

(Hebrews) ch.8:10-10:18

by Zac Poonen

The new covenant offers forgiveness of sins, holiness through the Holy Spirit, and fellowship with God, enabling us to live a holy life and to know God personally, intimately, and as a child knows his father.

Duration: 1:18:19

Scripture: Jeremiah 31:33, Acts 2:38, Hebrews 7:16, Hebrews 8:7 - 9:1, Hebrews 9:3-4, Hebrews 10:16-17

Topics: "New Covenant", "Obedience To God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. He explains that following Jesus does not mean imitating his specific actions or lifestyle, but rather adopting his attitude of total obedience to the will of God. The speaker highlights that Jesus set an example of complete obedience by denying his own desires and doing the will of the Father. He also discusses the significance of Jesus' body being prepared by God for the purpose of fulfilling the Father's will. Additionally, the speaker contrasts the Old Covenant with the New Covenant, emphasizing the superiority of the blood of Christ in providing forgiveness and salvation.

Transcript

We were looking at the New Covenant in Hebrews chapter 8 and verses 7 to 13. There the Apostle says that if the first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second. For finding fault with them, he says, behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will effect a new covenant.

Then he goes on to describe the New Covenant in verses 10 to 12, and we saw last week that this had three parts to it. The first we looked at was verse 12, I will be merciful to their iniquities and I will remember their sins no more. There is a complete blotting out of the past record of our life if we turn from it and confess our sin to the Lord Jesus.

His blood was shed to cleanse us from all sin to the place where God says He will not even remember our sins any more. But the New Covenant does not stop there. It goes on for forgiveness of sins to a certain extent was known even in the Old Testament.

David says, for example, in Psalm 103, Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgives all your iniquities. David could praise the Lord for forgiveness of all his sins. In Psalm 32, also verse 1, he says, Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

And so we see that even the Old Covenant promised a certain forgiveness of sins which was experienced by people like David. It was not fully understood and it was only typified by the blood of bulls and goats. It was fully understood and atoned for, of course, only when the Lord Jesus actually died on Calvary's hill and shed His blood.

So that in the New Covenant we have the full experience and understanding of forgiveness of sins and therefore we can rejoice in the full assurance that our sins are no longer remembered by God if we have come into His light. But yet the New Covenant goes beyond that, for it does not just forgive our sins, we are told in Hebrews 8, and verse 10 is pardon, then the second is the promise of holiness. This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord.

I will put my laws into their minds and I will write them upon their hearts and I will be their God and they shall be my people and they shall not teach everyone his fellow citizen and everyone his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for all shall know me from the least to the greatest of them. Pardon first, holiness second, and fellowship third, though holiness and fellowship could be looked at together as one. But let's look at verse 10.

I will put my laws into their minds and I will write them upon their hearts. Now under the Old Covenant the law of God, which is an expression of His will, was written upon tablets of stone which Moses brought down from the mountain. The Ten Commandments were written on those two tablets of stone.

Now that symbolized and signified that man's heart was hard and therefore God could not write His laws upon man's heart until God had given man a new heart. And the promise in the book of Ezekiel in chapter 36 is that God will give to His people under the New Covenant a new heart. In Ezekiel chapter 36 in verse 26 He says, I will give you a new heart and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and I will give you a soft heart, a heart of flesh.

The tables of stone were a picture of man's heart. Man's heart was harder than stone and God's laws could not be written on that heart and God had to take away that heart and give man a new heart in which He could write His laws and this was possible only under the New Covenant. Under the Old Covenant God wrote His commandments upon those tables of stone with His finger.

Under the New Covenant the finger of God is the Holy Spirit. If we will compare two verses of Scripture we can see that. We read in Luke chapter 11 verse 20, If I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

When we compare that with the parallel passage in Matthew and chapter 12, we read in verse 28, If I cast out demons by the spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. Comparing these two verses in Luke 11 and Matthew 12, we find that Jesus in one place said the finger of God and in the other place the spirit of God, implying that the spirit of God is God's finger. So it is through the Holy Spirit that God writes His laws now upon our hearts and minds and this is what God has promised to all His children under the New Covenant.

First of all, forgiveness of sins and second, the gift of the Holy Spirit. And what does the Holy Spirit do? He writes God's laws upon our hearts and minds, Hebrews 8.10, and He brings us into a fellowship with God where we do not have to have someone else teaching us about God, Hebrews 8.11, but all shall know Me from the least to the greatest. Under the Old Covenant, people could not know God directly.

They had to go to a man like Moses and say, You speak to God and tell us what God tells you. And even in the times of the kings, they had to go to the prophets and find out what God was saying. But under the New Covenant, you do not have to go to a Moses or an Elijah to hear the voice of God and to know the will of God for you.

There is still a place for the apostle and the prophet and the teacher and the evangelist and the pastor in the New Covenant, but yet, beyond that, each person who comes into the New Covenant can know God for himself. In the first epistle of John, chapter 2, we read in verse 27 that the anointing, that is the Holy Spirit, whom you have received from Him, abides in you, and you do not have any need for anyone to teach you. But as His anointing teaches you about all things, just as it has taught you, you abide in Him.

And so we see that the Holy Spirit writes God's laws upon our heart and mind and brings us into a living fellowship with God. This is the whole purpose and significance of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. You remember, John the Baptist was the forerunner of Jesus Christ.

