

"A Valid Covenant"

If you are visiting with us, we are going through the Book of Hebrews.

We are on the 9th chapter . . . we will begin reading in verse 16, "For where a covenant is, there must of necessity be the death of the one who made it. For a covenant is valid only when men are dead, for it is never in force while the one who made it lives. Therefore, even the first covenant was not inaugurated without blood. For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying 'THIS IS THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT WHICH GOD COMMANDED YOU.' And in the same way, he sprinkled both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry with the blood. And according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness."

Now all of that pertained to the ritual of the priest in the old covenant with the animal sacrifices.

Now listen to what he says, beginning in verse 23 (Heb 9) about the new covenant, "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. For Christ did not enter the 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; nor was it that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the holy place year-by-year with blood not his own. Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often from the foundation of the world; but now once at the end of the age he has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And inasmuch as it is appointed unto men to die once and after this *comes* the judgment, so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time not to bear sin to those who eagerly await Him for salvation."

Now let me give you a little commentary on these verses . . . verses 18-22, we said he was speaking of the ritualistic sacrifices and offerings under the old covenant. These verses tell us that the first covenant was not effective until there was a death. God made covenant with them . . . He gave them a covenant, but that covenant according to law, had to be ratified by the death of animal sacrifice. So we found the sacrificial death of those innocent animals, who represented the people, without their death, the covenant was not affective. And for them to have a covenant relationship with God, the animal had to die. Now why God did that I don't know, but that is God's way of doing things and He didn't tell me . . . but I know it is right.

Now in verse 23, if all of these things in the Old Testament had to be cleansed by blood, then he says "heavenly things," and these heavenly things are the blessings on the new covenant, the heavenly things also could not become affective until there was a death. But this time it is not the death of an animal standing for the people, it is the death of Christ. So the "heavenly things" as he calls them, which are the blessings of the new covenant, could not be affective and could do us no good until Christ died . . . that's vs. 23.

Now in versus 24 through 28, he describes these heavenly things that he's talking about, which

are the blessings of the new covenant, which were cleansed and made affective by the blood of Christ. And he lists, in these verses, three things that he calls "heavenly things" I think, which he calls blessings of the new covenant.

The first one is that Christ appears in the presence of God for us (vs. 24). "For Christ did not enter the holy place made with hands, a *mere* copy of the true one (He was not an earthly priest . . . He had nothing to do with the old covenant system) He entered heaven itself (and the reason Christ ascended and went back to heaven and the reason He is there now is that) He may appear in the presence of God for us" . . . that He may represent us.

Now if He represents us, then according to the book of Hebrews as we have seen, we have free and total and complete access to the Throne. So he says let us come boldly before the throne of grace that we might receive mercy and grace to help in the time of need. We do not have a high priest who does not understand us, but we have One that was tempted in all points as we are if we are, who has faced everything we will ever face, who has suffered in the flesh as we suffer, who has gone through all of the trials and the pitfalls of human life reason, He knows and understands and can sympathize with us, and He is representing us before the Father, **and it is the same as if we were there** . . . so much so that Paul says, "We are sitting with Christ in heavenly places."

So wherever Christ is there we are there and if He is seated at the right hand of the Father, we also have access to the Father. And so his point if chapter 10 and verse 19 is "Since therefore, we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus . . . vs. 22, let us draw near" . . . let's take advantage of the fact that we can come boldly before the throne of grace and actually receive the mercy and the grace and the help that we need.

I can't understand Christians who are always whining, and crying and squalling about how hard it is and what a terrible life they are having as a Christian. All of heaven has been made available to them . . . He has given them all things that pertain to life and godliness . . . He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realm . . . He has withheld nothing from us . . . to the extent that Paul tells in First Corinthians 3, he says "**All things belong to you** whether life or death or Paul or Apollos or whatever, he says . . . all things belong to you and you belong to Christ and Christ belongs to God . . . you can't get any better off than that. "He is appearing in the presence of God for us" . . . He is representing us and we have access . . . that's made possible by His death.

The second one is in verse 26, "But now once (it only took one time) once at the consummation (or at the end of the age) He was manifested (He was manifested in the flesh . . . He came in the flesh) He was manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."

