

Hebrews

Hebrews 8:13-9:14 – Regulations, Redemption, Cleansing

May 10, 2009

- I. **Hebrews 8:13-9:14 . . .** [13] When He said, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear. [9:1] Now even the first covenant had regulations of divine worship and the earthly sanctuary. [2] For there was a tabernacle prepared, the outer one, in which were the lampstand and the table and the sacred bread; this is called the holy place. [3] Behind the second veil there was a tabernacle which is called the Holy of Holies, [4] having a golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden jar holding the manna, and Aaron's rod which budded, and the tables of the covenant; [5] and above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat; but of these things we cannot now speak in detail. [6] Now when these things have been so prepared, the priests are continually entering the outer tabernacle performing the divine worship, [7] but into the second, only the high priest enters once a year, not without taking blood, which he offers for himself and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance. [8] The Holy Spirit is signifying this, that the way into the holy place has not yet been disclosed while the outer tabernacle is still standing, [9] which is a symbol for the present time. Accordingly both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make the worshiper perfect in conscience, [10] since they relate only to food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until a time of reformation. [11] 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, that is to say, not of this creation; [12] and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. [13] For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, [14] how much more 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?

II. Prayer

III. Regulations, Redemption, Cleansing

A. Regulations: **Hebrews 9:1** . . . Even the first covenant had regulations of divine worship

1. Regulations: requirements, laws and rules laid down by the authority for the primary purpose of regulating conduct.
 - a. Of course, here in **Hebrews 9:1**, we rightly conclude that God is the authority and the regulations are directed toward conduct related to worship.
 - b. Now let me remind you right now of the two things I pointed out last Sunday about worship.
 - (1) First, we worship God when we give Him honor, respect, and adoration.
 - (2) Second, true worship of God is not a function of time of day or location or mood or music or testimony or any other thing of that nature. True worship is a function of the heart, mind, and life. Or to sum that up, true worship is a function of our conduct – beginning on the inside and working its way outside – all day and day by day.
2. Now notice that God begins this statement with the word “**even**.” “Even the first covenant had requirements,” regulating the conduct of those who came into God’s presence (i.e., the High Priest, once a year).
 - a. In beginning this statement with the word “**even**,” God is telling us that we too have requirements regulating our conduct in relation to entering into and remaining in the presence of God. And I spoke of some of those last Sunday.
 - b. Consider: If the High Priest took God’s regulations so seriously as to fear for his life when going into God’s presence – we too should take God’s regulations for us just as seriously. Better yet, we are invited to go beyond fear driven obedience of His regulations to love driven fulfillment of His regulations.
3. And what are His regulations for us today?
 - a. Salvation through repentance and faith in Christ
 - b. Put away all known sin
 - c. Resist the devil when tempted
 - d. Daily (*if necessary*) die to self and your ungodly fleshly desires
 - e. Put on godliness – from the inside out
 - f. Love God above all else and love others as yourself

4. As God says in **Psalm 24:3-4a** . . . Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? And who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands (**outward**) and a pure heart (**inward**).
- B. Redemption: **Hebrews 9:12b** . . . Through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.
1. To redeem someone is to release them from some sort of captivity by paying the required ransom.
 2. We were in captivity – and in fact, some of us here today may still be in captivity – to the power and practice of sin. And God makes it perfectly clear that all who are in captivity to the power and practice of sin are doomed to the penalty of sin.
 3. While in our captivity, we have no means or way to get out. There is nothing we can do **to redeem ourselves** from the penalty of sin, the power of sin, or the practice of sin. We were stuck – like prisoners in a cage.
 - a. We are like slaves who cannot get free of our masters (the flesh, the world, and the devil),
 - b. And we are weaklings who cannot win the war when up against the likes of Satan, our ungodly fleshly desires, and the allurements of the world.
 4. But Jesus paid the ransom to set us free from our captivity – the captivity of death, the captivity of an old, sinful nature, and the captivity of weakness against the enemy of our souls.
 5. As God says in **Titus 2:11-14** . . . For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, [12] instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, [13] looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, [14] who gave Himself for us to **redeem** us from every lawless deed, and to **purify** for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.
- C. Cleansing: **Hebrews 9:14** . . . How much more will the blood of Christ . . . cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?
1. Definitions:
 - a. Our **conscience** is that God created and God endowed part of us that discerns good from evil, warns us when we are about to do what is evil, and convicts us when we have done what we know we should not have done.

