

“The Way Revealed”
(Hebrews 9:6-14)

Introduction: In verses 1-5, the author told us a little bit about what the tabernacle of the Old Covenant was like. He calls it “the earthly sanctuary” because it was put together with man-made materials. It was an area walled off by curtains, in which were two tents. The first tent was called “the holy place,” and the second tent was called “the holy of holies.” He also told us what was in each of these tents. In the first was the lampstand, the table of showbread, and the altar of incense. In the second was the ark of the covenant, in which was the golden jar of manna, Aaron’s rod which budded, and the two tables of the covenant. This was to be a picture for them of heaven. Remember that it was made according to the pattern, or picture, which Moses saw on the mountain.

Now the reason he told us about these things, was first, so he could make a comparison between the earthly tabernacle and the real one in the heaven, to show that the heavenly one is better. But he also told us these things so that he could now tell us what the priests were doing in there, and how what they were doing was not nearly as good as what Christ did. And what he will tell us this evening is that

The priests could only make you outwardly clean, but Christ could make you inwardly clean.

I. First, he tells us what the priest were doing in those two tents (vv. 6-7).

- A. First, what they were doing in the outer, or the first, tent (v. 6).
 - 1. In this tent, he says that the priests are continually going in and out.
 - 2. The reason they are is so they can do what God has commanded them to do in the divine worship.
 - a. In this first tent was the lampstand that needed to be trimmed and kept lit at all times. And so the priests would go in to trim them in the morning and in the evening.
 - b. At the same time the priest was to put fresh incense on the golden altar of incense. We read in Exodus 30:7-8, “And Aaron shall burn fragrant incense on it; he shall burn it every morning when he trims the lamps. And when Aaron trims the lamps at twilight, he shall burn incense. *There shall be perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations.*”
 - c. This is what Zacharias the priest was doing when the angel appeared to him and announced the birth of his son, John the Baptist (Luke 1).
 - d. The one last thing they would do was to make sure that there was always fresh bread on the table once per week. On every Sabbath day, the priest was to place twelve loaves in order on the table before the Lord, as an everlasting covenant. The bread was for Aaron and his sons to eat (Lev. 24:5-9).
- B. “But into the second only the high priest enters, once a year, not without taking blood, which he offers for himself and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance” (v. 7).

1. The second tent did not see a lot of activity during the year. It was only entered once in the year.
 - a. It was on the day of atonement, which is the tenth day of the seventh month, called Tishri. Tishri is around September/October.
 - b. And on this day, the high priest did not enter just once, but twice. The author means here that there was only one occasion on which the high priest entered that tent. But on that one occasion, he entered twice.

2. And why did he enter?
 - a. The first time was to offer the blood of a bull for his sins and the sins of his household (Lev. 16:11-14).
 - b. And the second time was to offer the blood of the goat for the sins of the people (vv. 15-16).
 - c. He was to sprinkle the blood of the bull on the east side of the mercy seat and in front of it. And he was to sprinkle the blood of the goat on the mercy seat and in front of it.
 - d. He also needed to take some coals from the altar and put them into his censer. Then he was to put two handfuls of finely ground sweet incense on the coals, so that the incense would make a cloud which would cover the mercy seat. If the incense was not burned, then the priest would die (vv. 12-13).
 - e. There are two things which are not mentioned here. One is that the priest would take two goats and then cast lots for them. The one that fell to the Lord was sacrificed. But the one which fell to the other was designated as the scapegoat. The last thing the high priest would do on the day of atonement was to lay his hands on the head of the scapegoat, confess the sins of Israel over it, and then send it away into the wilderness. This was to show the people that their sins were removed from them and carried far away.
 - f. The other thing not mentioned here is that the priest would take off his violet robes on this day and wear clean linen clothes. Some have suggested that this pictures Christ, who left the glory of heaven to be clothed with the flesh of man. And then after He died for our sins, again was exalted to heaven where He rules and reigns forever.
 - g. But one other thing is mentioned here. This offering was for the sins which the people did in ignorance.
 - (i) Whenever someone sinned, he was to bring a sacrifice for that sin.
 - (ii) But sometimes they didn't know that they had sinned. Maybe they didn't know that something they did was sinful. Or maybe they forgot about their sin.
 - (iii) But even though they may have been ignorant or forgot about their sin, God still held them accountable to make an atonement for it. Even those sins deserve punishment!
 - (iv) Jesus tells us that ignorance of God's Law may make our punishment less, but it doesn't excuse us altogether. He says in Luke 12:47-48, "And that slave who knew his master's will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, shall receive many lashes, but the one who did not

know *it*, and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but few. And from everyone who has been given much shall much be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more.”

