

Hebrews 9:23-28

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Christ's sacrifice was better than any previous sacrifices: He offered it in the presence of God, the blood of the sinless Son was offered, and it was offered once for all.

Since the New Covenant was made in the heavenly more holy tabernacle, it required a greater sacrifice: *Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these* (v 23). Christ's eternal redemption of our sin was so much greater than the Old Covenant sacrifices that were offered. The Pauline Author explains the superiority in these verses.

Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us (v 23). Christ did not enter the earthly tabernacle, which is *a mere copy* of the heavenly one. He entered the very *presence of God* on our behalf.

The Author explains how Jesus does not need to sacrifice Himself continually: *Nor was it that He would offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood that is not his own* (v 25). He also does not offer His sacrifice once a year as the Levite priests do; He entered only once for all. Lastly, he offered His own blood, while the high priest made sacrifices *year by year with blood that is not his own*.

Jesus's sacrifice was of such a superior, ultimate quality that it only needed to happen once: *Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself* (v 26). If Christ needed to sacrifice more than once He would have had to suffer since the *foundation of the world*, but at the right time, He came to earth to sacrifice Himself and make provision of the eternal redemption for all of humanity.

We are assured that Christ's sacrifice is sufficient: *And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment, so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him* (vv 27–28). The fact that *men die once* and then go on to judgment is contrasted with Christ's sacrifice which was able to *bear the sins of many*.

Christ came the first time to bear our sins and bring us the salvation from sin in the presence of God — to deliver us from spiritual death and bring us new life through a new birth. That is our first salvation. Jesus also sent the Holy Spirit and now resides inside all believers. Those who have trusted Jesus now have access to His resurrection power, that they may walk in the newness of life and receive daily a deliverance from, or salvation from the power of sin in our daily walk. That is a second kind of deliverance, or salvation.

Verse 28 states that Jesus *will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin*, bringing about a third sort of deliverance. To those who eagerly await Jesus's return, when He appears they will receive another sort of deliverance. This likely refers back to Hebrews 2, where

Psalm 8 is quoted. Psalm 8 makes it clear humanity was created for the purpose of ruling and reigning over the earth in perfect harmony with God and others.

This is the crown of glory the psalm references that God bestowed upon humanity. Hebrews 2 makes a severe understatement, noting that we do not now see a harmonious relationship among humanity, God, and nature. However, what we do see is Jesus, who was crowned with the glory and honor originally intended for humanity because He suffered and died.

Hebrews 2 goes on to say that Jesus is the captain of our “salvation” and has paved the way for us to receive the same reward. We must be eager for Jesus’s return; that means we are living by faith and walking in Jesus’s resurrection power. When Jesus returns, He says “My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done” (Revelation 22:12b).

Every believer who overcomes as Jesus overcame is given the reward to share the throne with Jesus (Revelation 3:21) and will therefore be delivered from the futility of not being completed or made perfect (“teleo”) with respect to the purpose for which he or she was created—to rule the earth with Jesus.

When Jesus returns, all those who are living life with a clear conscience, walking in the obedience of faith, will be delivered, or saved from futility to complete fulfillment of the purpose for which we were created. A major theme of the Pauline Author in his letter to the Hebrews is that losing that reward will be a terrible loss—one that ought to be avoided at all cost. He will raise that point quite graphically in the next chapter.

Biblical Text

²³ Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. ²⁴ For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; ²⁵ nor was it that He would offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood that is not his own. ²⁶ Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. ²⁷ And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment, ²⁸ so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him.