And how did he describe the Lord Jesus Christ to those who followed him? We read in John's Gospel, chapter 1, verse 29, John the Baptist pointed to Jesus and said, Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. As the forerunner, he pointed to Jesus and said, There is the one who will take away sin. Then he said in verse 33, He is also the one who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.

So John the Baptist pointed to Jesus as the one who takes away sin and who baptizes us in the Holy Spirit, or gives us His Holy Spirit. And these two are related to the new covenant, as we saw in Hebrews 8, verse 10 to 12. First, forgiveness of sins, Jesus taking away the sins of the world.

And second, holiness and fellowship through the Holy Spirit. Jesus baptizes us in the Holy Spirit. And this we see is also what Peter promised people on the day of Pentecost, Acts 2.38, when people came to Peter and asked him, What shall we do? He said, Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, and you will receive, one, forgiveness of sins, and two, the gift of the Holy Spirit.

We must see both these, forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Spirit, as part of the new covenant, if we are to enter in and possess our inheritance. We turn again to Hebrews 8, verses 10 to 12, where we have been looking at the new covenant. And we saw that the three parts of the new covenant mentioned here, verse 12, pardon, verse 10, holiness, and verse 11, fellowship, these three parts are related to what John the Baptist proclaimed Jesus would do for the people.

One, bear their sins and take it all away, and two, baptize them in the Holy Spirit. And also related to what Peter offered to the inquiring multitude on the day of Pentecost, he said to them that they could receive forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. These are the two distinctive gifts God offers His people under the new covenant.

And Hebrews 8, verse 12, refers to forgiveness of sins, and Hebrews 8, verses 10 and 11, holiness and fellowship, are related to the gift of the Holy Spirit. Now, when we see that it is in this way that the new covenant is superior to and better than the old covenant, that today we can have a full and total and complete pardon of all our sins and live in the assurance of sins forgiven, and not only forgiven but no longer remembered, and in addition receive the gift of the Holy Spirit so that we can have strength to live the holy life that God has commanded us to live in His word, and enter into a fellowship with God whereby we know God personally, know Him intimately, and know Him as a child knows his father, as a friend knows his friend. And when we see that these are related, these last two are related to the gift of the Holy

Spirit, we begin to understand the reason why Jesus promised to baptize His apostles in the Holy Spirit.

We need to understand this if we are to know what is the chief and primary ministry of the Holy Spirit in our life. In 2 Corinthians 3, verse 18, we read these words, We all with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord the Spirit. And in that verse we have a description of what is the primary ministry of the Holy Spirit to conform us to the likeness of Christ in character and in our ministry, to transform us into that image.

And this is the distinctive blessing of the new covenant. We see here in Hebrews 8 and verse 9 that God says, Under the old covenant they did not continue in My covenant, and I did not care for them, says the Lord. But under the new covenant, the promises, I will, and the word I will occur a number of times in verses 10 and 11 and 12.

Notice in verse 10, I will put My laws into their minds. I will be their God. I will write My laws upon their hearts.

Verse 12, I will be merciful to their iniquities. I will remember their sins no more. It is God who does these things.

It is God who forgives our sins. It is God who writes His laws upon our hearts and our minds, not we ourselves. It's not we who by our own effort and strength are going to struggle to do the will of God.

That's what people tried to do under the old covenant, and they failed miserably. But under the new covenant, the promises that God will do it. Notice the contrast in verse 9. They did not continue in My covenant.

They could not do it. Why could they not do it? Because of the weakness of human flesh. Human flesh is unable by itself to do the will of God.

Even if in our inner beings we are willing, the flesh is still weak. Jesus said the Spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. We do not have the strength to do the will of God.

And so God has made a provision to enable us to do His will by the gift of the Holy Spirit. It is through the Holy Spirit that we can now overcome the weakness of the flesh and do God's will. And so the distinctive difference between the new covenant and the old covenant is in the gift of the Holy Spirit, who brings to us the strength to do God's will.

Jesus said to His apostles in Acts 1, verse 8, that after the Holy Spirit had come upon them, they would receive power. This is the distinctive mark of the Spirit-filled man. He has power.

The mark of the Spirit-filled man is that he has power, power to do the will of God, power to be a witness for Jesus by his life and with his lips. And when we see that this is the mark of those who are filled with the Spirit, we begin to see the difference between the old covenant and the new covenant. Under the old covenant, they were weak.

Under the new covenant, we have provision for strength. So today, under the new covenant, we can no longer say, well, my flesh is weak, therefore I cannot do God's will. We cannot make that as an excuse.

No doubt the flesh is weak. We cannot do God's will. It is true.

But God has made provision for us through the gift of the Holy Spirit. And it is the privilege of every Christian to seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit in Ephesians 5 and verse 18. We are told, be continuously filled with the Holy Spirit.

This is not a once-for-all experience. God may lead us into it in a crisis, but we need to be continuously filled with the Spirit, to be continuously strong in our inner man by the Spirit if we are to do the will of God. This was Paul's prayer in Ephesians chapter 3 and verse 19.

