"If God can bring blessing from the broken body of Jesus and glory from something that's as obscene as the cross, He can bring blessing from my problems and my pain and my unanswered prayer. I just have to trust Him."

– Anne Graham Lotz

Prayer Study #519

HEBREWS 9

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THE GLORY OF THE TABERNACLE

1 *Now even the first covenant had regulations for divine worship and for the earthly sanctuary.* ***2*** *A tabernacle (sacred tent) was put up, the outer one or first section, in which were the lamp stand and the table with [its loaves of] the sacred showbread; this is called the Holy Place.* ***3*** *Behind the second veil there was another tabernacle [the inner one or second section] known as the Holy of Holies,* ***4*** *having the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered entirely with gold. This contained a golden jar which held the manna, and the rod of Aaron that sprouted, and the [two stone] tablets of the covenant [inscribed with the Ten Commandments];* ***5*** *and above the ark were the [golden] cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat; but we cannot now go into detail about these things.*

The writer to the Hebrews expounds further on the difference between the Levitical service or Aaronic priesthood as compared to the priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ who is a priest after the order of Melchizedek. The first on earth is merely a type of the one in heaven where Jesus currently ministers.

The main description of the Mosaic tabernacle is found in Exodus 25-31 and 35-40. God had told Moses to build this sanctuary so that He could dwell among his people (Exodus 25:8). The people freely and extravagantly gave for the construction of this tabernacle that a halt had to be called to their giving (Exodus 36:5-7). It was a beautiful place full of symbolism and types (a symbol is something which is itself but represents something else, such as a country's flag, whereas a type is a prophetic representation foreshadowing something to come, such as the crossing of the red sea is a type of separation from the world by water baptism or such as Isaac is a type of Christ. In this study we do not have time to cover the tabernacle thoroughly, although such a study would be an excellent one for you to do.

In the earthly sanctuary there was a certain ritual followed. The tabernacle of Moses was about 45 feet long, 15 feet wide, and 15 feet high. It was divided into two sections. The

first was the Holy Place in which was the showbread and the golden lamp stand. Jesus is the bread of life, and gold represents the divine nature so a golden lamp stand could possibly represent the Holy Spirit or the Word of God since a lamp in scripture typically is a witness.

The second part of the sanctuary, which was behind a thick veil and a place that only the high priest could go once a year to atone for the sins of the people, was called the Holy of Holies. The Holy of Holies contained a box structure, the ark, made out of gopher wood and overlaid inside and outside with gold. The lid of the box was highly ornamented and was called the mercy seat. It had cherubim made of pure gold, looking down on the top of the box. That was where the blood was placed, for *"without the shedding of blood is no remission of sin,"* (Hebrews 9:22). The ark contained the pot of manna, which represents the ministry of Jesus, i.e. He feeds those who are His own. Aaron's rod that budded speaks of Christ's death and resurrection because it was a dead rod that came back to life. The tablets of the covenant speak of the fact that Jesus fulfilled all of the law.

THE ONLY ENTRY TO THE PRESENCE OF GOD

6 *Now when these things have been prepared in this way, the priests continually enter the outer [or first section of the] tabernacle [that is, the Holy Place] performing [their ritual acts of] the divine worship,* ***7*** *but into the second [inner tabernacle, the Holy of Holies], only the high priest enters [and then only] once a year, and never without [bringing a sacrifice of] blood, which he offers [as a substitutionary atonement] for himself and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance.* ***8*** *By this the Holy Spirit signifies that the way into the Holy Place [the true Holy of Holies and the presence of God] has not yet been disclosed as long as the first or outer tabernacle is still standing [that is, as long as the Levitical system of worship remains a recognized institution],* ***9*** *for this [first or outer tabernacle] is a symbol [that is, an archetype or paradigm] for the present time. Accordingly both gifts and sacrifices are offered which are incapable of perfecting the conscience and renewing the [inner self of the] worshiper.* ***10*** *For they [the gifts, sacrifices, and ceremonies] deal only with [clean and unclean] food and drink and various ritual washings, [mere] external regulations for the body imposed [to help the worshipers] until the time of reformation [that is, the time of the new order when Christ will establish the*

reality of what these things foreshadow—a better covenant].

The priests had the responsibility of daily leading in the worship of God. This was not to be some formalized worship but real worship giving God the praise and adoration He deserves.

