

“A Parable of the Present Age”

Fixing Our Eyes On Jesus, Our High Priest

Hebrews 9:1-10

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Jeff: Our great God in heaven, we give You thanks for this day and for the time You give to us. We realize that our times are in Your hands and that You've created a time for everything. And Father, as we think about that, we realize that not only have You given to us the seconds that tick off the clock, but You've given to us those moments that will be embedded in our minds forever, those that are both corporate, those that we remember as a people, and those that we remember as individuals. And we're thankful for that. And yet we're thankful most of all that in the fullness of time You sent Your only-begotten Son into the world that we might have life everlasting. Father, we're thankful for that. And we're thankful for the Holy Spirit who opens our eyes to the significance of His work. Thank You, Father, for Your call upon our lives and for the Holy Spirit waking us, regenerating us, resurrecting us, that we might hear it and be drawn to You. Thank You for not only that, but for the justification that we have in the Lord Jesus Christ, for our adoption, for our growth in grace. Thank You, Father, for the impending glorification that is ours. Thank You for all of these things that are in Christ Jesus that belong to us. Father, You are a wonderful God and You are God alone, and we give You thanks for that.

Father, as we gather here this morning, we recognize that it is a privilege to gather to open Your word in this country. And Father, it is in one sense not just a privilege of our country, but it is our right as sons and daughters of God. And Father, as we gather, we gather knowing that whether our country privileges us with this or not, we would gather and study Your word. And Father, we pray that You would give us strength for the day.

Lord, we ask also that You'll hear our prayers with regard to those whom we love. We think of Bruce. We ask that You would continue to make Him well. We're thankful that He's on the mend and pray that would continue. Father, we pray for Peter's granddaughter and we continue to lift her up. And we ask, Lord, and we pray first of all and give You thanks again that You providentially work the meeting that took place so that Peter's daughter could get information that would lead to a procedure that would be less invasive and perhaps more effective for his granddaughter. And we pray, Father, for that good providence to continue in their lives. And we pray for this to resolve easily and well. And yet we know that it will be a long road.

Father, we pray for James. We ask for his healing. We ask that You will bless him, Lord, not only with physical healing, but bless James and his wife as they consider their future and their need to be helped. And Father, considering where they are and that sort of thing, we pray that You'll give them wisdom and insight. And Lord, we are thankful for their determination to live independently. And yet, Father, we pray that You'll grant them wisdom in what they need.

Lord, we certainly pray for Kevin and ask for Your continued hand to be upon him as he continues to get tests and looks forward to a procedure for his heart. And Lord, we ask these things, giving them to You in the precious name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

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Men: Amen.

Jeff: All right. Well let's get started today, and I want us to look at Hebrews 9:1-10. If you have it, turn there. Why don't we turn to Hebrews 9? And let me read Hebrews 9:1-10 to you. This is the word of God.

“Now even the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly place of holiness. For a tent was prepared, the first section in which were the lamp-stand and the table and the Bread of Presence. It is called the Holy Place. Behind the second curtain was a second section called the Most Holy Place, having the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant, covered on all sides with gold, in which was a gold urn holding the manna, and Aaron's staff that budded, and the tablets of the covenant. Above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail.

“These preparations, having thus been made, the priests go regularly into the first section, performing their ritual duties. But into the second only the High Priest goes, and he but once a year, and not without taking blood, which he offers for himself and for the unintentional sins of the people. By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the Holy Places is not yet opened as long as the first section is still standing, which is symbolic for the present age. According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper, but deal only with food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until the time of reformation.”

Participant: The word of the Lord.

Men: Thanks be to God.

Jeff: Okay. So here is what we're going to be thinking about today. I think that in many ways it's a very succinct, tight teaching that we find here in this particular section. And I think our HTML cord is bad, and this is why it's going to go on and off. I don't think it's anything other than the cord. But we have an introduction, and we're going to be thinking about some introductory things that are important for us as we get into an understanding of the next two points. And the second point is simply going to be that *the type that we find in the Scriptures is from God*. And then third, *the type serves as a purpose*. And so we're going to be thinking about that.

And so it's a very tightly formed, Biblically logical section. And we're going to think a lot today about typology. And so let's start doing that with the introduction.

I want you to notice something. I want you to notice what we've been looking at for several weeks now, I think. I want you to notice that we find that the tabernacle in verse 9 is called a symbol. And yet the interesting thing is that if you look at the Greek, that's the very word *parable*. And so you could say that there is a symbolism of the tabernacle. This is something that we find in the Scripture itself. But also it's a parable. In other words, when you think of a parable you think of two words. You think of a prefix, *para*. It's a preposition meaning *alongside*. And the *able* is *to cast*. It's from a word that means *cast*. So *to cast alongside* is the idea of the parable.