He says that you may know the love of Christ which passes knowledge. But how are we to know it? In verse 16 he prays that God would grant you according to the riches of His glory to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man. It is thus that Christ dwells in our hearts by faith and that we, being rooted and grounded in love, come to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge.

And so it is through the power of the Holy Spirit that we can walk in God's will today, that we can obey God's laws. It is thus that God writes His laws upon our heart and our mind according to the new covenant, Hebrews 8.10. I will put my laws into their minds. I will write them upon their heart.

This is through the power of the Holy Spirit. In 2 Corinthians chapter 3 we read these words. 2 Corinthians chapter 3 and verse 3. You are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

The Holy Spirit has made us a letter of Christ to be read by all men, it says in 2 Corinthians 3.2. All men are reading our life. What are they reading? Are they reading how we are walking in God's laws? So many Christians have not understood their privilege under the new covenant that God will bring them into such a life where they can walk in God's will and obey His laws. It is not through their own strength.

It is God who strengthens them to do His will in every area by the power of His Spirit, enabling them to walk in His ways. We read here, Now even the first covenant had regulations of divine worship and the earthly sanctuary. For there was a tabernacle prepared, the outer one, in which were the lampstand and the table and the sacred bread.

This is called the holy place. And behind the second veil there was a tabernacle which is called the holy of holies, having a golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden jar holding the manna and Aaron's rod which budded, and the tables of the covenant. Above it were the cherubim of glory, overshadowing the mercy seat.

But of these things we cannot now speak in detail. Now when these things have been thus prepared, the priests are continually entering the outer tabernacle, performing the divine worship. But into the second only the high priest enters once a year, not without taking blood which he offers for himself and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance.

The Holy Spirit is signifying this, that the way into the holy place has not yet been disclosed, while the outer tabernacle is still standing, which is a symbol for the time then present, according to which both gifts and sacrifices are offered, which cannot make the worshipper perfect in conscience, since they relate only to food and drink, and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until a time of reformation. Now here again the apostle is trying to bring out the difference in the new covenant compared to the system of worship under the old covenant. In chapter 8 the contrast was drawn between the old covenant and the new covenant, and it was pointed out how the new covenant was better than the old covenant.

How was it better in this sense that we can now have victory over sin and not just forgiveness, and also we can know God personally, intimately, without any other human being coming between us and him? There is one God and one mediator only now between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. We can go directly to God through Jesus Christ. From chapter 9 verse 1 onwards, right on to verse 18 of chapter 10, the contrast is drawn between the better worship that is ours under the new covenant, and then in chapter 10 verses 19 to 25 he explains a little more about the better fellowship that we are under the new covenant where we can enter into the most holy place.

And in chapter 9 verses 1 to 10 he says about the form of divine worship under the old covenant. They had a tabernacle, and in the tent of the tabernacle there were two parts. The tabernacle itself consisted of three parts.

One was the outer court in which the altar and the laver were kept, and then the tent which was divided into two parts. The first part of the tent was called the holy place, which was taken into the most holy place on the day of atonement, but which was normally in the holy place. And into this holy place the priests could enter.

But between the holy place and the most holy place was hanging what is known as the veil, and into the most holy place only the high priest could enter, as it says in verse 7, once a year. And thereby the Holy Spirit was signifying that the way into the most holy place was not yet open. This was the symbolism of the old covenant tabernacle with the veil hanging there, the thick veil, and on that veil were carved the cherubims, the same cherubims that stood outside the garden of Eden with the flaming sword, pointing out that man cannot enter into the most holy place.

Into the very presence of God man cannot enter, because it keeps man from coming near it. This is what he explains later on, how Jesus has gone into the most holy place through rending that veil. We shall come to that later in our study of Hebrews, but looking at Hebrews 9 verses 1 to 10 now, just to look briefly at the symbolism of the Old Testament form of worship.

We read there there was a tabernacle, verse 2, and when God told Moses to make that tabernacle, these are the words that he told him. In Exodus and chapter 25, Exodus 25 and verse 8, God said to Moses, let them construct a sanctuary for me, that I may dwell among them according to all that I am going to show you. The purpose of the tabernacle was for God to dwell in the midst of his people.

God was to dwell in the midst of his people, and that tabernacle was a symbol of the Lord Jesus Christ, concerning whom it is written in Matthew chapter 1 that his name was Emmanuel, God with us, God dwelling with us. And we read in John chapter 1 verse 14, the word, the word who was God, Jesus Christ, came and pitched his tent among us as a man. This is the meaning of that verse, and so the Old Testament tabernacle was primarily a picture of God manifest in the flesh, but also it is a picture of the New Testament church and of the New Testament Christian today.

God dwells by his spirit in the heart of the Christian and in the church. You are the temple of God, it says in 1 Corinthians 3, and God dwells in you. Yes, the spirit of God dwells in us, and we read here in Hebrews 9 verse 2, there was a tabernacle prepared, which was a picture of God's dwelling place, and in that tabernacle, the tent of it, in the holy place, which is called here the outer one, the first one, there was the lamb stand, the table, and the sacred bread on the table, and behind the second veil, that is the veil that prevented people from going into the most holy place, was the most holy place, which contained the golden altar of incense taken in from the holy place on the day of atonement into the most holy place, and

the ark of the covenant, which was permanently in the most holy place, containing the golden jar holding manna, Aaron's rod which budded in the tables of the covenant.

