

HEBREWS 9:11-28

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Hebrews chapter 9 as we continue our study through the Word of God.

This evening we will finish up this powerful chapter showing us that Jesus is a better sanctuary.

Now keep in mind who Paul is writing to. Paul is writing to Hebrews and specifically Jewish believers who were struggling with their faith because of the persecution they were facing, the persecution they were suffering at the hands of fellow Jews, some were even members of their own family!

Also, keep in mind that from childhood they were taught the Old Testament Scriptures, they knew what the Temple was all about with all the sacrifices that were being offered.

And so now the tug to go back to it all was growing and Paul is trying to draw them back to Christ.

Now you might be thinking, ***“But they gave up so much to come to Christ!”***

Folks, God never, He never asks us to give up anything without first offering us something that is far better in return!

Last week we saw the earthly sanctuary, the Tabernacle with all its implements.

We saw the earthly service of the priests with the sacrifices they made, culminating with the Day of Atonement or Yom Kippur.

And Paul’s point was that all of this was only temporary, it was only a symbol or type of what was to come.

In fact, the word “**symbolic**” in Hebrews 9:9 speaks of setting something side-by-side to make a comparison.

That is what Paul is doing here and it will be what we are going to be doing this evening, what we are going to be studying.

Like I have said, last time we looked at the Old Covenant, the Tabernacle and tonight it will be placed alongside the New Covenant, the Tabernacle not made with hands, Jesus Christ and we will see that Jesus is a better sanctuary.

With that as our introduction, let’s begin reading in Hebrews chapter 9, beginning in verse 11 and let’s see what the Lord has for us this evening as we study through His Word and we see how Jesus is a better sanctuary.

HEBREWS 9

VERSE 11

Paul is making an obvious point here but sometimes that needs to be done to awaken people, to get them thinking about what they are holding on to!

His point is simple. The Tabernacle and the Temple were made with human hands.

Yes, God provided the blueprints for how they were to be built and what was to be placed inside the Tabernacle, but man did the building.

It was also made from materials of this earth.

And yes, it was impressive, the Temple of Solomon and even what is called Herod’s Temple were far more impressive than the Tabernacle, but they were only temporary.

And he is comparing the old sanctuary with the new sanctuary. You see, the new sanctuary was not made by the works of men's hands using the materials of this earth, but God made it, and it is heaven itself, the place where God dwells!

In fact, the earthly Tabernacle was just a copy of what the heavenly one is like.

Stephen, giving his testimony before the Sanhedrin or the Jewish religious council that was like a religious Supreme Court, dealing not only with religious matters but social ones also, said in Acts 7:44-50, **“Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as He appointed, instructing Moses to make it according to the pattern that he had seen, which our fathers, having received it in turn, also brought with Joshua into the land possessed by the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers until the days of David, who found favor before God and asked to find a dwelling for the God of Jacob. But Solomon built Him a house. However, the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet says: ‘Heaven is My throne, And earth is My footstool. What house will you build for Me? says the LORD, Or what is the place of My rest? Has My hand not made all these things?’”**

Stephen talks about the Tabernacle, he talks about Solomon's Temple and he makes the point that God does not dwell in Temples made with hands, His dwelling place is in heaven, His throne is in heaven.

Thus, Jesus being our Great High Priest has His sanctuary in heaven and being King of kings and Lord of lords His throne or palace is also in heaven.

Now, as limited as the earthly priests were, they could not take the common person into the holy place, that was only for the priests, and only the High Priest could enter the holy of holies and only once a year, but Jesus takes us into the heavens!

In Ephesians 2:4-6 Paul tells us, **“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”**

Through Christ we are seated in the heavens, that is where our citizenship is as Paul tells us in Philippians 3:20-21, **“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.”**

And Paul concludes by making the point that the old sanctuary is **“not of this creation.”**

Let me explain it like this. First of all, Jesus is not part of this creation because He is the Creator of all things! I think we all know that.

