

A Grace Gathering  
20 July 2022

A “Gathering” Around the Lord’s Table:  
A Meditation

The Book of Exodus begins with God’s people in bondage to a mighty nation that “knew not Joseph” and the miraculous redemption of them to become His covenanted people through the divine disclosure at Mt. Sinai. The book ends with the installment of the tabernacle provision and the symbolic presence of God dwelling with His people in the pillar of fire by day to lead them and the pillar of fire by night to comfort them. God’s provision for His people was marvelous, but its purpose was temporal and anticipatory. The Tabernacle access to God pointed beyond itself to prepare God’s people for the coming of the true and final sacrifice for sin, one who would not enter an earthly veil to a physical Ark with its mercy seat and worshipping cherubim, but the very presence of God in heaven to atone for us.

The writer of the Book of Hebrews used the very thought of the movement of reading the Old Testament as anticipatory of fulfillment in New Testament to encourage the people of God in discouraging, troublesome circumstances. The re-occurring phrase in Hebrews is “better than.” The point is that Christ’s single, final sacrifice is what was anticipated in the tabernacle/temple ritual.

“Now the main point is this:

We have such a high priest, who has taken His seat  
at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven,  
a minister in the sanctuary, and in the true tabernacle,  
which the Lord pitched, not man (Heb 8:1-2).”

“For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands,  
a *mere* copy of the true one, but into heaven itself,  
not to appear in the presence of God for us (Heb. 9:24).”

The argument looks like this:

1. Christ is superior to the angel who mediated the Law (1:1-2:18)
2. Christ is superior to Moses who received the Law (3:1-4:13)
3. Christ is superior to the Aaronic priesthood (5:1-10:18)
  - a. Aaron stood on the earth; Christ in heaven (a better position).

“But when Christ appeared as a high priest  
Of the good things to come, He entered through the greater  
and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands,  
but the is to say, through His own blood, He enter the holy place  
once for all, having obtained eternal redemption (Heb. 9:11-12).”

- b. Aaron required succession, Christ is without end (better qualifications)
- c. Aaron promises were only temporal, Christ forever (a better covenant)
- d. Aaron’s work was in an earthly tabernacle, Christ’s eternal (a better sanctuary)
- e. Aaron’s sacrifices required endless repetition, Christ but once (a better sacrifice).

“By this will we have been sanctified  
through the offering of the body of Christ  
once for all (Heb. 10:14)”.

The victory over sin was completed in one sacrifice. This is made clear by the ending of the Mosaic codes, the sacrificial laws. Jesus has fulfilled the perfection demanded by the law and He, therefore, is able to bring us to perfection (sanctification) in Himself before God (to cleanse our conscience from sin). By the sacrifice of Jesus:

- 1. The conscience has been cleansed from the guilt of sin.
- 2. We have been made adequate to approach God as accepted worshippers.
- 3. We have experienced what the old age only anticipated.

“This is the covenant that I will make with them  
after those day,” says the Lord:

I will put my laws upon the heart, and on their mind  
I will them. He then says, “Their sins and their lawless  
Deeds I will remember no more.” Now where there is forgiveness  
of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin (Heb.  
10:15-18)

- 1. The witness of the holy writings, vv.15-17

The writer quotes once more from Jeremiah 31:31-34, the New Covenant (see 8:8-12).

2. The conclusion: the finality of Jesus' sacrifice, v.18

Here is the writer's grand crescendo. Since forgiveness has come, we have proof that sacrifices have ended forever!

“... so Christ, 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 (Heb. 9:28).”

Let us, who have so much to celebrate, celebrate together!

