

“Once to Bear the Sins of Many”

Fixing Our Eyes On Jesus, Our High Priest

Hebrews 9:23-28

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Jeff: Well, in the absence of Don Maurer I’m going to go ahead and sing. *(Laughter)* No, I’m not. I’ll tell you what. I can’t sing for anything at all in the world. One time I did a solo in a congregational church I served, *acapella*. It was really bad. *(Laughter)* I can’t tell you how bad it was! *(Laughter)*

Anyway, one of the things that I do on the side is that I work for the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals. And I got pulled into this through a friend of mine and started writing for the website. And then they asked me to do a couple things. Anyway, at this point now I basically run their website called “Place for truth,” which is a site for biblical and theological instruction. And it’s been a great experience to get to know the Alliance, because one of the things that they realize is that the alliance is really out to promote Reformed theology. And they’re really out to do it on a broad scale. And so they are always looking to sponsor conferences. They’re always looking to find ways to get written information into the hands of people. And they have to run the organization, but they’re oftentimes just interested in doing it for free because they want to get the message out.

So they asked me what I might be able to do for them and what I might be able to do for some others. And my mind immediately went to you guys. And I asked them if I could have some packages. For instance, this is the Philadelphia Conference On Reformed Theology, which is the conference that James Montgomery boice started, and the conference that they used to invite R. C. Sproul to. R. C. Sproul did a lot of his beginning stuff with the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals because James Montgomery boice met him and decided that this is a guy that we need to get out there and get known and that sort of thing. So Sproul went to the Philadelphia Conference On Reformed Theology for many years, and they actually have a lot of his older stuff on their website. And when Sproul died they gave it away.

I’ll tell you what. Some of it is just absolutely entertaining. You know, he’s a younger man. He’s up and coming. He just has a ball at these things. I found it entertaining to listen to him at these things. Anyway, this is from the year 2000. It’s the conference out in Philadelphia. It’s a great conference if you ever have the opportunity to go. They give their report in this package. And they also give some of their different websites. For instance, “The Mortification of spin” is with Carl Truman, and so on. They have a Puritan website, and of course “Place for Truth.” And they also have James Montgomery Boice’s “The Bible Study Hour” still going, and that sort of thing. So there’s a lot going on.

And then what they did was that they started taking some of the stuff that we put on our website, “Place for Truth,” and they started packaging it in books. And they have a book on the Fall, a book about grace, just different books on different topics. Usually they have an interview with some theologian who has written on the subject or who has taught on the subject. That interview is conducted by Jonathan Masters, who is also part

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of the Alliance. And then there is a series of articles that follows. So they gave me this one on grace to give to you. So this packet is for you, and you can take one when you go out the door. Sig already has them set, so—

Sig: They’re on the counter.

Jeff: They’re you go. They’re on the counter. Merry Christmas to you. And if you ever want to sponsor something worthwhile, the Alliance is something that you can turn to and do that with.

Participant: Is “The White Horse Inn” a part of it?

Jeff: “The White Horse Inn” is part of the alliance, yes. The interesting thing is that over the years you’ll notice that Ligonier Ministries doesn’t carry things that James Montgomery Boice did. Part of the reason for that is not that there was ever a rift between Boice and Sproul. But Ligonier basically said that if we have Boice’s stuff at Ligonier that we’re really basically selling two of the same brand. So the alliance has really taken up James Montgomery Boice and continued him on. And his wife—I think her name is Linda—has encouraged the publication of Boice’s work. And so a lot of that is still in the works and being reprinted today. So it’s a different thing.

Well, let’s pray together. I can hum a few bars if you really want me to. *(Laughter)* I don’t suspect that’s the desire. So why don’t we just pray?

Our heavenly Father, we thank You and praise You for this day, for the time that You’ve given to us. We thank You that You are God and there is no other. Father, we are mindful of the fact that we are but dust. And yet, because of Your Son the Lord Jesus, we are sons and daughters who are able to sit at the table of the great and mighty King. Father, as we gather before You this morning, we do so by the power of the Holy Spirit who resides in us, who is indeed a gift to us, a down payment, a deposit of the better things yet to come. And Father, as we gather before You, we are also mindful that You are working in us by Your Spirit to bring about Christ in us, to form Him. And Father, we also know that is the cruciformed life, the way of the cross. And so we pray that You will bless us, even as we walk through the humiliation that our Savior walked.