We see that spoken of in John 1:1-3, where John tells us, **“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.”**

In other words, Jesus is eternal, He is Almighty God, and He not only created all things, but He holds everything together. (Colossians 1:17)

And in John 1:14 we are told, **“And the Word became flesh and dwelt [tabernacle] among us . . .”**

I think the picture that is being painted for us of Jesus is that He is a living *“Tabernacle”* that was not made with hands, but is eternal and in this Tabernacle our sins are forgiven and we can come together and worship, fellowship with God!

Now, is there a sanctuary in heaven?

I believe that there is because the earthly sanctuary was a copy of what the throne room of God is like.

But again, I think the picture, since we are looking at Jesus being superior to all, is that Jesus is a better sanctuary because what the Old Covenant couldn't do, Jesus does! He brings us to the Father as He paid in full the penalty for our sins.

As we read on, we will continue to see the comparison between the old and the new.

VERSE 12

Keep in mind that the animal sacrifices were only a temporary covering of sin. They could never take away your sins, and Paul will deal with that more as we read on.

But only a perfect sacrifice, which these animals were not, could obtain eternal redemption for our sins!

As we know, Jesus, as our Great High Priest, did not offer animal sacrifices for our sins but shed His own blood.

It was a sacrifice only needed once for all and it is eternal in that it cleanses our past sins, our present sins and our future sins!

It is as the Lord said in Isaiah 1:18, **“Come now, and let us reason together,’ Says the LORD, ‘Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool.’”**

I like the way The Living Bible translates this verse, it says, **“Come, let’s talk this over!’ says the Lord; ‘no matter how deep the stain of your sins, I can take it out and make you as clean as freshly fallen snow. Even if you are stained as red as crimson, I can make you white as wool!’”**

God has the answer to the problem of sin and it is found in Jesus if you would only come to Him and discuss it, give your life to Him, ask Him to be your Lord and Savior!

Let me share this with you. We are told,

Jesus did not just slip into the Most Holy Place amidst a protective cloud of incense to breathlessly perform a ritual sprinkling and then exit until next year. Instead, he came having given his own precious blood once and for all, and there he sat down at the right hand of the Father – never more to leave. Everything foreshadowed by the earthly Tabernacle – the altar, the laver, the candlestick, the altar of incense, the Ark of the Covenant, and the Tabernacle itself – is fulfilled in his new priesthood in ways beyond description. . . .

But there is even more, for the unlimited access is crowned with unlimited efficacy [effectiveness] as Christ makes consciences clean. To make this point, the author reiterates the limited nature of the old system . . .

- R. Kent Hughes, Hebrews – An Anchor for the Soul, p. 229

And that is what we will be looking at next, the limited nature of the old system and how it compares to Jesus Christ and the work that He has done for us, the finished sacrifice that He has made for us.

You see, Paul wants the Jewish believers to understand that the work that Christ completed on the cross of Calvary was secure; it was an all-encompassing act of redemption!

And the Holy Spirit wants us to understand that point as well because there is so much confusion regarding what Christ has done and what we need to do!

The work was completed and the only thing we added to our salvation is – *SIN!* You can't add good works to it because the work was completed and if you could, then Paul's next point would be meaningless. Listen to what he tells us.

VERSES 13-14

Once again Paul wants them to think about what they are holding on to. And to do that he wants them to think about those imperfect sacrifices that were made and how they could never take away a person's sin, and yet, it was sufficient for that time until the Messiah would come.

Now that He has come, why are you going back to that which is not sufficient when we have complete sufficiency in the work of Jesus Christ, the perfect sacrifice. Something for them and us to think about if we are holding onto good works for our entrance into heaven.

And let's look at this for a minute. The Old Testament sacrifices were not without purpose, they were more of a ceremonial cleansing, but, like I have said, they could never take away a person's sins.

That is where Jesus comes in and His sacrifice was not only an external cleansing for us, but He cleanses us inwardly and that inward cleansing is then manifested in our lives, in our actions, outwardly!

We are not cleaned up old creatures, but we are a new creation in Christ and thus, we are to walk accordingly, don't walk in the old ways but walk in Christ, in the new life He has given to us!

