

May 16, 2010 by Steve Brandon



Our Heavenly High Priest

Hebrews 8:1-6

1. His Place of Ministry (verses 1-2)
2. His Gift of Ministry (verses 3-4)
3. His Things of Ministry (verse 5)
4. His More Excellent Ministry (verse 6).

When I was in high school, I took a class called "Humanities." In that class, we studied the ancient literature that has impacted our society. We studied Roman and Greek literature. It's not that I remember a lot of the details of the class. However, I do remember that during one particular class, we were studying Plato's Republic, in which Plato was searching for the ideal community. Anyway, the teacher stood in front of the class, placed a chair before us and said, "This is not a chair." At such a claim, we all objected. "What do you mean it isn't a chair" It sure looked like a chair. We all called it a chair. You could sit in it like a chair. And then, Mr. Locassio explained. "This is not a chair. Rather, what you see before you is an approximate representation of the ideal chair that exists elsewhere (either in your mind or in the heavens). All other forms that you recognize as approximating the ideal of a chair in your mind, you will call a chair, because you recognize that it has the quality of 'chairness.'" In many ways, this is true. It's what separates us from computers. We have ideals in our minds to which we compare the realities of the things in life.

Our family had an illustration of it this week with our three year old son, David. We were all sitting at the table and something came up about boys and girls. We asked David, "Are you a boy or a girl?" He said, "Boy." We proceeded to ask David about all of the members of our family that were there around the table. We asked, "Is mommy a boy or a girl?" He said, "Girl." We asked, "Is daddy a boy or a girl?" He said, "Boy." "Is Carissa a boy or a girl?" "Girl." "Is SR a boy or a girl?" "Boy" "Is Hanna a boy or a girl?" "Girl." "Is Stephanie a boy or a girl?" "Girl." How does he know these things? Plato would say that he knows them because he has in his mind an ideal picture of "boy" and "girl." And when he evaluates someone according to these categories, he identifies the closest match to his ideal.

As we come to our text this morning, we will see some of these same concepts. We will see the ideal and the representation of the ideal. As you read it, I want for you to look for the ideal and for the representation of the ideal.

Hebrews 8:1-6

Now the main point in what has been said is this: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister in the sanctuary and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man. For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices; so it is necessary that this high priest also have something to offer. Now if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer the gifts according to the Law; who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned by God when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for, "See," He says, "That you make all things according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain." But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises.

The ideal is the true tabernacle in heaven, where Jesus is seated. In verse 2, the author identifies it as "the true tabernacle" (verse 2). The representation is the tabernacle that Moses built. The author identifies it as "a copy and shadow of the heavenly things" (verse 5). Plato would identify the earthly temple that stood on Mount Moriah in Jerusalem as an approximate representation of the ideal temple that exists elsewhere. It has a quality of "templeness" about it. And he would be exactly right. The earthly temple, which was the center of Jewish worship, was, in actuality, only a representation of the perfect heavenly tabernacle, which, in reality, is "the true tabernacle" (verse 2). Now, it's not that the earthly tabernacle is false. Rather, it's that it merely approximates the original. Or, to use Biblical language, it is a copy and shadow of the original. Several times later in this epistle, this idea will flush itself out.

Hebrews 9:11-12

But, when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.

The tabernacle that Jesus ultimately entered as our high priest isn't the earthly tabernacle of this creation. Rather, it was the holy place of God's creation. Jesus entered the holy place, not through the veil in Jerusalem, but into the holy place in heaven. The same thing takes place in Hebrews 9:23-24.

Hebrews 9:23-24

Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true

one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.

In other words, the priestly role of Jesus isn't upon the earth, in an earthly tabernacle. Now, the priestly role of Jesus is in heaven, before the very presence of God, Himself! And that's the point of my message this morning. Jesus is "Our Heavenly High Priest." And thus, the title of my message this morning: "Our Heavenly High Priest."