And Father, part of that entails the element of human suffering. And Father, as we think about that element, we think about friends like Peter, whose granddaughter is facing surgery today. We ask that Your hand would be upon her. We pray for her well-being, for the success of the surgery. We certainly pray for her recovery and for the ability of the surgeons to enable her to cause growth. Lord, we are just thankful for these kinds of developments in science and medicine, and pray for the good use of it today. Calm the hearts of Peter and his family.

Father, we also pray for donna. We certainly ask that as her life comes to a close that You will bless her with much grace. Father, we ask for Grant, and ask that You will bless him. Help the doctors to be able to come to some determination about what the cause, the root of the problem is. And Father, we pray for stamina on the part of his family, that You’ll be with them and encourage their hearts even as they go through this difficult time together.

But most of all we pray that all of these folks would have their eyes cast upon the Lord Jesus, and that they would see Him through the difficulties, and see Him in the

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midst of the difficulties. And Father, we certainly pray for our brother Bruce. We are glad that he’s up and around and able to teach the bible study in Pittsburgh. We do pray for his continued wellness. And Father, we look forward to seeing him next week if it’s Your will and plan.

Father, we ask that You’ll open our eyes to Your word this morning. Bless this study to us. Enrich our faith and help us to grow in the Lord Jesus Christ, for it’s in His name that we pray these things. Amen.

Men: amen.

Jeff: All right. Well, today we are going to be looking at Hebrews chapter 9. So let’s turn there and read verses 23-28, another shorter section. It’s our last somewhat shorter section before we go on to a longer section next week. And we’re going to add just two or three verses to this.

You know, my wife says to me, “You should never tell jokes.” *(Laughter)* And so—

Participant: Good advice.

Jeff: Yes, probably good advice. Well, let me read it for you.

“Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ has entered not into the Holy Places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. Nor was it to offer Himself repeatedly, as the High Priest enters the Holy Places every year with blood not his own. For then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is He has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for Him.”

Participant: The word of the Lord.

Men: Thanks be to God.

Jeff: Am I supposed to say that? *(Laughter)* I always wait like somebody else is supposed to say that. And I kind of wonder why anyone isn’t saying that. *(Laughter)*

Participant: That’s Sig’s job.

Jeff: Bishop, is the guy who reads supposed to say that?

Bishop Rodgers: Yes. Whoever reads for us says it.

Jeff: Got it.

Participant: And we respond.

Jeff: Got it. All right. You know, it’s been over a year that I’ve been with you guys. And one of these days I’ll get these down. *(Laughter)* Next week; I’m going to aim for next week. *(Laughter)*

Participant: We’re turning you into a liturgical speaker.

Jeff: That’s right.

Participant: Maybe even an Anglican. *(Laughter)*

Jeff: I don’t know; there’s a lot of Presbyterian in these genes. *(Laughter)* Well, let me talk to you about the things we’re going to talk about today. I’m going to mention some

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things in the introduction. I want to talk to you about three specific aspects that are going to be emerging from this text. *Christ is in the presence of God. Christ has offered Himself as a better sacrifice. And Christ will return.*

Let me say a couple of introductory things at this point that I think are important for us to remember. I think that it's important for us to absolutely bear in mind that what we're dealing with is not abstract theology. I think that we could have a tendency to read what we're reading and study what we're studying and come away thinking, wow! This is really abstract! It's somewhat distant from me.

I think you could think that by virtue of the fact that a lot of what we're dealing with is in the Old Testament. I mean, we're still thinking about the Levitical priesthood. We're thinking about the Mosaic covenant. We're thinking about a lot of things that really don't touch us anymore.

In fact, you can still hear one of the early church heresies propagated today, really in innocence. I mean, all you have to do—I've heard it on Christian radio twice by people being interviewed. For instance, this was a lady singer. I won't tell you who it was. It was a lady singer. She was being interviewed about her new album. And she was talking about God. And she said, “You know, the God of the Old Testament is so mean and so harsh. But you know Jesus, the God of the New testament, our Lord, is just such a kind and loving Savior.” You know, that sort of thing? And that's the heresy of Marcionism.

Participant: That's right.

Jeff: And it's still alive and well today. And I think that the heresy of Marcionism may not be affecting us directly. But I think the shadow of it is something that we always live in today, especially if we're not dealing much with the Old Testament. If we're not thinking about the Old Testament and how it relates to us, then that's a shadow of Marcionism. And so I think that just dealing with the Old testament itself sometimes has a tendency to make us feel like we're dealing with that strand of theology.