All these have a symbolism, and above it were the cherubim of glory. The cherubims stand for guarding God's holiness. Now, it's not very important for us to see the symbolism of all this, but they pointed to a day when all these things would be true in man's experience, when the law which was kept in the ark of the covenant would now be put into man, God's law written in man's heart and mind, and there would be fruitfulness from death, symbolized by Aaron's rod which budded, which was kept in the ark of the covenant, and the jar holding manna symbolizes God's continuous provision for people that will be true under the new covenant, man not living by bread alone, but by every word which proceeds out of the mouth of God.

There's symbolism in all this, but above all the symbolism was in the veil which hindered man from entering into God's presence. It is that veil which has been rent so that we can enter into the most holy place today because of the new and living way that Jesus has made for us. We turn again to Hebrews and chapter 9 and reading now from verse 11.

We saw in Hebrews 9 verses 1 to 10 about the old testament form of worship, and the contrast is brought now to the worship that is our privilege under the new testament. It's all verse 11 begins with the word but, but when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, or the good things that have come under the new covenant, he entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say not of this creation, and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through his own blood he entered the holy place, once for all having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ who through the eternal spirit offered himself without blemish to God cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God, and for this reason he is the mediator of a new covenant in order that since the death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

For where a covenant is there must of necessity be the death of the one who made it, for a covenant is valid only when men are dead, for it is never in force while the one who made it lives. Therefore even the first covenant was not inaugurated without blood, for when every commandment had been spoken by Moses to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats with water and scarlet wool and hyssop and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the covenant which God commanded you, and in the same way he sprinkled both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry with the blood, and according to the law one may almost say all things are cleansed with blood without shedding of blood. There is no forgiveness.

Now the point in this passage is what he says in verse 13 and 14, that the blood of Christ is far superior to the blood of bulls and goats. Under the old covenant they shed the blood of bulls and goats and calves, but under the new covenant Christ has shed his blood, and as much as the blood of Christ is superior to the blood of goats and calves and bulls, in the same measure the new covenant is superior to the old covenant. What the blood of Christ can do for us is far more than what the blood of bulls and goats could do for people under the old covenant.

David could say, Bless the Lord, O my soul, who forgives all your sins, but all he knew was the blood of bulls and goats. But under the new covenant, what can we say? We can say more than that our sins are forgiven. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin, and through the blood, we are told in Revelation 12, verse 11, we overcome Satan.

We are redeemed, purchased unto God by the blood. We are loosed from our sins, we read in Revelation 1, 5, by the blood of Christ, and we overcome Satan by the blood of the Lamb. So there is not only forgiveness, but there is deliverance from sin's power.

The blood cleanses us and gives us a conscience that is perfect. Under the old covenant, we are told in Hebrews 9, verse 9, that the conscience of the worshipper could not be made perfect. And herein lies the difference between the new covenant and the old covenant.

Under the old covenant, a man could not be perfect in conscience. Under the new covenant, we can. This is the perfection that is promised us in the new covenant, a perfect conscience, where our conscience does not condemn us for anything.

God promises us under the new covenant a life where we can be free from the dominion of sin. We need not be defeated by sin under the new covenant. We can be free from the dominion of sin.

This is the essential difference. And we can have a conscience that is void of offense toward God and toward men. We can say, like the Apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 4, I am conscious of nothing against myself.

This is the life that we can live in under the new covenant, because the blood of Christ is far superior to the blood of bulls and goats. We are told in verse 11 of Hebrews 9 that Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the Old Testament high priest. He is the true high priest, of which the Old Testament high priest was only a type.

And he has entered through into the very presence of God, the immediate presence of God in heaven, which is the fulfillment of the Old Testament holy of holies in the Old Testament tabernacle. This presence of God is not one made with hands. That is not a created thing, verse 11.

And he has entered in. The Old Testament high priest could enter in only with the blood of goats and calves, verse 12, into the most holy place. But Jesus has entered with his own blood, verse 12, into the most holy place, into the immediate presence of God, and has purchased for us, obtained for us, an eternal redemption.

And so it says, if the blood of goats and bulls, verse 13, could sanctify people under the old covenant, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God, there was no spot in Christ. He lived a sinless life, and he offered himself that sinless, spotless life, no blemish, offered to God. How much more will that blood cleanse our conscience from dead works to serve the living God? What are dead works? Dead works are the works that we do in our own strength.

They may be good works according to our own understanding and according to the understanding of other human beings, but we read in Isaiah 64, verse 6, that our good works are like filthy rags. The best works that we can produce are like filthy rags. They are corrupt at their source because they are produced in the strength of self and invariably for the glory of self.

They are corrupt even though externally they look good. We are to be cleansed by the blood of Christ from our own filthy rags. Even our own righteousness needs to be cleansed in the blood of Christ.

Our righteousness, dead works, we are to confess them as no good for salvation. And now we can serve the living God as Jesus served the living God by the power of the Holy Spirit. And so he is the mediator, verse 15, of a new covenant, and in order to seal that covenant he died.