Paul tells us in II Corinthians 5:17, **“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”**

You see, the real problem is on the inside and only God can deal with that. It is through His shed blood that we are cleansed!

And when Paul speaks about the ashes of the red heifer, the Jewish believers knew exactly what he was talking about.

You see, these ashes of the red heifer you can read about in Numbers chapter 19 but it deals with the remains of a burnt offering that was preserved and then sprinkled in the laver and used for washing to provide for a ceremonial cleansing.

What is the point that Paul is making?

The point is this. That was a shadow, the cleansing has come in Christ, we don't need to use ***“holy water”*** as some tell us because there is no value to it.

One more point regarding the ashes of the red heifer.

You may have seen over the last few years that some of the Orthodox Jews are in search for this red heifer that will be sacrificed and its ashes then will be used to cleanse the priests, the new Temple and the Temple implements so that the sacrifices can be started again.

But, if there is one white hair, it can't be used. So far they have come close, but in God's timing they will have the red heifer and, after we are gone, the Antichrist will make a covenant for the Temple to be rebuilt and the sacrifices will start up again.

Remember, this is during the Tribulation Period, at the start!

Now, what does Paul mean when he writes about what Christ has done when he says that God will, **“purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”** Hebrews 9:14.

First, let me share with you about this conscience that God has given to us. It is a wonderful gift from God, but it does have its limitations. It is not perfect. Let me show you what I mean.

First of all, our conscience can be – *SEARED!* Paul put it like this in I Timothy 4:2, “... having their own conscience seared with a hot iron.”

In other words, we can sin over and over again, and our heart can become so calloused that we don't feel that what we are doing is wrong anymore.

Not only that, but our conscience can also be *DEFILED!* Paul put it like this in Titus 1:15, “To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled.”

As we move away from the things of God, that which is pure, we are going to be going after the things of this world, which are impure and thus, they will defile us. Not only our actions, but our minds or conscience!

And, lastly, our conscience can be – *EVIL!* Paul makes that point in Hebrews 10:22 where he wrote, “let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.”

As we move away from God, we will be moving towards evil and the heart is wicked, so be careful. Draw near to God!

Now, in saying all that, the wonderful thing is that Jesus has paid in full the debt we owed for all our sin. And yet, we remember them, we let what we have done in the past hold us back from doing what God has called us to do.

You see, I think that is a problem, even for Christians today. They struggle with this issue of forgiveness. Maybe some of you here this evening or those listening on the Internet or the radio are beating yourself up, you just can't let go and receive the forgiveness that Jesus has for you. And that truly is the key as we will see, He paid the price, we are ***FORGIVEN!***

Let me share this story with you and you will see what I mean about how hard it is to be forgiven and how our conscience can just keep us down if we don't bring it to God and let go of these things. We are told,

Albert Speer was once interviewed about his last book on ABC's "Good Morning, America." Speer was the Hitler confidant whose technological genius was credited with keeping Nazi factories humming throughout World War II. In another era he might have been one of the world's industrial giants. He was the only one of twenty-four war criminals tried in Nuremberg who admitted his guilt. Speer spent twenty years in Spandau prison.

The interviewer referred to a passage in one of Speer's earlier writings: "You have said the guilty can never be forgiven, or shouldn't be. Do you still feel that way?" The look of pathos [despair, sorrow, suffering] on Speer's face was wrenching as he responded, "I served a sentence of twenty years, and I could say, 'I'm a free man, my conscience has been cleared by serving the whole time as punishment.' But I can't do that. I still carry the burden of what happened to millions of people during Hitler's lifetime, and I can't get rid of it. This new book is part of my atoning, of clearing my conscience." The interviewer pressed the point. "You really don't think you'll be able to clear it totally?" Speer shook his head. "I don't think it will be possible."

For thirty-five years Speer had accepted complete responsibility for his crime. His writings were filled with contrition and warnings to others to avoid his moral sin. He desperately sought expiation [punishment]. All to no avail.

How pitifully sad, for forgiveness was available in the blood of Jesus Christ. Coming to Christ would truly have been like being born again. He literally could have had a new conscience – without the slightest sense of lingering guilt.

