

The following sermon was preached at Redemption Baptist Church on Sunday, 24 October 2021. We encourage you to look up the Scriptures that are referenced, and see the context for yourself. May the Lord speak to your heart as you study His Word.

Setting Things Right (Part 2)

Hebrews 9:6-10

In last week's message from **Hebrews 9**, we talked about the Tabernacle (the tent of meeting, where Israel worshipped God); and we learned why the Tabernacle was not permanent. We learned that **the Tabernacle was impermanent, and insufficient, because it merely pictured spiritual reality**. The Tabernacle *pictured* forgiveness of sins, and salvation, and a person's relationship with God; but it couldn't *actually* take away sins, or save anyone, or give anyone a relationship with God. That is why the Tabernacle was only a *temporary* arrangement. Something perfect and permanent was yet to come!

Tragically, most of the Jewish people, to this day, do not understand this. Because they refuse to believe that Jesus is their Messiah and Saviour, many of them are feverishly intent on rebuilding the Temple in Jerusalem. Why? Because in their mind, there can be no salvation without a Temple! They choose to trust in the Temple, which contained only *shadows and pictures* of salvation, rather than place trust in their *real* God and Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, last week we looked at several of those pictures from the Temple.

First, there was the **Candlestick**. The seven-branched golden candlestick (or Menorah) was a picture of the Holy Spirit, who illumines the believer's mind, and enables him to live a godly life.

Secondly, there was the **Table of Shewbread**. The Table of Shewbread pictured the fellowship that believers have with Jesus Christ. Believing on Christ, and abiding in Him, is like eating bread. Eating bread gives physical life and nourishment to our bodies: and likewise, believing on Jesus, fellowshiping with Him, and feasting on His Word, brings spiritual life with God, and spiritual nourishment.

Thirdly, the **Altar of Incense** pictured the prayers of God's people. Believers' prayers are like the sweet smell of burning incense, rising up to God's throne. Our prayers are well pleasing to God.

Fourthly, the **Veil** between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies pictures Christ's body. Just as God supernaturally tore the veil of the Temple at the moment of Christ's death, so Christ's body was broken for us on the cross, so that we may now have free access to the throne room of God the Father.

Lastly, there was the **Ark of the Covenant**. The Ark pictures the throne of God—the place where mercy is shown to sinners, because Christ's blood has been presented there as the ransom for our sins.

These pieces of furniture were beautiful *pictures*; but they were *only* pictures. The performance of the Temple rituals never took anyone's sins away. The Tabernacle was an important teaching tool; *but it couldn't save anyone!* This is what we will be talking about today, as we look at the second and third reasons why the Temple was only temporary. The title of this message is **Setting Things Right (Part 2)**.

Read Hebrews 9:6-10.

From this passage, we see that the Tabernacle was only temporary because...

I. It could not provide direct, free access to God (vv. 6-8).

In **verses 6-8**, Paul is giving us a brief description of the layout of the Tabernacle, and of what went on inside the Tabernacle. To begin with, there was the **“first tabernacle.”** By this, Paul means the first *room* of the Tabernacle. This first room was called the *Holy Place*. The priests entered into this room through a veil on the east end of the Tabernacle; and inside this room were the Candlestick, the Table of Shewbread, and the Altar of Incense. At the west end of this room was the thick **veil** which separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies.

Now, Paul doesn't give much description of the Holy Place, because he didn't need to do so: his Jewish readers knew all about it. He merely mentions that the Holy Place was where the priests performed their service to God. But, remember—whom do these priests represent? They are a picture of all believers. The Bible teaches us that *every* believer in Jesus is a priest unto God!

Read 1 Peter 2:4-9.

Now, if the priests represent all believers, then what does this **first room** of the Tabernacle (the Holy Place) represent? It represents *fellowship with God* in the Christian life. Everyone who knows Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour is a priest in the Temple of his own body. He is also a priest in the Temple of his local church (*if he have followed the Lord in baptism after his salvation*). Just as the **Menorah** burned day and night, so every true Christian has the Holy Spirit to illumine him, at all times. Just as the **shewbread** was always on the table, so every true Christian abides in fellowship with Jesus Christ, and feasts on his Word. Just as the priests kept the **incense fire** burning at all times, so every Christian can cry out to God in prayer at any time.