Mankind had only one problem . . . he still has only one problem no matter who he is and that problem is sin . . . and Jesus came into the world and was manifested to take care of the that problem. There was not another man living that could do it. There was not a system that man could invent that could do it. That's why all of the religions of the world amount to nothing. They cannot solve man's basic and only problem . . . the problem of sin. They can make men feel good. They can give him peace. They can do a lot of things for him perhaps, but they

cannot answer the problem of sin. The Law could not do that . . . there was nothing that could put away sin and give man forgiveness.

So when Jesus comes, He is born of a virgin. The significance of the virgin birth is He is sinless. Now He was like us in all points as far as the flesh is concerned . . . He was a human being . . . He suffered as we suffered . . . but He was sinless. He was tempted as we are tempted, but He didn't give in to that temptation. He didn't make the same mistakes that Adam had made . . . so He was sinless, and He being sinless, He could therefore deal with sin. And when He died . . . the wages of sin is death . . . but when He died, He was not dying because He had sinned . . . you see, if He had ever sinned He could not have paid the price for us. But He being sinless, He was innocent and pure . . . that's what the Lamb represented in the old testament . . . God took all of the sin of the world . . . He took our sin, and as Paul said, He made Him who knew no sin to become sin . . . He became sin on our behalf. He becomes what we are. He exchanged places with us. And He took our sin upon Himself and when He did that, God punished Him for our sin instead of punishing us.

And here, when He was hanging on the Cross and dying that terrible death, it was as if you and I were hanging there dying . . . He was doing it on our behalf . . . and the Hebrew writer said He didn't have to do it time after time after time . . . He said one sacrifice was enough, and so down in the 10th chapter, verse 12, "But He, having offered one sacrifice for sin for all time, SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD." Verse 14, "For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified."

His one offering took care of all my sins past, present, and future. He paid the price, and as he said, He put away sin.

What does that mean for me? Well, he says (Heb 10:15), "the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us . . . vs. 17, AND THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS I WILL REMEMBER NO MORE . . . (vs. 18) Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin." As I have said so many times, you cannot add to what God has done. You can do nothing more to make yourself forgiven in the sight of God than what He has done. He did it all and he tells us in the 9th chapter, vs. 14, "How much will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." It's a cleansing that goes as deep as my consciousness of sin . . . not a surface thing . . . not a temporary forgiveness . . . it cleanses us to the extent that it cleans our conscience . . . by the way, that is the only thing that can give you a good conscience is the blood of Christ. He'll cleanse your conscience from dead works . . . so forget about dead works . . . you can't do anything to add to it . . . it will cleanse your conscience from dead works so that you might serve the living God . . . that's possible because this is one of the blessings of the new covenant . . . He put away sin!

Christians should not have any problem with sin. We act like that is our biggest problem. Sin is not a problem for a Christian. James says resist the devil and he will flee from you. There is no temptation that comes to man that you will not be able to bear. With every temptation there is a way of escape. God is not putting a guilt trip on you. He has removed your sins as far from you as the east is from the west and He has done that so that you might serve the living God. If you are serving the living God, you don't have time to dilly around with sin. So He put

away sin.

And the third blessing of the new covenant, or what he calls "heavenly things" coming out of the fact that Christ appeared in the presence of God for us and made us a sin offering that takes away all of our sins . . . that means we have complete salvation.

Verse 28, "Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, shall appear the second time not to bear sin but to those who eagerly await Him for salvation." He concludes this chapter by those two verses saying that is appointed unto men once to die and after that comes the judgment . . . and then he says when Christ appears at that judgment of for that judgment, it is going to be for us who wait for Him **for salvation**. In other words, our salvation is complete, or will be completed whenever He comes.

We look at man and we look at the world and we see that people are dying. We face death every day . . . it's appointed unto man once to die, and the next thing is the judgment, but what he says is that part of the heavenly things . . . part of the promise of the new covenant is that **we don't have to face that judgment**. He has already been judged for our sin . . . so when He appears our salvation will be complete. We will receive the completion of our salvation which is our new bodies. Romans Eight, We have been redeemed, but we have been redeemed in Spirit, not in body. That which is born of flesh is flesh that which is born of Spirit is Spirit. Our spirit has been born again . . . our flesh is still in the world. Our flesh is destined for death, but some day this flesh is going to be born again . . . it is going to come out of the grave as a new body or when Jesus comes it is going to change in a moment in the twinkling of an eye and Paul says we will have a spiritual body . . . John says it will be like Him . . . because we will see Him as He is. So that completes our salvation or our redemption.

Those are the heavenly things that are made possible by the blood of Christ.