- R. Kent Hughes, Hebrews Volume One – An Anchor for the Soul, p. 230

Now some of you may be wondering, ***“How in the world can that be? How can he be forgiven for all the crimes against humanity that he had done? He should feel guilty, he should feel bad!”***

Now, in saying that, let me ask you this. Did Jesus just pay for some sins and not others? Is your sin less offensive to Jesus than his sin?

You see, Jesus paid it all! All of our sins were nailed to the cross of Calvary and by His shed blood the penalty for our sins was paid for. Jesus bore the penalty for our sins, all of our sins! Thus, we can find forgiveness as we come to Jesus repenting of our sins and asking Him to be Lord and Savior of our lives. For believers, that forgiveness is already there we just need to accept it into our lives!

And keep in mind that Jesus, as our Great High Priest, did not offer animal sacrifices for our sins but shed His own blood. It was a sacrifice only needed once for all and it is eternal in that it cleanses our past sins, our present sins and our future sins! Praise God for that.

One more point that we need to deal with and that is this. When Paul speaks of dead works is he talking about sin or a works salvation?

I think they go hand in hand.

You see, sin is the problem and man's solution to this problem is to work to atone for his sins.

But Paul is saying that will never happen.

Think about it, if it was a works salvation, then how much work?

There is no answer to that one except this; you won't make it into heaven no matter how good you are for the Bible says that our righteousness before a holy God is like filthy rags!

Could you ever be assured of your salvation through a works salvation?

NOT AT ALL!

But Jesus said we can have assurance of our salvation in John 5:24, **“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.”**

You see, we can enter in through the blood of Jesus Christ applied to our lives by faith.

Thus, as we put our trust in Him our conscience is at ease knowing that our salvation is not based upon what we have done but what He has done. It is not based upon my faithfulness to maintain it, but His faithfulness!

Listen to how Spurgeon sums this up for us. He wrote, *“And, dear friends, do keep in mind that you are henceforth to ‘serve the living God.’ You that are acquainted with the Greek will find that the kind of service here mentioned is not that which the slave or servant renders to his master, but a worshipful service such as priests render unto God. We that have been purged by Christ are to render to God the worship of a royal priesthood. It is ours to present prayers, thanksgivings, and sacrifice; it is ours to offer the incense of intercession; it is ours to light the lamp of testimony and furnish the table of shewbread.”*

VERSE 15

Here is an important question. How were the Old Testament saints saved?

Many still struggle with that question today and thus, it is important for us to understand this. You see, many would say by works, the keeping of the Law, but that is wrong.

Now that can be confusing because we know that salvation is not by works, it only comes through Christ but God had not become flesh and dwelt among us at that point, He had not atoned for our sins at that point!

So how were they saved?

In speaking of Abraham Paul tells us in Romans 4:19-22, “**And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. And therefore ‘it was accounted to him for righteousness.’**”

You see, he was saved by faith as he looked to the promise of the coming Messiah and once the Tabernacle was built and later the Temple, they obeyed by faith still looking forward to the coming of the Messiah.

And after the death of Jesus on the cross of Calvary He went down into the part of Hades known as Abraham’s bosom, where those who died in the faith waited for the Messiah and were comforted by Abraham.

You can read of this in Luke 16:19-31 as Christ spent three days and three nights in the belly of the earth, before His resurrection, and He released those in this part of Hades.

Those that died outside of the faith remain in the other part of Hades, along with all those that will die outside the faith, and they are awaiting the Great White Throne Judgment.

In Ephesians 4:9-10 we are told of what Christ did, **“(Now this, ‘He ascended’ - what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)”**

They looked ahead to the coming Messiah, and we look back on the finished work of Christ and are saved by grace through faith. And since the payment of sin was made for us, when these bodies go back to the dust of the earth, we go to be with the Lord immediately for to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. (II Corinthians 5:8)

Now, in regard to Jesus being the mediator of the New Covenant, listen to what Wuest tells us:

The word “mediator” is the translation of mesites which refers to one who intervenes between two, to make or restore peace and friendship, to form a compact, or to ratify a covenant. Here the Messiah acts as a go-between or mediator between a holy God and sinful man. By His death on the cross, He removes the obstacle (sin) which caused an estrangement between man and God. When the sinner accepts the merits of Messiah’s sacrifice, the guilt and penalty of his sin is his no more, the power of sin in his life is broken, he becomes the recipient of the divine nature, and the estrangement between himself and God, both legal and personal, disappears.

