

The Great Conclusion

Preached 6/5/2022

Good morning! Please bow your head with me in prayer.

Father, we thank you that we can draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith. Help us to hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for the One who has promised is faithful. Amen.

Introduction

I am very appreciative of the children being a part of the morning's worship time. As a parent, and now a grandparent, seeing my own little ones participating in the life of a body of believers was always a joy and it was the goal Robin and I had for our children. Education and occupation have an importance but being a part of Christ's body is far beyond any other goal we had for them. I hope all the moms & dads, grandmothers & grandfathers, and all of us at Grace will take upon ourselves the role of being mentors to these little ones.

As the children have already read the passage for us, I will not do so again. I want you all to consider this passage and hold it in your mind as I discuss it with you.

From the earliest sections of the book of Hebrews, the "Pastor", that is what I'm going to call the human author of this book, has been building up to a crescendo.

Step by step and point by point, the Pastor has shown us a side-by-side

comparison of all the important things of the old covenant in comparison to the person and work of Jesus Christ who is God the Son incarnate. Every comparison has shown the deficiency of the old covenant. He brings that comparison to a conclusion in this passage. Here, he will point out the differences of sacrifices, the difference in priests, and tells us the different states that await the ones who rely on those two covenants. These three points are vitally important. If you reach this point in the pastor's letter and say, "That's all well and good but I am going back to Judaism". You have heard all you need to hear, and you know your fate. The pastor is not responsible for what will happen to you. Those are heavy ideas, but they're needed statements for us to hear today. Too often we look back at the old covenant, scoff at those who followed it, and proceed to do what they did. So, to introduce us to the concepts of the difference in sacrifices, priests, and final state, I'd like you to see a little video

[A Comparison of Sacrifices](#)

I hope you enjoyed that. This was such a popular commercial back in ancient times, mid 1980s, because it touches on something we all experience. It also represents what the pastor is trying to tell us in this passage. This kind of activity started when we first began going to school. Each day became harder and harder to get excited over. Each year was marked by that wonderful concept that

eventually, we'd never have to go to public school again. We counted down to graduation but then a new counter started. Do we go to college? If so, we begin counting down the years again. The futility of the process built on us each year. Finally, the final graduation from learning. Then it became work. Day after day, week after week, year after year it's the same old routine. We start counting down the time until our next big break, our next new job, our next promotion, our retirement. The pastor holds this up for us to consider in the first few verses. Sacrifices continually offered year after year. What is the point of these sacrifices these people desire to go back to? Isn't it futile? Well, yes, it is if you expect these sacrifices to cleanse you. That's an error the pastor is pointing out to us. Scripture tells us the law is good if you use it lawfully. In the same way, the sacrifices are good if you use them for the intended purpose. But if your purpose is to buy God off, you're going to be disappointed. Verse 4 tells us "It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins". Did you catch that word "impossible"? Killing animals to take away our sin was never the point or benefit! So, what was the point? Verse 3: "the sacrifices are a reminder of sins year after year". Think of that commercial! Instead of saying "It's time to make the donuts" and "I made the donuts". Change it to "It's time to slaughter an animal" and "I slaughtered an animal". The futility is the same. You can never get

ahead of your sin with animal blood. God isn't interested in animal blood or anything else you or I can sacrifice. He is the God of life, why would He delight in death? Through the prophet Ezekiel, God declares "I take no delight in the death of the wicked". If the death of an evildoer who deliberately chooses evil is not wanted by God, why would he want the death of an animal? It can't accomplish anything! Verse 7: "I have come to do your will, O God!" What were Adam and Eve supposed to do? God's will. What does God expect from every person? To do His will. "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done!" Not animal sacrifices. Not empty works of mankind. So, the Old Testament sacrifices were not to cleanse anyone from sin. They were to show us what we deserve. We deserve to have our throats cut and not some poor animal. And we will be punished unless someone rescues us.

