

Ascension & Appearances

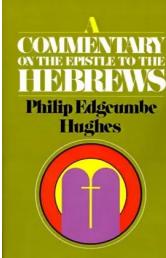
A. Death Necessary for Inheritance [9:15-22]

9:15-17 How does this argument depend upon the dual meaning of *diatheke* [covenant]?

[1] He conceives of the uncancelled iniquities of the covenanted people as going on accumulating, these sacrifices notwithstanding. In spite of annual expiations designed to clear the "ignorance" of the past year, in spite of the blood of goats and bulls profusely shed, in spite of countless sin-offerings presented by individual offenders, the mass of unpardonable sins went on increasing, till it had become a great mountain rising up between Israel and God, loudly calling for some Mighty One who could lift it and cast it into the sea. Christ is the Mighty One. **A.B. Bruce** *The Epistle to the Hebrews* p.357

[2] [9:16,17] The mention of the promised inheritance which is received on the basis of the redeeming death of Christ suggests the analogy from everyday life of the principle of inheritance, in accordance with which the provisions of a last will and testament become effective only on the death of the testator. Rather more than analogy is involved, however, since the Greek word *diatheke* which is used here can mean either "covenant" or "testament," and at this point in the argument there is an easy transition from the sense of "covenant" to the sense of "testament." Within the present context there is in fact a close association of ideas, for, as we have seen ..., the connection of a covenant and death particularly in the form of the shedding of blood in sacrifice, was commonplace in the history of the Hebrews, not to mention other peoples. But an association of this kind was not a necessity. The covenant between David and Jonathan, for example, involved no death in its invitation, but the exchange of personal possessions (1 Sam. 18:3f.), and the establishment of God's covenant with Noah was related, it seems, only to the rainbow as the symbol of its firmness (Gen. 9:8ff.). In the case of a last will and testament, however, the death of the testator is invariably required before the terms of his disposition can become operative.

Philip Edgecumbe Hughes *The Epistle to the Hebrews* p. 368



9:18-21 How did Moses illustrate the necessity of the blood – for atonement and cleansing? (Ex.24:3-8; 29:12,36)

[3] When therefore the spiritual Israelite was convinced by the law of sin, both as guilt and as a condition of impurity and strengthlessness, he was comforted by the promise of the inheritance, which always was of grace, unconditional and sure, and in a righteous and holy manner through expiation. **Adolph Saphir** *The Epistle to the Hebrews* p.593

9:22 The 'red thread' which binds all revelation – both old & new testaments

[4] Three things in Hebrews are said to be indispensable for Christian life: the blood (9:22); faith (11:6); and holiness (12:14). **W.H. Griffith Thomas** *Let Us Go On* p.118

[5] Round and round this ancient window into the past (15-28) is bound the red cord of blood. Twelve times at the very least does this solemn, this awful, word occur. The devil himself seems to admit that it is invested with some mystic potency; else why should he compel so many of his miserable followers to interlard each phrase they utter by some reference to it? Man cannot look on, or speak of, blood without an involuntary solemnity; unless, indeed, he has done despite to some of the deepest instincts of his being, or through familiarity has learnt contempt. And we feel whilst reading this chapter, as if we have come into the very heart of the deepest of all mysteries, the most solemn of all solemnities, the most awful of all tragedies, or martyrdoms, or sacrificial rites. Take off the shoes from off your feet; for the place on which we stand together now is holy ground. **F.B. Meyer** *The Way Into the Holiest* p. 117



B. The Ascension & the 3 Appearances [9:23-28]

9:23 Why would 'heavenly things' need purification? (Eph.1:10; Col.1:20)

[6] [9:23] The necessity for the purification of the earthly sanctuary and its vessels came from the fact that they were to be used by man and shared in his impurity (comp. Lev. 16:16). Agreeably with this view it may be said that even 'heavenly things' so far as they embody the conditions of man's future life, contracted by the Fall something which required cleansing comp. 1 Tim. 4:4f ... Man is, according to the revelation in Scripture, so bound up with the whole finite order that the consequences of his actions extend through creation in some way which we are unable to define (compare Gen. 3:17ff; Is. 24:5,6; Jer. 23:10; Rom. 8:18ff.). And conversely the effect of Christ's work extends throughout creation with reconciling, harmonising power; Eph. 1:10; Col. 1:20). **Brooke Foss Westcott** *The Epistle to the Hebrews* p.272

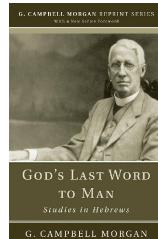
"the consequences of his actions extend through creation in some way which we are unable to define"

Are our spiritual sacrifices acceptable?