- (v) This means that even if you don't know that something is a sin, and yet you do it anyway, you are still guilty. But those who know what God wants, and still don't do it, are more guilty.
- (vi) But thankfully whenever you repent of your sins and turn to Christ, your sins are forgiven, whether you knew what you were doing, or whether you were ignorant that what you were doing was wrong. Even if you don't remember them all, Christ still cleanses you of all of them. I do believe, however, that if the Lord brings to your mind something you did years ago as a child, or as a young man or woman, which was wrong, that you should still ask for God's forgiveness. And if you have done something which needs to be fixed, such as stealing something which didn't belong to you, you need to return it or make restitution for it.
- (vii) Children, this should help you to make sure that you do everything right the first time. Try to obey and serve the Lord with all your heart now, so that you won't need to try and make right a lot of wrongs when you are older. Be thankful that you have parents who can teach you the difference between right and wrong.

- 3. What the author has told us here is meant to highlight three things:
 - a. The day of atonement was the only occasion on which only one man, the high priest, could enter only for those few moments into the throne room of God.
 - b. When the priest entered, he was only able to enter through blood.
 - c. And that blood was not able to bring a man to God, because it had to be repeated every year before he could go back inside.

II. The Holy Spirit, then, meant to teach us through this arrangement of the Tabernacle that it was not able to bring us to God (vv. 8-10).

- A. The way into heaven, the real way, was not revealed while the first tent was standing (v. 8).
 - 1. The “holy place” here means the holy of holies.
 - a. Sometimes it is called by this name.
 - b. And the author clearly tells us that as long as the first tent is standing, which is the holy place, the way into this other holy place is hidden.
 - 2. What this means is that while the Old Covenant arrangement was still standing, while it was still in existence, the New Covenant order, which was represented by the Holy of Holies was not revealed.
 - a. The way that the tabernacle was built was to teach them that they could not enter into heaven in that way. The average Israelite could not enter into the Holy of Holies, not even through the sacrifices.
 - b. It needed to be removed before the people could enter into the kingdom of God.
 - c. This shows how foolish those were who stopped at the pictures, who were

happy with the shadows. These things showed them that they couldn't come to God.

- d. If there was one lesson which the Old Covenant should have taught them, it was that in this system there was no direct access to God.
- e. And this applied to the Temples which were later built as well, when the Tabernacle was no longer used. They also showed that the people could not come straight into God's presence.

B. This was also to teach them about how helpful the Temple and the priesthood were to them now (v. 9-10).

1. What it was to teach them was that the gifts and sacrifices which were offered were not able to cleanse the conscience of those who made them.
 - a. The gifts were the non-bloody things which the Law required, such as unleavened cakes, meal offerings and drink offerings.
 - b. And the sacrifices were the bloody offerings, the bulls, goats, and lambs.
 - c. But these things could not remove the sense of guilt that they had. These things could not make them holy.
 - d. They only went as far as the flesh. They were pictures of the real cleansing. They could make you ceremonially clean, but not really clean from your sins.
 - e. Now it is true that those who had faith, those who truly believed in God, when they offered these sacrifices, they really were cleansed. But this did not come from the blood of the sacrifice. It came through the blood of the Lamb of God.
 - f. What the author is saying here is that these sacrifices themselves, could not cleanse your sin. They did not have the power to remove them. You need something more.
 - g. This teaches us that our problem in coming to God is not outward, but inward. It is a matter of the heart. God doesn't reject us because we are ceremonially unclean. He doesn't condemn us because our flesh and blood is polluted. He rejects us because our hearts are filthy with the dirt of sin. And until this is cleansed, He will not let us come into His presence.
2. The food and drink requirements, as well as the ceremonial washings, could not help either.
 - a. They were required by God. They were useful for health and good hygiene.
 - b. But they could not touch your conscience by themselves. They were only imposed on them until the time of the New Covenant should come. And now that the New Covenant has come, they are done away (Acts 15:28).
 - c. Again these were only pictures of Christ. They could not take away their sins. They were meant to lead them by the hand to the One who could, to Christ. Those who looked beyond the types to Christ, did receive forgiveness of sins. But many did not not.
3. Those who try to get to heaven through the Old Covenant shadows will not arrive in heaven at all. And those who try to come to God through any religion which only deals with our outward behavior, and not with our heart, is also

doomed to failure.

