

Hebrews 9:11-14

The Heavenly Sanctuary

(NIV, Interpretation and notes added. Scripture text is bolded)



No longer is the worshipper limited in their relationship with God. Now through the atoning restorative work and sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the true worshipper may enter into the Holy of Holies in the heavenly realms to worship and serve the living God.

Verse 11 **When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here** [RSV: have come], **he went through the greater and more perfect** [the true] **tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation.**

When Christ came, the shadow of things to come gave way to the perfect abiding reality, c.f. 10:1. Jesus is the perfect priest and the perfect sacrifice all in one. His coming is the reformation and the restoration along with the salvation. It is a day of gladness and celebration. The tabernacle or tent of meeting is where God meets with man in the heavenly realm, heavenly Zion, or heavenly temple in which God dwells. God does not live in houses or temples made/built by man/hands, c.f. Acts 7:48; 17:24; John 2:19.

The Mosaic tabernacle was a material copy of the true tabernacle, c.f. Isaiah 66:1-2. God inhabits the high and holy place, eternity, along with those who are of a contrite and humble spirit, Isaiah 57:15. Hebrews 3:6 declares that the people of God are now the house of God, and Christ is head over the house. Jesus is the high priest of a new eternal order. Hebrews 4:14 states that Jesus has gone through the heavens, and Ephesians 2:6 states that the believer has been raised up with Christ and is seated with Christ in the Holy of Holies, the heavenly realms.



Verse 12 **He** [Jesus] **did not enter** [heaven or the true tabernacle] **by means of** [through] **the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all** **by** [GK: through/on the bases of; RSV: uses the word "taking"]

instead of the word “by”] **his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption.**



Jesus entered the Holy of Holies in the heavenly realm to be enthroned as priest and king. The debate among theologians is whether the atonement was a two-fold process requiring the death on the cross (the altar) and the presentation of the blood of Christ to God (at the mercy seat) in the heavenly sanctuary; or a single act of atonement completed upon the death and shedding of the blood of Christ on the cross. Obviously the results are the same—atonement/salvation through the death and blood of Jesus Christ.

Verse 13 The blood of goats and bulls [sin offerings] and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean [those who are defiled, unfit, impure] sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean

Outwardly clean refers to a cleansing of the flesh or external purification (Numbers 31:21ff; Numbers 19). This cleansing has no effect on the conscience or the inner man. It is only external and symbolic to counteract the defilement of sin.

Verse 14 How much more [superior], then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished [free of inward blemishes—sinless] to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death so that we may serve the living God!

Jesus' sacrificial death was a spiritual and eternal sacrifice, c.f. Isaiah 42:1. He came to bear the sins of many (v.28) as a sin/guilt offering, procuring their justification—that is, their inward and spiritual purification required for heart communion with God.

This work of Christ makes perfect the worshipper (v.9) by removing the pollution, and setting the worshipper free from inward bondage. Now those who come to God can worship him—unhindered. Under the old order this was impossible to achieve. Through Christ, the sense of guilt that previously kept the worshipper at a distance from God has been removed.

These acts that lead to death are described as inward and spiritual defilement, c.f. Hebrews 6:1. We are called to repent from dead works--practices and attitudes that belong to the way of death that pollute the soul and create a barrier to access to God. The true worshipper has been set free by the sacrifice of Christ so that he/she can enter boldly into the dwelling of God to worship and serve him.



What's Your Next Step?

You are loved!

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