

## Once for All

Hebrews 9:24-28

<sup>24</sup> For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made by human hands, a mere copy of the true one, but he entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. <sup>25</sup> Nor was it to offer himself again and again, as the high priest enters the Holy Place year after year with blood that is not his own; <sup>26</sup> for then he would have had to suffer again and again since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the age to remove sin by the sacrifice of himself. <sup>27</sup> And just as it is appointed for mortals to die once, and after that the 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>

Last week we introduced the idea that our earthly worship is merely a copy of what is happening in heaven. What we do here is finite, what is done in heaven is eternal. So in the scripture today, the writer to the Hebrews reminds us that what Jesus has done for us was once for all – it does not have to be repeated. Because of this, as New Covenant Christians, we have reality! We are not depending on a high priest on earth who annually visits the holy of holies in a temporary sanctuary. We depend on the heavenly High Priest who has entered once and for all into the eternal sanctuary. There He represents us before God, and He always will.

We must beware of trusting anything for our spiritual life that is “made by human hands” (Heb. 9:24). It will not last. The tabernacle was replaced by Solomon’s temple, and that temple was destroyed by the Babylonians. When the Jews returned to their land after the Captivity, they rebuilt their temple; and King Herod, in later years, expanded and embellished it. But the Romans destroyed that temple, and it has never been rebuilt. Did you know that since the genealogical records, which were housed in the temple, have been lost or destroyed, the Jews

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<sup>1</sup> *The Holy Bible : New Revised Standard Version*. Nashville : Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989, S. Heb 9:24-28

are not certain who can even minister as priests. So, these things that are “made by human hands” are perishable, but the things “not made with hands” are eternal.

Another thing this passage teaches us is Christ’s ministry is final and complete (vv. 25–28). There can be nothing incomplete or temporary about Christ’s ministry in heaven. The writer pointed out again the obvious contrasts between the Old Covenant ministry and the New Covenant ministry:

- The Old Covenant involved repeated sacrifices. The New Covenant involved one sacrifice, made once for all.
- The Old Covenant involved the blood of others. The New Covenant involved Christ’s own blood, once for all.
- The Old Covenant involved covering sin. The New Covenant involved putting away sin, once for all.
- The Old Covenant was for Israel only. The New Covenant was for all sinners, once for all.
- The Old Covenant had the High Priest leave the holy of holies. The New Covenant had the High Priest enter heaven and remain there, once for all.
- The Old Covenant had the High Priest come out to bless the people. The New Covenant has a High Priest who will come to take His people to heaven, once for all.

Christ was appointed as High Priest of the New Covenant to represent sinful people in heaven itself, in the presence of God. Christ does not offer repeated sacrifices as in the Levitical institution, because that would have required Him to die many times since the Creation of the world. Instead, the heavenly ministry of Christ called for a thoroughly sufficient, one-time sacrifice to do away with sin.

We humans are sinful creatures destined to die once, and after that to face judgment. But this danger is turned up-side-down by the fact that Christ was

sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people. The singleness of Christ's sacrificial work is in contrast with the repeated Levite ministrations. The "once"-sacrifice of Christ compares with the "once"-death of each of us, and for those who trust him, He has calmed our fears. Now those who are waiting anticipate our eternal salvation. His first coming was to take away our sins. His second will be to bring our eternal "salvation" and our "eternal inheritance" of which we are heirs (see 9:15; 1:14)<sup>2</sup>

What the writer is saying is the work of Christ is a completed work, final and eternal. On the basis of His completed work, He is ministering now in heaven on our behalf.

Did you notice that He has appeared to put away sin by dying on the cross (Heb. 9:26). He is appearing now in heaven for us (Heb. 9:24). One day, He shall appear to take Christians home (Heb. 9:28). These statements are all based on His finished work.

After reading this, the Hebrew Christians who received this letter must have realized that there is no middle ground. They had to make a choice between the earthly or the heavenly, the temporary or the eternal, the incomplete or the complete.

The sacrifice of Christ never needs to be made again. Through Christ's sacrifice the road to God is forever open. Men and women were always sinners and always will be but that does not mean that Christ must go on offering himself again and again. The road is open once and for all. We see something similar in the medical world today. A surgical operation may be thought to be impossible by all. Then some surgeon finds a way round the difficulties. From that day that same operation

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<sup>2</sup>Walvoord, John F. ; Zuck, Roy B. ; Dallas Theological Seminary: *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : An Exposition of the Scriptures*. Wheaton, IL : Victor Books, 1983-c1985, S. 2:803

is avail to be done by all surgeons in that field. We may put it this way—nothing need ever be added to what Jesus Christ has done to keep open the way to God's love for sinning humanity.<sup>3</sup>

As Christian, our sanctuary is in heaven. Our Father is in heaven and our Savior is in heaven. Our citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3:20) and our treasures should be in heaven (Matt. 6:19ff). And our hope is in heaven. We Christians walk by faith, not by sight. No matter what may happen on earth, we can be confident because everything is settled in heaven.<sup>4</sup> We come weekly not to make sacrifices, but to celebrate what has already been done on our behalf.

We do not need to fear death or Christ's second coming because we await joyfully his coming that brings salvation and eternal inheritance. He has paid the price for sin once and for all. Now all He asks is that we trust and accept what he had done for us! We thank God!

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<sup>3</sup> Barclay, William, lecturer in the University of Glasgow (Hrsg.): *The Letter to the Hebrews*. Philadelphia : The Westminster Press, 2000, c1975 (The Daily Study Bible Series, Rev. Ed), S. 108

<sup>4</sup>Wiersbe, Warren W.: *The Bible Exposition Commentary*. Wheaton, Ill. : Victor Books, 1996, c1989, S. Heb 9:11