

FROM COVERING TO CLEANSING (Part 1)

Hebrews 8:6

⁶ But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.

The promises under the New Covenant are *better* than the promises under the Old Covenant. This is especially true when it comes to how God deals with sin.

Leviticus 17:11

¹¹ For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.

Under the Old Covenant, God primarily dealt with sin by “atoning” or *covering* it. We can see this as far back as the Garden of Eden!

Genesis 3:21

²¹ Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

When we come into the New Testament we’re presented with God’s *new* strategy for sin—to *cleanse* men of their sin.

John 1:29

²⁹ The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

Revelation 7:14

¹⁴ And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

The sacrifices under the Old Covenant could NOT do this!

Hebrews 10:4–5

⁴ For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. ⁵ Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me:

God doesn't seem content to simply cover men's sins. He wants to *cleanse* them of their sin! Unfortunately, most Christians seem content with simply having a "covering" for their sin. But, the problem with this is that NOT ALL SINS ARE COVERED BY THE BLOOD.

Hebrews 10:26

26 For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,

Notice, THERE IS NO SACRIFICE or covering for sins committed in willful disobedience. This is because sacrifices are intended for sins committed in ignorance.

Numbers 15:27–28, 30

27 And if any soul sin through ignorance, then he shall bring a she goat of the first year for a sin offering. 28 And the priest shall make an atonement for the soul that sinneth ignorantly, when he sinneth by ignorance before the Lord, to make an atonement for him; and it shall be forgiven him. 30 But the soul that doeth ought presumptuously, whether he be born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people.

Notice, 'presumptuous' (willful) sins should be avoided AT ALL COST!

2 Peter 2:9–10

9 The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: 10 But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.

Psalms 19:13

13 Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; Let them not have dominion over me: Then shall I be upright, And I shall be innocent from the great transgression.

Notice how David calls *presumptuous* sins "the great transgression." This is because, among other things, they are the kind of sins that can bring a person under the *dominion of the devil*!

2 Timothy 2:25–26

25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; 26 And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

The question remains, “Can a person be forgiven of presumptuous/willful sin, particularly if there’s NO SACRIFICE for such sins?” The answer is, YES! David is probably the clearest example of this.

2 Samuel 12:9–10, 13–14

⁹ Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. ¹⁰ Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. ¹³ And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said unto David, The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die. ¹⁴ Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die.

Although David was guilty of willful sin (adultery, murder), he was STILL granted forgiveness from God. The question is, WHY?

Psalm 51:16

¹⁶ For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: Thou delightest not in burnt offering.

David was *not* granted forgiveness on the basis of a sacrifice. Instead, he was granted forgiveness on the basis of God’s mercy!

Psalm 51:1

¹ Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: According unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.

This is a reminder that God doesn’t just grant forgiveness because someone brings Him a sacrifice. God can ALSO forgive on the basis of His mercy.

Psalm 86:5

⁵ For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; And plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.

Second, since there was no sacrifice (or covering) for David’s sin, he sought to be *cleansed*.

Psalm 51:2

² Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin.

If our sins aren’t covered, then they must be cleansed! And, the thing that’s essential to being cleansed is *confession*.

Psalm 51:3

³ For I acknowledge my transgressions: And my sin is ever before me.

We see the SAME pattern in the New Testament!

1 John 1:9

⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If you're familiar with the Levitical system, then you know that before the high priest could perform his priestly work of *cleansing*, the worshipper was required to "lay his hands" upon the animal and confess (acknowledge) his sin. This completed the transfer of guilt from the individual onto the sacrifice, AND it released the priest to perform his priestly duty. In other words, ministry of the high priest was ACTIVATED by their confession!

We also have a High Priest whose priestly work is activated by our confession.

Hebrews 4:14

¹⁴ Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

What are we to confess? First, we are to confess our *sins*. But, in addition to this, we also confess our *faith*.

Hebrews 10:23

²³ Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)

The reason we confess our faith is so that it won't waver!

Romans 4:20

²⁰ He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;