Participant: Can you explain Marcionism? I've never heard of that.

Jeff: Yes. Marcion was an early church figure who came to Rome in the second century, in the 100s. And basically what he believed was—and here I'm going to throw out another term—he believed in what was called *Gnosticism*. And Gnosticism is the Greek word for knowledge. And so keep that in mind.

So the highest deity in Gnosticism was immaterial. The lowest form of deity in Gnosticism was material, or one who created something material. If you created material, you're bad. And Gnosticism said that we are products of the lowest form of deity, God the Father, who is a mean, angry God. He created material, and that's a bad thing.

And so what we have to do is, the gnostics said that through secret knowledge—hence the *gnosis*—we need to get back up to the highest deity. But that knowledge is secret. The Gnostics used to say, “We can give it to you, but you have to come follow us,” that sort of thing. So that was Gnosticism.

Marcionism was a part of the gnostic heresy. It said that the God of the Old Testament is really a bad guy since He created material things, the world that we live in. And what we really have to do is that we really have to get back to the true God, the wonderful deity who is immaterial. And we can only do that by secret knowledge.

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So what Marcion did was that he took the Canon that was functioning in the church at the time and basically axed the Old Testament. And he axed all of the gospels except Luke, and he edited Luke heavily. And he edited Paul’s writings, though he kept most of Paul’s letters. He edited those and then some of the rest of the letters in the Old Testament. He either took or left them, but he edited those as well.

It was actually in response to Marcion that the church, which had been functioning with a Canon up to that point, said, “Uh-oh! We’ve got a heresy! We’ve got a problem here! We need to identify the books that we’ve been functioning with as a church.” And so what you find is that you get people beginning to identify the books that were actually functioning as the Canon within the church at that time.

So you get the Muratorian Fragment, and you get those kinds of things. The Muratorian Fragment was like the letter with the book list of the New Testament, the earliest book list of the New Testament, and that sort of thing. Does that help?

Participant: Yes.

Jeff: anybody else? No? Okay. So we need to remember that what we’re dealing with is not abstract but very concrete and very practical, especially for the people who were in this pivotal time where the Old Covenant was coming to a close and the New Covenant was emerging.

So that’s not what we’re dealing with. We’re not dealing with abstract theology. Now I realize that we’ve been going through chapter 9 very slowly, even though that turtle looks like he’s moving pretty fast. We are going through it slowly, and we’re going through it slowly for a reason. We’re learning some things as we go.

For instance, first of all we learned that the tabernacle taught a lesson in and of itself. And that lesson was that we have limited access to God under the Old Covenant. That limited access to God in the Old Covenant was, you remember, that everyone could gather in the Outer Court. But only priests could enter into the Holy Place. But only one priest one time per year could enter into the Most Holy Place.

And so you have this lesson that not everyone can go to God. In fact, even for those who can go to God there is a select one out of them who can go to God. So there’s a lesson in terms of what the tabernacle is telling us.

And that lesson, interestingly enough, he says is not just a figment of the writer of Hebrews’ imagination. But he says that this is something the Holy Spirit taught. And so it’s a lesson taught by God Himself.

And then the last time we were together we compared, we contrasted the Mosaic covenant. We basically said that this is a problem. What’s being dealt with here in this transitional period is a problem that really emerges from a faulty understanding of the Mosaic covenant within the covenant of grace. And you remember the last time we talked about this. We said that there are two basic covenants—the covenant of works, which was with Adam and God. Adam blew that covenant. And so there is the covenant of grace with god and Jesus. And that covenant of grace has five exfoliations. It unfolds with five different petals, the fifth being its fulfillment and climax in Jesus Christ in the New Covenant.

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But when you look at what the writer to the Hebrews is saying, he’s saying, look! He’s saying that the Mosaic covenant, which is one of the exfoliations of the covenant of grace, and the New Covenant appear to be at odds.

So let’s talk about that. What was the purpose of the Mosaic covenant? And remember the last time we talked about how its purpose was to tease out sin, to make it manifest, to show the need for the sacrificial system, and hence the One who would come and fulfill the sacrificial system in the New Covenant. So we talked about some of that the last time we were together and pointed out the problem.

And then we looked at Christ as both Priest and Sacrifice, and how He was the fulfillment of all the things that we saw in the Mosaic administration. So there were some lessons that we learned thus far.