And oftentimes when you think of a parable in terms of Jesus' teaching, here Jesus is teaching. And He's now illustrating something He said with a parable. He's casting

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something alongside of what He said. And so the tabernacle is in some sense a visible illustration of something else. At least that’s the way that we’re to understand it. So it’s a parable; it’s a symbol.

But you don’t only find that. If you go back to Hebrews 8:5, one of the things that you find is, you find that the temple was shown to Moses in heavenly places.

Transcriber’s Note: Hebrews 8:4-5, NKJV. *“For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law; who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, ‘See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.’”*

Jeff: Now when you think of that, you think of the heavenly place, the temple, as something that was not a shadow. But what Moses built was a shadow or a copy. Or again that’s at least what we’re told in the Scriptures.

So now we find a couple of things. We find that the tabernacle is called *a symbol* in some translations because that’s a legitimate translation. It’s called *a parable*. It’s called *a shadow*. It’s called *a copy*.

All of a sudden you’re beginning to get the idea that the tabernacle is something that is impermanent. It’s something that’s transitional. And so you find that it’s called these different things. And the question that you have to ask yourself is why? Why is it called these different things? What do we make of this?

Well, I want you to think about an illustration that I’m going to use, and I’m going to use a parable. I’m going to cast something alongside. I want you to think about a flight simulator.

When my son was in high school he used to have a class. And they had a flight simulator in his classroom. And so he could get into the flight simulator and he would fly. At least he would come home and he’d say, “Dad, today I flew.”

I said, “Where’d you fly?” And he’d tell me where he flew. And I would always say to him, “Son, you’re not really flying. You know that.”

He said, “I know that, Dad.”

I said, “How do you know that?”

He goes, “Because I was in class the other day and I walked out of the flight simulator.” *(Laughter)*

So a flight simulator is not flying. But he would say this to me. He would say, “You know, Dad, I know that I’m not flying. But I’ll tell you what. That flight simulator sure does give you the sense that you’re flying. You feel it. when you’re looking at the screen, sometimes you lose your belly, you know? It’s really cool, Dad. You really ought to see it.” So it gives you the sense that you’re flying.

And that’s what I want to say. It’s not able to take you up into the air and take you to point B. But it can give you the sense of what it must feel like to control an airplane. It even gives you the physical feeling of flying.

Now that simulator puts us in the vicinity of the tabernacle. In other words, the tabernacle gives us the sense of what it must be like to experience the fullness of the type to which it points.

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In other words, when you go into the tabernacle, and you participate in what the tabernacle offers, you are to get a sense of what it is that the tabernacle is seeking to communicate as it communicates its fullness even beyond itself. Now we’re going to think about what that means as we continue to lay that out this morning. But that is basically what it means.

Now here are a couple things that I want to show you before we get too far along. First of all, I want you to understand what a type is in a most basic sense. A *type* is something of a time bomb. In other words, that type that is in the Scriptures is there because the Spirit put it there. And it may not look like a type until later on. And later on that’s going to explode.

I want to show you one way in which you see this. Look with me for a minute at Matthew’s Gospel, Matthew chapter 1.

Transcriber’s Note: Jeff turns pages.

Participant: It’s right after Malachi, Jeff.

Jeff: Yes, thank you. (*Laughter*) So in Hosea 11:1, here’s what you read. Now you guys are in Matthew. Did I say 2?

Participant: No.

Jeff: Oh, look in Matthew 2. Sorry. And I want you to look—where is it now?—in 2:15.

So in Hosea 11:1 listen to what this says. *“When Israel was a child I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.”* Now that’s Hosea 11:1.

Now does that look like a prophecy or a typology about Jesus Christ? Do you think that you would look at that and think that if you just read Hosea? But when you turn to Matthew chapter 2 verse 15, and you notice that Jesus is told through his earthly father, his adoptive father Joseph, to be taken down into Egypt. And then verse 15: *“And they remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: ‘Out of Egypt I called My Son.’”*

So Hosea 11:1, which doesn’t necessarily look like a prophecy of the Son, or even a typology of the Son, is most certainly both. And yet it’s like a time bomb. It doesn’t hit us as such until we get to the New Testament. And the same Spirit who placed that time bomb in Hosea 11:1 inspires Matthew to pick that prophecy up and use it for what it was meant to be used for, both a prophecy of the Son and a typology of Christ who is the antitype or the fulfillment of the type. And so there’s a sense in which Scriptural types are like time bombs.