The Old Covenant could never save you, but Jesus can and does as He shed His blood for our sins. He is the One who has brought us to God!

VERSES 16-17

Let me start out by saying the Greek word used for “**covenant**” in verse 15 is the same Greek word that is used for “**testament**” or “**will**” here in verses 16 and 17. Then why is it translated into a different English word?

Very simply, in verse 15 the word is used religiously and thus the word “**covenant**” is used. And in verses 16 and 17 of Hebrews chapter 9 the word is used legally and thus, the word “**testament**” or “**will**” is used. And as you will see, there is a very good reason why both are important.

Now let’s deal with this issue of this “**testament**” or “**will**”. What in the world is Paul talking about here when he says that a “**testament is in force after men are dead**”?

To understand what Paul is saying here we need to think of this testament as being like a “*last will and testament.*” This will make sense. You see, this will not be in effect until the person who made the will dies.

Think of it like this. My children can’t come up to me and say, “*Dad, we are ready to collect on your will!*”

Why can’t they do that?

Because I am not dead yet, in fact, I am feeling pretty good! I guess you can say I am not quite dead yet!

You see, I have to die before they can receive what I have for them in my will and my wife is first in line and then the kids! I better sleep with one eye open tonight!

Therefore, Paul's point is this, the New Covenant could not take effect until the "**testator**," until Jesus died! After His death the New Covenant was established!

Spurgeon put it like this, "*If there be a question about whether a man is alive or not, you cannot administer to his estate, but when you have certain evidence that the testator has died then the will stands. So is it with the blessed gospel: if Jesus did not die, then the gospel is null and void.*"

I hope that makes sense to you but if not, let me put it into perspective for you like this. If I am the sole possessor of someone's will, all that they own is going to be mine someday. But right now, all that the person has are only promise's that they have made to me. Then, once the person dies all those promises become a reality.

Up until the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ there was only the promise of the coming Messiah and the inheritance of eternal life through Him, the forgiveness of our sins! But when Jesus was crucified, when He died all those promises became a reality to us, they are ours as the New Covenant was established.

That is what Paul is saying to these Jewish believers, that the Old Covenant is gone, it has been replaced and ratified by the death and resurrection of Jesus!

Now think about this for a minute. Jesus is not only the *Testator*, but He is also the *Mediator* of this New Covenant!

Can any man be both?

Absolutely not because if it takes your death to establish the will being enacted upon then how can you be the mediator, you are dead?

So no man can do this but Jesus can because He not only died for our sins but He rose from the grave on the third day!

Thus, Jesus has left us one of the greatest inheritances ever, eternal life with Him and because He lives, He lives to mediate His will, He shows us how to live out our faith!

VERSES 18-22

This is so important for us to understand today because so many are trying to deny the blood atonement. And here, it is not an option, for without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin! And we will look at that more in a minute.

But first, look at how Paul explains it to these Jewish believers, something they knew but it was important for them to be reminded and then shown what it all pointed to.

How was the Old Covenant ratified?

Paul tells us by the shedding of blood and that the blood was sprinkled upon the book, the people, the Tabernacle and all the vessels of ministry.

Why was the blood sprinkled?

Because the payment for sin is the shedding of blood and the animal sacrifices looked ahead to the sacrifice that Jesus would make for us by shedding His blood.

In Matthew 26:28 Jesus tells us, “**For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission [forgiveness] of sins.**”

You see, the New Covenant was also ratified by the shedding of blood, His own blood as He was the Lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the world!

