

Only Christ is Our Mediator in Heaven

Hebrews 9:11-24 (vv. 15-24)

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I. Historical Background & Biblical Context

A. Historical Background

It is crucial to have a clear understanding of the role of the priests and the sacrifices made under the old covenant in order to fully understand Jesus Christ's sacrifice and His exclusive position as our mediator in heaven.

Under the old covenant, the position and function of high priest was to serve as the mediator between God and the people. The covenant also established the tabernacle as the sacred place where the high priests performed sacrifices to atone for the sins of the people (Heb. 9:2-5, Exod. 25-27). The old covenant and its laws were important for the times, but their purpose was temporary and limited. Sacrifices were required continually, hence an ongoing need for atonement and redemption (Heb. 9:7, Lev. 16). Man did not have full and complete access to God. Access to God for atonement was annual and limited to high priests in the tabernacle's inner room (Heb 9:7-8). The sacrifices offered could only grant temporary forgiveness of sins. They were unable to fully cleanse or penetrate the conscience of man and unable to bring lasting forgiveness or transformation (Heb. 9:9).

The old covenant served as a foreshadowing of the new covenant that later came through the coming of Jesus Christ (Heb. 9:10). The new covenant surpasses the limitations of the old. Through the new covenant, we receive **a)**

eternal redemption, which means our sins are forgiven and our relationship with God is restored for eternity; and **b) complete access to God's presence** and to experience His abundant grace. Now, Jesus serves as our mediator in heaven, interceding on our behalf and securing our forgiveness and salvation from sin.

B. Biblical Context

In Hebrews 9:11-24, we are encouraged to persevere and remain steadfast in our faith knowing the superiority of Jesus Christ's sacrifice. Jesus is the central role in the Plan of Salvation. He is the Son of God, the great High Priest, the heir of all things, and superior to all things. Jesus fulfilled the old covenant and is the perfect mediator of the new covenant.

II. The Lesson: Only Christ is Our Mediator in Heaven (Hebrews 9:11-24 vv. 15-24)

A. Christ's sacrifice makes Him the only mediator (v. 9:11-15)

Jesus, the high priest, came to offer the final atonement for our sins. In alignment with the pattern set forth in the Old Testament, he entered a tabernacle. However, this tabernacle is distinguished as greater and more perfect. The scripture clearly indicates that this tabernacle was in heaven, as it was not created on earth by human hands.

Unlike the high priests operating under the old covenant, Jesus entered the presence of God in the Most Holy Place of the heavenly tabernacle. He did this once for all, meaning that it would never be repeated. He sacrificed by his own

blood, not the blood of animal sacrifices. Jesus is holy, blameless, perfect, pure, unblemished, and set apart from sin, allowing him to be the perfect sacrifice for humanity. Thus, his sacrifice obtained eternal redemption for humanity, securing forgiveness and salvation for all who believe in him. Jesus was the only one who could do this; and his work was sufficient.

The animal sacrifices required for the old covenant sanctified and cleansed people externally. However, the blood of Jesus, offered through the eternal Spirit, has a far more profound impact that can cleanse our consciences and removing the guilt of sin. This inward transformation enables us to wholeheartedly serve the living God with joy and without shame. Jesus is the only one who can bridge the gap between humanity and God. His sacrifice served as the core of the new covenant. Through him, all who are called can receive forgiveness of sins and the inheritance of eternal life.

B. Only His Death Put The New Covenant Into Effect (v. 9:16-17)

A will comes into effect only after the death of the person who made it. This principle is also applied to the new covenant. The new covenant was established to grant believers an inheritance, and to activate the new covenant, Jesus' death was essential. His death brought the new covenant into effect, so that believers can secure the promises that laid within it.

C. Forgiveness and Purification Can Only Come From the Blood of Jesus (v. 9:18-24)

Even the first covenant established by God with the Israelites through Moses required a sacrificial death. Moses sprinkled the blood of calves mixed with

other ingredients over the people of Israel and declared “This is the blood of the covenant, which God has commanded you to keep”. Similarly, Moses sprinkled blood on the tabernacle and every ceremonial instrument.

Everything is to be cleansed by blood and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. The shedding of blood can be seen here as symbolic of consecration, purification, and forgiveness of sins.

The earthly tabernacle and sacrifices served as copies of the heavenly one. However, Jesus’s sacrifice was needed to purify the heavenly things. Jesus’ sacrifice surpassed all sacrifices in its superiority and power to fully cleanse and purify. Unlike the animal sacrifices offered in the earthly tabernacle, Jesus’ sacrifice fulfilled the intended purpose of those sacrifices, accomplishing complete atonement for sins. The old sacrifices, though temporary in nature, served as symbolic pointers to the ultimate and permanent solution that was fulfilled through Jesus Christ. Jesus now appears for us in heaven before the presence of God.

III. Conclusion

In conclusion, Christ alone serves as our Mediator in Heaven. The old covenant, established through the laws and sacrifices given to the people of Israel, provided a temporary system for atonement and reconciliation.

However, Jesus Christ, through His perfect sacrifice on the cross, became the ultimate and everlasting Mediator between God and humanity. His shed blood cleanses our sins, grants us access to God, and secures our eternal redemption. In Him, we find the fulfillment of God's promises and the perfect intercession for our salvation. Through faith in Christ, we have the assurance of a personal relationship with God and the hope of eternal life.