And so today we’re going to learn three additional aspects as we bring chapter 9 to a close, three important aspects that will help us to round out some of our knowledge about Christ. And the first is that *Christ entered the presence of God*. But before I move there, does anybody have any questions or comments about anything from the last time that you’d like to follow up with? No? Okay.

All right, verses 23 and 24. I want to start with those. These are perhaps the most difficult verses that we’re going to look at today. Why is that? Well, I want you to see what they say. Let me read them again. *“Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ has entered not into the Holy Places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.”*

Well I know Don is going to be listening to this. So let me just say this right now so he can hear it. Right after last week’s study Don sent me a question related to verse 23. And he anticipated the problem that we were going to find in this week’s lesson. And so I answered Don, saying, “I’ll tell you next week.” (*Laughter*) “I don’t know yet. I’ll tell you next week.”

So let me begin by saying that an Old Testament believer, someone who lived in light of the Old Testament, would have understood these verses. Of course we need to go in and make purification. Of course we need to do that. When you think about this, think about the earthly tabernacle. The earthly tabernacle needed cleansing because human beings contaminated it. In fact, when you think about the Old Testament sacrificial system, think about it this way. Think about how it was that the priests actually contaminated the earthly tabernacle by their very priestly activities because they brought themselves into the temple. They were human.

Now I want you to see that. You can see this in Leviticus 16:11, 15 and 16. I have it up here. It’s pretty small. But I’ll read it to you. It says this. *“Then Aaron shall offer the bull of the sin offering which is for himself and for his household. And he shall slaughter the bull of the sin offering which is for himself. Then he”* (that is Aaron the High Priest) *“shall slaughter the goat of the sin offering which is for the people and bring its blood inside the veil, and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat.”* This is in the Holy of Holies on the ark, the mercy seat that is situated

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on the ark. *“He shall make atonement for the Holy Place.”* Do you hear that? *“He shall make atonement for the Holy Place because of the impurities of the sons of Israel, and because of their transgressions in regard to all their sins.”*

So here is the High Priest who has to make atonement for himself, for his household, and for the people of Israel because they contaminate the earthly things.

Now any Old Testament reader would say, “Of course. We understand that. That’s all right.” It’s because of the impurities of the sons of Israel, because of their transgressions with regard to all their sins. That’s why even the priest needs to be atoned in his sins, even priestly activity. Okay, that’s consistent with the Old.

But then notice how our text goes on. *“Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the things in heaven to be cleansed with these”*, meaning the blood of bulls and goats. That’s okay; we’re all right there. *“But the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.”*

Let me read that again for you guys who might not have caught that the first time, because it’s subtle. We don’t really get it. *“Therefore it was necessary for the copies of these things.”* What are the copies of these things? The earthly tabernacle. The earthly tabernacle is the copy of the heavenly. So therefore it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these. In other words, the copies were the earthly tabernacle in which the priest would go in and make atonement.

But then he goes on and he switches. Now he’s talking about the heavenly things. The heavenly things themselves need to be cleansed *“with better sacrifices than these.”*

Now of course, what does that mean?

Participant: That’s the question.

Jeff: That’s the question. What does it mean? Two questions arise out of this. What are the better sacrifices? And secondly, why is it that the heavenlies need to be cleansed with these better sacrifices?

Now this is really the center, right, because we’ve been talking about the one sacrifice of Christ, once for all. And now we’re talking about sacrifices plural. And why is it that the heavenlies need to be cleansed?

Okay, I’m going to deal with those. And so I want you to stop me along the way if you have any questions.

I think the first is a very easy one to deal with. When we talk about “better sacrifices,” I think what’s going on here—and it’s not just me. But I think scholars across the board would say that this is a generic plural. In other words, he’s matching. If you look at the text, he talks about these rites, in other words, these earthly rites in which the priests participate. And then he talks about better sacrifices. So what he’s doing is, he’s matching the plurals. These rites, these sacrifices. That’s the idea.

Now the reason why I think that he’s just doing this stylistically, and that there’s not a theological undertone to this, is because of what he says next. Look at what he says if you go on in this chapter. He says in verse 25, *“Nor was it to offer Himself repeatedly, as the High Priest enters the Holy Places every year with blood not his own. For then He would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, He has appeared once for all at the end of the ages.”*

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I think that what he’s doing here is just stylistic. And that’s what other scholars tend to think, that this is just a generic plural. And you see here in 7:27, 9:12 and 14, and 10:10, 12 and 14, that all of those places talk about the sacrifice of Christ being offered once, once.