Yet, what about the **“second”** room of the Tabernacle? Let's look again at **verse 7**, and see what Paul says about it. (**Read verse 7 again.**) This **“second”** room is what was called the Holy of Holies. This was the room where the Ark of the Covenant sat; and *only the High Priest* was allowed to enter this little room, one time per year. This room represents the very throne room of God; and the Ark of the Covenant (the mercy seat, in particular) represents the *very seat* of God Himself. God Himself manifested His presence in a pillar of light, right over this very spot! Then, of course, there was **the high priest**, who approached the Ark of the Covenant with the blood of animals on the Day of Atonement. The high priest was a picture of our true High Priest, Jesus Christ; and **the blood of the bulls and goats**, which was sprinkled on the mercy seat, represents the precious blood of Jesus, which washes away our sins.

By the way, did you notice what Paul said about **“the blood”** in **verse 7**? He said that the high priest entered the Holy of Holies **“not without blood.”** Why could the high priest **“not”** go into the Holy of Holies without blood? Because without the blood, there could be no true, accurate picture of our salvation. There is *no other way* to have your sins forgiven than through the blood of Jesus. If you are trusting in anything other than Christ's shed blood to save you, **you are not saved**. Even *talking* about the blood of Jesus, or *singing* about the blood of Jesus, cannot save you! You must humble yourself, admit you can't save yourself, repent of your sin, and place your complete trust in Christ. *That* is how the blood is applied to your heart's door.

Christian, if you have loved ones who are not trusting in the blood of Jesus, don't fool yourself into thinking that they will somehow make it into Heaven, even though the blood of Jesus hasn't been applied to them. Their being a "nice person" or a "religious person" won't save their soul any more than it saved yours! They must be saved; and you have the responsibility to tell them so. The Tabernacle of the Old Testament was filled with spiritual "object lessons" and prophetic pictures. The high priest, and the blood of animals, were just two of the hundreds of spiritual "object lessons" in the Tabernacle. **However, what about that veil that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies?** Obviously, this prominent feature of the Tabernacle must have profound meaning! As we saw last week, the veil is a picture of Christ's body, which was broken for us. However, it represents even more than this. The veil **represents the fact that, without Christ's sacrifice, man is barred from God's presence.** If the Holy of Holies represented God's throne room, and if entry into that room was blocked by a thick veil, then the obvious meaning is that man is barred from God's presence!

Now, is this the way it is *supposed* to be? By giving this symbol of the veil, was God saying that there would *always* be a barrier between Himself and man? Not at all! Paul says, in **verse 8**, that through this symbol of the **veil**, the Holy Ghost was "**signifying**" that the way into God's presence was not "**yet**" made known. The very fact that there was a veil between these rooms indicated that free, uninhibited access to God *would* be provided in the future! One day, Christ's body *would* be broken for us, and the veil *would* be pulled back, so that we can enter God's presence!

How do we know that God *intended* for us to have free access to His presence? Well, let's look back to the beginning of the human race, and see how things stood between man and God *then*.

Read Genesis 3:8-10, 24.

There was a time, at the beginning of the world, when God took on human form, and *walked* in the Garden of Eden with man; and He did this regularly. Adam and Eve *knew* when God was coming to walk with them. God Himself (particularly, the second Person of the Godhead), walked and talked with Adam and Eve every day. Does this not sound like free, unrestricted access to God? Yes, it is! *This* is the way that God intended things to be! *This* is the purpose for which God created Man. God created man to have free, loving fellowship with Himself.