For instance, I’ll show you one more, just so you can see this. You go to Hebrews chapter 10, and I’ll go to Psalm 40. And if you look at verse 5, it will say, *“Consequently, when Christ came into the world, He said, ‘Sacrifices and offerings You have not desired, but a body You have prepared for Me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings You have taken no pleasure. Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God,’ as it is written of Me in the scroll of the book.’”*

Now the interesting thing is that if you look in Psalm 40 verse 6, it says, *“In sacrifice and offering You have not delighted. But You have given Me an open ear. Burnt offering and sin offering You have not required. Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come; in the scroll of*

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the book it is written of Me. I delight to do Your will, O God; Your law is within My heart.”

Now when you read Psalm 40, there are a couple of things that strike you. #1, you might look at that Psalm and say that there’s something prophetic or Messianic about that Psalm, because I don’t think that the Psalmist has himself in view, at least not as somebody who’s going to live perfectly before God, delighting in all the law. Now you could say that. One could say that and still say, “Well, I delight in God’s law; I just don’t always keep it.”

But there’s something else about this Psalm that really makes it striking. And that is that you don’t read what you read in the Psalm. In Psalm 40 verse 6 it says, “*You have given Me an open ear.*” But in Hebrews chapter 10 verse 5 it says, “*But a body You have prepared for Me.*” Now that looks a lot like something that’s Messianic. Oh, a body! This is the Incarnation that’s in view.

But what about Psalm 40 verse 6, that “*You have given Me an open ear*”? Well, let me tell you the difference. The difference is that the Masoretic Hebrew text has “*You have given Me an open ear.*” But what’s being quoted here in Hebrews chapter 10 is not the Hebrew Masoretic text, but it is the Greek translation of either the Masoretic text, that Hebrew text, or some other text. But it is now in Greek.

And what happened was this. Here is the transitional point. What happened was this. In Hebrew “*an ear You dug for Me*” is an idiom for “*a body You have prepared for Me.*” So for instance, “an ear You have dug or carved out for me” is idiomatic for preparation of the body. In other words, it’s describing part of the carving or the shaping of the body. But in the Septuagint text, the Greek translation of the Hebrew, what we have is the idiomatic expression developed and unfolded for us.

But the idea again is that this is *typology*. Typology is there in the Old Testament, and it’s brought out more clearly in the New. It’s like a time bomb.

Now here’s the next thing you need to understand. And that is that *Scriptural types do not produce replicas*. In other words, when you think about it, let’s use an example—animal sacrifices. Animal sacrifices as they point beyond themselves, as they are a type, they don’t demand that the fulfillment be an animal, right? They don’t demand that the fulfillment be exactly what they are.

Think about it like this. John the Baptist looks at Jesus and says, “*Behold, the Lamb of God!*” In other words, the type and the antitype or its fulfillment is not exactly the same thing. The type was an animal. The antitype of the fulfillment is a divine Being, human and divine in one Person.

Now this is important, because why? Think about Ezekiel 40. It goes on for about eight chapters, and it tells you about the perfect temple, an absolutely perfect temple. And end times exponents think, oh! What we need then is a perfect temple like the one we find in Ezekiel 40. And therefore, they say, we need to get the Dome of the Rock mosque removed. And we need a temple, a perfect temple, like the one we find in Ezekiel 40, and so on, built there in its place. And that will be a sign of the end.

But you see, what they do is that they make this fallacy. They believe that the type must produce the exact likeness of itself, the antitype. And they fail to realize that just as

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the animal does not need to produce, nor must it produce another animal for its fulfillment, that its antitype or fulfillment may in fact be different. And so when you look at a perfect temple, you are to see the perfect form of reconciliation between God and man. And that points to—somebody said it! Somebody is stealing my thunder!

Participant: Jesus.

Jeff: That perfect temple is Jesus, because that and all that the temple embodies is a type of Jesus, who is its antitype. So Jesus comes and He is the temple. There is no need to look ahead and to hope for a temple that’s built on the dome of the mosque. It’s not necessary; it’s not required, and certainly not Biblical. What is required is that we see Jesus as the fulfillment of the Ezekiel 40 temple. It’s as simple as that.

So types demand historical and theological fulfillment. They don’t demand exactness in terms of what they are. An animal doesn’t demand an animal. What an animal sacrifice demands is its theological and its historical fulfillment—theological fulfillment in Jesus Christ who brings final reconciliation between us and God, and historical fulfillment in that He actually comes and does that. Okay, so not only that. No no no, no questions. *(Laughter)* No, go ahead.

