

The Midweek Podcast:

Heaven and Earth: Hebrews 10:11-18 | August 18, 2025 | Michael Carter + Kevin Wilson

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Well, I'm Michael Carter and this is the mid week and we are continuing our series in Hebrews chapter 5-10 and we have titled this little subseries of Hebrews, *Heaven and Earth* through the summer where we've taken a passage for the Sunday morning and then we've continued it in the middle of the week with sermon and discussion. And this episode we're talking about Hebrews 10:11-18. So let me just read that to get us started. Hebrews 10:11-18 says,

“And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices which can which can never take away sins. But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. For by a single offering, he has perfected for all time, those who are being sanctified. And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us. For after saying ‘This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days,’ declares the Lord. ‘I will put my laws on their hearts and write them on their minds.’ Then he adds, ‘I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more. Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.’”

So we're drawing near a close to this series and we titled it Heaven and Earth because that's what we see being explained. We have an earthly worship which was given by God, but it was provisional. Christ from heaven will provide the better sacrifice, a better ritual and was foretold in the Old Testament. The text turns to give support for why we can trust this new message. Although we learned a few weeks ago that it's not new. It's been the plan all along. It is perceived as new by the Jewish believers in Christ. So why can we trust that Christ's atoning work is more effective at taking away sin than the old covenant system with its rituals and its sacrifices? Well, in essence, the author is answering the question, hey, we understand that you say it's better, but why can we trust you?

So I'm going to answer that question or I'm going to answer it from the scripture with these two answers. We have confidence because Christ rests and we have confidence because the Spirit foretold all of this. So let's start with the top. We can have confidence because Christ rests.

There are different parts of the Old Testament covenant. The covenant's the big term and there's a lot of things underneath it. That is the law, the priests, the animals, the rituals and the festivals. In the previous few verses, we're talking about animals and sacrifices. Our section today looks to Christ as the perfect priest in that system. And in verse 11, it says, "and every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins." So the author is reviewing here. He covered this in Hebrews nine, verse 10 and the surrounding verses. When he says can never take away, that word for take away describes to literally peel away or uncloke. Remember a few weeks back in the sermon, I preached on Hebrews 10:1-4, and I referred to remaining sin as a weighted blanket, holding down the Christian soul. I don't know if you know what a weighted blanket is, but it's a blanket that is very heavy and it's supposed to keep you held down in the middle of the night from tossing turning, which would wake you up. And that's supposed to give you a deeper sleep. Well, that's kind of what sin does. It holds you down to give you a deeper sleep.

The old system as designed would not uncloke the sin from us. Rather, the repetitiveness of the system would keep our need for uncloking ever before us. I explained that in the sermon. This should have created within God's people an anticipation and a longing for a promised better, a better system, wherein sin would finally be dealt with once and for all. Then we learned that the Old Testament law sacrifices were given so that sin could be paid for with a life by shedding the blood of an animal. But they didn't work because they did nothing to change the heart of the believer. You see, it wouldn't take away. It wouldn't uncloke the sin.

So we'll continue in verse 12. It says, "But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God." That Christ sits in heaven seems to be a big deal to the Hebrews writer. It comes up first way back in Hebrews 1:3, where it says, "after making purification for sin, he sat down at the right hand." And then again, in chapter one, verse 13, it asks the question, "And to which of the angels has he ever said, sit at my right hand?" And then again, in chapter eight, verse one, the writer says, "now the point in what we're saying is this, we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand."

So Kevin Cox, he taught on this in our midweek podcast a few weeks back in episode 20. He said that in all the instructions about building the temple, there were no places to sit. God did not give instructions to build furniture for sitting. Explicit instructions for everything else, the curtains, the walls, the ceilings, the lamp stands, no chairs. This was intentional because the system was designed to keep the priests up, working, moving and atoning. But with the Son of God, He sits, He rests. Where else does that come from?

Well, when God created all things in Genesis, he intentionally rested to indicate completed work. It was done. And then he invites us into his rest, making Sabbath, making Sabbath keeping a commandment. Here, the author is saying that the message of completeness and adequacy of Christ's sacrifice is supported by the fact that he is seated in the heavenly place beside God.

Warren Wiersby, he says, "The fact that he sat down was the proof that his work was complete." All right. And our passage goes on to talk about his supreme reign over all creation. Even his enemies will in verse 13, "will be made a footstool for his feet." You can just imagine Christ with his foot on the neck of his enemies. His enemies are our enemies also. He will reign superior. And then verse 14 goes on to say, for by a single offering, he has perfected for all time, those who are being sanctified.

So Thomas Schreiner in his commentary, which we refer to Schreiner a lot, he's very helpful commentary on Hebrews. He calls this one of the most famous sentences in the letter that what I just read, one of the most famous sentences in the entire letter for believers, those who put their faith in Christ completed work for sin. Their sanctification is an objective reality. It's what God has done. There is also something. This is also something that theologians refer to as the already and not yet nature of the kingdom. The phrase being sanctified in this verse, it got my attention because if you read it in other translate or other versions in English, it says something different. And it's a big difference.

