

## The High Priest of Our Confession: 5

### The Superiority of the Heavenly Sanctuary

#### Hebrews 9.1-28

“Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession” **Hebrews 4.14**

In these studies we have been seeing that the High Priestly ministry of Jesus is not subject to an earthly tabernacle as the better New Covenant is ministered from a better sanctuary – the heavenly sanctuary.

Last time we looked at the inferiority of the Earthly Sanctuary and noted that:

1. It was on Earth (v1)
2. It was a shadow of things to come (vs2-5)
3. It was inaccessible to the people (vs6-7)
4. It was temporary (vs8-9)
5. It was ineffective to change hearts and lives (vs9-10)

As we continue through Hebrews 9 we will see how the sanctuary of the New Covenant is far better than the Tabernacle (or Temple) of the Old Covenant.

#### The Heavenly Sanctuary

At verse 11 the writer shifts to looking at the Heavenly Sanctuary and shows why it is better and why the ministry of Jesus is far better.

#### **1. (v11) It Is A Heavenly Sanctuary**

“But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation”

- *'Not of this creation'* – not an earthly tabernacle, constructed with earthly materials. The earthly tabernacle may have been beautiful, ornate, of gold and precious materials, but the heavenly sanctuary is *'greater and more perfect'*.
- It requires no earthly priest to minister because Jesus came as High Priest of the *'good things to come'* - all those things that were shadows and types in the Old Covenant find their fulfilment in Jesus (see Hebrews 10.1)

“For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect”

#### **2. (v12-23) It Is Effective For Changing Lives.**

What a contrast these verses are! - we saw last time that the earthly sanctuary was ineffective to change hearts and lives.

- The high priest took the blood of an animal into the Holy of Holies many times during his life, but Jesus took His own blood into the heavenly sanctuary once for all.

- That's an amazing statement – He did it ONCE and it covers ALL people for ALL time.

Under the Old Covenant the sacrifices brought ceremonial cleansing to the body (v13)  
 “For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh,”

but Jesus blood did what they couldn't do – (v14)

“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?”  
 Jesus' blood cleanses and purges the heart and conscience of man, and gives the believer right standing with God (makes them righteous).

In verses 15-23, the apostle uses an illustration of a Will & Testament to explain his argument:

When a person makes a will and decides how to divide out his estate, no one gets the inheritance, even though they may be named in the will, until after the person who made the will (the testator) dies.

- Jesus had an eternal inheritance to give to His church, and this is spelled out in the New Covenant (New Testament).
- So that the covenant could take effect, Jesus had to die, but there is something even more amazing, more wonderful - Jesus died to make the Covenant effective, and then came back from the dead to administer the 'inheritance' personally.
- Jesus is the only person to be both testator and executor of His own will. That's the function of His High Priestly ministry – to see that the details of the New Covenant are carried out.

That's why it is important for us to know our rights under the covenant – we state them through our confession. He is the High Priest of our confession and sees to it that what we believe (through our confession of faith) comes to pass and fulfilment in our lives.  
 “Let us hold fast the confession of *our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful*” **Hebrews 10.23**

“Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful” (NIV)

“So let us seize *and hold fast and retain without wavering the hope we cherish and confess and our acknowledgement of it, for He Who promised is reliable (sure) and faithful to His word*” (Amp)

### **3. (v24) The Heavenly Sanctuary Is The Fulfilment, Not The Shadow**

“For 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*”

- The priesthood of Aaron's order ministered in a tabernacle that was temporary. Everything about the tabernacle pointed to Jesus – the structure, furnishings and the sacrifices.
- Jesus is not ministering in an earthly tabernacle with its copies and imitations, but in the better Heavenly Sanctuary that is the fulfilment of these Old Testament practices. The High Priest sprinkled blood on the mercy seat for the people, but Jesus appears in the very presence of God for us.

- Let us not cling to ceremonial rituals as though they have any power, but to Jesus Himself, our Great High Priest.

#### 4. (v24-28) It Is Based On A Completed Sacrifice

“For 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. (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”

In wrapping up this study and to prepare us for next time we see that this is all made possible because of a better sacrifice.

One of the key words of these last few verses is the word *appear*. This word is used three times (vss 24, 26, 28), once each in the present, past and future tenses and is used to show us that the sacrifice is completed.

There is nothing more to do, the sacrifice is complete. He does not have to die every year, He has appeared once to put away sin. We said it earlier – it was a ONCE for ALL sacrifice.

Under the Old Covenant the people did not know whether the sacrifice was complete and their sins atoned for until the High Priest came out of the Tabernacle. His 'appearing' signified the blood had been accepted.

In these verses we see Jesus'

- past appearance, which put away sin for us (v26) – He had to die and rise again to bring the New Covenant into effect.
- present appearance in heaven for us (v24) – as our High Priest, administering the New Covenant
- future appearance to take us to be with Himself (v28)