

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Hebrews 9:15-22

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the bible again. Today, we will continue reading Hebrews chapter 9, verses 15 to 22.

Christ, through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without blemish to God—this is a great declaration. It reveals that Christ's redemption was the joint plan of the Triune God, accomplished through their united work. Christ, by His own blood, entered the Most Holy Place once for all and completed the work of eternal redemption. In this process, fourfold grace is included: First, the grace of substitution on the cross—He bore the punishment for our sins in our place. Second, the grace of propitiation before the mercy seat in the heavenly tabernacle. In English, this is usually translated as propitiation. Christ, by His own blood, opened the way to the Most Holy Place. On the third day after His death, He was resurrected and, on Resurrection Sunday, became the firstfruits offered to God, becoming our propitiation before Him. Third, in our experience, our conscience is cleansed by Christ's blood, and we receive the grace of redemption—our sins are fully forgiven. Fourth, we are accepted by God and reconciled to Him, receiving the grace of reconciliation, which grants us the position to serve the ever-living God.

The author has already proven that Christ's blood is far superior, more effective, and more complete than the blood of bulls and goats offered by the priests under the old covenant. Next, in verses 15–22, the author continues to expound on how Christ's blood is the foundation of the new covenant.

Verse 15: “And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.”

“For this reason” refers to what was stated in verse 14: “Christ, through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without blemish to God.” Therefore, He became the Mediator of the new covenant. The old covenant was delivered through Moses, and the Law of Moses testified of God and revealed human sin. The sacrificial ordinances in the old covenant temporarily covered sin through the blood of sacrificial animals. Now, as the Mediator of the new covenant, Christ redeemed the transgressions committed under the first covenant by means of His death. The translation in the Chinese Union Version (CUV) emphasizes that Christ’s death redeemed those in the Old Testament era. Since they had sinned before Christ came, how could their sins be redeemed?

Hebrews 9:12 states that Christ “with His own blood, entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.” Since it is an eternal redemption, it includes those in the Old Testament era. This understanding is, of course, correct. However, this translation narrows the original meaning of the author. According to the KJV translation: “by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament,” the direct translation into Chinese would be: “by means of death, He redeemed the transgressions under the first covenant.” The “first covenant” naturally refers to the old covenant because when the law came, it revealed human transgressions. This includes people from both the Old and New Testaments, and these transgressions are all redeemed through Christ’s death.

The same applies to people under the new covenant. Christ’s redemption is eternally effective and is not limited by time. Although people in the Old Testament lived before Christ, their sins were committed before His death, yet by the effect of Christ’s redemption, they were counted forward and thus redeemed. Likewise, those in the New Testament era who live after Christ, and whose sins were committed after His death, also have their sins counted backward under His redemption. Christ’s redemption resolves the problem of transgressions, regardless of whether one lived under the Old or New Covenant.

If that is the case, does it mean that all people’s sins are forgiven and erased without condition? Of course not. Redemption is conditional. According to the KJV,

“they which are called”—that is, those who are called. Though Christ’s redeeming grace is for all, only those who are called can truly experience and enjoy this grace.

Abraham was the first to be called, and the descendants of Abraham by faith are those who are called. More directly, it refers to what John 3:16 says: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” Those who are willing to believe in and accept the salvation of Jesus Christ are the ones who are called. The redemption of the sins of the called ones is only the negative aspect. More importantly, the positive aspect is that they will receive the eternal inheritance promised by God.

What is this eternal inheritance? 1 Peter 1:4 tells us: “to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.” Paul further elaborates in Ephesians 1:13-14, stating that not only will we receive the inheritance prepared by God in heaven, but we have already received the pledge, guarantee, or down payment of this inheritance today. Ephesians 1:13-14 says: “In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.” When we believe in Jesus Christ and receive His life, the Holy Spirit dwells in us, and this Holy Spirit is the guarantee of our future inheritance.

Hebrews 9:15 not only tells us that Christ’s blood has eternal efficacy, unrestricted by time and space, but also that we can apply His blood at any time and place to deal with our sins. This verse also brings out a crucial point: Christ redeemed the transgressions established under the law covenant through His death. 1 Corinthians 11:25 states: “This cup is the new covenant in My blood.” This means that the new covenant was established through the blood of Jesus Christ. Therefore, the establishment of this new covenant occurred at the time of Christ’s death, which introduces a new point in verses 16-17.