Transcriber’s Note: Hebrews 7:27, NKJV. *“Who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people’s, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.”*

Hebrews 9:12, 14. *“Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. 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?”*

Hebrews 10:10, 12, 14. *“By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God. For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.”*

Jeff: So here’s what I don’t think, Don. I don’t think he’s contradicting himself. I don’t think he’s saying, “Oh, I forgot. Are there other sacrifices?” I don’t think that’s what he’s doing. And I think—Go ahead.

Participant: Was the better sacrifice not just Jesus dying upon the cross? Was His life of obedience being also a sacrifice? Oh, there’s a microphone! Should I repeat it?

Jeff: No, I got it. But why don’t you repeat it for the men? Some of the men may not have heard it.

Participant: So I’m thinking that the better sacrifices plural, they’re all sacrifices of Christ. One is His intended death upon the cross. But also His perfect love of obedience is the sacrifice. I mean, Mary tells Jesus, “Well, You’ve got to do that again.” Well, Jesus never made a mistake, but He did it again. So it’s a sacrifice. And then the Father calls Him home.

Jeff: And you know, it’s great to hear You say that, actually. What about not just the passive aspect of the giving of His life, but what about His life? And the only thing I’d say to this is that I don’t know. I mean, I don’t know if that’s in the mind of the author of Hebrews. I know that when Paul talks about the obedience of Christ, he talks about it in the very way that you talk about it. But he puts together the passive aspect of Christ being on the cross, suffering for sins, with his other obedience in Philippians 2:8. It says, *“And being found in human form He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”* So in that sense he doesn’t divide the obedience like we oftentimes do theologically. We talk about the active and the passive obedience like you just highlighted. I mean, you’re right. Whether that’s in the mind of the author here I don’t know. Good question, though.

Participant: I was going to say that without His obedience He couldn’t have sacrificed Himself. So in that sense it’s sort of included in the bigger picture.

Jeff: Yes, and that’s very true. Without the obedience He could not have been the Lamb without blemish. But just so you guys know, we oftentimes divide the obedience in terms of its two aspects for a particular reason. And that reason is because we want to talk

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about the benefits that accrue to us on the basis of that division. So, for instance, we often talk about the passive obedience of Christ, that by which He offered Himself on the cross to be punished on our behalf, that we might have what? The forgiveness of sins. But when we talk about the obedience of His life leading up to that point, yes, that is what makes Him the perfect sacrifice to be offered without spot or blemish. But it becomes the foundation for the imputation of His righteousness to our account.

So there are two very important aspects when I talk about the gospel. I often talk about how we can't truncate the gospel. And we often truncate it by just talking about what we get from His passive work or the passive aspect. And so we have to think about the active work, which is what you mentioned, which was very good. Yes?

Participant: I thought you were going to tell us—and maybe you're getting to that—that in the heavenly places—

Jeff: We're getting there. They need to be purified. We're getting there.

Participant: I don't understand why—I'll wait.

Jeff: Okay. Let me go then on to this. Why is it that the heavenly things need to be purified? And that's an important question. I want to give you three answers. Then I want to give you the right answer. *(Laughter)* You guys are really tough today. *(Laughter)*

Anyway, here is what some people say. Some people say that the heavenlies need to be purified because of the wrath of God being in the heavenlies against man's sin. And so the wrath of God needs to be atoned for and purified. And scholars have said, no, no, nno. If you say that, what you're doing is that you're pitting one attribute of God against another. You can't do that. So that's easily dismissed with the consistency of God.

Others have said it's man's sin. Now what's the problem with that? The problem with that is that by the time we get to heaven we're not contaminating anything.

Participant: Right.

Jeff: If I die in Jesus Christ today, I've not contaminated the heavens.

So what I've done is that I've done the switcheroo. It's Spin City at this point. I've said, “The heavenlies? Oh, this is about me, right?” And that's not a good one.

Others have said that the purification of the heavenlies happened when Satan was cast out of the heavens. Now that's creative. The question is and has to be in everybody's mind, where did Satan enter into this whole text? Now he's in the Bible and he's in the world. But when we interpret this text, the question is that it seems that to say this about Satan is to actually do a little bit of what we call *isogesis*. It's to read into the text. He's a convenient explanation at this point. I don't think that works.

