

## Eagerly Waiting • Hebrews 9:27-28

### I. INTRODUCTION

#### A. Conference

1. If you and I had the misfortune of having to attend a conference of Geneticists, we would have to sit and listen to lecturer after lecturer talking about things that went way over our heads.
2. I doubt anyone here this morning has a Ph.D. in genetics so the terminology would be like gibberish to us.
3. The only way for us to understand it would be if someone took the time to explain each and every term in ways we could grasp.

#### B. Hebrews

1. The Book of Hebrews was written to Jewish Christians who were well acquainted with the fine points of the Jewish religion.
  - a. they understood all about the priesthood and the temple.
  - b. they understood the system of sacrifices and the details of the rituals of the law.
2. The writer draws upon this common knowledge of his readers and uses it to show the superiority of Jesus Christ to the Judaism of their past.
3. But these things are largely lost on us today and we might feel a bit confused as we read over his argument.
4. We can get so caught up in trying to understand the *terms* and *rituals* mentioned here that we lose sight of the larger point of the passage – that Jesus Christ has come to *fulfill* the *ritual* part of the law, while *empowering us* to fulfill and live the *moral* law.

### II. TEXT

#### A. Setting The Context

1. It's the last two verses of chapter 9 we want to concentrate on this morning, but we need to first set their context.
2. The author has been saying that as our Great High Priest, Jesus is superior to the previous priests because while they had to offer sacrifices *often* – He only had to offer Himself *once*.
  - a. the reason the priests had to offer *many* sacrifices was because

at best, all the blood of bulls and goats could do was provide a *temporary cover* for sins.

- b. because Jesus was the perfect sacrifice, His one offering forever dealt with sin by not merely *covering* it – but *removing* it altogether.
3. He says it this way in vs. 24-26 . . .

**24 Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, *which are* copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;**

**25 not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another—**

**26 He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.**

4. Ever year, on the Day of Atonement, the high priest of Israel would enter into the most holy place of the temple.
- a. he went in with the blood of a goat which he would sprinkle on the top of the ark of the covenant
  - b. this blood provided a *covering* for the sins of the people.
  - c. the goat that had been sacrificed was a *substitute* on their behalf.
5. You see, God had laid down the principle of atonement coming through the shedding of blood in Lev. 17:11.

**The life of the flesh *is* in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it *is* the blood *that* makes atonement for the soul.**

6. I realize this seems *barbaric* and offends the sensibilities of many people today.
7. Ancient Judaism was a *bloody* religion, and not a few people are put off by the gospel today because the message of the cross *offends* them.
8. But that was God's *whole point* in originally instituting the *sacrifices* as the means for our gaining forgiveness.
- a. sin is a terrible thing; a wicked, abominable, destructive thing!

- b. in fact, sin is *so* evil, *so* destructive that it leads to *death*.
  - c. so terrible is sin, that the only way to deal with it is to kill it!
  - d. and that's what the shedding of blood is all about.
9. When you read about *blood* in scripture, understand it as referring to *death*!
- a. some people think that the blood of Christ is a *special* substance that has *magical* properties -
  - b. but that is not at all what the Bible means when it speaks of the blood of Christ.
  - c. it simply refers to His death, which came about through the shedding of His blood on the cross.
  - d. friends, it was the *death* of Christ, not His actual, physical blood that atones for us.
10. The shedding of blood was emblematic for death in the ancient world because they knew from experience that when a person's or animal's blood flowed out of their body, that person died.
11. Thus, the shedding of blood spoke of *death* – it was the visible symbol of the *departure* of life.
12. When in Lev. 17 God said,

**The life of the flesh *is* in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; . . .**

- a. He was saying that a *substitute* could be used
  - b. the death of a substitute would pay for a person's debt of sin.
  - c. so the people brought their sacrifices as substitutes in their place.
  - d. the shedding of all that blood was a graphic reminder to them of just how big a deal sin is!
13. If the rites of ancient Judaism seem barbaric and bloody; if the message of the Cross offends you because it was such a bloody scene, then understand something – YOU'RE RIGHT!
- a. it *is* barbaric and offensive -
  - b. but what's barbaric is not the blood!
  - c. what's offensive is not the gore of the sacrifices.
  - d. what's barbaric and offensive is the *sin* that demands such a high price that the life of an *innocent* would have to be offered up in sacrifice to bring forgiveness!
14. In v. 25, the writer reminds his readers that the Jewish High

Priest had to renew the sacrifice of the Day of Atonement every year.

- a. why? because it was not possible that the blood of a goat could really remove sin.
  - b. it was only a temporary covering
  - c. perfect, lasting forgiveness would require a perfect, lasting sacrifice.
15. Jesus *was* that perfect sacrifice, so He only needed to die the one time.
16. That one sacrifice on the Cross was enough to atone for the sins of all time and all mankind.

