actual body and the actual blood of Jesus Christ being offered once again for the remission of their sins. So it's not a remembrance that they're taking part in, it's a *repeat* as far as they're concerned and there's all kinds of problems with that scripturally not the least of which is a denial of the *finished* work of the cross. The scripture is clear, "...not that He should offer Himself often."

Now Vs 26 makes it clear that *if* Christ's work wasn't perfect than "Yes" He'd have to suffer over and over again since the foundation of the world. But by His sacrifice He once for all put away sin. Do you understand that all of the sin of all of mankind is wrapped up and put away in Christ, it's already done. and The only thing that keeps a person from entering into that reality of the absence of sin being accredited to their life is the fact that they won't come to Christ. Because in Christ the sin question is settled, but people won't come to Christ which leaves only one alternative. If they won't let their sin be dealt with in Christ, then they have to deal with it themselves, but here's the deal. It's only a *perfect* sacrifice that will make *perfect atonement*. This is why the reality of hell is for eternity. It has to be eternal for all who reject the sacrifice of Christ. Why? Why can't they pay for it for a million yrs and that be good enough? Listen, it's true that hell is the penalty for sin of the unrepentant.

They're there to pay the penalty of their sin having rejected Jesus' payment. But being imperfect people they can never make a *perfect* payment. and If the payment is imperfect, then as we're reading here it would have to be constant and continual, a person could be released from hell the moment they made a perfect payment. Which is another way of saying, "never" because we're all *imperfect* people, and it's impossible that an imperfect resource (the sin nature of man) could make a perfect (that is a sinless) payment. and So Jesus came and in these last days paid that penalty for us, and since His sacrifice was perfect, it didn't need to be constant, it was only once, and it was for all. Now all we've left to do is turn *to* Him and trust *in* Him, He's our scapegoat, He's the one who has put away our sin.

#### Vs27-28

There is one unavoidable, inescapable appointment that all of mankind will make and they'll all be on time for it and that the appointment that we all have to stand before God and give an account. It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment. Now if you're in Christ, your sin's been judged, you'll be judged according to what rewards you'll receive or not receive based upon the motive of your heart in doing or not doing what you've done or didn't do.

But outside of Christ, there's nothing that awaits a person outside of the white throne judgment of God and the lake of fire. That's simply the truth. and Though the writer here isn't seeking to combat the idea of reincarnation here the point remains, after death, isn't another chance on life, now is the time to receive Christ, today is the day of salvation. When Moses and Elijah appeared to the Lord there on the Mt of transfiguration, they were still Moses and Elijah, they didn't used to be Moses and Elijah but after reincarnating several times they were someone else. Reincarnation is simply another lie from the pit of hell seeking to deceive man in to growing numb and not sensing the urgency to come to Christ, because we only get one life. and It's here that we make the choice that will determine where we spend eternity, be it in God's presence, or eternally separated from Him in outer darkness, paying our own penalty perpetually, eternally for our sin.

But it's appointed for man to die once, even so Christ died once, and in so doing He bore the sins of many. The next time He comes it won't be to deal with the sin issue, it'll be to rescue those who've trusted in Him and establish His reign in righteousness upon the earth. This Vs isn't a reference to the rapture, it's a reference to His 2<sup>nd</sup> coming. and I pray that you might be found in that company that *eagerly* awaits His coming.

During the days of the O.C. that one day a yr when the High Priest would enter the holy of holies, the crowd would gather in eager anticipation of his emerging from that place. Because when he came out, it meant God had received the sacrifice, the people's sins were forgiven. and Even so we eagerly await for Christ's appearing again, apart from sin for salvation, the culmination of all things, He'll judge the earth, establish His reign in righteousness, and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

#### Prayer Points:

Lord everyone of us have an appointment with You, a day when we'll stand before You, and I pray that we might be found ready. Eagerly anticipating the day, not finding ourselves ashamed on that day, or worse yet unprepared for that day having never come to trust in You. Lord I pray that the heart of each person here might be turned toward You today, that we might be found in that place of trusting in You, Lord Your word's not confusing, it's very clear. You and You alone are the sufficient sacrifice for our sin, and so may we place our confidence in You alone, and not in our own works or the works of man's hands. You laid Your life down for us, now teach us to lay our lives down for You.

If you've not trusted Christ for the forgiveness of your sin, why not do that today. Why not be forgiven right now, it's ready, it's waiting, but you can't be forgiven by trying to change your ways, or by seeking to do a good deed, forgiveness is offered to you exclusively in Christ, turn to Him, trust in Him, surrender all that you are to all that He is, repent from your sin and come to Christ.