So if we elevate that one, how do we understand the purification of the heavenlies? Well, here's where I need you to think with me about what we've done the last time. What we did the last time was that we compared. Remember what we said. The tension here is a tension between one exfoliation, one petal of the covenant of grace which is the Mosaic petal, that pitted over against the New Covenant.

Now think again about those two covenants and how they were pitted against one another. I think that if we think again about those two covenants we have our answer. How so? The question I'm going to propose is this. Is there a parallel in the way we

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ought to think about those two covenants, just like there was a parallel before when we looked at them? And I think there is.

How so? Well, if you look at verse 18, what does it say? It says that the Old Covenant needed to be inaugurated with blood. For what? Verse 22: “*for the forgiveness of sins.*” For “*without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness*” of sins.

And then what do we find? In verse 23 we find that there needs to be a consecration or a purification of the heavenlies. So what I’m going to propose—and this is from the great John Owen. Did I mention John Owen, the Puritan John Owen? You know, I’m dropping names to get a little clout behind the position here, right? You’re not disagreeing with me, you’re disagreeing with John Owen, that sort of thing, right? *(Laughter)*

Participant: Was he an Anglican? *(Laughter)*

Jeff: He was an independent, not even a Presbyterian. He is now. *(Laughter)* But what his position says is this. What he’s been doing is that he has been comparing the Mosaic with the New. And just like the Mosaic needed to be inaugurated, so too does the New need to be inaugurated.

And so what is the inauguration? The inauguration is a cleansing for the forgiveness of sins by blood. Jesus brings His blood into the heavenlies on our behalf. And so therefore the consecration and the inauguration are parallels of expression.

Look. If you were to ask me to go beyond that, and to say more than that, I’m going to say, what do you think, Bishop? *(Laughter)* I say that’s the best that I can do. Let me ask you if you have any questions about that before we go on to the next point. All right. You guys are a fine audience. That’s good. If you have any, certainly ask.

Participant: Can I clarify one thing? So it’s more of the style in the writing, as opposed to Christ really having to do something to purify heaven.

Jeff: Yes, I think that’s it. So for instance, he’s paralleling for us by expression those two aspects of the covenant.

Participant: So the priest’s blood—

Jeff: Is showing us that the one fulfills the other, right?

Participant: So the bull’s or goat’s blood could never prepare heaven.

Jeff: That’s right.

Participant: So Christ’s blood prepares heaven for us. Does that—

Jeff: That’s how he’s expressing it. That’s right. And just to add something, why is it that he talks about inaugurating with the Old and consecrating with the New? I think he’s trying to help us to see, just like he was trying to help the early church to see that the Mosaic covenant could not actually purify with the blood of bulls and goats. That’s why he uses the word *inaugurate*. So he uses, in a parallel fashion, *purify* or *consecrate* with regard to the New because Jesus’ blood is that which finally and fully purifies us for heaven. Yes?

Participant: Jeff, I’d like to hear from the bishop why he thinks the heavenlies need to be purified. What is your input on that?

Bishop Rodgers: I have never asked the question. *(Laughter)* So I don’t have an answer. I’ll have to think about that. I’m thinking, I’m thinking. *(Laughter)*

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Jeff: Obviously, it came to my mind because Don asked the question. Thanks, Don.
(*Laughter*) Yes, go ahead.

Participant: Let me just insert maybe a bigger way. I mean, it is sort of a way of not just limiting Christ’s sacrifice to the earth, but in a way it’s making it grander all the way around.

Jeff: I can’t think of his name. There’s a commentator who talks about the cosmic element to the whole thing explained in this way. Yes?

Participant: I think that the main emphasis lies in the fact that the sacrifice of Christ is once for all, never to be repeated. And therefore it covers everything—this age and the next age, earth and heaven, whatever. So the emphasis is not on repeated sacrifices, but one sacrifice for all time and for everyone for whom it is intended to cover.

Jeff: Yes.

Participant: That’s my thinking. More than that, I don’t know; I can’t say.

Jeff: Right, right. So let’s move on then to *Christ, a better sacrifice*, because the bishop has actually given us a great segway. I think there are two elements here, and likely a third. And the first is *the element of time*—at the end of the ages, or at the climax of the redemptive covenants, in the fullness of time, however you want to express it, “*God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law*”, right? So there’s the aspect of time. In time Christ offered Himself or was offered up as a sacrifice. And the character of that sacrifice was to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

When I say “character,” it reaches back to what we were talking about with regard to the spotless character by His obedience of that sacrifice. But there’s a pastoral element here, too. And it’s this. “*And in as much 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.*” You know, he has been talking to us about the cleansing of the conscience. And the fascinating thing is that he actually pulls this idea of Christ being offered once in time together with the fact that we die once in time. And he says, “Brothers, listen. You die once and then face the judgment. But Christ who died once faced your judgment already.” And so I think there’s an intensely pastoral aspect to this idea of Christ, a better sacrifice, dying once.