Now look at Hebrews 9:22 once again, it says, “**And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.**”

The Amplified Bible puts it like this, “**[In fact] under the Law almost everything is purified by means of blood, and without the shedding of blood there is neither release from sin and its guilt nor the remission of the due and merited punishment for sins.**”

But what if you were poor and could not afford to bring an animal sacrifice for your sins? Does that mean you had no atonement, no covering?

Not at all, for in Leviticus 5:11-13 we are told, “**But if he is not able to bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons, then he who sinned shall bring for his offering one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour as a sin offering. He shall put no oil on it, nor shall he put frankincense on it, for it is a sin offering. Then he shall bring it to the priest, and the priest shall take his handful of it as a memorial portion, and burn it on the altar according to the offerings made by fire to the LORD. It is a sin offering. The priest shall make atonement for him, for his sin that he has committed in any of these matters; and it shall be forgiven him. The rest shall be the priest’s as a grain offering.**”

You see, this was all symbolic, it pointed to Jesus Christ and even this exception represented a blood sacrifice for Leviticus 17:11 tells us, “**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.**”

Now, like I have said, tragically today there are those who see the cross of Calvary, the shed blood of Christ as crude and offensive, they see it as barbaric! They can’t believe that a holy and righteous God, a good God would do something like that.

Many of you have heard of Paul Young’s book, *The Shack*. I would not recommend this book unless you need to burn it to keep yourself warm.

Sorry, but the doctrines this book puts forth is not according to the Scriptures, but they are doctrines of demons! You may not like that but if they are not of God, if they contradict what the Scriptures are saying, then that is the only other option!

Listen to what we are told in this radio interview with the author of, *The Shack*, Paul Young. He told the interviewer that he did not hold to the traditional view of the atonement in that he does not believe Jesus Christ bore the punishment (i.e., penalty) for man's sins when He died on the Cross.

He also stated, with regard to this topic: "I don't know if you're aware, but that's a huge debate that's going on in theology right now within the evangelical community." That debate, to which Young refers, is the new theology (or as we call it the new spirituality) that is entering Christianity through contemplative and emerging figures such as Brennan Manning, Brian McLaren, and Marcus Borg and many, many others!

This "huge debate" states that a loving Father would never send His Son to a violent death on behalf of the sins of others. And while they do not deny that Jesus did physically die on a Cross, they insist that His death was not to be a substitutionary act wherein He was punished for our sins. Rather, they say, He was killed by man, not for man. And he was a perfect model of sacrificial servanthood.

As Episcopal new spirituality author, Alan Jones, states, "Jesus' sacrifice was to appease an angry God. Penal substitution was the name of this vile doctrine" (*Reimagining Christianity*, p. 168).

Liberal theologian and Pastor Harry Emerson Fosdick said the doctrine of the blood atonement was a slaughterhouse religion, and he said it was 'precivilized barbarity.' In his 1922 sermon "Shall the Fundamentalists Win?" he stated:

“It is interesting to note where the Fundamentalists are driving in their stakes to mark out the deadline of doctrine around the church, across which no one is to pass except on terms of agreement. They insist that we must all believe in the historicity of certain special miracles, preeminently the virgin birth of our Lord; that we must believe in a special theory of inspiration that the original documents of the Scripture, which of course we no longer possess, were inerrantly dictated to men a good deal as a man might dictate to a stenographer; that we must believe in a special theory of the Atonement that the blood of our Lord, shed in a substitutionary death, placates an alienated Deity and makes possible welcome for the returning sinner; and that we must believe in the second coming of our Lord upon the clouds of heaven to set up a millennium here, as the only way in which God can bring history to a worthy denouement [conclusion]. Such are some of the stakes which are being driven to mark a deadline of doctrine around the church.”

What this line of thinking is saying is that while Jesus’ going to the Cross should be looked at as an example of perfect servanthood and sacrifice, the idea that God would send His Son to a violent death on the Cross is barbaric and would never happen. Thus, Fosdick (and those who adhere to this reasoning) rejects Christ as a substitute for our penalty. ***THERE IS NO ATONEMENT!***

Folks, I think G. Campbell Morgan had it right when he said, “There is nothing cruel and offensive I see in the cross with its blood – except your sin and mine.”