Yet, what ended this beautiful relationship? Sin! Adam's sin had both an immediate and a long-term effect upon man's relationship with God. The immediate effect of sin was that that man had to leave the Garden. He had to leave that place where he had once had free, uninhibited access to God's presence. The long-term effect of Adam's sin is that mankind was now spiritually cut off from God. As sinners, we are born into this world in sin, and already separated from God. Worst of all, we are, as a race, sentenced to *eternal* separation from God. God's justice demands that we be separated from God forever in the Lake of Fire. The worst thing about the Lake of Fire is that those who go there will be forever *separated from the presence of the Lord*. In **2 Thessalonians 1:8-9**, Paul says that those who "**obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ**" will "**be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord.**"

So, what does this all mean? This means that when God promised Adam that He would send a Seed to crush the head of Satan, He was promising to redeem us--to *buy us back*. When God

promised to send a Saviour, He was promising to *restore man to a free, unrestricted relationship with Himself*. This is what salvation is all about--having fellowship with God again!

Before Christ came, that restrictive veil between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies was always there. It was there to teach the people of Israel that free access to God had not yet been restored. ***“While as the first tabernacle was yet standing”*** (in other words, “as long as the Old Testament Tabernacle was still around”), there was always that visible symbol of the barrier between man and God.

Yet, God’s promises were not in vain. **Through our High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, free, unrestricted access to God has been restored!** Christ has now gone into the heavenly throne room to present His blood as the payment for our sin. Through Christ’s offering of His body on the tree, the restrictive veil has been torn; and Christ now sits on the throne as the King and High Priest of His people. We who are saved are able, as kings and priests, to go directly into the Holy of Holies. There is no longer a cumbersome system of rituals to remind us of our sinfulness. There is no restricted room in some earthly Tabernacle, where only one man can go to represent us to God one time per year. *For those who are redeemed, there is no barrier to God’s presence!* That is why God urges His children to “draw near” to Him!

Read Hebrews 10:19-22.

Brethren, do you realise what an incredible privilege we have? Old Testament believers were certainly able to pray to God; yet, they were encumbered with a mountain of symbolic rituals; and those rituals reminded them that *free* access to God hadn’t actually been made yet. They always had that sense that things were not yet “squared away” between man and God. They didn’t even feel the freedom, as individuals, to address God as “Father.” Why? Because they knew that the Saviour had not yet come. Today, however, there is no barrier. We who have believed on Jesus may go freely and boldly to God at any time, and call Him “Abba, Father.” We can do this without reserve, because we know that the price for this privilege has been paid. Perhaps there is one here who does not *know* this privilege, because you have not truly been saved. If so, draw near to Christ! He is calling you to Himself. Come to Him today!

Now, there is one more reason why the Tabernacle was temporary. It was temporary because...

II. It could not provide satisfaction to the conscience (vv. 9-10).

(Read verses 9-10.) In the book of **Hebrews**, Paul repeatedly reminds us that the duties of the Old Testament high priest were ***“figures.”*** In other words, they were merely “pictures” of what Christ would do in the future. Therefore, they were only ***“for the time then present.”*** In other words, they were only temporary. The rituals of the Tabernacle were not an end in themselves. They were for the purpose of *teaching*. When the “real thing” would come, there would be no more need for the teaching tool.

Yet, what does Paul mean when he says that these gifts and sacrifices ***“could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience”***? Well, you’ll remember that the word “perfect” means “complete.” Paul is saying that there was no real sense of *completion* in the

consciences of Old Testament believers. No matter how many sacrifices they offered, they still sensed that “Whatever is necessary to free my conscience has not been done yet.”

So, what are we to make of this? Does this mean that believers in Old Testament times were walking around with guilty consciences, not feeling that they had truly been forgiven by God? No, that’s not what Paul means. Old Testament saints *did* know that their sins were forgiven. The point Paul is making is that *it was not the outward, material objects and rituals of the Tabernacle that freed their consciences*. True believers knew that the sacrifice of animals couldn’t truly take away their sin. In fact, it was quite the opposite. The continual sacrifices of the Tabernacle were actually a *reminder* that man’s sin problem was not settled.

Read Hebrews 10:1-4.