I want to highlight something, though, because I think it’s important. It’s the idea of “*to bear the sins of many.*” Now I want you to think about this. There are two ways of expressing what Christ does with our sin. Some say, well, he took it away. And some say that He bore it.

Now those who say that He bore our sins, as reflected here in this text, say, “Don’t talk about that He took it away, because that doesn’t communicate the idea of Him, Christ, having our sins laid upon Him, and Him atoning for those sins.” You know, when you talk about it as being taken away, you talk about it as being erased. And that’s not true. Somebody has to die for these things. Somebody has to pay for them. So when I hear “taking it away,” it’s just not a Biblical idea.

Well, I want you to understand something. We’ve been looking at Leviticus 16. And I want you to know that it is a Biblical idea. The idea of burying and taking away are biblical ideas.

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I want you to think about this. I want you to think about this. You know, I want you to think about how wonderful it is not to be under this old administration of the Mosaic covenant.

Can you imagine having to come to church on the Day of Atonement? Now you’ve got the minivan. And what you have to do is you have to put the one sacrifice in the back. And then you have to put another sacrifice in the back, the Azazel sacrifice. You put it in the back. Now you have to keep these lambs from getting beat around as you drive to church, right, because they’re not going to be able to stand easily in the back of your minivan. So the kids are going to hold them down. So the kids are going to hold him down, and you’re telling them, “Don’t bruise the lamb”—you know, that sort of thing? Then you get them out.

Well, one lamb was to be sacrificed, offered as a burnt offering. But the other sacrifice, the Azazel, had the same kind of treatment in terms of the priest’s laying his hands upon the head of the sacrifice in the symbolic transference of sins from the sinner to the sacrifice. But that Azazel lamb did not receive the same treatment. It was not killed and burnt on the altar. It was led out into the wilderness. In other words, it communicated the idea that our sins are led away from us as far as the east is from the west.

Both of those ideas were encapsulated in that Old Testament sacrifice. Now you see this in Jesus. I mean, we think about so many expressions, like “*He bore our sins in His body on the tree.*” But the question is, where did He do it? Where did He do it? Hebrews 13:12 says that He was crucified “*outside the camp.*” He was outside of the city of Jerusalem. And that’s where He did it. And so, in other words, we see Jesus as both the sacrifice and the Azazel sacrifice.

And the point is, why is it that in the Old Testament, as we’ve seen before, why is it that you have all these sacrifices that point to one sacrifice in Christ? And the answer is this. No one animal sacrifice could encapsulate all of what Jesus did for us.

Participant: Amen.

Jeff: That’s why there were so many, this proliferation of sacrifices.

Well let me say a word, because it is important that we wrap up with this part without skimming over it too much. Verse 28: He’s going to return a second time. And He’s not going to deal with sin.

Participant: Amen.

Jeff: Like He did the first time. He’s not going to be a Priest. He is a Priest on our behalf. And He is a Priest to those for whom He is a Priest. But when He returns, He’s not going to return to become a sacrifice like He did the first time. He has already made that sacrifice, though we don’t see it in its fullness yet, okay?

However, that’s not what he wants to focus our attention on at the end of chapter 9. What he wants to focus our attention on is that those who eagerly await Him will see Him as both their Priest and as the Judge of others. He has already judged their sins in Himself on the cross. But He will judge sins in others.

But here’s the focus. The focus is not on others. The focus is on us, because he’s asking us. Do you eagerly wait for Him? That’s really what he’s asking. You see, he’s been subtle about this. He’s talked about our conscience. He’s talked about the one day of

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our death, the one day of Christ’s atoning sacrifice, how the two merge and minister to us. But now he’s asking us. Do you eagerly wait for Him?

Now a lot of people say this. “You know, I don’t really know what you mean.” I was just told this the other day. “You know, you get to spend all your time writing a sermon all day and all week. You don’t do anything else.” (*Laughter*) I have the easiest, cushiest job in the world. (*Laughter*) Well I guess I do, right? But anyway, when you’re in the real world, (*laughter*), you can’t eagerly wait.