Now, even as we begin, I want to set forth for you the main application of this passage to us. We often think about heaven only in future terms. We often think about heaven as a place that we (who believe in Christ) will go some day. We often think about heaven as the place where all will be made right, someday. We often think about heaven as the final state--someday, somewhere over the rainbow. Now, these things are exactly right. And we should have our hope fixed on heaven like this. We should anticipate the future. Or, as Peter said, it's "suffer now and glory later." But, heaven is a very present reality today! As truly as Jesus is alive, there is a place called heaven where Jesus is and from which Jesus is ministering to His people. He is exalted to the right hand of God, which is in heaven. He is a high priest, who is praying for us now (Heb. 7:25). I call you this morning to think of "Our Heavenly High Priest." who ever-lives to make intercession for us. Paul said it this way in Colossians 3:1-2, "Keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth."

And so, as we meditate this morning on the heavenly role of Jesus, set your mind there. It will help you to realize that there is another realm, in which we must live. And in many ways, the spiritual realm is the greater reality. Too often our minds are earthly. We think much about the affairs of this life. We think much about our finances. We think much about our children. We think much about our relationships and our retirement. We think much about health care and taxes. We think much about the flooding in Tennessee. We think much about the oil spill in the gulf. We think much about the global threat of Iraq and Iran and China. And these are genuine concerns. And we need to put effort into these things. However, there is a greater reality, where we need to put even greater effort. It's in the spiritual realm. "Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Eph. 6:12). The aim of my message is to help you think about the greater realities of this life: Jesus Christ as our heavenly high priest. Let's begin digging into our text.

Hebrews 8:1.

Now the main point in what has been said is this: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,

As a preacher I love these kinds of verses. Because, one of the things that I aim to do each week as I teach the Scriptures to all of you, is to communicate to you the aim of the original writer. There are several reasons for this, but the most basic reason is that I want to let the Scriptures speak for themselves, because I believe that such a method will have the greatest impact on your soul. The Spirit of God uses the Word of God in the lives of the people of God. When I come across a text like this, there is always a great comfort to my soul that I'm getting it right and that the Holy Spirit will move! He says, "Here's the main point! We have such a high priest in heaven!"

Now, as you read the commentaries, there is a bit of discussion as to whether these words are summing up what came before, or if these words are anticipating what comes next. You can see this in the translations of the NIV and of the ESV. They translate verse 1 this way, "Now, the point of what we are saying is this: we [do] have such a high priest." Does verse 1 look backwards? Or, does verse 1 look forwards? Yes! The writer is referring to what he has said. And, the writer is referring to what he is about to say. I say this because the topic isn't changing here. It's more of the same! What's been said is going to be said again. Chapter 7 was filled with example after example after example of how the priesthood of Jesus is better than the priesthood of Levi. The priesthood of Jesus is perfect, whereas the priesthood of Levi was not (Heb. 7:11-12). The priesthood of Jesus is of kingly descent, whereas the priesthood of Levi was not (Heb. 7:13-14). The priesthood of Jesus is worthy, based upon the power of the life of Jesus, whereas the priesthood of Levi was not (Heb. 7:15-17). The priesthood of Jesus brings a better hope (Heb. 7:18-19). The priesthood of Jesus comes with an oath (Heb. 7:20-22). The priesthood of Jesus endured forever (Heb. 7:23-25). Jesus is a pure priest (Heb. 7:26). Jesus is the final priest (Heb. 7:27). Jesus is a perfect priest (Heb. 7:28). Of course, this is the main point in what has been said. We have a great high priest. Chapter 8 will continue on with these things.

Now, indeed, in chapter 8, the emphasis is a bit different. In chapter 7, the emphasis was upon the earthly ministry of Jesus. But, here in chapter 8, the emphasis is upon the heavenly ministry of Jesus. We will find that our heavenly high priest is better than the earthly high priests, because His priesthood is the ideal from which we derive the earthly ministry of the Levites.