Every time an Israelite took a lamb to be sacrificed on the altar, he was reminded, once again, of his sin problem. Every single day, all day long, the smoke rose from the altar; and this smoke was a constant reminder of man’s sinfulness. How, then, could Old Testament believers be sure that they were accepted by God—especially when the sacrifice of animals could not actually take away their sins? Well, let’s see how Abraham knew that *he* was justified before God.

Read Genesis 15:1-6.

Read Romans 4:1-3.

Old Testament saints knew that God’s righteousness had been accounted to their own bankrupt accounts. *How* could they be sure of this? Was it because they were “good”? No. It was because they trusted God! When they placed their faith in God as their Saviour, God forgave them, and declared them to be “righteous.” They knew that they were “justified” before God. They didn’t fully understand *how* God was going to take their sins away; but they knew that the Redeemer was coming: and they placed their faith in that promise. They were *confident* of this. They *knew* it to be true—even though the Saviour had not arrived yet. As Jacob put it, “***I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD.***”

Old Testament saints knew that they were redeemed. Yet, they also knew that in their daily *relationship* with God, *cleansing and restoration of fellowship* was granted on the basis of repentance.

Read Psalm 51:1-17.

As you read **Psalm 51**, one thing is very clear: David understood that his forgiveness and cleansing had *nothing* to do with the offering of animal sacrifices. For at least ten months, David had been going through the charade of going to the Temple and offering sacrifices; but those sacrifices could not restore David to close fellowship with God, or return to him the joy of his salvation. It was *only when David was broken about his sin, and repented of it*, that he was cleansed. In **2 Samuel 12**, we read the account of David’s repentance. For months, David had been trying to hide his sin; but God, in His mercy, finally brought him to repentance by sending the prophet Nathan to stick his bony finger in David’s face and say, “***Thou art the man!***” His sin exposed, David was struck to the heart, and confessed his sin with true repentance; and as *soon as*

he confessed his sin, he was forgiven. Until David repented, he was miserable. All along, David was saved by faith, and justified before God. He never lost his salvation; but he did lose the “*joy*” of his salvation. Until he confessed his sin to God, and turned from it, he was miserable. In fact, it appears that the guilt of his sin even affected him *physically*.

Read Psalm 32:1-4.

Many people believe that this psalm (just like **Psalm 51**) was written by David after he had repented of his sin with Bathsheba. With this in mind, look at what David says. He says, “*When I kept silence, my bones waxed old.*” In other words, as long as David stayed silent, and refused to acknowledge his sin, God afflicted his body with a physical malady that affected his bones. Apparently, David had developed some kind of arthritic pain, or perhaps even the beginning of osteoporosis, during this time. Unconfessed sin had begun to turn him into an old man!

We probably all know people whose bodies have aged by many years because of their sinful living. Sin destroys the body; and it certainly torments and withers the spirit. Sin can turn even a Christian’s life from a fruitful garden into a dry, barren desert. As David put it, “*For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer.*”

So, what is the bottom line? It is this. First, the saints of Old Testament times knew that God grants salvation to sinners not because of their works, but because of their faith in God. (This is called “justification.”) Secondly, Old Testament saints knew that personal cleansing from sin in their daily walk with God was granted on the basis of faith and repentance. (This is called “sanctification”--the daily setting apart of believers from sin unto God.)

Salvation was no different for Old Testament believers than it is for New Testament believers. Sanctification was also the same (except that the Holy Spirit didn’t indwell Old Testament believers). Old Testament believers looked *forward* to the cross, and we look *backward* to the cross; but Christ’s saving *and* cleansing work apply backward and forward in history. Every saint who has ever lived is saved and sanctified by faith in Christ, and repentance of heart.

However, the fact that Old Testament believers were saved and sanctified by faith doesn’t change the fact that they were required to do all the sacrifices and rituals of the Tabernacle. It also doesn’t change the fact that every time they sacrificed animals, they were reminded that the work of redemption had not actually been accomplished yet. They knew that their sin *was* removed; but they knew that the thing that made it *possible* for their sin to be removed was yet in the future. Things were not yet made “perfect.”

