

Hebrews

Hebrews 9:15-22 – Cleansing

May 17, 2009

I. **Hebrews 9:15-22** . . . For this reason He is the mediator of a new **covenant**, so that, since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first **covenant**, those who have been **called** (*without getting into election or free-will issues, we see from this word “called” that God is the one who takes the initiative to restore the broken relationship between Himself and us*) may receive the promise of the **eternal inheritance**. [16] For where a **covenant** is (*a will or testament – an arrangement made by one party with absolute power, which the other party may accept or reject, but cannot alter*), there must of necessity be the death of the one who made it. [17] For a **covenant** is valid only when men are dead, for it is never in force while the one who made it lives. [18] Therefore even the first **covenant** was not inaugurated without blood. [19] 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, [20] saying, "This is the blood of the **covenant** which God commanded you." [21] And in the same way he sprinkled both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry with the blood. [22] And according to the Law, one **may almost say**, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

II. Prayer

III. Not Mentioned Last Week – Return to **Hebrews 9:14**

A. Note the Beautiful Reference to the Triune God – **Hebrews 9:14** . . . 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**?

IV. Cleansed by **Blood, Fire, and Water**

A. Last Sunday I talked about Christ cleansing our conscience from dead works – and I gave you some examples of dead works. This Sunday, I want to take the idea of cleansing further.

B. We just read in **Hebrews 9:22** . . . And according to the Law, one **may almost say**, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

1. The point here is that **almost** everything is cleansed by blood – which implies there are some things cleansed by other means than the shedding of blood.
2. Now if there are other cleansers, what might they be? According to the scriptures there are three primary cleansers. They are, **blood**, **fire**, and **water**. And in an effort to encourage us to pursue all avenues of cleansing for the purpose of living a holy life, I want to talk about these three today.
3. However, there is one more point I want to make about these three means of cleansing before talking about each one specifically.
 - a. These three cleansers do not apply to ceremonial cleansing – as if acting out a ceremony that touches our outside only is sufficient to cleanse us inwardly – which is where we need cleansing first and foremost.
 - b. Neither do these three forms of cleansing apply to imputed righteousness or positional holiness – which we receive when we repent and put our faith in Jesus Christ for salvation from the power, practice and penalty of sin.
 - c. These three forms of cleansing apply to that cleansing which a Christian needs from time to time as a result of temporarily stepping off the narrow path in some way or another and getting involved in thoughts, words or deeds which he knows are wrong in the sight of God. In other words, these three cleansers are practical by nature and available to be applied any time we need them.

C. **Blood** – Christ’s blood shed at his death

1. **I John 1:5-9** . . . This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that **God is Light**, and in Him there is no darkness at all. [6] **If we say** that we have fellowship with Him and **yet walk** in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; [7] but **if we walk** in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the **blood of Jesus** His Son cleanses us from all sin. [8] **If we say** that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. [9] **If we confess** our sins, He is faithful and righteous **to forgive** us our sins and **to cleanse** us from all unrighteousness.
 - a. Confess – agree with the truth about our part in a situation
 - b. Broken and contrite heart – tears, sadness over breaking God’s heart and treating Him so badly

- c. Repent – change or confirm a changed mind about the sin we are confessing with the full intent to put it out of our life (accompanied by action that validates our intent).
 - d. Get back up and step back on to the narrow path –
2. THIS IS CLEANSING BY THE BLOOD

D. **Fire** – Primarily the work of the Holy Spirit, but may also include the work of Trials and Tribulation

1. The **Holy Spirit: John 16:5-7** . . . But now I am going to Him who sent Me; and none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?' [6] But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. [7] But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the **Helper** will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.
 - a. **John 16:7-11** . . . But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. [8] And He, when He comes, will **convict the world** concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; [9] **concerning sin**, because they do not believe in Me; [10] and **concerning righteousness**, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; [11] and **concerning judgment**, because the ruler of this world has been judged.
 - b. **John 16:13-14** . . . But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will **guide you into all the truth**; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. [14] He will **glorify Me**, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you.
 - c. **Romans 8:26-27** . . . In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but **the Spirit Himself intercedes for us** with groanings too deep for words; [27] and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because **He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God**.
 - d. **John 7:37-39** . . . Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. [38] "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, '**From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.**' " [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.

- e. Therefore, **I Thessalonians 5:19** . . . Do not quench the Spirit – *(do not through water on the fire of the Spirit, or turn a deaf ear to the inward speaking of the Spirit)*.

2. **Trials and Tribulations** (part of the Cleansing Fire)

- a. **Job 23:10** . . . But **He** knows the way I take; when **He** has tried me, I shall come forth as gold.
- b. **Psalms 119:67, 71** . . . Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep Your word. [71] It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I may learn Your statutes.
- c. **Romans 5:1-5** . . . Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, [2] through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. [3] And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; [4] and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; [5] and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.
- d. **James 1:2-4** . . . Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, [3] knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. [4] And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.
- e. **I Peter 1:6-9** . . . In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, [7] so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; [8] and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, [9] obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.

3. **SO WE SEE THAT THE FIRE – THE HOLY SPIRIT AS WELL AS TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS BRING CLEANSING.**

E. **Water** – Baptism: putting off the old and putting on the new – mentally, and physically.

1. **Romans 6:3-7, 10-13** . . . Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? [4] Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so **we too might walk in newness of life**. [5] For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, [6] knowing this, that **our old self was crucified** with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; [7] for he who has died is freed from sin. [10] For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. [11] **Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus**. [12] Therefore **do not let** sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, [13] and **do not go on** presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; **but present yourselves to God** as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.
2. We are to lay down or give up our old life and take on Christ's new life. We are to put off the old nature, the flesh, the old man, and put on the new. We are to die to self, and come alive to Christ. We are to no longer live for ourselves, but rather, live for Jesus. This is the cleansing of water.
3. Putting Off and Putting On
 - a. **Romans 13:12-14** . . . The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore **let us lay aside** the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. [13] **Let us behave properly** as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. [14] But **put on the Lord Jesus Christ**, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.
 - b. **Ephesians 4:17-24** . . . So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you **walk no longer** just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, [18] being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; [19] and they, having become callous, have given

themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. [20] But you did not learn Christ in this way, [21] if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, [22] that, in reference to your former manner of life, **you lay aside the old self**, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, [23] and that you **be renewed in the spirit of your mind**, [24] and **put on the new self**, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

- c. **Colossians 3:5-14** . . . Therefore **put to death** the members of your body which are upon the earth: immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. [6] For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience, [7] and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them. [8] But now you also, **put them all aside**: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. [9] Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, [10] and have **put on the new self** who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him— [11] a renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all. [12] So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, **put on** a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; [13] bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. [14] Beyond all these things **put on** love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

V. Conclusion

- A. God has provided us with these three means of cleansing – for as sure as we live in this world, still have our fleshly bodies, and experience the devil’s temptations we will get ourselves soiled and need cleaning up.
- B. If or when we find sin easy or frequent, we need to come to terms with what we really want – God and godliness or self, the pleasures of our flesh, and worldliness. Choose you this day whom you will serve.
- C. But for the godly, there is the blood, the fire and the water for cleaning up so that we can get back on that narrow path and live godly.