

## The Temple Hebrews 9:1-15

Galatians 5:13-25

John 14:1-18

Responsive Psalm 119: 1-8

Last week we finished up chapter 8 of Hebrews which was mostly a quotation of Jeremiah 31, which in effect the Author here was showing that Christ is the fulfillment of this promise, the promise that the Lord said, I will make a new covenant with my people which I will write on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they will be my people. And in the final verse of chapter 8, he concludes, since there is now a new covenant, the old has become obsolete and is vanishing away. One thing I didn't touch on last week that I think is just an interesting note, is if we notice that he is talking about the old covenant law's and traditions in the present tense, not as passed away, but as passing away. He said it was made obsolete, so now it is passing away.

Well since it is widely believed that this book was written before AD 70, that would put the temple and all of its traditions still in practice. So while the new covenant had been established in the blood of Christ on the cross, the old covenant was still in operation in Jerusalem, but it had been rendered obsolete....and is now passing away. Seems a bit prophetic does it not? Especially considering the temple was destroyed in AD 70, in effect putting an end to much of the old covenant practices. And that really is what the Author here will be taking up in our passage this morning, is the practices in the old covenant, the regulations, traditions, and methods of worship vs the new covenant.

Since not everyone was here last week, I will sum it up for a moment just to bring everyone up to speed before we continue for chapter 9 for like usual, it is really a continuation of proof as to the fading, and passing of the old covenant. The main issue we looked at last week, was the issue of the law itself. If the old covenant has passed, if it was replaced and is now obsolete then what is our rule and guide for our life? The short answer? Christ. And how is that played out in our lives? Through love. I am not going to spend the time here this morning listing again bible verses talking about how love really is how the christian operates, and really it is Christ's love reflecting through them that causes them to be "lawful" people. For if you love someone, you would not seek them harm, and as Galatians 5 says, "For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, that you love your neighbors as yourself, and the following verses which we read this morning, go on to show how that is true, for one who lives in the flesh is one way, and one who lives by the spirit is another, which clearly teaches the role and operation of the spirit within the believer as one who is our guide and helper.

The old law operated out of a sense of pure duty, out of absolute obedience, and if it was broken, there was no mercy or grace, there was no forgiveness, but rather only came judgment, and the punishment of death. And as we all know, there is no way that anyone, even as believers in Christ can actually keep these laws, therefore the laws pointed to needing a righteousness outside of ourselves, the operation of the old covenant law was to point to man's dire situation before God and its need for a savior. As we will see this morning just as the law was given to point to something greater, to point to man's need for a righteousness not their own, the temple itself pointed the same thing, pointed to man's need for salvation and a covering of sin. So let us read our passage this morning that we will be looking at, which is talking about the temple. ( read Hebrews 9:1-10

As we know God gave explicit directions as to how this temple was to be constructed, which is an important detail to remember when we talk about the temple. For each thing, and each practice of the temple worship traditions served a purpose, was there to teach a lesson, and to show in a progressive revelation things about Christ, the coming messiah, the true high priest. As verse 1 says, the first covenant had ordinances of divine service, which we see the author here then proceeds to list in the following verses. Later in the chapter, which we will get into in the next coming weeks the author here will contrast and compare these divine ordinances and ceremonial practices of the temple worship with the ministry of Christ in the new covenant.

The first thing I want to point out is notice that the law, and the temple worship practices are not treated as separate things. But rather the author here is tying them together as one, the old covenant. There is no justification for a separation of the old covenant practices with the law. That is, the idea of the law having 3 separate roles, moral, ceremonial, and judicial is not actually supported in scripture, for in fact they all fall under one covenant and that covenant has faded, has passed, has become obsolete....all of it. The idea of the tripartate, or 3 divisions of the law is a construct of man attempting to understand the role of the law and the old covenant on the new testament believer. It is obvious that we no longer practice the sacrifices and ordinances of the temple, it is obvious that we no longer practice the judicial practices of the old testament, but somehow we must still be under the law, it still must be a guide, no, it has faded, it has been replaced by a new covenant, and a new law that is far superior to this old.

One very important distinction between the new covenant, and the old covenant, is its nature by which it operates. By that I mean, the old covenant as we know was focused upon the physical, encompassing every aspect of life, in this sense you can say the 3 parts, the old covenant did account for the moral, ceremonial and judicial aspect of the life of the israelites, but if any of it was broken came judgment. And what happened? Israel broke the covenant, As Jeremiah 31 says, "my covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them." The first covenant was conditional, and it was broken by Israel, which is why the author here says in chapter 8, verse 7, "For if the first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second." The fault of the first covenant is not a fault in it's design or purpose, but it's fault is that Israel did not keep it. But isn't that the whole point of the law really? It is not truly possible to keep the whole law, so even here israel's failure to keep it only shows that mankind is incapable of keeping God's law. Therefore, a need for a second, and better covenant one which is not contingent on our keeping it, but it rests completely and solely upon God.