III. But now we see that all important “but:” “But when Christ appeared” (vv. 11-14).

- A. The priests and their ceremonies could not make a man perfect, “but” Christ can.
 - 1. When Christ appeared, He entered into the greater and more perfect Tabernacle.
 - a. This Tabernacle was greater and more perfect, because it is not man-made.
 - b. It is the one which the Lord pitched. It is not of this creation, it is not of this world. It belongs to heaven.
 - c. And again, He did not enter it only for a brief time, and only once per year, but He entered it once for all, now to appear in the presence of God for us.
 - d. This is the holiest place of all. In all the world, the land of Palestine was the holiest of all. In all of Palestine, Jerusalem was the holiest city. In all of Jerusalem, the temple was the most holy. In all the temple, the Holy of Holies was the holiest place of all. Now if this is true of the picture of heaven, how much more of heaven itself!
 - e. Christ has entered into heaven, into the real holy place, now to appear in the presence of the unapproachable God every day for us, and for our salvation.
 - 2. And He did not enter through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered once for all.
 - a.

9:24), the immaterial, unapproachable presence of God, where He intercedes for us. His glorified body, as the meeting place of God and all Christ’s redeemed, and the angels, answers to the heavens through which He passed, and passes. His body is opposed to the tabernacle, as His blood to the blood of goats, etc.

greater — as contrasted with the small dimensions of the earthly anterior tabernacle.

more perfect — effective in giving pardon, peace, sanctification, and access to closest communion with God (compare Hebrews 9:9, Hebrews 10:1).

not made with hands — but by the Lord Himself (Hebrews 8:2).

12. Neither — “Nor yet.”

by — “through”; as the means of His approach.

goats ... calves — not a bullock, such as the Levitical high priest offered

for himself, and a goat for the people, on the day of atonement (Leviticus 16:6,15), year by year, whence the plural is used, goats ... calves. Besides the goat offered for the people the blood of which was sprinkled before the mercy seat, the high priest led forth a second goat, namely, the scapegoat; over it he confessed the people's sins, putting them on the head of the goat, which was sent as the sin-bearer into the wilderness out of sight, implying that the atonement effected by the goat sin offering (of which the ceremony of the scapegoat is a part, and not distinct from the sin offering) consisted in the transfer of the people's sins on the goat, and their consequent removal out of sight. The translation of sins on the victim usual in other expiatory sacrifices being omitted in the case of the slain goat, but employed in the case of the goat sent away, proved the two goats were regarded as one offering [ARCHBISHOP MAGEE]. Christ's death is symbolized by the slain goat; His resurrection to life by the living goat sent away. Modern Jews substitute in some places a cock for the goat as an expiation, the sins of the offerers being transferred to the entrails, and exposed on the housetop for the birds to carry out of sight, as the scapegoat did; the Hebrew for "man" and "cock" being similar, gebher [BUXTORF].

by — "through," as the means of His entrance; the key unlocking the heavenly Holy of Holies to Him. The Greek is forcible, "through THE blood of His own" (compare Hebrews 9:23).

once — "once for all."

having obtained — having thereby obtained; literally, "found for Himself," as a thing of insuperable difficulty to all save Divine Omnipotence, self-devoting zeal, and love, to find. The access of Christ to the Father was arduous (Hebrews 5:7). None before had trodden the path.

eternal — The entrance of our Redeemer, once for all, into the heavenly holiest place, secures eternal redemption to us; whereas the Jewish high priest's entrance was repeated year by year, and the effect temporary and partial, "On redemption," compare Matthew 20:28, Ephesians 1:7, Colossians 1:14 1 Timothy 2:5, Titus 2:14, 1 Peter 1:19.

v. 13

For His blood, offered by Himself, purifies not only outwardly, as the Levitical sacrifices on the day of atonement, but inwardly unto the service of the living God (Hebrews 9:13,14). His death is the inaugurating act of the new covenant, and of the heavenly sanctuary (Hebrews 9:15-23). His entrance into the true Holy of Holies is the consummation of His once-for-all-offered sacrifice of atonement (Hebrews 9:24,26); henceforth, His reappearance alone remains to complete our redemption

(Hebrews 9:27,28).