Since all covenants are valid only when men are dead, verse 17, so he died. Even the first covenant was sealed with the blood of animals, and Moses took that blood and sprinkled it upon the book and the people, and thereby the old covenant was sealed. The new covenant also has been sealed as we are told in Hebrews and chapter 13 and verse 20, the blood of the eternal covenant sealed with the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And just like under the law everything was cleansed with blood, under the new covenant too, through the blood of Jesus Christ we get a clean heart, a heart that is clean. And when God cleanses our heart there is no virtue in calling it unclean. If we have confessed every sin and if we have asked Christ to cleanse us, then dear friend, it is your privilege to rejoice in a clean heart.

Rejoice in that clean heart and don't call unclean what God has cleansed with the and we saw there how the blood of Christ is far superior to the blood of goats and calves, and in the same measure the new covenant is superior to the old covenant, and the worship that is offered under the new covenant is superior to the worship that is offered under the old covenant. Under the old covenant the worshiper could not be perfect in conscience. Hebrews 9 verse 9, but under the new covenant we can.

And we see in Hebrews 9 verse 12 about the blood of Christ being presented before the Father as a complete atonement for man's sin, and in verse 14 we find the blood cleansing our conscience from dead works. Why does the blood cleanse us? So that we might serve the living God no longer with dead works produced in our own strength, living under the law, but works that are the result of the Holy Spirit energizing and strengthening us from within. This is the point of Hebrews 9.14. We see in Hebrews 9.14 that the value of Christ's blood is because of who He is, the second person of the triune God, and because of His sinless life He offered Himself without blemish, without sin, to God.

Therefore His blood has power to cleanse our conscience, and without the shedding of blood, verse 22, there is no forgiveness. Verse 23. Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these, that is, with the blood of goats and calves, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us. Nor was it that He should offer Himself often as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood not His own. Otherwise He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world, but now once at the consummation He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once, and after this comes judgment, so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time not to bear sin to those who eagerly await Him now for salvation. And so we read here about Christ, verse 24, entering the most holy place, the immediate presence of God, not that which was made with hands in the tabernacle, but into that which the tabernacle was only a type of, into the very presence of God, now to appear in the presence of

God for us. And here we read about the three appearances of Christ.

We read in verse 26, He has been manifested, He has appeared on this earth to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. By sacrificing Himself He has put away sin once and for all. But then we read of the second appearance of Christ, which is in heaven itself, verse 24.

He now appears in the presence of God for us. His appearance on earth was in the past. His appearance in heaven is now in the present.

Then we read, thirdly, He will appear, verse 28, a second time in the future back to earth to those who eagerly await Him for a full salvation. First of all, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, verse 26, and He has done a perfect job. There is no sin that has not been atoned for.

That sacrifice was perfect. That is why God the Father raised Jesus from the dead. That was God's demonstration to the world that the death of Jesus is a sufficient payment for the sins of all humanity.

Every man's sin has been atoned for through the death of Christ on the cross. It's a perfect sacrifice. But then we read of the second appearance of Christ, which is in the presence of God.

He now appears in the presence of God for us. After finishing the work of putting away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, He has gone through the veil with His blood. The veil that separated the most holy place from the holy place was rent in two when Jesus died on the cross.

And we shall look at the symbolism of that when we come to chapter 10, verse 20. But for the present, we see that He did enter into the presence of God. And why is He now in the presence of God? He is there to appear there for us.

We read in Romans chapter eight that Jesus now appears in the presence of God, interceding for us. Romans 8, verse 34. Christ Jesus, who died, who rather was raised, who is at the right hand of God now, interceding for us.

Jesus Christ is interceding for us. We read when we looked at Hebrews 7 and verse 25 that He always lives to make intercession for us, to those who draw near to God through Him. Anyone who draws near to God through Jesus Christ, Christ lives to make intercession for him.

And this is what Jesus is doing now. The work that Jesus is engaged in now, until His second coming to earth, is interceding, praying for all His people. Now there's a practical lesson that we can learn from this.

We read in Revelation chapter 12 that there is another one who comes into the presence of God, and that is the devil, who is always accusing us. Revelation 12, 10. Satan is called there the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before God day and night, and they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb.

It is through the blood of Christ that we overcome the accusations of Satan. Before God, Christ is interceding for us, and Satan is accusing us. We overcome the accusations of Satan by the blood of Christ.

Now when we accuse others, we are actually doing Satan's job. But when we intercede for others, we come into fellowship with Jesus Christ. Now the question that you can ask yourself is, do you accuse your brothers and have fellowship with Satan thereby, or do you intercede for your brothers and have fellowship

with Christ? Those who have fellowship with Christ pray for their brothers when they see weaknesses in their brothers.

Those who have fellowship with Satan accuse them when they see the weaknesses in their brothers. Then the third appearing of Christ, which is a second time on earth, verse 28, is returned to earth in glory. He will come not now to bear sin.

Without sin, he will come a second time to those who await him for salvation, that is, to complete their salvation. Jesus has already paid for the penalty of our sin. He has given us his spirit to deliver us continuously from the power of sin.

Now he is coming to save us from the very presence of sin, so that there will be no sin anywhere, to deliver us completely from the presence of sin. But to whom for whom is he coming? To those who eagerly await him. He is coming in glory.

It is appointed unto men, we read in verse 27, once to die, and after this the judgment. All men have to die once, and after this the judgment. To those who are eagerly awaiting for Christ, it will be a judgment for rewards.