Participant: When you use this word *antitype*,--

Jeff: Yes, it just means the fulfillment of the type. There’s the type and the antitype.

Participant: It’s not opposite.

Jeff: No, it’s in place of.

Participant: Type and fulfillment. Thank you.

Jeff: *Anti-* can mean *against*, or it can mean *instead or in the place of*, right? So the antichrist can be against Christ, but also in place of Christ, right?

Participant: Oh, oh!

Jeff: He’s taking the place that belongs to Christ. And so that’s the idea of the antitype. So the type is the first and the antitype is the fulfillment of the first. Okay?

So types demand the historical fulfillment. But think about this, too. Types implode once the fulfillment comes, which is why in Hebrews 8:13 we find that the types and the shadows and the copies are becoming obsolete.

Transcriber’s Note: Hebrews 8:13, NKJV. *“In that He says, ‘A new covenant,’ He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.”*

Jeff: They implode upon themselves because there’s no longer a need for them.

All right. So I realize that’s a lot for an introduction. A bit heavy and theological, maybe. But any questions that you might have about that? Frank, go ahead. Oh, you were just waving at me. *(Laughter)*

Participant: Jeff, I agree with you about the Ezekiel—

Jeff: Stop right there, Don. *(Laughter)*

Don: Why would Ezekiel go through all these eight chapters in great detail about the temple? Why doesn’t He just say a little bit if Jesus is the fulfillment of that?

Jeff: That is a great question, Don, and here is why. It’s because revelation is progressive. There is a progressive character to it. And when a prophet is in the midst of one particular point of the progression, he may not know the end. So for instance, I’m not

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totally convinced—and I don’t think we should be,—that Isaiah knew the Man he was writing about, or all the details he was writing about when he wrote about Isaiah 53. He knew that he was writing about the fulfillment of the Seed in Genesis 3:15. But he did not know what we know in the New Testament. Nor did Ezekiel understand fully. He knew that he was writing about the completion of all that the ceremonial law pointed toward. But I’m not sure that he understood all the details of what that meant. My guess is that he had a pretty good idea that he was writing about full reconciliation between man and God. And he probably understood that he was writing about the One who would bring that reconciliation.

But you also have to remember this thirdly. You see, we all eschew the idea of mechanical dictation when it comes to inspiration. In other words, we say that the writers of Scripture were not what we would call amanuensises, secretaries who just simply wrote down what God whispered in their ear, except for when it comes to prophecy. Prophecy is the closest thing to dictation that we have in all of Scripture. God certainly inspired the writers of the New Testament to write exactly what He wanted them to write, but He includes the personalities in the New Testament. But that is done in a way different from what we find in the Prophets, where there is certainly more of a dictated mode of inspiration.

So those three reasons are what I would give for saying that here is Ezekiel who is in the midst of the progress, who is being told what to write. And this is why he writes it. I mean, in one sense it’s easy enough for us to say, “Why don’t you just say Christ?” But we’re standing on 2500 years on top of him. Yes?

Participant: Isn’t it also true that this writer is taking all of these chapters to convince his audience not to turn back to Judaism?

Jeff: Well, that’s what I’ve got coming up. Does somebody else have a question? No?

Okay. So the second point I want to talk to you about is that *the type is of God*. Types originate from and belong to God. So what I want you simply to understand by this is that whether it’s Hosea 11:1 as a type of the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, or whether it’s a type of the body of Christ in Psalm 40, told to us in Hebrews 10, it’s planted in the Old Testament by God. It belongs to Him. And that’s why I want you to understand that the Holy Spirit tells us about types. And we have to be very attentive to what he says.

He says three things. The first is this. *Scripture is inspired of God*. And we see that in our text. This is the Spirit who is saying these things in the text. And one of the things that I want you to understand is that it is the Spirit saying these things in the text. But it is also the Preacher who is exegeting and expositing these things. That’s the interesting point that I think we ought to catch.

Here it is. This Preacher is saying, look! This is what the Old Testament says, because this is what the Spirit said in the Old Testament. But as a preacher looking at the Old Testament and writing a New Testament sermon, he’s basically saying, “Look, I’m just taking out of the Old what the Old says.”

Now of course he’s an inspired exegete. And so when he goes back to Psalm 40 the Spirit leads him to Psalm 40 to use in Hebrews chapter 10, and to understand that that is indeed an antitype of what we find in the type of Psalm 40. So we find the Incarnation

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there. But the point is that all this man is doing is preparing a sermon. He’s exegeting the Old Testament Scriptures. He’s telling us what the Spirit says.