The ESV, which I read all the time and we're reading through this series, and the NIV, they both say being sanctified. But the NRSV and the HCSB, which are really good translations, they're pretty wooden. They're word for word. They say "are sanctified". So there's two. It's either being sanctified or are sanctified. Those are huge differences. So when I see that we've got to go to the Greek. We got to find out what was in the original and you have to know a little grammar, which I was not really good at, but I've learned over time. The Greek phrase in the is in the present tense indicating a finished state. It's not an ongoing process. In other words, Christ sacrifice, his blood, has purified believers is what the Greek is saying. Let me see if I can give an illustration.

My family watched the movie Miracle a few weeks back. It is, if you don't know what it is, it's about the US hockey team winning gold in the Olympics against all odds. So I had never seen it, you know, I'm 45, I had never seen this movie. So I thought it's about time. I like Kurt Russell, I think he's a great actor, so I wanted to see this movie. In the story, a big part of this movie was the coaches player selection method. There's this kind of almost seemed like this was like this was key to the tension. Who would be on the team and would they be

ready to face the most dominant hockey team in the world? The coach, Kurt Russell, was confident that the team he chose possessed the talent to win. As well as you know, I'm not spoiling anything here. This is based on a true story. The U.S. hockey team did win, therefore the movie. And I knew that going into the movie. I knew they would win. But there were these grueling scenes of the coach getting the players he selected ready to win.

My perspective as a watcher of this movie was really interesting because those players, they were chosen to be on the team. They were on the team, but not yet ready to win. Yet I knew they had won already. I was looking at these kids, born to be hockey players, having been selected to be on the US Olympic hockey team. And I knew they had already won, but I watched them be made ready. Christ's sacrifice has purified believers is what the verse is saying. And I like that little phrase, a two word phrase, purified believers. A believer is someone whose heart is changed, loves God, loves the provided cross, and wants to be made into Christ's likeness. They're on the team in the analogy and they love it.

There are people out in the world who don't have a heart for God or the cross. They're not on the team if you want to use the analogy. The Bible says that the world sees the cross as foolishness, so they don't have faith. There is a tension here in the already and not yet, because my ultimate sanctification happens in the future in heaven, but it's also complete in God's sight now. That's why there are these different translations. Believers are being and are purified. And actually, I don't know where it is, but the Hebrew writer uses both. It's earlier, he uses another tense. But it's all to indicate that both are true. God has already done it and seen it, although we are still living in the not yet.

So when, this biblical, this theological topic comes up, a question always arises, even though our text isn't addressing that question, I figure I'll bring it up anyway. And it's this, if all I have to do is believe to be sanctified in God's presence, does that mean I can keep on sinning freely? Well, I like how Thomas Schreiner answers this question. He says, "The objective and definitive nature of perfection isn't contradicted by the sin that continues to stain the everyday life of believers. The warnings in the letter show that this absolute perfection isn't yet theirs. They are perfect before God because of what Christ has done, even though they still struggle with sin, the already and the not yet. But this objective reality, it gives us confidence that Christ has done the sacrificial work, it isn't up to me. He's done it. And by faith, God's grace has applied it to me."

Another writer says it like this, "those who have trusted him need not fear for they have been perfected forever." 1014. Believers are complete in him. Colossians 2 10 says we have a perfect standing before God because of the finished work of Christ.

So we move on into another reason to trust, and that is we can have confidence because the Spirit foretold all of this. In verse 15, I've already read it, but I'm gonna read it again with a footnotes. Verse 15 and so on. "The Holy Spirit also bears witness to us. For after saying, 'This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days,' declares the Lord. 'I will put my laws on their hearts and write them on their minds.'" This is a quote from Jeremiah 31, 33. Jeremiah 31, 33. It goes on, "then he adds, 'I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.'" This is a quote from Jeremiah 31, 34. he is highlighting that these two thoughts are right beside each other in Jeremiah. And then the Hebrews writer finishes, "Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin."

So how do we know personally that we have this perfect standing before God? Because God the Spirit said it. All right. Why should we have confidence in Christ's sacrifice? Because God the Spirit assures it. The author quotes Old Testament promises as from God the Spirit, and they promise in the New Covenant that sins will be put away forever. That's verse 17. "I will remember their sins no more." Finally, he declares in verse 18, there is no longer any offering for sin. So sin, as it relates to my cleansing and standing in God's sight, as it relates to our being chosen by Him for justification and salvation, as it relates to our being in God's love, His favor and His service, sin has been utterly dealt with. Verse 14 serves as a huge vehicle for our fellowship with God. He sees our position as through the blood of Christ, as perfect, as sanctified. Not that we are perfect in character, not that we don't still sin, but we, the believer by faith, can enter into his presence as cleansed worshipers. And this makes sense why the author responds just a few verses later. "We can draw near with a true heart and full assurance of faith."

So it's been a lot, very thick theology here. Let me close with some encouragement. Let me encourage the believer. Sin intends to separate you from God and how effective it has been. Like a weighted blanket, sin suppresses your energy to spring up and run to God when you need mercy, when you want fellowship, when you have needs in life, sin has been effective. And it's been lying to you about God's posture towards you, here's the truth. Believer, His face is towards you for whom He sent His Son. So what do we do? We look to Christ's finished work and we cast off the weight and boldly enter God's presence for fresh resources of mercy and grace. You can do that right now. You can call to Him in your time of need.

The enemy would lie to you and say God is disappointed in you, that you need to get your act together. This is the heaviness of sin, sapping your energy. Simply look to Christ and His sufficient cross and call out to Him.

Discussion between Michael Carter and Kevin Wilson

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