Participant: No?

Jeff: Right? But you know, the interesting thing about it is that if you look at the New Testament, 1 Corinthians 1:7 says, “*so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” Romans 8:23: “*We eagerly await our adoption*”, which Paul describes as “*the redemption of our bodies*”, which will come when Christ appears. And Philippians 3:20: “*we are citizens of heaven, from which we eagerly await the appearing of our Savior.*” So it’s not just here in Hebrews. It’s elsewhere that we are told that we have to eagerly wait.

Now what’s this eagerly waiting all about? What is it like? Well, I want to give you an example. I think that this might help you to understand what he is saying here.

Eagerly waiting is doing your work. It’s not selling everything, quitting your job and living on top of a mountain waiting for the Second Coming of Christ. That’s not eagerly waiting. Eagerly waiting means that you leave this Bible study and do your work, okay? Apparently, I’m going to be able to take a nap after this. (*Laughter*)

Participant: That’s right.

Jeff: But you go to your work. But you go to your work, and it’s like you’re going on vacation for you in two or three weeks’ time. In three weeks’ time you have the family vacation planned that you’ve been anticipating for six months. But it’s always in the back of your mind. Even though you’re doing your work, it’s always in the back of your mind. And you’re living your life in that direction.

So for instance, a buddy of yours comes up to you at work and says, “The Pens are playing tonight, and we’re going to win tonight. It’s going to be a good game. My buddy is selling two tickets. I picked #1. You’re going to have to cover the other one. Do you want to go?”

And you say,--I mean, it’s in your mind--, “I’m going on vacation in three weeks. I can’t afford to shell out \$250 for that ticket, not now,” right? Because you’re eagerly awaiting the vacation. And you’re making choices in life of that coming vacation.

You see, that’s what it’s like to eagerly expect Jesus. So for instance, you’re living your life. And as the temptations of the day come to you, you’re saying, “I’m waiting for Jesus. That’s not part of waiting for Jesus,” right? And so you choose Jesus instead of that temptation. That’s the idea.

Now I don’t mean to communicate perfectionism in any way, shape or form. That’s why when we sin there is forgiveness for us in Jesus. But even when I sin, there’s forgiveness only in Jesus, right?

So the question that this text is asking us is this. It’s asking us, it’s saying to us, are we eagerly waiting or are we drifting? Or are we neglecting so great a salvation? Those are

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the questions that the writer of Hebrews has put to us. The question is are we eagerly awaiting, because those who wait understand that they don't have to expect judgment in 10:27. And so who are you waiting for? Are you eagerly waiting? Unless you have questions, let's pray. Yes?

Participant: Can you repeat that last slide about those who aren't eagerly awaiting?

Jeff: Yes. 10:27 talks about—well, I'll read it. Look at 10:27. I'll start in verse 26.

“For if we deliberately go on sinning after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries.” So that's the idea.

Participant: There is really no condemnation. But there will be a final accountability on the last day.

Jeff: Yes.

Participant: I think of a Psalm in the Old Testament where it says, *“My tongue cleaves to the roof of my mouth if I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy.”* As we look to the new Jerusalem, in our hearts and minds that should be higher than anything.

Jeff: Yes, absolutely. Anybody else?

Participant: In this season of Advent, when we await the coming of Christ, is it theologically accurate to say that the day of judgment happened two thousand years ago outside the city of Jerusalem, when Christ was hung on the cross?

Jeff: Yes, for all of those in Christ the day of judgment happened on that cross.

Participant: When is the day of judgment for those who are not in Christ?

Jeff: Either on the day of their death or at the Second Coming of the Lord. I mean, you have to distinguish between the two, right? The judgment at one's death if one is not in Christ will lead them to be sent to hell. And then the final judgment, when the sea and all that is in it gives up the dead when Christ comes in all of His glory, that will be the final judgment, when those who are not in Christ will have their souls reunited with their bodies and they will be cast into the lake of fire.

All right. Let's pray. Father in heaven, we are thankful for the Advent season. We're thankful for the Lord Jesus Christ and His coming. Father, we pray that You will bless us as a result of His coming. And we know that You already do and are thankful for it. Bless us, Lord, with the continuing knowledge and the growth in our salvation that is in the Lord Jesus Christ. And we're so thankful for Him and pray in His name. amen.

Men: Amen. *(Applause)*