And so the preached Word, as he says in chapter 4, is a living Word. It’s living not because it’s preached by him, but because he’s preaching what the Spirit has said. So that’s first.

Secondly, *the Spirit is very clear*. Notice that it says this. It says *clear* or *evident* in the text. This is clear!

Now the question is, what’s clear? It’s this. As long as the tabernacle stands, access to God is not evident. That’s exactly what he says in the text. All I’m doing is telling you that this is what the Preacher says is evident or clear. As long as the old economy stands, as long as the temple stands, as long as sacrifices are offered, as long as priests function on a daily basis, as long as incense is still offered, guess what? Access to God is obscured.

Now you need to think about this. If access under the Old is not clear, then why would you go back? That’s Bill’s point. And this is the author’s point. This is what the author of Hebrews is saying. Why would you go back to that which is less clear and obscure? If the clear is here, why would you go back?

The third thing that he says is this. He’s telling people who are wanting to go back. *If you refuse to listen to the Scriptures, then you refuse to listen to God*. That’s what he’s saying. If you refuse to listen to the type and the antitype which is of the Spirit of God and is clear, you refuse to listen to God Himself. That’s what He’s saying. That’s a pretty powerful argument—tightly knit, I think.

Participant: Okay.

Participant: Hey Jeff, just one thing.

Jeff: Yes.

Participant: Just one thing for clarification. When you use the word *tabernacle*, are you talking about the one that traveled through the desert?

Jeff: Yes, I am.

Participant: So you’re not talking about the temple that Solomon built?

Jeff: He’s transitioning. He talks about the tabernacle at first, and then he talks about the two ages. And we’re going to look at that in the next point where he transitions then to the temple. And he says, “I’ve been talking about the tabernacle. But we’re living in the day of the temple.” So I think that’s what he’s pointing at.

So there’s a history of this here. There’s a history, exactly what I’ve said to you. This is the Spirit’s word. The Spirit speaks clearly. To refuse to listen is to refuse to listen to God Himself.

Now listen to what we’ve already been through in this letter. In chapter 2 he says, “Pay close attention,” right? Remember, he admonishes them to pay close attention. In 3 and 4 he tells them, “You need to listen and hear, because unbelief is the danger.” And then in 5 and 6 he tells them that they have been sluggish to hear, dull of hearing.

So what he’s been doing is that he has been telling them all along exactly the very thing that he’s telling us to do here, and that is to pay attention to what the Spirit says in the Scriptures.

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You know, just as an aside, I don't know about you guys, but when we think about what we find in the book of Hebrews, we find a pretty strong argument for the authority and the infallibility and inerrancy of Scripture. It's kind of all over the pages of this particular text. And so types are of God. And we need to turn to God in order to understand those types.

Well, *types also serve a purpose*. Any questions about that before we move on? I realize that we're running out of time and you guys are wanting to go Black Friday shopping just like me. *(Laughter)* Any questions before we move on now? All right.

So *the type serves a purpose*. Let's think about this. What is the purpose? What's the purpose of the type? Well, we need to understand a summary of what the Spirit has been saying before we can understand the purpose of the types.

So the summary first. And that's this. I'm going to say something to you that may make sense or that may not make sense. You've heard me talk about the present age as the age to come before. Do you remember that? If you remember that, raise your hand. There are three of you. So you don't remember that? That's fine. I'm going to ignore that. *(Laughter)* You're not confusing me by it. If you have a question about it, you can certainly ask me. But that has to do with the Vossian Biblical theology that I've taught you in the past. This does not have to do with that.

Transcriber's Note: Vossian theology, from Gerhardus Voss, a 20th-century Presbyterian theologian.

Jeff: When he talks about the present time, he's not talking about the present age that we find elsewhere in Scripture. When he talks about the present time he's talking about this. He's talking about the fact that the temple still stands. He's talking about the sacrifices still being offered, of the priests still functioning on a daily basis. He's talking about all of that stuff. That's the present time that he has in mind when he writes this letter.

That means that he is living in an unrepeatable transitional period. Now I want you to understand something. One of the things that I think is really difficult for people to understand is that not everything in Scripture applies to them as they would like it to apply to them. For instance, I've said to my congregation a number of times that if somebody tells you that he has had a Gethsemane experience, you should run from him, because he's not had a Gethsemane experience. Gethsemane was an unrepeatable event. It was Christ's event. It was what He experienced leading up to His crucifixion. We don't have Gethsemane experiences. Christ had a Gethsemane experience. It was an unrepeatable event.

Now there is something of that here. What we find in this early letter is a transitional period. We are never going to experience this sort of period again in the life of the church. Why? We are never going to live during the time when the Old Covenant is coming to an end and the New Covenant is coming into existence. We're never going to live in that time again.