This leads us to the last phrase of **verse 10**. Let’s read **Hebrews 9:10** again. (**Read Hebrews 9:10 again.**) As you may remember, the title of this message is *Setting Things Right*. The idea behind this title comes straight from this verse. You see, the Greek word for “*reformation*” has the idea of “setting something upright.” It means to take something that isn’t complete, or that isn’t right, and to *make* it complete and right. Before Christ came, things were not “right” yet, because the actual payment for sin had not yet been made. Salvation and daily cleansing from sin were applied to Old Testament believers *in advance*, on the basis of Christ’s *future* sacrifice; but the sacrifice had not actually been made yet. For the time being, they had to deal with figures,

parables, and shadows of salvation. However, when Jesus Christ came into the world, He came to make salvation *reality*. Jesus Christ *is* that Reality. He *is* salvation.

Those of us who are living today have 2,000 years' worth of witness that Jesus is that Reality. Certainly, all of us in this room have heard that Jesus is the Saviour of the world. We've all heard that "Jesus died to save us from our sin." The question is: Have *you* actually placed your trust in Christ, and Him alone, to save you? Do you *know* Christ? Or do you merely know *about* Him?

Years ago, when I still lived in America, I used to witness, as often as I could, to a couple whom I shall call "Dave" and "Jannine." They had a garage business; and I would often go there for tune-ups and car repairs. Whenever I was at the shop, I witnessed to them and gave them tracts. Shortly before I left for Ireland, I even gave them a Bible, and wrote a letter explaining salvation. However, it seemed as though they would never respond to the Gospel. They were always polite; but I could tell that they thought me to be a little "fanatical." They put the Bible out in the waiting room of their garage for customers to read; but they obviously were not reading it themselves. My parents often witnessed to them, as well; but their efforts always seemed to be in vain.

However, a few years after my wife and I moved to Ireland, earth-shattering changes began to take place in Dave and Jannine's family. Through exposure to occultic things, their family began to be terrorised by demonic activity in their house, and throughout their property. Their family was so terrorised, that they all began to sleep in one room at night, to give themselves a sense of safety; but even then, they got hardly any sleep. They were desperate for answers.

Well, Dave and Jannine shared this information with my parents, and my parents shared it with their pastor. After praying fervently over this situation, their pastor paid this family a visit, and shared the Gospel with them. Dianne claimed to be saved; but the pastor soon discerned, from what she was saying, that she was *not* truly saved. She was deeply annoyed by the pastor's questions about salvation, because she knew, deep down inside, that she was *not* sure of her salvation. Her life showed no signs of Christ's presence, because she didn't truly know Him.

Well, after the pastor prayed over their house, things got a little better; but Dave and Jannine still had no peace in their souls. However, the day came when Dave and Jannine truly crossed over the threshold of salvation. Another Christian befriended them, and invited them to her church; and soon afterward, at the close of a church service, Jannine cried out to Jesus to save her. The next time she met my parents, she told them, again and again, that she now *knew* that she is saved! She was a completely different person! She had no fear anymore, because she knew that Jesus had washed her, and made her new. (By the way, after her salvation, the demonic activity in their home stopped!) In time, Dave concluded that he had received Christ when he was a child, but that he had wandered far from God; and he, too, began to grow in Christ. Dave and Jannine now attend church every Sunday morning, Sunday evening, and Wednesday evening. They have thrown out Rock music from their lives. They have abandoned the old movies and T.V. shows that glorify sinful living. They can't help but tell others about what Jesus has done for them. They went from *head knowledge* of Jesus as Saviour to *true repentance and trust in Christ*.

Conclusion: This, my friends, is what Jesus Christ does! He saves and keeps those who come unto God by Him. He has made it possible for all who are saved to have free access to the Father in prayer. He washes away our sin with His blood, and imparts a conscience that is clean and free. He daily cleanses

and forgives those who belong to Him, and enables them to stay in right fellowship with God. **In short, Jesus Christ has set things right.** Have things been “set right” in your life? First of all, have you truly been saved? If you need to be saved, don’t put it off! Receive Him today! If you *are* saved, are you living in right fellowship with Him? If you have sin that needs to be confessed, please do it today!