To those who are not eagerly awaiting him, who have not availed of his atoning blood, it will be a judgment unto condemnation. But Jesus is coming, and this is the hope of those who have availed of his atoning blood and are looking for his appearing. We turn now to Hebrews chapter 10.

The first eighteen verses of this chapter are a continuation of the theme that began in chapter 9, verse 1, of the better worship that is offered us under the new covenant. And here we read, For the law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices, year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect those who draw near. Now there again is the same emphasis that the law could not make people perfect, and the contrast is that under grace people can be made perfect.

Perfect in what sense? It has already been mentioned in chapter 9, verse 9, perfect in conscience. The New Testament speaks of two types of perfection. One is an absolute, sinless perfection, which will take place only when Jesus returns in glory.

Paul says in Philippians chapter 3 and verse 12, he says, I have not yet become perfect. He said that towards the end of his life. What did he mean? That he was not yet sinlessly perfect.

He could not say that he was completely free from sin, because there were whole areas in his unconscious being which he was ignorant of, which he could only discover as he faithfully walked with God, like the lower part of an iceberg. In our subconscious being there is sin that we are ignorant of. That's true of all of us.

It was true of Paul towards the end of his life. It was true of the mature apostle John, who at the end of his life says, if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves. No, there is sin in our subconscious being.

But what Paul could say was, in 1 Corinthians 4, verse 4, I am conscious of nothing against myself. That's what the mature apostle John could also say. In 1 John 2.1, these things I write to you, that you do not sin, that is, consciously.

And chapter 3, verse 8, he who commits sin is of the devil. There is a difference between having sin, 1 John 1.8, which refers to our subconscious being, and committing sin, which is a conscious act. So we can be perfect only in that part of our being which we are conscious of.

Perfect in our conscience. And this is what Paul says in the same breath in Philippians 3.12, where he says he is not perfect. In verse 15 he says he is perfect.

So in the same paragraph he says two opposite things. I'm not perfect, and I am perfect. Meaning, of course, that he was not sinlessly perfect, because there were whole areas of his being that he was unconscious of.

And only when Jesus came could he be completely free from the presence of sin. But he could say that he was perfect according to the perfection offered under the new covenant, which is perfect in conscience. Perfectly free from conscious sin.

And Hebrews 10.1 says the same thing, that the law could not make those who come to it perfect. Otherwise, it says in verse 2, if they were perfect, then those offerings would cease to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sin. He is speaking again about conscious sin.

But in those sacrifices, he says, there is a reminder of sins year by year. For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. Therefore, when Jesus comes into the world, he says, sacrifice an offering thou hast not desired, but a body thou hast prepared for me.

In whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast taken no pleasure. Then I said, behold, I have come in the role of the book it is written of me to do thy will, O God. And after saying above, sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast not desired, nor hast thou taken pleasure in them, which are offered according to the law, then he said, behold, I have come to do thy will.

He takes away the first in order to establish the second. By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices which can never take away sins.

But he, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time onward until his enemies be made a footstool for his feet. For by one offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified. And the book of Hebrews is showing how the new covenant is better than the old covenant, and here it is that under the new covenant we can be perfect in our conscience and we can be sanctified, verse 10, by the same will that Jesus had.

Now looking at this passage, verses five to nine, these are words quoted from Psalm 40, verses six to eight. Sacrifice and offering thou is not desired. That is, what God actually desired was not just the offering of bulls and goats.

These were only symbolic and typical. But now a body hast thou prepared me. Jesus was given a body in the womb of the Virgin Mary.

A body was prepared into which Jesus came, and he took a body of flesh like ours and came into this world, and he said that which God desired above burnt offerings and sacrifices, Behold, I have come to do thy will, O God. What was the perpetual sacrifice to God? We read in verse six, In whole burnt offerings

and sacrifices for sin thou hast taken no pleasure. That's not what God was looking for, but a body in which his will would be done.

That's the meaning of verse five and verse seven. A body hast thou prepared me, and in this body I have come, says the Lord Jesus, to do thy will, O God. In that body which God gave him, a body of flesh like ours, he completely did the Father's will.

No human being had ever done that before. In every area, in every point, in thought, word, deed, attitude and motive, Jesus did the will of God. Lo, I have come to do thy will, O God.

And his own human will he offered up as a perpetual sacrifice to God. He said, Not my will, but thine be done. Many times Jesus said these words.

I have come from heaven not to do my will, but the will of him who sent me. Turn for a moment to John's gospel and chapter five. John chapter five and verse 30.

In the last part of that verse he says, I do not seek my own will, but the will of him who sent me. And in John chapter six and verse 38 he says, I have come from heaven not to do my own will. What did he do with his own will? He denied it.

Or in other words, he offered it up as a sacrifice to his father. He said no to his own will, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. In the garden of Gethsemane he said, Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.

That was his own human will, but he denied it. He said, Nevertheless, not my will, but thine. There was that human will which Jesus denied perpetually.

He offered up his human will as a sacrifice to God continuously in that body which God had prepared for him, and thereby he pleased God utterly. He came to do God's will, and he took away Hebrews ten, verse nine, the first covenant, in order to establish the second. How did he take it away? By doing the will of God completely in every area of his life.