That means that what is happening in the life of this church is a transitional period which is unrepeatable. It's not going to happen again.

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That means that when we try to understand what’s happening here, we need to not ask the question, “Where am I in this text?” But we need to ask the question, “What’s happening in this text?” And I’ll tell you what’s happening in this text. The temple is still standing and still functioning, and Christ has come. He has come; He’s been crucified. He’s been buried, He’s been resurrected. He’s ascended into heaven, and He has poured out His Spirit. And yet the temple which pointed to Him as the fulfillment still stands. There’s a transitional period here. And that temple is still going to stand until 70 A.D. It’s going to stand for about 30 more years. Okay? So we are in a transitional time. Go ahead.

Participant: So this isn’t to be confused with the writer writing this letter before 70 A.D.

Jeff: He did write it before 70 A.D.

Participant: He did. Okay.

Jeff: I believe he wrote it before 70 A.D. He was writing in this transitional period.

Participant: So this is prophetic, then?

Jeff: There’s a sense in which this is prophetic. And yet he is telling us that the types have to implode.

Participant: This is obsolete. But he’s not really telling us that in 70 A.D. that it is actually going to implode.

Participant: So at the end of 8 when he said that the first one was becoming obsolete will be growing old and ready to vanish away, he’s leading into that.

Jeff: I think he understands that whatever God is going to do, these types are going to be brought to an end. They’re not going to continue to live on in light of the fulfillment.

And that means that we need to look at the parable of the temple, because that is what he is living in light of. He’s living in light of the temple existing while Christ exists as the fulfillment of these things.

Now let’s think about the tabernacle or the temple floor plan. What do you find? You find that this is the outer and you have to enter in. And when you enter into the courtyard, there is the altar for sacrifices and the outer court, the bronze altar. And then you enter into the Holy Place. And when you enter into the Holy Place you run right into the altar of incense. And then when you run into the Holy of Holies, then you run into the ark of the covenant with the mercy seat upon which the blood needs to be splashed.

Now anybody can be in the outer court and watch the sacrifices on the bronze altar, morning and evening—anybody. With the Holy Places the priests go in every day. They take two handfuls of incense, mix it up, and they offer incense on the altar of incense. Every day the priests go in. So everybody and then the priests.

And then when you get into the Holy of Holies, one High Priest once a year goes in. And you see what the Holy Spirit is saying. He says that the Holy Spirit is saying that as long as this still stands, access to God is obscured. Why? Because everybody, just priests, one priest. If you can’t see that this limits access to God, then you’ve not been able to see the point he’s making. The point he’s making is that what stands as part of the Old limits access to God. It hinders access to God.

But the New has brought all who are in Christ into communion with God in the Holy of Holies. We are all, in Christ,. Brought into the presence of the living God.

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Now what’s the Spirit’s point? His point is that as long as the temple stands, there’s no access. That’s what he says in the text.

Now the second point is this. He says that this will happen “*until the time of reformation.*” So let’s look at this for a second. The Old was a type. The Old denied access to God. And he says this.

And if all of this theological stuff doesn’t ring a bell with you, let’s talk about an experiential argument for just a minute. He says, “How is your conscience under the Old Covenant?”, because under the Old an animal could never take away the guilt of conscience. In fact, what the Psalms say in Psalm 103, it prophesies to a time when our sins would be cast far from us. God would choose to forget them, right?

But under the Old what would happen? What would happen is that once a year you would have what? The Day of Atonement, where all the sins would be remembered. So under the Old there was a remembrance of sin yearly, not to mention that it could be daily. But under the New there is a forgetting of sin by God and a cleansing of the conscience that was not part of the Old, right?

So how is your conscience under the Old? Well, think about this. Under the Old we were afraid of death. The writer to the Hebrews says, why were we afraid of death? Because in chapter 9 we know that in death we’ll need a judgment. And why will we need a judgment? Because of sin. And he says, look! That is the cycle that holds us in bondage all of our lives.

Now here’s the thing I want to say to you. I forgot to mention that the accuser will bring all of these things up to accuse us. And let me just say this. The Old is unable to help the conscience. But Christ is able.

Now I realize that at this point there’s going to be a question. Somebody is going to say, “Wait a minute. My conscience is not helped. I feel just as guilty as I did the day I was converted. In fact, there are some sins that I’ve committed after my conversion to Christ that I feel more guilty about than anything I did prior to coming to Christ. So you talk about this cleansing of the conscience that’s part of the second administration of the covenant, and I just don’t feel it.”