[7] [9:23] But we have already had reason to emphasize that the people of God are the house of God, that His dwelling-place is in their midst. It is they who require inward cleansing, not only that their approach to God may be free from defilement, but that they may be a fit habitation for Him. Just as the tabernacle in the wilderness, together with its furniture, had to be anointed and sanctified so that God might manifest His presence there among His people and they might serve Him there, so the people of God themselves require to be cleansed and hallowed in order to become "a habitation of God in the Spirit" (Eph. 2:22). The same essential teaching recurs in 1 Pet. 2:5, where believers in Christ are described as being "built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ". But in order to be a spiritual house of this kind they must have experienced regeneration and cleansing by "sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 1:2, 19, 22f.). **F.F. Bruce** *The Epistle to the Hebrews* p.219

9:24 Which appearance is essential to God? (John 4:22-24; Matt.27:51)

[8] The first thought of worship is that of rendering homage and adoration in the presence of God, whether by an individual soul, or by a company of men and women, united in the sacred activity. ... Now the Son passed into heaven to appear before the face of God, and that on our behalf. Thus the ultimate in worship is made possible through the Son's offering of Himself, and consequent appearing before the face of God. **G. Campbell Morgan** *God's Last Word to Man* p.98,103



9:25.26 But to which appearance is our High Priest's ministry forever tied? (v.7)

[9] [9:26] Each element in this sentence brings out some contrast between the work of Christ and that of the Levitical High-priests. Their sacrifices were repeated year by year during a long period of preparation: His sacrifice was offered once for all at the close of the succession of ages. They by their action called sins to mind (c. 10:3): He annulled sin. They provided typical atonement through the blood of victims: He provided an absolute atonement by the sacrifice of Himself. With them the most impressive fact was the entrance into the darkness in which the Divine Presence was shrouded: with Him the manifestation on earth, still realised as an abiding reality, brought the Divine Presence near to men. **Brooke Foss Westcott** *The Epistle to the Hebrews* p.276

[10] But there is a deep sense in which that blood is flowing, washing, cleansing, and feeding souls, all down the age. Like the stream of the desert, it follows us. "It speaketh," pleading with God for man, and with man for God (12:24). "It cleanseth," not as a single past act, but as a perpetual experience in the believer's soul, removing recent sin, and checking the uprising of our evil nature (1 John 1:7). It is the drink of all devout souls; and its perennial presence and efficacy is well symbolized by the appearance still on the communion tables of the Church of the

wine, which tells the worshipper that the blood of Calvary, once shed, and never to be shed again, is as fresh and efficacious as ever, or as the wine poured freshly into the cup. Let man say what they will, the shedding of the blood of Christ is an embodiment of an eternal fact in the Being of God, and is an essential condition of the healthy life of man. **F.B. Meyer** *The Way Into the Holiest* p. 119

9:27,28 How did the Levitical system type another appearance?

[11] [9:27,28] The fulfilment of the work of the Levitical High-priest suggests another thought. When the atonement was completed the High-priest came again among the people (Lev. 16:24). So too Christ shall return. He shall in this respect also satisfy the conditions of humanity. His Death shall be followed by the manifestation of His righteousness in the judgment of God. **Brooke Foss Westcott** *The Epistle to the Hebrews* p.278

[12] What marvellous appearances are these three! He appeared once in the end of the world as a Sacrifice. He appears now in heaven as a Priest. He will appear the second time without sin unto salvation; as of old the high priest, at the close of the day of atonement, came out with outstretched hands to bless the people. Oh, to be looking for Him, that we may not miss the radiant vision or the tender blessing of peace! **F.B. Meyer** *The Way Into the Holiest* p. 120

Our best exposition of Leviticus 16

[13] It has been often pointed out that this chapter is the best illustration and explanation we possess of the meaning of Leviticus 16, just as it may be said that the best explanation of this chapter is found in Leviticus 16. Four parts of the High Priest's work on the Day of Atonement are used here to express spiritual realities in Christ. The High Priest superintended the offering of the sacrifice outside the tabernacle. Then he entered into the Holy of Holies with the sacrificial blood. Thereupon he presented the blood by sprinkling it on and around the Mercy Seat. And afterwards he returned out of the tabernacle, having accomplished his work. These four actions can be well described as indicating and symbolizing our Lord's Atonement, Access, Appeal, and Advent. The truths are helpfully summarized in verses 26-28, where we find three of the four aspects. In verse 26, His appearance in the past for Atonement; in verse 24, His appearance in the present as our Priest; and in verse 28, the promise of His reappearance at His Advent. **W.H. Griffith Thomas** *Let Us Go On* p. 121

