

## HEBREWS – LEVITICUS

“Thus and Necessary”

Hebrews 9:23-28

August 27, 2023

### Hebrews 9:23-28

<sup>23</sup> 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. <sup>24</sup> For Christ has entered, not into 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. <sup>25</sup> Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, <sup>26</sup> 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. <sup>27</sup> **And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment,** <sup>28</sup> **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.** <sup>1</sup>

“This is the Word of God” – “Thanks be to God.”

### “THUS” AND “NECESSARY”

As we read verse 23, we see these two words “thus” and “necessary.”

### Hebrews 9:23

<sup>23</sup> **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.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Heb 9:23–28). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

<sup>2</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Heb 9:23). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

“Thus” – a clear word that in original language points the reader, or listener to the verses we covered last week – vv. 15-22.

This is a reminder that the blood spoken of so graphically in the Old Testament as the sacrifices for sin, and referenced by the writer of Hebrews is required for all believers to receive their eternal inheritance. It shows that the death was not optional. It was an indispensable element for the forgiveness of sins.<sup>3</sup>

**THUS...**the blood is **NECESSARY**. There’s no confusing the meaning here. The blood was needed, required, essential, the only option, plan A with no plan B. This reveals God’s demand.<sup>4</sup>

There is power in the blood, as the hymn states.

But why must the tabernacle of the Old Testament, this tent that was detailed in books of the law, explained by the Hebrew writer in prior verses and discussed by us a few weeks back, be cleansed?

Why did these ornaments and tools and items within need to be cleansed with blood?

This is a room...not a person. The blood washes white as snow, we’ve been told, but for those embedded in the church culture, that has always meant the washing of a person’s sin, an individual’s sin...not a building.

I mean, the “church are the people, not the building” right? We’ve been saying that for years. Thus, shouldn’t the “tabernacle be the people, not the tent?”

Think on this today, thus...

1. A necessary, and complete purification
2. A necessary, and final death

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<sup>3</sup> Schriener, Thomas R. *Hebrews: Evangelical Biblical Theology Commentary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2020), 282.

<sup>4</sup> Schriener, 282.

### 3. A necessary, and glorious rescue

#### **A NECESSARY, AND COMPLETE PURIFICATION**

About eight years ago or so a friend of mine and I drove up to Kingsland, Georgia to visit a television set piece built by some folks who could be described as devoted fans with their own YouTube web-series. We went to see the set for the USS Farragut. This Farragut had nothing to do with the Navy but was a recreation of the original set of the USS Enterprise from the original Star Trek filmed in the 1960s.

This homemade starship in a large metal building was impressive. I've watched all the old shows, and this looked exactly like the real deal, complete with all the lights, props, and everything. I was like being transported literally to another time (not the future, but the 1960s) to a Hollywood set. It was immersive.

There are immersive recreations of shows like The Office and Friends that many have seen. Built for fans...but not the real deal.

Those are copies of fake locales, but as I shared a few weeks back, in the wilderness of Israel today there is a replica of the Old Testament tabernacle for church and tour groups to visit. It has more meaning than the Star Trek set. Yet, it too is not the real thing. Just a replica. A place where visitors can immerse themselves in a location to have an experience, or maybe find clarity regarding questions or biblical history.

Whether a recreation of a television set built on nostalgia or the recreation of historic sites and items for the purpose of learning and understanding more, the concept of copies are not foreign.

This portion of Hebrews speaks of items from the Old Testament that were simply copies of more valuable things. This was not a biblical bait-

and-switch. This was not a spiritual shell game. This was not God messing with his image-bearers.

The tabernacle, the vestments of the priests, the altar, tools, basin, ark of the Covenant, rites, and rituals of the old were intentional, instructional, godly, and right. These things are holy. But...they are copies created by God for a divine purpose.

Copies of the heavenly realm. A foretaste of what is current, but not yet.

So here is the copy of the heavenly realm and it required cleansing, purification, the commands were for the priest to sprinkle and place blood upon items in the tabernacle to ceremonially cleanse it.

### **Hebrews 9:23**

**<sup>23</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup>**

But why? It was necessary because the sins of humanity require purification. The copies of that which is in heaven needed to be ritually cleansed so that the sacrifices and offerings would be received.

The Old Testament tabernacle was a type, a model, that was cleansed ceremonially with blood. Once a year the high priest would go into the Holy of Holies with a basin of blood to sprinkle it upon the mercy seat.<sup>6</sup>

Yet this verse states that while necessary to cleanse the copy, the image of the heavenly, those in heaven themselves were cleansed in a new way, a complete way, a final way through the only one with access – the High Priest of High Priests. Our Prophet, Priest, and King, Jesus Christ.

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<sup>5</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Heb 9:23). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

<sup>6</sup> Phillips, John. *Exploring Hebrews: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1988), 119.