And I want to be perfectly frank with you at this point. And I realize that this may not be a helpful thing for you to hear at the moment. But I think it’s a helpful thing for you to hear in the long run.

My wife had problems with anemia for a while. And that meant that she needed to take iron supplements. And I’m sure that many women in your lives have had similar problems.

Well, I want you to think about that in this light. What if the doctor said to my wife, “You need to take 500 mg of iron supplements, and your iron levels will increase?” So my wife went home and said, “Okay. I’m going to take 100 mg of iron a day.” And at the end of three months my wife came to me and she said, “You know, I just don’t feel very strong. I don’t feel as bad as I did, but I certainly feel weak.”

And I’d say to her, “Well, did you take 500 mg of iron like the doctor told you to?” She said, “No. I took 100.”

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I said, “Well, don’t you think that has something to do with it?” And she’d say, “Yeah, I guess it does.”

Now you say to me, “I don’t understand what you’re saying.” Well, here’s what I’m saying. I’m saying that if you’re sluggish of hearing the Scripture’s teaching in all that it teaches, you’re taking 100 mg of iron and not 500.

Participant: Amen.

Jeff: And your life resides in chapters 5 and 6. You should be at one point, and you’re not. And you can’t figure out why it is that you’re thinking about going back. You can’t understand why it is that you’re not farther along than you are. You can’t understand why it is that your conscience still bothers you about sins. You can’t understand all of these things. And the answer to that is that if you’re not taking in a full-orbed gospel and the riches of the teaching of Scripture, you’re never going to be to the place where you can affirm what chapter 9 says, that there is a cleansing of the conscience in Christ. If you’re always feeding on an anemic gospel, an anemic teaching in Scripture, you are never going to have the robust experience that this writer is talking about. It is as simple as that.

And so which would you rather have? Would you rather have that which can give you this experience, the 500 mg of iron, or would you rather have the 100 mg of iron and feel all right, but never experience what he is writing in this text? Yes?

Participant: The curious thing is, just as this person points out, it’s easier to go back to the tangible.

Jeff: Sure.

Participant: Because I can be moralistic. I can go back and do my works. I can go back and do my sacrifice and trust that a lot more than the freedom in Christ. And so I think we all still struggle with that. That’s one of the major challenges that he points out to us.

Jeff: Well, I mean, I think you can frame this in a number of ways. One of the ways you can frame this is that I’m just too busy. I’m just too busy to take time out and sort of engage. I’ll leave it at that. You’re right. You can go back to a moralistic teaching. And that doesn’t help you. It’s like going back to the Old.

Participant: What’s a clear picture of getting the 500 mg?

Jeff: Well, I’ll tell you. One of the things that I often think about is that there is an anemic gospel that’s preached today and taught today. And that anemic gospel is what we’ve talked about before. When you ask somebody the question: Well, what did Jesus do for you? And someone says, “He died for my sins.” In evangelicalism, that’s the answer to what the gospel is.

And that’s not the gospel. At best, that’s half the gospel. But it’s not even really half the gospel. But it is at least half the gospel in this sense. He didn’t just die for my sins. He lived a righteous life. And so in His death I find the forgiveness of sins. But if I only find the forgiveness of sins, then I’m no better than Adam in the garden.

But if he lived a righteous life on my behalf, and I’m not only forgiven in him, but if His righteousness is imputed as my righteousness, now I have a basis upon which to stand before God. And so when I preach the gospel to myself, I understand that I’m both

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forgiven and righteous before God. If I just think that I’m forgiven before God but I’m not righteous in His sight, then I’ve got a major problem.

And that overflows. All of it is connected, right? So now, if I don’t believe that I’m righteous in His sight, that affects my view of sanctification. If I don’t believe I’m righteous in His sight, then what I get into is this caricature of sanctification that I’m always accused of by somebody in this room. *(Laughter)* Bill. And what happens is, then if I say that I’m forgiven and therefore neutral, then I guess I need to work, do my best in order to get what I didn’t have to begin with.

But if I believe not only that I’m forgiven but that I’m righteous, then I believe that I’m as righteous today as I will be when I stand before God in eternity.

Participant: Amen.

Jeff: But my conduct needs to catch up to what I am in Christ. Therefore I am becoming what I already am in Jesus Christ. So my sanctification is entailed in a right understanding of the gospel, and so on and so forth. So these kinds of things build on one another. If I don’t have that kind of understanding, then I’m an anemic Christian, right? I need this robustness to my understanding of the gospel.