Alright, we got through the introduction . . . our time is about gone, but let's go back to verses 16 and 17 . . . "For where a covenant is there must of necessity be the death of the one who made it. For a covenant is valid *only* when men are dead, for it is never in force while the one who made it lives." The old covenant was never in force as long as that animal was running loose out there in the lot. But once that animal was taken and slain and offer upon the Alter, the old covenant came into being. As long as Christ was living the life of man here upon the earth for 33 1/2 years, the new covenant was not in force . . . the heavenly things were not real . . . they were not available to man . . . it was only after He died . . . only after the cross that the new covenant and these heavenly things came into being.

This means that the events and teachings before the death of Christ must be interpreted in the light of His covenant death. I'll show you what I mean in a few minutes. Jesus lived and died under the old covenant. He lived and died under the Law. He lived and died in what we call the Old Testament Days. That's why He said, I think in John 14:12 to His disciples, "Truly truly I say unto you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and *greater works* than these shall he do; because I go to the Father."

He is actually saying that his followers would do greater works than He did. Now that blows

some people's mind. But He is saying My ministry was restricted to the old covenant . . . it was restricted to the lost sheep of the house of Israel . . . Jesus never went out and preached to the Gentiles. He never, like Paul, went on a missionary journey outside of Palestine. He was confined to lost sheep of the house of Israel . . . He lived and died under the Jewish system without ever preaching what Paul and Peter preached as facts. Now Jesus preached it, but He said it is coming.

He put it in terms in which they did not understand it. Peter could preach it and Paul could stand and preach it openly and talk about the resurrection of Christ and His power. . . but Christ could only point them to it and they didn't understand it when He did. He said, destroy this temple and in three days I'll build it again . . . they thought He was talking about the earthly temple. It was only after the resurrection that the disciples began to understand what He was talking about. And so, everything that Jesus did and everything that Jesus said has to be interpreted in light of the fact that He died.

And if you look at it from this side of the Cross, you can look back and then you can begin to understand what He was saying back then. We take it for granted, but they did not understand it. In the First chapter of Acts, when the disciples met with Jesus after His resurrection . . . the first thing they said is Lord will you at this time restore the kingdom of Israel? They thought He was going to start an earthly kingdom . . . and restore the kingdom of Israel like David had done. Even after the resurrection they did not understand it.

Let me give an illustration to this . . . when we go back to the third chapter John when he's talking the Nicodemus, he tells Nicodemus you have to born again . . . born from above or born anew . . . we have thrown that term around and we have used it very loosely in the Christian world . . . people talk about born-again Christians . . . what other kind is there? Why did Jesus talk in language which confounded even this learned Jew, this teacher of the Jews . . . Nicodemus did not understand what Jesus was talking about. Jesus said you have to be born-from-above . . . Nicodemus never heard of such a thing. You have to be born again—can I enter my mother's womb a second time and be born? Are you talking a second physical birth? Nicodemus had no idea what Jesus was talking about, and Jesus didn't explain it to him . . . Jesus just said unless you are born of water and the spirit you can't even see the Kingdom . . . that which is born flesh is flesh and that which is born Spirit is Spirit . . . don't be surprised at this He said.

But Nicodemus didn't have the foggiest idea of what Jesus was talking about. And I this same thing is true with this woman at the well in the fourth chapter . . . Jesus said if you knew who you were talking to, He would give you living water and you would never thirst again. She said you don't have anything to draw with from this well and this well is deep, but I would like to have some of that water. She didn't know what that water was . . . and Jesus really didn't explain it to her . . . but John gives us a note on that in seven chapter of John (vs. 37) when Jesus said, "If any man is thirsty let him come to Me and drink. He who believes upon Me, as the Scripture said, 'from his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.'"

And when Jesus stood up and said that I have an idea that they didn't know from Adam what He was talking about. And so John tells us, John looking back on this event years later, John tells

us what he was talking about . . . (vs, 39) “But this he spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.”

