

First not faultless

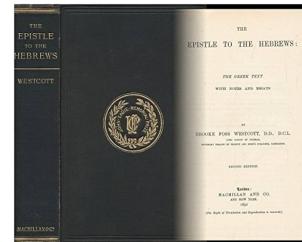
A. Contrast of Two Covenants [8:1-7]

8:1,2 How is it easy even for the religious to miss the ‘main point’? (Matt.6:19-21; Phil.3:18-20; Col.1:5, 3:1,2; 1 Pet.1:4)

[1] [8:1] “The Majesty in the heavens” ... is a reverential periphrasis for the name of God, like “the Majesty on high” in Ch. 1:3. The expression used here is fuller than that in Ch. 1:3 because of the addition of “the throne” between “right hand” and the surrogate for the divine name; for the fuller expression cf. also Ch. 12:2 (“the right hand of the throne of God”). **F.F. Bruce** *Hebrews* p.161

[2] [8:1] The aspect under which the writer of the Epistle thus regards the work of the Risen Christ explains his silence as to the fact of the Resurrection. The fact itself underlies all his argument. He assumes the permanence of Christ’s perfect humanity through death of which the Resurrection is the pledge; and dwells on the continued activity of Christ in His glorified humanity; but he refers to the Resurrection directly only once: 13:20 **Brooke Foss Westcott** *The Epistle to the Hebrews* p. 230

[3] [8:1] A spurious or superficial conversion dwells rather on the peace of God than on the God of peace, contemplates the cross of Christ and not the Christ of the cross, rejoices prematurely in deliverance from punishment, instead of cleaving in repentance and faith to Jesus, who delivers us from this present evil world, and raises us unto newness of life; heavenly in its character and hope. Wretched and fatal self-deception, to imagine that after a worldly, selfish, self-centred life upon earth we shall be transplanted into the kingdom of glory, into a blessedness of which we have had no foretaste, into an inheritance of which we have received no earnest in the gift of the indwelling Spirit. Jesus, who died on the cross, is now in heaven; it is only from heaven that the blessings of redemption, forgiveness, and the eternal love of God, are now bestowed by Him; He never delivers from the wrath to come without drawing us unto Himself, without separating us by His cross from the dominion of sin and the tyranny of self, without sending into our hearts the Spirit, as the Spirit of life. **Adolph Saphir** *The Epistle to the Hebrews* Vol. 2 p.469



[4] [8:2] There is a significant contrast between the Session of Christ and His serving ... The two words in fact present the two complementary aspects of Christ’s Person and Work, His divine Majesty and His infinite love. Christ serves though He reigns and reigns in serving. All that the High-priest did in figure He does absolutely.

He makes atonement for men with God: He makes God known to men; and thus in both ways He fulfils their destiny. **Brooke Foss Westcott** *Epistle to the Hebrews* p. 216

8:3-5 Is this concept of the present as shadow, not reality, derived from the Platonic ‘ideal’? (Ex.25:40; Col.2:16,17)

[5] Taking then these three general titles of the Tabernacle we see that the structure was held to represent provisionally in a sensible form three truths, (a) the Presence of God with men, (b) His righteousness, (c) His ‘conversableness.’ It is scarcely necessary to add that the idea of a ‘dwelling’ of the Lord in no way tended to confine His Presence to one spot: it simply gave a distinct reality to the fact of His Presence. So again the conditions of the ‘witness’ and the ‘meeting’ were not absolute. They emphasised the truths that God Himself determines the terms and mode under which He offers Himself to men conformably to His own Nature. If now we consider the account of the building and arrangement of the Tabernacle we shall recognise that it was fitted to convey most impressively the three lessons which it embodied. It was held to be wholly of divine design. No part was originated by human invention. It was reared after the pattern in which God prescribed the details of the way in which He should be approached (Ex. 25:9,40; Heb. 8:5) So the people confessed that if God is to be known, He must reveal Himself. **Brooke Foss Westcott** *The Epistle to the Hebrews* p. 237

8:6,7 Even before the coming of ‘better promises’ (e.g. eternal) why should it have been self-evident that the former covenant was not faultless? (7:18-28)

B. The New Covenant [8:8-13]

8:8,9 How is it indicated here why the former covenant was not faultless? (v.7)



[6] [8:8] Let us remember that this covenant, announced by the prophet Jeremiah, is to be made first with the house of Judah and the house of Israel. It is a spiritual covenant, yet a national one. To Israel pertain the covenants, both of law and of grace. This is taught by Scripture throughout, and most clearly in the chapters in which this precious promise of the Messianic covenant is contained. No one can read this section of the prophetic word and entertain the slightest doubt that literal Israel, the seed of Abraham, and their restoration in their own land, from the subject of divine promise. **Adolph Saphir** *Epistle to the Hebrews* Vol. 2 p.496

8:10,11 What is the secret of the spiritual success of the New Covenant? (Jer. 17:1,5,9,10; contrast v.7)