I mean, let’s say this. I know some people who would say, “Well, not everybody has to learn theology.” And I would say that’s not true. As soon as you begin to think about God, you become a theologian. I mean, if you’ve had one thought about God, you’re a theologian, because theology is the study of God. The question in your mind has to be not how much of a theologian am I, but do I want to experience all that God has meant for me to experience as a result of His gospel?

And if I want to live as Mr. Weak Faith in *Pilgrim’s Progress*, and stumble along on the path, then I can’t say that’s the best way to want to go. I can also say that if you say, “I’m going to choose to live as Mr. Weak Faith,” the question has to be do you have faith, right? Mr. Weak Faith had faith. He had the certificate. But I think that in terms of our experience, if we’re content with almost no faith at all, we have to ask ourselves. Does that mean that I have faith?

But I don’t think that’s what the gospel intends. Paul certainly talks about reaching ahead and striving for that which is beyond himself. “I haven’t attained it. But I certainly am striving to attain that which I don’t yet possess.” Bill? I knew it; I knew it was coming. *(Laughter)*

Bill: Do you know what happens when you take too much iron? You get constipated. *(Laughter)* I’ll leave my sanctification up to God and work on my maturity, and not be constipated.

Jeff: Thank you for that, Bill. *(Laughter)*

Participant: Jeff, my question. How does God look at us if we’re anemic? How does He see us?

Jeff: Well, I think you have to look at this from the two perspectives of the one sanctification that we enjoy. There is the *definitive* aspect, in which we’ve been removed from the kingdom of darkness and placed into the kingdom of light, and therefore we are His children. And in justification we are as righteous as we’re ever going to be. But here He looks at us as learning house rules. We are learning how to behave in the way that is

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appropriate for being His sons. And so He looks at us from two aspects: from the aspect of His Son, but also in that sense that we are becoming what we are in His Son. So He looks at us from those two aspects.

Participant: But our standing with Him isn't diminished, even though I understand what you're saying. We should be working on it. We should be striving.

Jeff: If my theology leads me to complacency in godliness, my theology is not a good theology.

Participant: Right. Okay, that's good. Thank you.

Jeff: Anybody else?

Participant: My thought is that everything that you've said, that really relies on trusting, right? Because you said to believe in the double imputation. In sanctification my witness is becoming better because of what I already have and I'm catching up to it. But all of that really requires us to trust in that, because without that trust we still have that guilt-ridden fear there, whereas if we truly believe that this has happened, then that's where I can rest in that.

Jeff: Well, it certainly relies on our faith or the aspect of trust. But think about trust. Part of trust is knowledge, right? It's knowledge and agreeing with that knowledge. Then it's affections. My affections have been inflamed for God, right? I no longer suppress His truth in unrighteousness, but I long for His truth, okay?

Now think about the knowledge in the context of what this means. There are places all over the Scriptures—Romans 6, Philippians 4-- , where I'm told to reckon things. In other words, get it into my head. If you have faith, then get this into your head and agree to it, and long for it to be the case. In other words, let your faith be informed more and more by your knowledge, that your faith might enlarge.

So for instance, when he talks in Romans 6, what does he say? He says that you need to get it into your head that you have died to sin in Jesus Christ.”

And you say, “Well, I don't experience that.”

He wants to say this to you. You don't experience that because you've not reckoned it enough in your head.

Participant: Amen.

You say, “Well, wait a minute. You're just telling me about the power of positive thinking.” No, I'm not telling you about the power of positive thinking. I'm telling you that this is what the Bible says. The Bible says to get your thinking straight. And then your living gets straight.

You know, in Philippians 4 he talks about reckoning all the beautiful things, the right things, the just things, and so on. He's telling us what to think. Here's the problem with us. The problem with us is that we leave, and what do we start thinking about? We start lusting, we start being greedy, we start being hateful. You name the number of things; you fill in the blanks for what you do.

Participant: We're never perfect.

Jeff: Yes. But if you dwell on those things, rather than taking them captive to Christ, taking every thought captive to Christ,--you know you're going to fail; there's forgiveness in our failure in Jesus Christ. 1 John 2:2, right?

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Transcriber’s Note: 1 John 2:1-2, ESV. *“My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous.”*

Jeff: But if you’re not actively taking your thoughts captive for Christ, then you’re drifting, which is what we find in Hebrews 2. Well, I’m drifting way past the time, so let me pray for us. *(Laughter)*

Father in heaven, thank You for this day, and thank You for our time together. Lord, thank You for the thanksgiving that we had with family and friends. Lord, remind us daily of how thankful we need to be. Bless us, Lord, in the teaching of Your word, for we ask it in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Men: Amen. *(Applause)*