He nailed that one for us and think about it, that is the reason God became flesh and dwelt among us, to pay in full the penalty for our sins, that perfect sacrifice, once for all and without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin, ***NONE! THERE IS NO ATONEMENT!***

And here's the thing. God cannot ignore our sin, but He has provided a way of forgiveness and that is by asking Jesus Christ to be your Lord and Savior, to receive His forgiveness through His shed blood.

Let me show you how important this is to God and thus, it should be to us.

In the New Testament there are over 290 references to the love of God.

How awesome is that, 290 times God declares His love for man.

But, in the New Testament there are over 1300 references to the atonement.

What does that mean? That over 1300 times God gives us an assurance of salvation that is at our disposal through the blood of Christ!

It is that important, a matter of life and death!

Make no mistake about it, "The shedding of Jesus' blood is God's *answer* to man's problem of sin. In his sermon *The Blood-Shedding*, Spurgeon began by showing us three fools. The first is a soldier wounded on the field of battle. The medic comes to the soldier, and immediately the soldier wants to know everything about the rifle and the soldier that shot him. The second fool is a ship captain, whose ship is about to go under in a terrible storm. The captain is not at the wheel of the ship, trying to guide it through the crashing waves; he is in his room studying charts, trying to determine where the storm came from. The third fool is a man who is sick and dying with sin, about to go under the waves of God's justice, yet is deeply troubled about the *origin* of evil. We should look to the *solution* more than to the problem."

Absolutely, for ***WITHOUT THE SHEDDING OF BLOOD THERE IS NO REMISSION OF SIN!***

VERSE 23

Yes, it was acceptable for the copies of the heavenly things, the Tabernacle and later the Temple and all that went with it, to be purified or cleansed with imperfect sacrifices but when it comes to heavenly things, they could only be purified or cleansed with a perfect offering!

Now wait a minute, how was heaven defiled?

Why would heaven need to be purified?

Possibly because Satan still has access to heaven according to Job 1:6, he is the accuser of the brethren before the Father.

Also, that is where sin began with Satan, in heaven before God!

VERSES 24-26

It is all summed up here and if they didn't get it yet, Paul is going to make it very clear here.

Yes, Jesus was crucified on this earth, but His work continues on in Heaven as He intercedes for us before the Father.

Not only does He appear before Father God, but He appears before Father God for us! How glorious is that! The earthly High Priest again could enter the Holy of Holies only once a year and offer the sacrifice before God for the people. Our Great High Priest, Jesus Christ takes us right to the throne of God, the veil is torn that separated man from God, the way is open to God through Jesus!

Here is another important point for us to understand.

Jesus died once for our sins, not continually, not often, but once!

Now I grew up in the Roman Catholic Church and please understand I am not picking on the Roman Catholic Church, but I am going to show you what they believe and how it goes contrary to the Scriptures, which is our final authority, not man!

Ludwig Ott, who is a Roman Catholic theologian, made this statement in regard to the perpetual sacrifice dogma that was made official by the church at the Council of Trent in the middle of the sixteenth century. He explains it like this,

The holy Mass is a true and proper sacrifice. It is physical and propitiatory, removing sins and conferring the grace of repentance. Propitiated by the offering of this sacrifice, God, by granting the grace of the gift and the gift of Penance, remits trespasses and sins however grievous they may be.

- Ludwig Ott

You see, to Catholics, Jesus is still being crucified at every Mass, but that goes against Scripture. Jesus has come and put away sin by His sacrifice once for all!

That is what Peter tells us in I Peter 3:18, **“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit.”**

Notice that Jesus died *ONCE* for sin, and that should be an end to any other ideas of working our way into heaven or offering the sacrifice of Jesus over and over again. The work is completed!

One writer put things into perspective by saying this,

“This principle of sacrifice explains why the suffering of Hell must be eternal for those who reject the atoning work of Jesus. They are in Hell to pay the penalty of their sin, but as imperfect beings they are unable to make a perfect payment. If the payment is not perfect, then it has to be continual and constant – indeed, for all eternity. A soul would be released from Hell the moment its debt of sin was completely paid – which is another way of saying never.”