And it says, By this will, verse ten, we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. We are brought into a fellowship with Jesus Christ in this area, and Jesus has given us an example by his own life of obedience. He says to us, Follow me.

Our will is to be laid down as a perpetual sacrifice in these bodies of ours if we are to enter fully into this new covenant that Jesus has come to establish. We turn now to Hebrews, chapter ten, and verse ten. We were looking at the example of the Lord Jesus, who, when He came into the world, said, A body hast thou prepared for me, Hebrews ten, five, and that body was prepared by God, the Father, for his son, with one purpose, that in that body the will of the Father might be done.

And that's why it says in verse seven, Behold, I have come in the roll of the book it is written of me to do thy will, O God. And repeat it again in verse nine. Behold, I have come to do thy will.

And verse ten, it says, By this will, we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of once for all. In the body of Jesus Christ, for the first time on earth in a human body, the will of God was done perfectly. And Jesus thereby became the leader for those who come into the new covenant, the beginning of a new race, those who come under his headship, as contrasted with the headship of Adam.

Those who live under the headship of Adam, their life is marked by disobedience. In Ephesians two, they are called the children of disobedience. But when we are transferred from the headship of Adam to the headship of Christ, we are to come into a life of obedience.

Under the first covenant, God gave his laws to man, but because of the hardness of man's heart, man could not live up to all that God expected man to live up to. There are many things God permitted people under the mosaic law to do which he does not permit today. Jesus made that clear when people asked him why Moses permitted divorce.

The Pharisees came up to Jesus, we read in Matthew chapter 19, and said, Why did Moses permit divorce? Verse 8. And Jesus replied and said, Because of the hardness of your heart. Verse 8. Because of your hardness of heart, Moses permitted you to divorce your wives. That was the reason.

And until the Holy Spirit was given on the day of Pentecost, man's heart remained hard. And it's only after the Spirit was given that man's heart could be soft. The promise in Ezekiel 36 was, I will take away the stony heart from you and give you a heart of flesh.

And so under the new covenant, we can do the will of God. This is the difference between the old covenant and the new covenant. Many people have misunderstood the difference between the old covenant and the new covenant.

They have felt that under the old covenant, God gave man a lot of laws. But under the new covenant, Jesus has kept all those laws for us so we don't have to keep them. That is not the difference.

The difference is that under the old covenant, man could not keep the laws of God. But under the new covenant, because of the gift of the Holy Spirit, man can keep God's laws. In this end, we are to present our bodies as a living sacrifice to God.

We are told in Romans 12, verses 1 and 2, I urge you, brethren, present your bodies a living sacrifice. In verse 2, it goes on to say that you may prove what the will of God is. Now this is what it means to follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ.

Jesus said, follow me. What does it mean to follow him? Are we to be miracle workers like him? Are we all to be carpenters like he was? Are we all to be unmarried like he was? Are we all to live without homes like he did? No, it is not in these areas, not in the particulars of the will of God for Jesus that we are to follow him, but in the attitude that Jesus had towards the will of God, which is one of total obedience. He denied the desires of the flesh and did the will of the Father.

He said, not my will, but thine be done. And that was the attitude of Jesus right through his life. And verse 10 of by this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Jesus offered his body up to the Father not just when he died on the cross, but right from the time he came to an age of understanding. As a child, he offered up his body to do the will of the Father completely and totally. And we are to enter into the same spirit.

We are to be identified with this will of Jesus Christ. He goes on in verse 11 to say, every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But Jesus, he having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time onward until his enemies be made a footstool for his feet.

And there we have in verse 12 and 13, the past, present and future ministry of Jesus Christ. In the past, verse 12, he came to earth, offered one sacrifice for the sins of all humanity. Now in the present, verse 12, he sits down at the right hand of God, interceding for us.

Verse 13, in the future, when he comes in glory, his enemies will be his footstool. And meanwhile, verse 14, by one offering where he presented himself, he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified. He has perfected us.

This word perfect or perfected is a word that comes a number of times in the book of Hebrews. We saw it in chapter 10, verse 1, that the law could not make perfect those who draw near. What type of perfection is this? We saw that earlier in Hebrews 9, verse 9, where the law could not make a man perfect in his conscience.

Not that he could not have his sins forgiven. David rejoiced that his sins were forgiven. He could say in Psalm 103, Bless the Lord, O my soul, who forgives all your iniquities.

He rejoiced in it. But perfection in conscience is more than having our sins forgiven. It is being able to say what the apostle Paul could say in 1 Corinthians chapter 4, and verse 4. I am conscious of nothing against myself.

In other words, in Paul's entire conscious area, according to the light that Paul had given him by his conscience, quickened by the word of God in the Holy Spirit, he lived a life free from conscious sin. Therefore, he was perfect in his conscience. And it is this perfection that the new covenant promises us.

And we are told in verse 14 of Hebrews 10, By one offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified. Now, earlier in Hebrews chapter 2, we had seen that he, verse 11 of Hebrews 2, he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father. We are all one in Christ, and it is in union with Christ, in the surrender of his body, to do the will of the Father, that he has perfected us.

If we are not united with him in the same spirit, presenting our bodies to do the will of the Father alone, then we will not be perfected or entirely sanctified. We are called to be united with Jesus in his offering, his body, to do the will of the Father, and for all time he has perfected those who are one with him like this. We turn now to Hebrews chapter 10 and verse 15.