[7] [8:10] The defect did not lie in the covenant-law; it was good in itself but, to borrow Paul’s language, “it was weak through the flesh” (Rom. 8:3) – because of the inadequacy of the human material which it had to work upon. What was needed

was a new nature, a heart liberated from its bondage to sin, a heart which not only spontaneously knew and loved the will of God but had the power to do it. **F.F. Bruce**
The Epistle to the Hebrews p.173

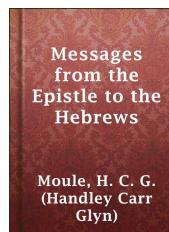
[8] [8:11] At Sinai He had engaged to bless them, yet under conditions which left them to discover the total inability of their own sin-stricken wills to meet His holy while benignant will. They failed, they broke the pact, and judgment followed them of course. But now another order is to be taken. Their King and Lawgiver, without for one moment ceasing to be such, will also undertake another function, wholly new, as regards the method of covenant. He will place Himself so upon their side as Himself to readjust and empower their affections and their wills. **H.C.G. Moule**, *Studies in Hebrews* p.38

[9] [8:11,12] The people are brought into true fellowship with God, and this involves an immediate knowledge of Him. No privileged class is interposed between the mass of men and God. All are true scribes (John 6:45) in virtue of the teaching within them (1 John 2:20,27). All have immediate access to the divine Presence. **Brooke Foss Westcott** *The Epistle to the Hebrews* p. 226

8:12,13 How has the first covenant become obsolete?

[10] [8:12] For the Hebrew, "remembering" was more than a mental effort; it carried with it the thought of doing something to the advantage, or disadvantage, of the person remembered. When Cornelius's prayers and alms ascended as a memorial before God, God took action to Cornelius's advantage ... When, on the other hand, "Babylon the great was remembered in the sight of God", it was "to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath" (Rev. 16:19). ... Under the old sacrificial system, there was "a remembrance made of sins year by year" (10:3) ... **F.F. Bruce** *The Epistle to the Hebrews* p.175

[11] [8:8-12] In other words, the law which formerly was external and accusing now becomes internal, an element of the redeemed nature, and a delight to fulfill; and the new covenant is the sphere, not of abandonment, but of unceasing fellowship with God, who, by virtue of the perfect atoning sacrifice of Christ our Law-keeper, is *merciful toward their iniquities and will remember their sins no more*. **Philip E. Hughes** *Hebrews* p. 300



STUDY 10

Earthly or Eternal?

A. The Ephemeral Nature of the Earthly Sanctuary [9:1-10]

9:1-5 Notice that aspect of the 'shadow reality' which our writer describes – how does this 'shadow' expose the fallacy of unbelief,

namely 'Unless I see I will not believe?' (1 John 2:15-17)

[12] [9:1-5] There are only two chapters of Scripture to narrate the creation of the world; but no fewer than sixteen chapters of the inspired record are devoted to the description of the tabernacle. It has been remarked, that God took only six days in the work of creation, but spent forty days with Moses in directing him to make the tabernacle. The work of grace is more glorious than the work of creation. Three times the book of Exodus gives a full account of all the parts of the tabernacle. First, when the command is given to build it; then again, when its preparation is narrated; and a third time, after it was actually erected. For the tabernacle shows forth the redemption in Christ, and the whole world was created that the glory of God should be manifested in Christ and the Church. And Scripture, by thus attaching a far greater importance to the description of the tabernacle than to the narrative of the world's creation, teaches us to contemplate the things that are unseen, to fix our thoughts and affections on the eternal and heavenly world, to lift our eyes to those heights whence descend the light and love of our blessed God. **Adolph Saphir** *Hebrews* Vol. 2 p.524

2 chapters given to Creation, 16 chapters to the Tabernacle

9:6-10 How does the Spirit, by the tabernacle structure, indicate the insufficiency of the former covenant?

[13] [9:1-5] God reveals Himself unto Israel as holy. Holiness, according to the Old Testament, is not so much one of the divine attributes, such as goodness, power, grace; but rather means the unity of all divine attributes, the very nature of God in His covenant relation to Israel. We bless His holy name, and mean thereby His forgiving grace, His healing, mercy, His renewing power, His faithfulness and loving-kindness. All His mighty wonders, and all the marvels of His guidance and rule, are to show forth His holiness. As in the new covenant we say God is love, so the Israelites said God is holy. **Adolph Saphir** *Hebrews* Vol. 2 p.549

[14] [9:6,7] Thus the Tabernacle witnessed constantly to the aim of man and to the fact that he could not as yet attain it. He could not penetrate to that innermost sanctuary to which he necessarily looked, and from which blessing flowed. The same institutions which brought forcibly to the soul of the Israelite the thought of Divine Communion made him feel that he could not yet enjoy it as it might be enjoyed. **B.F. Westcott** *Hebrews* p. 252