That is a powerful and correct way to look at it.

Why go back to that which can't save you?

Now I do realize that there are those that don't believe in the judgment of God, and there are so many Scriptures that speak of God's judgment that they ignore, but just listen to what Paul says next, there is no missing it unless you close your eyes to it.

VERSES 27-28

If you do not receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior of your life while you are living, you will be lost forever!

There are no second chances after you die. You see, once you die you stand before the Lord either in your own righteousness which are like filthy rags and you will be sent to Hell, or the righteousness of Christ that has been imputed into your life by faith in Jesus Christ and you will enter into eternity with Him!

Now some of you may be thinking of people in the Bible who didn't die like Enoch, (Genesis 5:24), and Elijah, (II Kings 2:11).

Others were raised from the dead like Elijah raising the gentile widow's son from the dead in I Kings 17:22, or the dead man who was tossed into the grave of Elisha and as his bones touched Elisha's bones this man came to life, (II Kings 13:20-21).

Jesus brought back to life a ruler's daughter in Matthew 9:25.

In John 11:43-44 we see Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead. All these died twice.

And then there are those who will be taken to heaven in the Rapture, they too will not experience death and this future event is spoken of in I Thessalonians chapter 4 and I Corinthians chapter 15.

So there are those again who will not even die once!

So what is up with that?

The principle is the same, "**And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.**" Hebrews 9:27.

But there are exceptions to the rule. The thing is, don't miss out on the point, judgment is coming for you, are you ready to meet your Maker?

Now Paul is not speaking specifically about reincarnation here, but this passage does deny it!

Basically, reincarnation is the successive rebirths of a soul into this life, as the soul progresses toward perfection or salvation. If you are good you are getting closer to the god-state and if you are bad you might come back as a duck to make up for your bad karma.

I know, some of you are thinking, "What a quack, quack?"

It is goofy but people believe that rather than believing in Jesus, they think He is foolish!

The Bible does not teach that we live, we die, we live, we die, we live moving towards perfection. There is none good, not one and thus, you can't work your way to goodness or perfection!

This life is it and then we face the judgment!

There are no second chances beyond the grave! Today is the day of salvation, don't pass it up!

We are living in the age of Grace and Jesus is coming again in Judgment, make no mistake about that.

Yes, Jesus came the first time not to condemn us but to save us, He dealt with the problem of sin through His atoning sacrifice.

Jesus said in John 3:16-21, **“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.”**

He is coming again apart from sin to redeem His people from these bodies of flesh and give us eternal bodies so we can live with Him.

It is as Paul said in Romans 8:22-23, **“For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.”**

Let me share these words with you and then I will close.

In short, the work of Christ is a completed work, final and eternal. On the basis of His completed work, He is ministering now in heaven on our behalf.

Did you notice that the word *appear* is used three times in Hebrews 9:24-28? These three uses give us a summary of our Lord’s work.

He *has appeared* to put away sin by dying on the cross (Heb. 9:26).

He *is appearing* now in heaven for us (Heb. 9:24).

One day, He *shall appear* to take Christians home (Heb. 9:28).

These “three tenses of salvation” are all based on His finished work.

- Warren Wiersbe, The Wiersbe Commentary – NT, pp. 830-831

Make no mistake about it, Jesus is a better sanctuary and after these Jewish believers read these words, they had to clearly understand that there is no middle ground for them to stand upon. Either they receive Jesus fully or they go back to the picture, the Old Testament sacrifices, which will never take away your sins!

And for us, how wonderful it is to receive the finished work of Christ into our lives for He has come to take away the sins of the World, He is with us today and He is coming again.

In saying that, are you eagerly waiting for Him?

I hope you are. I pray you are excited that any day He might return and that you are living your life accordingly!

Let me close this evening with these words from Paul in Titus 2:13-15, where he says, **“looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works. Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.”**

People get ready, Jesus is coming to take from the world his own.

In knowing that, may we let people know that truth so they can be ready as they receive Him as their Lord and Savior!