### **B. Vs. 27-28**

**27 And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment,**

**28 so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.**

1. All people die. And following death, we come before God for judgment.
2. I don't know how you are about keeping appointments but regardless of your track-record, you have two appointments that you are sure to be on time for
  - a. your death& your judgment
  - b. trust me, you'll be there for both!
3. As surely as the sun sets at the end of the day, the sun will set on your life and you will die.
4. Then once you pass from this world, you will stand before God and face His perfect judgment.
5. The time to affect the nature of that judgment is during *this* life, while you still draw breath.
6. For when you breath your last, it's too late to do anything that will alter the outcome of that judgment.
  - a. the Bible makes no provision for Purgatory
  - b. there is no evidence whatsoever that after death you can do something to expiate your guilt or remove your sin.
  - c. rather than endless cycles of reincarnation in which we keep

- coming back, trying to get it right -
- d. as it says so clearly in v. 27 – “It is appointed for men to die *once*, but after this the judgment.”
  7. While this is what has been appointed for all men and women, there *is* one exception – Jesus Christ.
  8. Like all men, Jesus Christ was appointed to die once.
    - a. but unlike all other men, He will never face judgment because He was sinless!
    - b. because He will never face judgment for Himself, He can *become* the perfect substitute for us!
    - c. at the cross, Jesus took our sin & judgment upon Himself.
    - d. our sin demands the just sentence of death – Jesus died that death on our behalf!
  9. Look at what he writes in v. 28 . . .

**28 so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.**

10. The first time Jesus appeared, He came to deal with sin.
11. When He appears again, it won't be to deal with sin since He's already dealt with it perfectly.
12. When He comes again, He comes to apply the *full result* of the salvation His death accomplished.
13. The first time He came for the Cross – the second time He comes for the Crown!
14. But there's an allusion here to the ritual of the Jewish Day of Atonement that we might miss.
15. He writes, “To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time.”
  - a. on the Day of Atonement, the people would pack into the temple grounds
  - b. this was the highest and holiest day of the entire year for this was their chance to renew their national covenant with God.
  - c. the high priest would put on his special robes and then perform the rites of sacrifice with the selected goat.
  - d. around the hem of his tunic were sewn little bells and around his ankle was tied a long rope.
  - e. when all was set, he would slowly walk in to the holy place

- with a shallow dish filled with the blood of the goat.
- f. he would move forward until he stood just before the curtain that separated the holy place from the Holiest of all –
    - 1) the Holy of holies which held the ark of the covenant
    - 2) above which floated the Shekinah – the glory cloud that represented the presence of God.
  - g. very carefully and reverently, he would then slip through the curtain and approach the ark
  - h. drawing near, with the Shekinah just inches from his face, he would dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle it on top of the ark, just below the cloud
  - i. as God looked down from the cloud, He would see the tablets of the ten commandments inside the ark, covered by the blood.
  - j. then, once the priest's service had been properly rendered, he would slowly back out of the Holy of holies.
  - k. the reason for the bells on the hem of his garment was so that the people could hear him still moving around in the holy places
  - l. if there was a moment of prolonged silence, they would know that he had done something to displease the Lord and God had fried him
  - m. then they would haul on the rope and drag his body out of the sacred place.
16. Imagine the tension in the courtyard as the priest disappeared into the holy place to *begin* his service.
- a. imagine the tension as the rope played out in the hands of the other priests.
  - b. imagine the anxiety that filled the air as that section of the rope came into view that marked the high priest's last few feet to enter into the Holy of holies!
  - c. and then those critical minutes while he sprinkled the blood on the top of the ark
  - d. everyone was utterly silent, even trying to still their own breath so they could catch the faint sound of bells
17. But if the priest was successful, as was almost always the case, then he would appear again, walking out of the holy place – and all the people would break out in triumphant rejoicing.
18. You see, as soon as the priest appeared, they knew that God had

accepted the sacrifice and their national covenant with Him had been renewed for another year.

19. Once more, they were the people of God.
20. So they waited eagerly for the priest to re-appear.
21. His reappearance signaled their salvation.