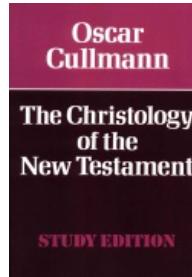
[15] In the whole of Asia, as Caligula complained, there was not a single temple, a single city or province of the empire, which had refused to admit his statue, and to honour him as a divinity, except in Judaea. **Adolph Saphir** *Hebrews* Vol. 2 p.533

[16] [9:1-10] As we ponder these references to the earthly tabernacle and its essential limitations, we see by contrast, as Bruce so well points out, that Christianity is a religion of access. As such, there is constant danger of hindrances being put to our freest, fullest approach to God. Gnosticism of old can be paralleled by more than one movement today. These do violence to this free, full access, which is the very life of Christianity and of our relation to God. **W.H. Griffith Thomas** *Let Us Go On* p.110

B. Eternal Redemption, Eternal Spirit [9:11-15]

9:11,12 What has Christ obtained which makes Him the perfect High Priest? (7:24,25)

[17] [9:12] Christian worship [he continues] in the light of that “one time” which means “once for all time” is possible only when even the slightest temptation to “reproduce” that central event itself is avoided. Instead, the event must be allowed to remain the divine act of the past time where God the Lord of time placed it – at that exact historical moment in the third decade of our chronology. It is the saving consequences of that atoning act, not the act itself, which become a present even in our worship. The Lord present in worship is the exalted *Kyrios* of the Church and the world, raised to the right hand of God. He is the risen Lord who continues his mediating work on the basis of his unique, completed work of atonement. **Oscar Cullmann** *The Christology of the New Testament* p.99

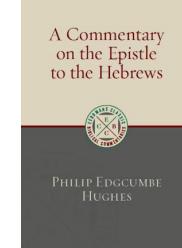


[18] [9:12] The description of the result of Christ’s work as “eternal redemption” is in marked contrast with the redemption for one year, implied and involved in the action of the High Priest on the Day of Atonement. The phrase “having obtained” means literally “having found for himself,” and seems to be contrasted with seeking perhaps because the High Priest sought forgiveness for himself and the people, but never really obtained it, at any rate as a permanent blessing. **W.H. Griffith Thomas** *Let Us Go On* p.113

9:13,14 Does the saving efficacy of Christ’s sacrifice consist merely in His perfect humanity? (John 4:20-24 - how does God ‘meet’ his people under the New Covenant?)

[19] [9:7-14] There are three classes of men. The worst, those who do not feel sin as a burden on their conscience, but cherish it as an idol in the heart. Oh what a discovery in the eternal world, that the burden is intolerable, and that the idol is an everlasting torment! Then there are men who try to cleanse the heart, and to lead a pure life, and hope thereby to remove the burden of guilt on the conscience. Who can help loving such? But not so can you obtain either a peaceful conscience or a God-loving heart. Christ is God’s righteousness for man. First the conscience is delivered, and thus the heart is renewed; and out of the renewed heart flows living obedience. **Adolph Saphir** *The Epistle to the Hebrews* Vol. 2 p.585

consequences as happen to other human blood that is shed. We may at least (and perhaps at most) assert that the body of Christ’s resurrection was, by the power of God, the human body in the perfection of its glorification, and as such the prototype as well as the firstfruits of the bodies of our resurrection. The preciousness of the blood of Christ inheres not in the physical blood as such but in the perfection of the unique sacrifice of himself which he offered and of which the precious blood is a synonym. The untenability of the negative deduction from a verse like Luke 24:39, which mentions only flesh and bones, that Christ’s risen body was bloodless, becomes perfectly plain when the same type of exegetical logic is applied to the declaratory statement of 1 Corinthians 15:50 that “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God,” which would compel one to conclude that the resurrection body is not only bloodless but also fleshless (a conclusion that was in fact drawn by the Socinians). This, however, would involve a contradiction, since the one text assigns and the other denies flesh to the resurrection body. Such is the peril of a crass literalism that does not show proper regard for the manner of speaking and for the context of such biblical statements. In both cases a figure of speech is employed, not a precise literal definition: “flesh and bones” in Luke 24:39 and “flesh and blood” in 1 Corinthians 15:50 are both descriptive of the body as a whole (*synecdoche*, in which a part stands for the whole). In the former passage, the purpose is to emphasize the reality of the resurrection as a *human* and *body* resurrection; in the latter, the reference is to the human body in its present mortal and corruptible state as distinct from the glorified and incorruptible character of the resurrection body. **Philip Edgecumbe Hughes** *The Epistle to the Hebrews* p. 334



Is it the literal blood that saves?

[9:12] It is wrong-headed, then, to be curious or concerned about what happened to the blood which Jesus shed. The important thing is that *it was shed* – by virtue of the incarnation, which made it possible for Christ, as Son of man, to shed his blood for men. Being truly *human* blood, it was susceptible to the same