

The Making of the New Covenant

Michael Woody | Hebrews 9:15–22

It is the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, both His death and the shedding of His blood, that grants the exclusive means of forgiveness.

WHY THIS TEXT?

1. Hebrews 9 celebrates the superiority of the blood of Jesus Christ.
 - a. It is superior because of his divine nature and his finished work of salvation.
 - b. He is able to do what sacrificial bulls and goats could never do, namely, to remove our guilt and reconcile us to God.
 - c. Hebrews 9:15 picks up on this reasoning, saying, “And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.”
 - d. A mediator is someone who represents two different parties. In order to mediate between the holy God and sinful humans, Christ first had to die.
 - e. This reasoning starts with the understanding that the first covenant—the old covenant under Moses—required the obedience of the people.
2. Within this text we have a primary application that also extends far beyond those readers who initially read this letter.
 - a. Who is the application of Christ’s sacrificial death made to? V. 15b, because a death has taken place for redemption from the transgressions committed under the first covenant.
 - b. How are we to understand this? Is this an application to the Old Testament saints? Absolutely! It is a clear statement that they were not saved in any other way than Christ!

- c. A secondary, and somewhat less clear application from this text can also be applied to us; we too were under the Old Covenant prior to our conversion. How is this? Scripture uses the terms for the unbeliever being under the Law. Romans 5:12-21
3. Paramount in the Old and New Covenants is the blood. Blood has been the basis of all God's dealings with man since the fall
 4. Blood is often for us a reminder of sin and our depravity. Blood is offensive to us
 5. The author of Hebrews remains very focused on the blood; it is the blood of Christ that grants forgiveness, nothing else can do. 7:22, 8:6, now he speaks of Christ as our mediator
 6. Verses 13-14 lead into this passage, it tells us what the therefore is there for. He has just stated how access is granted, and now he stated the basis of that access.

THREE REASONS FOR THE NECESSITY OF THE BLOOD OF CHRIST

1. It is the sacrifice of Jesus Christ that makes the covenant valid (v. 15-17)
 - a. This verse starts off with the words in the NKJV, And for this reason. What is the reason?
 - b. He is the mediator for those called (those who committed sins under the first Covenant), this is both for the Jew and the Greek.
 - c. This sacrifice inaugurates the blessings of the New Covenant: the inheritance is a possession
 - d. This passage assumes we are Jewish persons who lived in a day of covenants
 - e. This is why the first covenant, made at Sinai, was done with blood. When every commandment was proclaimed, he took the blood of calves and he sprinkled the scroll and the people, the tabernacle and everything in it was ratified by sacrificial blood.
2. It is the blood of Jesus Christ that ratifies the New Covenant (v. 18-21)
 - a. The therefore in this section refers back to verse 15, death was the penalty for breaking the covenant - Ezek 18:4
 - b. The blood of the covenant showed the penalty for breaking the covenant, but it also pointed forward to Christ and the new covenant in him. "Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins," the writer observes (Heb. 9:22).

- c. For this we need to go back to the Mosaic covenant - when the people agree to the terms of the covenant something happens. Turn to Exodus 24:3-8
 - d. The application of the blood was central to the making of a covenant.
 - e. You see, without the sacrifice and the blood a covenant was just talk - when that sacrifice and the representative blood is applied - now the covenant means something!
3. It is the blood of Jesus Christ that grants the exclusive means of forgiveness (v. 22)
- a. Without the shedding of blood there is NO forgiveness. The end of this forgiveness builds on concepts already provided in the recent verses:
 - b. We have to be absolutely clear here - without the shedding of blood there is NO forgiveness.
 - c. As a result of this verse we can also know, With the shedding of blood there IS forgiveness.

CONCLUSION

I offer to you today something that is the rarest, most precious thing that one could offer - I point you today to the person of Jesus Christ, the inaugurator of the new covenant, who made that covenant valid by His death and shed blood. As a result of this He offers true forgiveness and a conscience purged from dead works.