1. His Place of Ministry (verses 1-2)

Obviously, the place of Jesus' ministry is in heaven. You can see it clearly in verses 1 and 2.

Hebrews 8:1-2

Now the main point in what has been said is this: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister in the sanctuary and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man.

You can almost see Jesus seated in the heavens at the right hand of God, the Father: God the Father and God the Son, seated in glory together. Indeed, this will be the scene for all eternity. The Father and the Son worshiped together. We read at the end of Revelation 5, "And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, "To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever." And the four living creatures kept saying, 'Amen' And the elders fell down and worshiped."

The scene in verse 1 is awaiting this final day, when God and the Lamb are worshiped in full glory for all the creation to see. But, until that day, Jesus is seated awaiting the day when all of His enemies are placed as a footstool. Indeed, verse 1 is calling us back again to Psalm 110, which was the topic of so much of Hebrews 7. Psalm 110:1 says, "The LORD says to my Lord: 'Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.'" And this is precisely where Jesus is today. He is in heaven. He is seated at God, the Father's right hand. He is waiting. He is waiting for the day when He can return as the ruler of the world.

Now, this thought about Jesus seated at God's right hand is brought up four times in the book of Hebrews. The first comes in chapter 1, verse 3: "... When He had made purification of sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high." The second comes in our text this morning. The third comes in chapter 10, verse 12: "But He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time onward until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet" (10:12-13). The fourth comes in chapter 12, verse 2: "fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Four times in Hebrews, this thought comes to us. Now, the question here ought to be, "Why?" Why so much emphasis upon Jesus, seated at the right hand of God? Well, think with me about the original context of the letter. It was written to those who had left their Judaism and had come into the church. But, they were facing some pressure from their fellow Jews to denounce Christianity and return to their Judaism. I'm sure that they were using every argument in the book. "We have the prophets, who spoke to us. We have the angels, who have ministered to us. We have Moses, who directed us in the wilderness. We have Joshua, who gave us the land of Canaan. We have the Sabbath. We have temple and the priests and the sacrifices. We have Abraham. But, this Jesus? He's nothing! He was killed for His teachings. He's not around. What did He leave you? Nothing. All you have are His memories." The argument of the book of Hebrews is this: "Jesus Is Better, So Press On!" His word was final, unlike the prophets, who spoke "in many portions and in many ways" (Heb. 1:1). Jesus is better than the angels, because He is worshiped by the angels. (Heb. 1:6). Jesus is better than Moses, because He has been given more glory than Moses (Heb. 3:3). Jesus is better than Joshua, as He has given to us an everlasting rest (Heb. 4:3, 10). Jesus is better than the priests, because He, Himself is our perfect high priest (Heb. 5:1-10; 7:11-28). We have a promise that's better than the promise given to Abraham (6:13-20). It may appear that Jesus has left us. But, He has left us only to enter heaven as the vice-regent of the universe! In heaven, He ministers as our high priest. And right here is the key to why the author of Hebrews mentions Jesus seated at the right hand of God so often. As John MacArthur has written, ...

They did not need to fear losing out on what was going on in the symbolic, temporary Holy of Holies. They had the true, perfect, eternal Priest in the real, heavenly Holy of Holies, of which the earthly one was only a poor and soon-passing picture. In the real one, Jesus Christ, was ministering and interceding for them. Thus, the crowning argument for the superior priesthood of Jesus Christ is His exaltation into heaven to sit at the Father's right hand--the place of honor, mercy and intercession. [11](#)

Notice where Jesus is sitting. It's not merely that Jesus is sitting off in heaven some place on some obscure throne. Verse 2 says, "a minister in the sanctuary and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man." He is seated in the true, heavenly temple. This means that the throne of God is in the temple! This is what we see in Isaiah 6, when Isaiah saw the Lord. He said, "In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of the robe filling the temple" (Is. 6:1).