Now let's look to the sacrifice of Christ. Do you see what the pastor has done here? He has taken Psalm 40 and put it into the mouth of God the Son. I've heard people denigrate some sections of scripture by comparing it to words of Jesus in the gospel as if the gospel words are more authoritative. Forget Paul's and Peter's admonitions on that subject for a minute. Here is this pastor, whose words are part of Holy Scripture, telling you that in the Old Testament, we have Jesus speaking! Don't ever make that mistake again. All of scripture is

authoritative and it is the very words of God. And now, look at what the Son says? A body has been prepared for Him. Anything else? Yes, the Son further says “I have come to do your will”. The very thing mankind was created to do is the thing the Son did. The pastor repeats this quote to emphasize what he is driving at. All those sacrifices listed in the Law were to teach us about Jesus, not to replace Him. Verse 1 calls the sacrifices “shadows”. They’re not the reality. But don’t diminish them in importance because they are a shadow. Too many people died in the Old Testament by not doing the shadows according to God’s prescribed way. Some in the New Testament learned that same lesson. The shadows are not bad. Shadows tell us what the real thing looks like. What does the real thing look like? Jesus! We are to see Jesus in these shadows and Jesus was obedient to the will of the Father. The Father doesn’t delight in the blood of animals. At Jesus’ baptism we hear the words of the Father saying, “this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased”. He’s delighted in Jesus.

So what sacrifice are you looking to? The one that says you are a despicable sinner and worthy of having your throat cut or to the one that says come to me all who are heavily burdened. When you view it that way, why would I want to have anything other than Jesus? Comparing the sacrifices men were given by God to

God's sacrifice shows the former are worthless. Even more to the point, any item you or I invent as a sacrifice is even more futile. Jesus did it all! Don't insult Him.

A Comparison of Priests

Now let's look at the pastor's comparison of priests. Verse 11 describes the Old Testament priests. What do we see first? Those priests stand. OK. No big deal. Right? Wrong! Last week, pastor Chris talked about Christ bringing us into the heavenlies. Who can gain access to a King? The King's Son and any who the Son brings in can have that access. Who can sit before royalty? No one. Servants stand when the king is present. When the King sits, the servants still stand. So these priests who are standing, they have no special relationship to the King. They must stand. How often? Every Day! Day after Day! The Levitical priesthood's activities were so strenuous, there was mandatory retirement at age 60. So each day, they stand and perform the same actions and those actions cannot take away sin. Doesn't that sound depressing? That priest puts in all this strenuous activity, and no one is saved, and no one is purified. In his heart, he knows that even he isn't purified. He kills animals for his own sin and he goes right back to sinning. What is more, he knows that at any point, God could judge him for his hypocrisy. He is nothing more than an actor on a grand stage and the role he has is of a high price butcher of animals. Doesn't this bring to your mind

the words of the Teacher in the Book of Ecclesiastes? “Vanity of vanities! Everything is vanity!” Is that the priest you want to have as your advocate with God? A man as corrupted as you and I who offers a sacrifice that God has said He doesn’t want.

I’m so glad the pastor doesn’t stop there. The depressing nature of the Old Testament system is getting unbearable. The pastor begins with a simple phrase: “this man”. Wait! Didn’t he say back in verse 5 that as He was coming into the world He spoke, and we identified that speaker as God the Son. Yes, that’s what it says. God the Son took on human flesh. He was found as a man as Paul put it. Every limit we face, this man faced. I can relate to another human being. Our priest had to be a human. That’s a job requirement. But this one is also God the Son. As a priest he offered a sacrifice. How does it compare? The other guy had to do it every day. What’s the frequency here? Once a month? Once a year? Once a century? No. It is once forever. It is never repeated. And it cleansed of sin forever. It wasn’t something that made us OK with God until we sinned again. It made us right with God forever. Because that one sacrifice has completed everything, Jesus sits. He is royalty and can sit among royalty. He has completed everything; He never has to do anything else to provide redemption for us. It is an everlasting redemption!

What a comparison! On one side, is a man living a hypocrite's life who cannot achieve anything of value and will be put out to retirement at a young age. On the other is a man who is also God the Son whose one sacrifice saves us to the uttermost. Is that a choice? The hands of a hypocrite or the hands scarred by nails who is seated as royalty and whose duty and joy is praying for His followers. Which hands do you want?