### **C. Eagerly Waiting**

1. In the same way – we now eagerly await the reappearance of Jesus Christ, our great high priest whose entered into the heavenly holy place where He's forever established our covenant with God.
2. And there's a certain *tension* to our lives as we wait; not because we're uncertain of whether or not the Father will accept the Son's service –
3. We just don't know *when* He will re-appear.
4. Let me ask you – are you *eagerly* awaiting the return of Christ?
  - a. does the return of Christ *excite* you?
  - b. does the prospect of His coming *thrill* you?
  - c. when you think about the future, what **IS** your chief desire?
5. Young children start getting excited about Christmas as soon as they see the decorations going up.
  - a. already in the many of the stores, the Christmas products are out
  - b. usually the week after Thanksgiving, the harvest decorations come down and the stores start putting up the Christmas decorations
  - c. then the kids notice and they start dropping hints about what they want.
  - d. kids love Christmas, and as the weeks pass, they get ever more eager for the big day to arrive.
6. I wonder, are we eager for the return of Christ?
7. As we watch the pace of world events, do we realize that the stage is set, the decorations are all up and all we are awaiting is the dawn of the big day?
8. A brother came to me some time back and said that while he really wanted Jesus to return, He also longed to see his children grow up and start their own families.
  - a. he was concerned that his desire to see his kids grow up somehow denied his longing for the Lord.
  - b. I think we all understand that tension

- c. there are certain things we would really like to do here, and sometimes we hope the Lord delays His coming just long enough for us to be able to do them
    - 1) like finishing schooling and graduating
    - 2) getting married and enjoying a nice honeymoon
    - 3) getting that next promotion and moving into the corner office with the windows that look out over the county
    - 4) whatever it is we've invested a lot of time and effort in, we want to see it completed
    - 5) or maybe it's some life long dream – like vacationing in Hawaii
  - d. is it wrong to desire these things?
  - e. it's not really wrong, but it is short-sighted!
9. You see, when Jesus comes again, it is for salvation!
10. He's already paid for our sin, and when He comes again it's to bestow on us the fullness of the salvation He's secured for us & for this planet.
- a. here's what that means
  - b. it means this entire creation will be liberated from the curse placed on it in the Fall!
  - c. if you think Hawaii is gorgeous now – wait till you see it after Christ comes!
  - d. it means that these bodies we have will be changed and we will get new ones – bodies that are perfectly fit to enjoy all the bliss of heaven.
  - e. last time we went to Hawaii, several of the guys went on diets so they'd be in better shape and look better in their beach wear.
  - f. Oh – imagine what our new bodies will be like!
  - g. when Christ comes, that 80% of our brains they say we don't use will be fully restored to us – which means our capacity to enjoy the wonders of heaven and earth will be multiplied 6-fold!
  - h. sin will be banished, evil will be removed, all that causes sorrow and pain will be eradicated – nothing will remain to sully or tarnish our joy.
11. In other words, when Christ comes, He will usher in a whole new system that will make things like graduation, and families, and vacations seem petty and trivial.



12. Actually, God has given all these things to us now to be but foretastes of the joy that is to be ours in the consummate joy of seeing Christ when He comes.
13. Are you eagerly awaiting the return of Christ?
14. Does the prospect of His return thrill you right down to your socks?
15. If not, then I want to encourage you to spend some time thinking about what it means when it says that when He comes again, He comes for salvation.

### **III. CONCLUSION**

#### **A. Blood**

1. Immediately after the terror attacks on Sept. 11<sup>th</sup>, the Red Cross sent out an urgent appeal for blood donations
2. People flocked by the tens of thousands to blood banks and centers all over the nation to give blood.
3. This was probably one of the clearest signs of the strength and charity of the American people.
  - a. it's one thing to get patriotic and wave a flag
  - b. it's a bit greater step to sit down and write out a check for a relief fund.
  - c. but when people line up to have a needle stuck in their arms so they can give their life's blood so that others may live – that's an indication of something that is truly remarkable!
4. The life is in the blood, and people were willing to give some of their life so others could live too.
5. The blood that was given over that next week was given with the idea that there were innocent people in NYC or at the Pentagon that might need it.
6. Do you think the American people would have lined up to give blood to any of the terrorists who might have survived?
7. Of course not – they are the enemy, and if they die, well the attitude of most would be “Good riddance!”

#### **B. The Cross**

1. When Jesus hung upon that cross and His blood flowed out, He didn't give His life just for His friends, the disciples.
  - a. He didn't give His blood just for the good people or even just for His

countrymen

- b. He gave His blood for the despised Romans – the foreigners, the enemy!
- c. He gave His blood for the two thieves who were crucified on either side of Him
- d. His blood flowed for Pilate who had condemned Him,
  - 1) for the soldiers who had terrorized Him
  - 2) for the religious leaders who had mocked Him
  - 3) for the crowds that taunted Him.
  - 4) and as He hung upon the cross that day, His life leaving Him as the blood flowed through the nails holes, He looked down the long corridor of history to you and I sitting here this morning –
  - 5) His blood was shed for us!