So when He was talking to the woman at the well about living water, He was talking about the indwelling of the Holy Spirit . . . she didn't know that . . . and **nobody could have known that until after Jesus died, and went back to heaven, and sent the Holy Spirit into the world,** because He said when He (the Holy Spirit) comes, He will teach you and bring to your remembrance all these things and make them plain to you . . . **then you will understand them . . . but not now.**

And so He talked in veiled terms to Nicodemus . . . He said you must be born again and **it is only on the day of Pentecost and afterward that people understood the being born again meant receiving New Life . . . receiving a New Spirit . . . Christ coming to dwell in your life.**

There are many illustration like that in the New Testament . . . I think the 16th chapter of Luke, the story of the rich man and Lazarus was one of those where Jesus uses veiled terms to describe something . . . there isn't much explanation . . . in that chapter, He's talking about the hypocrisy of the Pharisees . . . and then all of a sudden he starts talking about the rich man Lazarus, the rich man dying, and Hades lifting up his eyes, and Lazarus dying and returning to the very bosom of Abraham . . . and that conversation went on . . . we are all familiar with that . . . and most everyone interprets that as being an explanation of what happens when a person dies . . . I can picture of Jesus teaching the Pharisees about their hypocrisy . . . and I don't want to spend much time on this, but I do want to illustrate the point . . . in Luke 15:11, Jesus said, “A certain man who had two sons (and He gives the story of the prodigal son) . . . in the 16th chapter, vs. 1, He says, “There was a certain rich man, who had a steward, and this steward . . . and then on down (vs. 19) He said there was a certain rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen and all of that . . . and Jesus talks about three men here . . . and the reason He does that is in vs. 14, “Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all of these things, and they were scoffing at Him.”

Now, why would Jesus start talking about life after death when He was talking to these Pharisees about their hypocrisy and self-righteousness . . . you see, so I think He is talking in veiled terms . . . the rich man, of course, is the Jew . . . the poor man, Lazarus is the Gentile . . . the rich man dies . . . Lazarus is carried into Abraham's bosom . . . **the Gentiles receive the blessings of Abraham through Christ . . . the Jews are rejected and they are in torment and there is a great gulf between where they cannot come together . . . Jesus said if they don't hear Moses and the prophets, they won't hear Me.**

All of these are simply lessons Jesus is teaching in veiled language because He has not yet died and He cannot fully reveal what is in the New Covenant until after His death.

Another classic example, and this is a classic I'll tell you . . . is found in Luke 23:42, two thieves, one on either side of Him, and one of them said to Jesus, “Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!” Jesus said, “Truly I say to you, today (and I think that is the way that ought to be translated and read . . . I say unto you today, right now, even right

now while we are hanging here on the cross . . . I tell you today you can have hope) I tell you today, you shall be with Me in Paradise.”

There are a lot of people in life who have put more trust in the thief on the cross than they have in Jesus Christ . . . always going back to the thief on the cross . . . if he was saved on his death bed I can be saved on my death bed . . . if he was saved without baptism, I can be saved without baptism . . . if he never partook of the Lord's Supper, it is not important to me . . . if he was not a member of the Church, I don't have to be a member of the Church . .

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ALL I HAVE TO SAY IS REMEMBER ME LORD WHEN YOU COME INTO YOUR KINGDOM . . . JUST LIKE THE THIEF . . .

LISTEN . . . THE THIEF ON THE CROSS WAS DYING BEFORE CHRIST DIED . . . HE IS DYING BEFORE THE BLESSINGS OF THE NEW COVENANT . . . HE IS JUST LIKE THE WOMAN TAKEN IN THE ACT OF ADULTERY WHOM JESUS FORGAVE AND SAID WOMAN GO YOUR WAY AND SIN NO MORE . . . HE IS LIKE ZACKIUS—JESUS SAID COME DOWN, SALVATION IS COMING TO YOUR HOUSE TODAY . . . HE IS LIKE THE SICK WITH THE PALSY LET DOWN THROUGH THE ROOF—JESUS SAID PICK UP YOUR BED AND WALK, ALL OF YOUR SINS BE FORGIVEN YOU . . . HE IS LIKE THE SINFUL WOMAN WHO WASHED JESUS' FEET—JESUS COULD SAY I DID NOT CONDEMN, I DO FORGIVE YOU.

JESUS COULD DO ALL OF THAT WHILE HE WAS LIVING . . . HE COULD TURN TO THE THIEF ON THE CROSS AND SAY TODAY I SAY UNTO YOU TODAY YOU WILL BE WITH ME IN PARADISE . . . HE COULD FORGIVE HIM.

BUT AFTER JESUS DIED THE BLESSINGS OF THE NEW COVENANT BEGIN . . . AND THE HOLY SPIRIT COMES . . . AND SO WE TURN TO THE BOOK OF ACTS . . . AND THE BOOK OF ACTS EXPLAINS SALVATION . . . WHAT IS REQUIRED OF MEN . . . AND WHAT IS EXPECTED OF THEM . . . AND WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A PART OF THE KINGDOM . . .