A Comparison of States

We now come to the comparison of the states of the ones relying on these two covenants. Look at the one who is following the Old Testament. This passage says he is never perfected. His own perspective is "I do all those things and I am never made perfect. I never have my hard heartedness removed. I never love purely but all my actions of love are so I can buy off God's righteous anger at my sins. My Holy Scriptures, the books of the Old Testament, tell me that my actions are not something God delights in". If he could understand the truth, he would realize that these constant sacrifices only highlight the fact he is getting further and further in debt to God by his evil actions. His sins are never taken away. His only hope is that God, instead of being just, will be as corrupt as he is and let him into His presence anyway. What a world that would be! The only hope is for the

almighty supreme ruler to be as evil as any of us are. But the worst will be seen as we consider Jesus as the true way.

Looking to Jesus, there we see God demonstrated as the holy and blameless One. The Son took on flesh and performed the will of the Father perfectly. His people are sanctified through the holy offering that God Himself prepared. As verse 14 puts it, that sacrifice perfected forever those who are being sanctified. I like that sound. I'm considered perfected forever by God even while the sanctification process is going on in my life. Look at verse 16 & 17. While the holy law is being written on my heart and mind, God will never again remember my sins and lawless deeds. Since this happy state has become mine, there is no longer any need for a sacrifice for my sins as verse 18 tells us. When you consider that Jesus has claimed He has done all that is needed, what an insult it is to think that there is something I need to add. If we look at Jesus and say, "Oh. I've committed this sin. I will sacrifice this to make atonement" we are not being holy and helpful to Him. Really, what we are saying is that Jesus needs my help to take away sins forever. His work really doesn't do it. What an insult! Thanks be to God! We have nothing to add to our Savior's work.

Those who seek to be justified by other means are left in a bad predicament.

Everything they depend on is shown to be useless by the scriptures they look to as a way to establish that path. There is one aspect of this glorious picture of Jesus Christ that we haven't discussed. The pastor brings it up but never expounds on it. It was mentioned in Hebrews 1:13 and touched on again here in Hebrews 10:13. Jesus is seated in heaven, and I've mentioned before how He intercedes on our behalf. But He is waiting for something. A promise made to Him has yet to be fulfilled. His enemies are not yet the footstool under His feet.

[The Great Conclusion's Conclusion](#)

The pastor who penned this letter has built up to this culminating point. The Old Testament law did not bring about salvation. Killing animals never made the Old Testament saints right with God. How were they saved? Through Jesus. Jesus told the pharisees that Abraham looked to Jesus' day and was glad. Abraham knew God would come and ransom him from his sin. Job proclaimed that he knew his Redeemer lived and, in the end, He will stand on the earth. David, who penned the words of Psalm 40 that were spoken by God the Son, was told by the prophet Nathan that a descendant of his would sit on the throne of Israel forever. David fell to His knees and worshipped God because the only one who can rule forever is the Lord Himself. The Old Testament prophets had an often-repeated

question to God. They asked, how long? Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, Habakkuk, and Zechariah all asked that question. Daniel asked it and God showed him how long it would be until Jesus showed up in the temple. They all asked, “how long?” because they knew the animal sacrifices didn’t do what they needed. They needed God’s cleansing of them. They longed for what we look back to with a cry of “Hallelujah!” We live what they longed for. Yet they are saved by Christ, too. The Old Testament saints are not the only ones asking God “How long?”. Revelations 6 tells us that under the altar in heaven, the souls of martyrs for the Word of God are calling and asking, “How long until you take judgment and avenge our blood on those who live on the earth?” That relates back to what I pointed out to you a few minutes ago. That’s judgment on the enemies of Christ. Think for a minute. Who are His enemies? Scripture tells us. Romans 5:10 tells us, “For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His son, then how much more, having been reconciled, will we be saved by His life.” Ponder what that tells us. Those who are not reconciled to God through Christ, are His enemies. Those choosing to try some other method for salvation will be His footstool. Who is to be His footstool? Those who do not follow Christ. As a theory, that seems all well and good. Some unnamed person is Christ’s enemy. Now, change that unnamed person to the name of your loved one who

does not know or follow Christ. That's when your heart should cry out, "Oh Jesus! Must it be that one?" I believe that is why the pastor becomes highly descriptive of how we are to live in the next few chapters. He has brought us to this great height and from it we see the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Book of the Revelation of John tells us what happens to those who are Christ's enemies at His appearing. They are crushed under His feet. We are called by this protracted theology covering up to this point in Hebrews 10 to an unrelenting conclusion. All must deal with Jesus on Jesus's terms. That is the first conclusion from this theological discussion.