The High Priest would go in once a year on the Great Day of Atonement or Yom Kippur to offer blood to atone for the sins of the people. Only the High Priest could go into the Holy of Holies where the Presence of the Lord was because the veil had not yet be ripped open.

So we have three stations in the tabernacle. The people could go only to the entrance of the Holy Place, where they laid their hands on a lamb as a sign of identification and then took their lamb to be sacrificed for their sins. The priests could only go into the Holy Place. The high priest could go into the Holy of Holies only once a year. Jesus changed all of that. His sacrifice for our sins ripped the veil of the temple so that we can go into the presence of the Father. He said, *"No man cometh unto the Father but by me,"* (John 14:6).

THE SACRIFICE WHICH OPENS THE WAY

11 *But when Christ appeared as a High Priest of the good things to come [that is, true*

spiritual worship], He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not a part of this [material] creation. ***12*** *He went once for all into the Holy Place [the Holy of Holies of heaven, into the presence of God], and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, having obtained and secured eternal redemption [that is, the salvation of all who personally believe in Him as Savior].* ***13*** *For if the sprinkling of [ceremonially] defiled persons with the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a [burnt] heifer is sufficient for the cleansing of the body,* ***14*** *how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal [Holy] Spirit willingly offered Himself unblemished [that is, without moral or spiritual imperfection as a sacrifice] to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works and lifeless observances to serve the ever living God?*

The better tabernacle does not belong to the earthly realm, as far as the materials and builders go. The priests went in the Holy Place continually, every day, but only got a temporary redemption for the people. Christ went in once and obtained eternal redemption. If the blood of animals could remove ceremonial uncleanness, surely Christ's blood can take away the guilt of sin.

THE ONLY WAY IN WHICH SINS CAN BE FORGIVEN

15 *For this reason He is the Mediator and Negotiator of a new covenant [that is, an entirely new agreement uniting God and man], so that those who have been called [by God] may receive [the fulfillment of] the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has taken place [as the payment] which redeems them from the sins committed under the obsolete first covenant.* ***16*** *For where there is a will and testament involved, the death of the one who made it must be established,* ***17*** *for a will and testament takes effect [only] at death, since it is never in force as long as the one who made it is alive.* ***18*** *So even the first covenant was not put in force without [the shedding of] blood.* ***19*** *For when every commandment in the Law had been read by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of the calves and goats [which had been sacrificed], together with water and scarlet wool and with a bunch of hyssop, and he sprinkled both the scroll itself and all the people,* ***20*** *saying, "This is the blood of the covenant [that seals and ratifies the agreement] which God ordained and commanded [me to deliver to] you."* ***21*** *And in the same way he sprinkled both the tabernacle*

and all the containers and sacred utensils of worship with the blood. ***22*** *In fact under the Law almost everything is cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness [neither release from sin and its guilt, nor cancellation of the merited punishment].*

The Old Testament believers were saved because they were looking forward by faith to the coming Messiah when they brought their sacrifices to the temple. Christ came and died for the sins of all from Adam to the present day. The life of Christ on earth could never save you. It was the death of Christ which saves you. It is His blood that cleanses us from all unrighteousness.

THE PERFECT PURIFICATION

23 *Therefore it was necessary for the [earthly] copies of the heavenly things to be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves required far better sacrifices than these.* ***24*** *For Christ did not enter into a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but [He entered] into heaven itself, now to appear in the very presence of God on our behalf;* ***25*** *nor did He [enter into the heavenly sanctuary to] offer Himself again and again, as the high priest enters the Holy Place every*

year with blood that is not his own. ***26*** *Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer over and over since the foundation of the world; but now once for all at the consummation of the ages He has appeared and been publicly manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.* ***27*** *And just as it is appointed and destined for all men to die once and after this [comes certain] judgment,* ***28*** *so Christ, having been offered once and once for all to bear [as a burden] the sins of many, will appear a second time [when he returns to earth], not to deal with sin, but to bring salvation to those who are eagerly and confidently waiting for Him.*

The heavenly things needed cleansing because sin originated in heaven with the pride of Lucifer. The blood of Christ is in heaven. The tabernacle was just a type foreshadowing the reality in heaven. He has made the one sacrifice that does not need to be repeated but is once and for all.

The Second Coming of Christ is not the Rapture, if there is one. Jesus will come to rule and reign on the earth. It will be too late for those who have not accepted Him. They will come under judgment. But for those who know Him and eagerly await His coming, that day will be one of great joy.