In the previous verses, the last couple of weeks, we were looking at Jesus having offered up his body to do the will of the Father completely. And we are told that by this will we are also sanctified, perfected, those of us who are being sanctified. Hebrews 10.14. Verse 15 begins, And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us.

For after saying, and this is a quotation from Jeremiah 31, verse 33, this is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord. I will put my laws upon their heart, and upon their mind I will write them. And their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.

Now here we read, The Holy Spirit bears witness to us. Now this indicates that in our study of the scriptures, for he is referring to an Old Testament passage in verses 16 and 17, revelation is primary. It's the revelation of the Holy Spirit that makes the word of God live to us.

Apart from the revelation of the Holy Spirit, we cannot understand the scriptures. For example, this passage in Jeremiah 31, verse 33, which we looked at earlier in our study of Hebrews chapter 8. And if

you look back to Hebrews chapter 8, verse 8 and 9, the Lord says, The days are coming when I will effect a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. That's how that passage begins in Jeremiah 31, verse 31.

And God says there that it will not be like the covenant which he made with their fathers on the day when he took them by the hand out of Egypt. Now in this passage, it's very obvious that the Lord is speaking about Israel and Judah, the nation whom he redeemed out of Egypt. It's not referring to the Gentiles at all.

It's got nothing to do with us. So if that be the case, how can this apply to us today who are Gentiles and not among the nation that was brought out of Egypt? That's where we need the revelation of the Holy Spirit to understand that that Old Testament passage is referring to the Israel of God, which is the church. There is a phrase in Galatians 6, verse 16, where the church of Jesus Christ is called the Israel of God.

That includes those Jews of the nation of Israel who've come to see Jesus as their Messiah and have received the Holy Spirit in forgiveness of sins through the shed blood of Christ, who entered into the new covenant. And so this new covenant is for us. But the principle I wanted to make here is that apart from the revelation of the Holy Spirit, we cannot know that.

If we use human logic, we would say that applies only to Judah and Israel. It doesn't apply to us. But the apostle says in Hebrews 10, 15, the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us.

And then in verses 16 and 17, he gives us a condensed version of what he had mentioned earlier in Hebrews 8, verses 10 to 12. And in this condensed version of the new covenant, the Holy Spirit includes two things. One, verse 16, I'll put my laws upon their heart and upon their mind, I will write them.

And he then says, and their sins and their lawless deeds, I will remember no more. So there are essentially two parts to the new covenant. The first part, verse 17, forgiveness.

And the second part, verse 16, the writing of God's laws upon our heart and our mind. What does this mean? How does God write his laws upon our hearts and our mind? We are told in 2 Corinthians, in chapter 3, that we are a letter written with the Spirit of God. 2 Corinthians 3, verse 3. You are a letter written with the Spirit of the living God.

If we compare two parallel passages in the Gospels, we discover that Jesus spoke about the Spirit of God as the finger of God. In Luke 11, verse 20, he says, if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. And in the parallel passage, in Matthew 12, verse 28, he says, if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

And so, comparing these two passages, we find that Jesus was referring to the Holy Spirit as the finger of God. And the old covenant was written on two tablets of stone. The new covenant is written on two tablets within us, mind and the heart.

Written again with the finger of God, which is the Holy Spirit. Hebrews 10, verse 16, means that God is going to make us want to do his will, as writing it in our minds, and gives us the ability to do his will by putting his laws into our hearts, so that we will God's will, and will God's will. Now, we read in Hebrews 10, 16, and 17, the two parts of the new covenant.

Verse 16 is through the gift of the Holy Spirit, who is the finger of God. Verse 17 is through the shed blood of Christ, and so, the two parts of the new covenant, referred to here in Hebrews chapter 10, refer to the

blood of Christ and the Holy Spirit. Acts chapter 2, Peter says these words in the day of Pentecost, when the inquiring multitude came to Peter and said, what shall we do? Peter's reply was, in Acts 2, 38, repent and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

Those are the two things that man had to do, repent and be baptized, as an evidence of their faith, and he says there that God will give you two gifts. One, the forgiveness of sin. Second, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and we see that this is exactly corresponding to what we have seen in Hebrews 10, 16, and 17, are the two promises under the new covenant.

Under the new covenant, the promises, your sins will be forgiven, and I will write my laws upon your mind and put them in your heart, and we saw that that referred to forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit, and so we see that when Peter preached the first gospel sermon on the day of Pentecost, he exalted Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord before them, as the one who died, was buried, risen again, ascended, poured out the Holy Spirit, coming back in glory. When people were convicted, Peter, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, offered them the two gifts of the new covenant, forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit, in order to do the will of God. When we preach the gospel today, we are to preach this gospel of the new covenant and offer to people two gifts of God, the forgiveness of sins through the shed blood of Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit that Jesus has poured out on his church.

The purpose of this gift of the Spirit being that God's laws will now be written on our minds and put in our hearts. We have the desire, the knowledge of the will of God, and the ability. God works in us.

Philippians 2 verse 13, to will and to do of his good pleasure, and this is through the power of the Holy Spirit. This is the new covenant into which God calls us.

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