My second application point is this, the pastor tells us that "He, Jesus, perfected those who are being sanctified". As a child of God, sanctification is a part of your life. That's wonderful news but do you realize the impact of that to you? Jesus doesn't send the Holy Spirit with a magical sanctification wand that he touches you with to make you sanctified. Sanctification is a process that you MUST join in with Him. I cannot sanctify myself but as the Holy Spirit works in me I join in the work. Scripture tells us we are to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. We join with the Holy Spirit in our sanctification. We are learning how to be the children of God. Are you actively doing so? Jesus, the incarnate Son of God, was perfected or completed in what he suffered. Later in this book, the pastor tells us

“In your struggling against sin, you have not resisted to the point of shedding your blood”. The One who came to do the will of the Father shed His blood. Do you struggle with your sin? Do you battle to the point of shutting of the television to attend to the growth of your soul? Do you study to show yourself an approved workman? Knowing that Christ is coming to judge your child, are you putting in the time to be prepared to answer their questions and to disciple them in the faith? Husbands are you working to get your next promotion at work or are you going to make yourself ready for the biblical and theological questions your wife is supposed to ask you. Wives, are you adorning yourself with the gentle and quiet spirit Peter tells us of in 1 Peter 3 or are you filling your mind with trashy “romance” novels? Singles are you preparing yourself for service for the Lord or are you just spending your time trying to attract your “soul-mate”. I love my wife deeply but in the new heaven and the new earth there is no marriage. Is there any soulmate other than Jesus, the groom of His church? Children are you preparing yourself to be an adult or wasting time trying to stay a child? Older saints are you finishing your race strong or are you coasting and saying, “I’ve done my time”. I’m pushing you hard right now. I push myself hard too. If you ask me, I always share my three prayer requests for myself. The top three don’t change. My three prayer requests for myself are: First, I am lazy; pray that I will overcome

it. Second: I am selfish; pray that I will put myself to death. Third, I am proud; pray that I will be humble before the Lord and you, my family. As elders, we are trying to become open and accountable with each other so we can model what we see in the scriptures for all of you. Those three topics prayer requests lead into so many areas where I battle sin in my life. We need to be serious about sin and get the help of our God and our brothers and sisters in Christ in dealing with our sins. I am so thankful for the closeness I have with the other elders but even more so with my community group. That bond is helping me as I walk in the school of sanctification. If you are not taking advantage of the help other Christians can be, you are missing a great blessing.

That leads to my final point on what we learn from this passage. The next few chapters will be a spin through the lives of Old Testament saints. Their lives are shown to us for our help. It is an open book. Their successes and failures, and there a lot of both, are there for our instruction. Jesus is our all-in-all. But our lives are not to be just "Jesus and me". Just like sanctification isn't a private thing, we need to understand that we are called to be a community. We are God's people. These saints of old are my brothers and sisters. They are my teachers. My failures, and there are a lot of those, and my successes, when they happen,

are not for me. They are for us. God doesn't say He wants individuals. He says He is calling us to be His people and He will be our God.

So, remember, we have the Superior Sacrifice, the Superior Priest, and we end up with a Superior state of life. So now, go out and work out our faith with fear and trembling. Let's pray.

Father, we are so needy of you to work in us through your Spirit. Our Lord Jesus has perfected us. Sanctify us through your word and grow us into a maturity that glorifies Jesus and causes those around us to hear our words and come to you through Christ for salvation. Through the privilege given to us by calling on the name of God the Son, Our Lord Jesus. We beg these things of you. Amen.