Yet this reference of purifying the heavenly things is not meaning that the heavenly places needed cleansing as the earthly does. In other words, there is no indication that the heavenly places are defiled by human sin. It does speak to the effectiveness and superiority of Christ's sacrifice. The clarity is here – Jesus's sacrifice is better than that offered under the old covenant. Why? Because it is connected with heaven itself – the presence of God.<sup>7</sup>

### **Hebrews 9:24**

**<sup>24</sup> For Christ has entered, not into 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.<sup>8</sup>**

### **A NECESSARY, AND FINAL DEATH**

“But why?” Have you ever been asked that by a child?

It can cause confusion if not consternation as parents seek to continually find acceptable answers to the “But why?” questions of youth. Often then result in the “Because I said so” answer.

But in this case, there's more needed.

The writer has spoken of the thus, necessary purification of Christ's blood required for the redemption of humanity, in accordance to the Old Covenant and ultimately as a fulfillment of law. But why the blood? Because it is necessary. And yes...because God said. But it is the rule and has been for many reasons forever.

And here we have the shift for the readers steeped in their own history and religious traditions. And while this may speak to the first century Jews primarily, through the Spirit's lead, it clarifies much for us today

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<sup>7</sup> Mohler, R. Albert, Jr. *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Christ in Hebrews* (Nashville, TN: Holman, 2017), 140.

<sup>8</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Heb 9:24). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

and answers the question “Why in our church are there crosses but Jesus is not on them as he is in some others?”

But why?

### **Hebrews 9:25-26**

**<sup>25</sup> Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, <sup>26</sup> 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.<sup>9</sup>**

When we think of our doctrine that affirms the perseverance of the saints, often the overly simplified statement that has been offered for generations comes to mind. As Baptists, we say “Once saved, always saved.” While there may be truth to that phrase, so many have sadly misused and misunderstood the perseverance and assurance of the saints to sadly convince themselves that their eternal security is complete because they were able to pray a prayer and go to church at some point.

The other extreme from false assurance is fearful faithlessness. The person who prays, seeks, attends, and yet somehow has never been led to understand the biblical truths regarding salvation, adoption, holiness, and the faith family. And let me just say that there are churches who fuel this and feed on those who live in fear. Some do so because of ignorance of scripture. Others do so to pad their bank accounts and marketing of their version of Jesus.

Thus, there are huge baptism moments at times – beach baptisms, spontaneous baptisms, y’all come and get baptized (again and again and again) just in case you really didn’t get baptized the five other times you were baptized. Pray again because you feel guilty. Surrender again because you aren’t sure you understood every single thing in the

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<sup>9</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Heb 9:25–26). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

scripture. Do it again because it “feels” right and sadly, we end up in this “Groundhog Day” version of Christianity where people are saved on Sunday, lost on Monday, resaved on Wednesday, and lost again by Friday, only to be saved and baptized again on Sunday.

What?!?

The hamster wheel of fearful faith leads to a life lived running...but going nowhere and even more tragic seemingly continues to put Jesus back on the cross to die again over, and over, and over, and over.

Thus, the once for all payment that is defined in Scripture here as complete, done, paid for, with the blood given as a ransom for the hearts of humanity and for those who would surrender to the Father is deemed “never enough.”

### **Hebrews 9:26a**

**<sup>26</sup> for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world.**

Thus, our cross is empty because the death has already occurred. The payment has already been made. The necessary sacrifice has already been given. Once and for all.

### **A NECESSARY, AND GLORIOUS RESCUE**

This part of God’s story is so exciting. So good. So right. So complete. To be rescued from certain doom is something that should resonate with all of us. I read of some who were able to escape the deadly fires of Maui a few weeks back. They jumped in the ocean and stayed there, treading water, for over five hours. Hard to imagine. The Coast Guard was able to rescue these. Can you imagine the elation at that moment, tempered with grief as all around them is burning. It is horrific. It is tragic. It is even beyond really describing the pain. Yet, in the midst to

have that Coast Guard ship come by to pull you in. Rescued. Relieved. Renewed.

### **Hebrews 9:27-28**

**<sup>27</sup> And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, <sup>28</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup>**

It is appointed for man to die once – thus reincarnation is not an option. One life to live is not just the name of a long-ago soap opera but a descriptor of our reality.

Life through Christ, so that our one life is one not wasted, not limited to the here and now, and not defined by the depravity of heart and the brokenness of our humanity.

One life, surrendered to the one who once for all bore the sins of the world, rescued and redeemed for now and forevermore.

Eternity is real. Eternity is secure for those in Christ. The glorious rescue is fulfilled through the blood of the Lamb.

*Have you been to Jesus for the cleansing power?*

*Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?*

*Are you fully trusting in his grace this hour?*

*Are you washed in the blood....the soul cleansing blood of the Lamb?*

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<sup>10</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Heb 9:27–28). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.