AND WE DON'T GO BACK TO THE WOMAN AT THE WELL, WE DON'T GO BACK TO ZACKIUS, WE DON'T GO BACK TO THE SICK WITH THE PALSY, WE DON'T GO BACK TO THE WOMAN TAKEN IN THE ACT OF ADULTERY . . . WE DON'T GO BACK TO THE THIEF ON THE CROSS . . .

WE GO TO THE MESSAGE OF THE GOSPEL, WHICH IS THE POWER OF GOD AND OF SALVATION, WHICH SAYS THAT JESUS LIVED, AND DIED, AND ROSE, AND ASCENDED, AND LIVES TODAY AND HAS SENT THE HOLY SPIRIT.

WE ARE LIVING IN THE DAYS OF THE NEW COVENANT AND ALL THAT HAPPENED BEFORE HIS DEATH HAPPENED UNDER THE OLD COVENANT . . . AND NONE OF THE BLESSINGS UNDER THE NEW COVENANT ARE OURS UNTIL AFTER HIS DEATH . . . THAT IS WHAT HE IS SAYING HERE.

AND SO, WHEN IT COMES TO HAVING ACCESS TO GOD, BEFORE JESUS DIED, THEY DID NOT HAVE ACCESS TO GOD LIKE WE HAVE IT ... HE WAS NOT IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD FOR THEM ... HE WAS IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD YES ... BUT HE WAS NOT THERE AS THEIR INTERCESSOR ... THEY COULD NOT COME THROUGH HIM INTO THE PRESENCE OF GOD AS WE CAN ... THAT'S THE BLESSING OF THE NEW COVENANT.

AND HE DID NOT PUT AWAY SIN BY HIS SACRIFICE FOR THEM UNTIL HE DIED ON THE CROSS ... THAT'S WHEN THE SACRIFICE WAS MADE ... BEFORE THAT THEY HAD TO OFFER ANIMAL SACRIFICE ... AND THEY DID NOT HAVE THE COMPLETE SALVATION THAT WE HAVE – THEY HAD NO HOPE OF ANY FUTURE.

YOU READ THROUGH THE PAGES OF OLD TESTAMENT ... ALL THEY SAY IS THEY LIVED SO MANY YEARS AND HE DIED ... THROUGHOUT THE OLD TESTAMENT HE DIED ... HE DIED ... HE DIED ... AND JOB ASKS IF A MAN DIES SHALL HE LIVE AGAIN ... OR IT SAYS AND HE WAS GATHERED TO HIS FATHER ... AND THEY DID NOT KNOW.

BUT JESUS COMES AND BRINGS THE MESSAGE OF HOPE ... AND HE SAID BECAUSE I LIVE YOU SHALL LIVE ALSO. AND WHEN HE WAS RESURRECTED FROM THE DEAD, HE PROVED THAT A MAN COULD COME BACK FROM THE DEAD AND LIVE AGAIN ... THEN THAT GIVES US THE FAITH AND THE HOPE OF A COMPLETE REDEMPTION

AND ALL OF THIS IS MADE POSSIBLE BY JESUS' SACRIFICE FOR US ON THE CROSS ... BEFORE IT WAS ANIMAL SACRIFICES ... AFTER HIS DEATH, IT IS HIS SACRIFICE ... THE BLESSINGS OF THE NEW COVENANT ARE OURS BECAUSE OF HIS DEATH ... NOT BECAUSE WE ARE CHURCH MEMBERS, OR THAT GOD LIKES US MORE THAN HE LIKES ANYBODY ELSE ... NOT BECAUSE WE ARE ANY BETTER THAN ANYBODY ELSE ... NOT BECAUSE WE HAVE DONE A LOT OF GOOD, OR BECAUSE WE WERE RAISED IN CHURCH AND SUNDAY SCHOOL ... NOT BECAUSE WE JOINED THE CHURCH AND GOT OURSELVES BAPTISED AT SOME POINT IN OUR LIVES ... NOT BECAUSE WE GO TO CHURCH EVERY SUNDAY , , ,

IT IS BECAUSE OF JESUS CHRIST AND HIS DEATH ... THAT MAKES IT ALL POSSIBLE ... ALL HE ASKS US TO DO IS BELIEVE IT, AND ACCEPT IT, AND LIVE IT.