13. if — as we know is the case; so the Greek indicative means. Argument from the less to the greater. If the blood of mere brutes could purify in any, however small a degree, how much more shall inward purification, and complete and eternal salvation, be wrought by the blood of Christ, in whom dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead?

ashes of an heifer — (Numbers 19:16-18). The type is full of comfort for us. The water of separation, made of the ashes of the red heifer, was the provision for removing ceremonial defilement whenever incurred by contact with the dead. As she was slain without the camp, so Christ (compare Hebrews 13:11, Numbers 19:3,4). The ashes were laid by for constant use; so the continually cleansing effects of Christ's blood, once for all shed. In our wilderness journey we are continually contracting defilement by contact with the spiritually dead, and with dead works, and need therefore continual application to the antitypical life-giving cleansing blood of Christ, whereby we are afresh restored to peace and living communion with God in the heavenly holy place.

the unclean — Greek, “those defiled” on any particular occasion.

purifying — Greek, “purity.”

the flesh — Their effect in themselves extended no further. The law had a carnal and a spiritual aspect; carnal, as an instrument of the Hebrew polity, God, their King, accepting, in minor offenses, expiatory victims instead of the sinner, otherwise doomed to death; spiritual, as the shadow of good things to come (Hebrews 10:1). The spiritual Israelite derived, in partaking of these legal rights, spiritual blessings not flowing from them, but from the great antitype. Ceremonial sacrifices released from temporal penalties and ceremonial disqualifications; Christ's sacrifice releases from everlasting penalties (Hebrews 9:12), and moral impurities on the conscience disqualifying from access to God (Hebrews 9:14). The purification of the flesh (the mere outward man) was by “sprinkling”; the washing followed by inseparable connection (Numbers 19:19). So justification is followed by renewing.

Cleansing of the flesh: the outward symbol of cleansing, like baptism washes off dirt, but not the soul, unless the reality is there given by the Spirit and received by faith.

14. offered himself — The voluntary nature of the offering gives it especial efficacy. He “through the eternal Spirit,” that is, His divine Spirit (Romans 1:4, in contrast to His “flesh,” Hebrews 9:3; His Godhead, 1 Timothy 3:16, 1 Peter 3:18), “His inner personality” [ALFORD],

which gave a free consent to the act, offered Himself. The animals offered had no spirit or will to consent in the act of sacrifice; they were offered according to the law; they had a life neither enduring, nor of any intrinsic efficacy. But He from eternity, with His divine and everlasting Spirit, concurred with the Father's will of redemption by Him. His offering began on the altar of the cross, and was completed in His entering the holiest place with His blood. The eternity and infinitude of His divine Spirit (compare Hebrews 7:16) gives eternal ("eternal redemption," Hebrews 9:12, also compare Hebrews 9:15) and infinite merit to His offering, so that not even the infinite justice of God has any exception to take against it. It was "through His most burning love, flowing from His eternal Spirit," that He offered Himself [OECOLAMPADIUS].

without spot — The animal victims had to be without outward blemish; Christ on the cross was a victim inwardly and essentially stainless (1 Peter 1:19).

purge — purify from fear, guilt, alienation from Him, and selfishness, the source of dead works (Hebrews 9:22,23).

your — The oldest manuscripts read "our." The Vulgate, however, supports English Version reading.

conscience — moral religious consciousness.

dead works — All works done in the natural state, which is a state of sin, are dead; for they come not from living faith in, and love to, "the living God" (Hebrews 11:6). As contact with a dead body defiled ceremonially (compare the allusion, "ashes of an heifer," Hebrews 9:13), so dead works defile the inner consciousness spiritually.

to serve — so as to serve. The ceremonially unclean could not serve God in the outward communion of His people; so the unrenewed cannot serve God in spiritual communion. Man's works before justification, however lifelike they look, are dead, and cannot therefore be accepted before the living God. To have offered a dead animal to God would have been an insult (compare Malachi 1:8); much more for a man not justified by Christ's blood to offer dead works. But those purified by Christ's blood in living faith do serve (Romans 12:1), and shall more fully serve God (Revelation 22:3).

living God — therefore requiring living spiritual service (John 4:24).

Hebrews 10:1; "better promises," (Hebrews 8:6; the "eternal inheritance," Hebrews 9:15, 1 Peter 1:4; the "things hoped for," Hebrews 11:1).

Redemption by Christ has opened that Holy of Holies. (Cf. Hebrews 4:16 Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need. Hebrews 10:19 Since therefore, brethren, we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, 21 and since *we have* a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled *clean* from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.”)

Note: The sacrifices cleansed and kept one in contact with the picture of the heavenlies. But Christ's blood really cleanses sin and gives one an interest in the realities in heaven.