- b. **Dead works** are those thoughts, words and deeds which, in spite of their apparent goodness, are riddled with hypocrisy. Dead works are done by those who want to gain God's benefits and impress others with their godliness – while at the same time they want to cling to certain thoughts, ways of speaking and behaviors that they know are offensive to God and hurtful to others. In other words, dead works are done by those who want to appear Godly and who want the benefits of godliness without having to abandon all sin they know is sin.
- 2. And why are these works dead? Because they come from the devil's inspiration – and his single intent is to turn us against God so God will turn against us. They come from our old, sinful nature. They are motivated by selfishness and pride.
 - a. We cannot pursue dead works without continuing our rebellion against God, without turning away from fellowship with God, and without exalting self love over love for God.
 - b. We cannot pursue dead works and Christ-like godliness at the same time. Though dead works may have an appearance of godliness, they are only an outward show of godliness when certain selfish and ungodly benefits are desired from such a show.
 - c. Finally, dead works are dead because they promote death between us and God and between our inner person and godliness.
- 3. Examples Of Dead Works:
 - a. When I preach – to the best of my ability – the deeper truths of God in a way that makes them practical and applicable **yet** all the while wondering why more don't come to hear ME preach – that's dead works, and the only way I can think of them as good works is to have an uncleansed conscience.
 - b. When we put on a religious face for church and other religious or special occasions **yet** knowingly allow ungodliness to be an ongoing part of our conduct in the home so that those outside the home think of us as saints while those in the home think of us as hypocrites – that's dead works, and the only way we can think of them as good works is to have an uncleansed conscience.
 - c. When we study the scriptures and talk about them as those who know God and His word **yet** ignore some of what we have read so we can continue doing something we know is wrong –

that's dead works, and the only way we can think of them as good works is to have an uncleansed conscience.

- d. When we pray earnestly for one another and for our missionaries and for the salvation of the lost and for human suffering whether here or abroad **yet** do not pray as earnestly for God to show us our sin and to conform us to the image of Jesus in every area of our life – that's dead works, and the only way we can think of them as good works is to have an uncleansed conscience.
- e. When we stand strong for marriage and against divorce **yet** look on others of the opposite sex as if they might satisfy us as much if not more than our spouse – that's dead works, and the only way we can think of them as good works is to have an uncleansed conscience.
- f. When we speak of God's trustworthiness as if our faith in Him were an unshakable conviction, and when we encourage others to trust in God with the same unshakable faith **yet** live in fear of anything we Christians ought not to fear so as to depart from God's way to go our own way – that's dead works, and the only way we can think of them as good works is to have an uncleansed conscience.
- g. When we behave in nice, respectful, gracious, conciliatory, seemingly loving ways because we can't stand being disliked, criticized or disapproved; or when our meekness results in silence in the face of unrighteousness – that's dead works, and the only way we can think of them as good works is to have an uncleansed conscience.
- h. When we live the Christian life so as to look Christian to any who observe us **yet** harbor resentment, prolonged anger, the desire to get even, or unforgiveness toward someone – that's dead works, and the only way we can think of them as good works is to have an uncleansed conscience.
- i. When we confess all manner of sin and severely admonish ourselves after having sinned again **yet** do not take the actions necessary to bring an end to our known sin – that's dead works, and the only way we can think of them as good works is to have an uncleansed conscience.
- j. When we thrill at those moments of feeling God's presence and affirm our love and gratitude for Him in worship and praise **yet** push Him away or pretend He's not there when, like a dog

we repeatedly return to the same old vomit or like a pig after being washed we return to the same mud – that's dead works, and the only way we can think of them as good works is to have an uncleansed conscience.

IV. Conclusion

- A. God established regulations for the conduct of Old Testament believers and He has established regulations for the conduct of New Testament believers. Then, God brought Jesus on the scene to redeem us from the power, practice and penalty of sin and to cleanse our conscience from dead works so that, from the compelling motive of love, we would serve the living God (**do His will His way**).
- B. Only a fool believes God will redeem the person who won't validate his desire to be cleansed from dead works by cooperating with and submitting to Christ's cleansing work.
- C. May we be people who not only want God's great and gracious gift of redemption, but also God's great and gracious gift of cleansing.