Verse 10, of chapter 8, says "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the lord. I will put my laws in their mind and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God and they will be my people. This distinction of the new covenant law from the physical, to the spiritual, and in its administration, that it rests completely upon Christ, those of us who are in Christ, whose sins are covered by his blood, and who have been justified through the death of the messiah, are freed from the curse of the old covenant, and our bound in love with our savior in the new, which is unconditional, eternal, never failing. How glorious is this new covenant, for mankind will fail, we will always fail in this body, but we are not met with judgment, but grace and forgiveness if we only confess our sins. What a stark difference between these 2 covenants, one is a covenant of death, and the other a covenant of life, a covenant of law, and a covenant of love.

As we have seen going through this book of Hebrews, the main point of this author is the Superiority of Christ in all things, and in that the superiority of this new covenant which is based upon better promises, a better sanctuary, and a better sacrifice. And the focus of today, is setting up the argument of Christ superiority in this better sanctuary. But we must first understand the old to see its fulfillment in the new, which is why the author here spends the time to explain the old temple worship. The first 5 verses here, describe the layout of the temple, that it was divided into 2 sections, an outer, and an inner chamber, in which the priests would enter once a year, bringing blood from the sacrifices to sprinkle on the altar. This inner chamber, the holy of holies was separated from the rest by a large heavy veil, this inner chamber was the presence of God and if any priest entered improperly, or without blood they would die. This signifies that there is only one way to approach God, the way that He prepared, the way that he ordered and setup and any other approach brought with it death.

Even here in the practice of the temple worship is the clear signs that there is only one way to God, and that way is his way, the way that he has made. The pathway to God, and heaven is not through many different ways, all religions do not lead to the same place as some want to believe today..but there is only one way to stand before God, and it is not without the blood of the lamb that was slain. These priests entered the very presence of God, once a year on behalf of the people of Israel, They came through the veil, with blood, as they were instructed. One way, and one way only, all others only lead to death. But we know through the the reading of the new testament that the blood of lambs, and the blood of bulls did not bring atonement to the priests before God, so what was the purpose of all of this? Well, as our author here says in verse 9, it was symbolic for the present time

And again we see the superiority of Christ in this practice of temple worship in verse 8, saying “the Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing.” So what does he mean by this? We have to remember the account of the events that took place during Christ's crucifixion. AS is recorded upon Christ's death, the veil that created the separation in the tabernacle was torn in 2, from top to bottom. Christ, the superior sacrifice offered himself up opening up the separation between God and man, in which now he is our mediator, not the priests and we all now have been granted access to the very presence of God. But just as it was in the temple, again there is only one way to this access and that is through the blood and sacrifice of Christ.

Again the superiority of Christ, and as we can see now that Christ has come and established this new covenant in his blood, that even the purpose of the temple itself no longer is necessary. It has faded, passed away, become obsolete. The temple practices were never designed to make one holy, just as the law was never given to make one righteous, as it says here in verses 9 and 10, IT was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience, concerned only with foods, and drinks, and various washings and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation....I initially was planning on only covering the first 10 verses of chapter 9 here but have actually already dove into the content of the following verses, so let us read this comparison, this fulfillment of these old covenant temple symbols to the true fulfillment in Christ, verse 11. But Christ came as high priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with his own blood he entered into the most holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.

For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living god?

And for this reason he is the mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of eternal inheritance. The veil has been torn, access to God has been granted through the mediation of Christ, the high priest, and the sacrifice whose blood covers all who are children of the promise so when we come before God in the holy of holies, he does not see our sins and rebellion, our faults and failings, but he sees the blood that was shed for us, applied to us, so that we may stand faultless before the throne. How glorious, is this new covenant, how gracious and merciful, in which we have in Christ, this eternal, covenantal promise from God, that he will be our God, and we shall be his people, in which we now have been granted direct access to him through prayer, through the mediation of the Son in the temple not made with hands, not on this earth, but in the very presence of God, the holiest of holies where our lord and savior sits at the right hand of the throne making intercession for us.

What grace, what mercy, what love he had for us, that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us, so that we could be put under his blood, so that we could become a holy people who can come to God in prayer in our darkest hours, in our greatest times of need to seek wisdom, and refuge. None of this was possible in the old covenant, for there were various levels of separation, the outer court of the tabernacle, the outer chamber, and the inner holy of holies but still even yet the separation that it was only the priests who could act on the behalf of Israel. But now, we have all been made priests, we have become a nation of priests as scripture says, Isaiah 61:6 “ But you shall be called priests of the Lord they shall speak of you as ministers of our God, you shall eat the wealth of the nations and in their glory you shall boast.

Exodus 19:6, and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation, these are the words you shall speak to the people of Israel. 1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into marvelous light. And Revelations 1:6 and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. IT is through the blood of Christ, that we are now able to enter into the holy of holies, the very presence of God, having the degrees of separation torn down we now have access to the father, for he has made us a kingdom of priests, a holy nation for himself.