Verses 16-17: “For where there is a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives.”

First, the "new covenant" in verse 15 and the "testament" in verses 16-17 use the same Greek word, *diatheke*, which originally means a contract or agreement, established by both parties and to be observed by them. Man is created by God, and what God says to man should naturally be a command that man must obey. However, because of His love for man, God not only speaks to man but also gives promises, meaning He is willing to bind Himself to the covenant. A promise is already a great grace from God, but He goes even further by lowering Himself to the level of man to establish a covenant with him.

The new covenant takes another step forward; it is established through the blood of Jesus. In other words, the new covenant is Jesus' testament, or in more familiar terms, His will. Normally, a wealthy person drafts a will before death to distribute his estate among his children and relatives. This will only take effect after his death, and since the testator has died, the will cannot be altered. Similarly, the new covenant is Jesus' testament, established through His death. When a person dies, their will takes effect. Therefore, the new covenant has the power to forgive sins, and this power of forgiveness is unchangeable because it is the testament that Jesus has established.

Verses 18-20: “Therefore not even the first covenant was dedicated without blood. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water, scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, ‘This is the blood of the covenant which God has commanded you.’”

The old covenant is a shadow of the new covenant. Since the new covenant is established by the blood of Jesus, the old covenant, to be an appropriate foreshadowing, also could not be established without blood. "For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law" refers to

Exodus 24:3-8, "Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the judgments. And all the people answered with one voice and said, 'All the words which the LORD has said we will do.' And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD. And he rose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes of Israel. Then he sent young men of the children of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the LORD. And Moses took half the blood and put it in basins, and half the blood he sprinkled on the altar. Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, 'All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient.' And Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people, and said, 'This is the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you according to all these words.'"

However, in this passage, scarlet wool and hyssop are not mentioned. Leviticus 14 records the purification ritual for a leper, where a live bird is killed in an earthen vessel over running water, and cedarwood, scarlet wool, and hyssop are tied together and dipped into the bird's blood mixed with running water. This mixture is then sprinkled seven times on the leper, making him clean. Therefore, scarlet wool and hyssop are tools used for dipping and sprinkling blood. On that day, Moses slaughtered the sacrificial animals, dipped scarlet wool and hyssop in the blood, and sprinkled the blood on the Book of the Covenant and on all the people. This blood served as the proof of the covenant between God and the people of Israel.

Verse 17: "For He testifies: 'You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.'"

This is a quotation from Psalm 110:4, where God Himself testifies about Jesus Christ. Psalm 110 was written by King David under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. At that time, the priesthood in the order of Aaron had already been passed down for nearly 500 years. If Aaron's priesthood could bring perfection, why would God, through King David of the tribe of Judah, prophesy 1,000 years in advance that another

priest would arise—not according to the order of Aaron, but according to the order of Melchizedek—and that He would be a priest forever? This shows that God intended to raise up Jesus Christ from the tribe of Judah—one who would hold both the kingly authority and the eternal high priesthood.

Verses 21-22: “Then likewise he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry. And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.”

The tabernacle and all the utensils within it were constructed by men under Moses' guidance, following the pattern God showed him on the mountain. Because these items were made by human hands, they became impure through human contact. Therefore, Moses had to sprinkle blood on the tabernacle and all the vessels, for according to the law, nearly everything was purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins.

Leviticus 17:11 states: “For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.” Since blood can make atonement, it can also purify. Without the shedding of blood, sins cannot be forgiven.

Let us pray together: Lord, thank You. We are all sinners, and the wages of sin is death. Without the shedding of blood, our sins cannot be forgiven. According to the will of the Father, You became the Mediator of the new covenant, shedding Your own blood and giving Your life. Not only have You forgiven our sins, but You have also established the new covenant with Your blood. This new covenant is Your testament—not only valid but also unchangeable. Therefore, as long as we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. What a great grace this is! Help us to appreciate and experience more deeply the salvation You have provided for us, so that our lives may become increasingly holy. In Jesus Christ's holy name, we pray.