There was a temple upon the earth, but it had no throne. The true temple is in the heavens, where the very throne of God is. Here on earth, at least in America, there is a separation of Church and State. The church's business isn't to tell the state how to run their affairs. The state's business isn't to tell the church how to run its affairs. But, in heaven it's different. The throne is in the temple because God is sovereign over all! He will be worshiped! He will rule from His throne. There is no separation of Church and State in heaven!

Now, I hope that you don't get the idea that Jesus is idle in the temple. When Jesus is seated, it isn't that He is seated upon a beach chair, sipping lemonade, and shaded by an umbrella from the sun. No. Jesus is busy. Verse 2 describes the fact that Jesus is serving in the temple. Yes, He is seated (verse 1). Yes, He is waiting (Heb. 10:13). Yes, His sacrificial work is finished (Heb. 10:14). But, no, Jesus isn't idle. It says here that Jesus is a "minister in the sanctuary." Literally, that is, a "people worker." The ministry of Jesus is continuing on in heaven! And you know what He's doing there, right? He's praying. He's praying for us. "Therefore, He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25). Remember when we were there a few weeks ago? I took an entire week to dwell on these things. We talked about John 17 - "What Does Jesus Pray For?" We found that He prays for Glory (1,2), Protection (11,15), Sanctification (17), Unity (21-23), Presence (24). Oh, may this comfort your hearts this morning! We have a high priest who prays for us.

2. His Gift of Ministry (verses 3-4)

Hebrews 8:3

For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices; so it is necessary that this high priest also have something to offer.

The function of priests is to minister to God on behalf of men. In so doing, he offers both gifts and sacrifices. This is plain and evident to anyone who reads the Old Testament. When you come to God, you need to bring your gift. The principle is contained in Exodus 34:20, "None shall appear before Me empty handed." When we come to God, we give. We give not because He is poor and needy, but because we are coming before a superior. It's an acknowledgement of how great He is and how small we are. Should you visit the President of the United States, it would be very appropriate for you to bring a gift. This is not because of the President's need for such a gift, but to show honor. And as priests come before God on our behalf, they offer up gifts and sacrifices.

In Hebrews 5:1 it says, "Every high priest taken from among men, is appointed on behalf of men in things pertaining to God, in order to offer

both gifts and sacrifices for sins." These may be bulls or goats or rams or heifers or pigeons or turtledoves. Or, it may be a grain offering that we bring. At any rate, the point is clear. Jesus--if He is going to be a priest--must have a gift to offer. And He did have a gift to offer, right? Though it doesn't say it here in verse 3, we know what Jesus offered. He offered up Himself. It said it already in the previous paragraph, Hebrews 7:27, "who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the sins of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself." Jesus Christ didn't offer up the blood of bulls and goats (for it was impossible for them to take away sins, says Hebrews 10:4). Rather, He offered up His body on the cross for our sins.

I'm calling this His Gift of Ministry (verses 3-4). He gives Himself. And here is the glory of the gospel of Christ, is it not? Titus 2:14 says, "[Jesus] gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession." And 1 Timothy 2:6 says, "[Jesus] gave Himself as a ransom for all." Jesus, who was "holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens," became "guilty, defiled, and sinful" like us, so that we might become "holy, pure and innocent" like Him! (to paraphrase 2 Cor. 5:21). We simply believe in Christ, and these things are ours. This is incredibly good news! Sure, we don't have an earthly priest. But, our priest is in heaven. And our high priest is better.

Today, when we come to God, we aren't required to come like those of the Old Testament, who always had to bring their gifts or sacrifices to appease God. Rather, when we come to God in faith, we have something better. We have Jesus Christ, Himself! We come, claiming His merits and God accepts us! So, come to Him! You will find Him merciful and gracious and willing to help! Verse 4 shows how different He is than the earthly high priests.

Hebrews 8:4

Now if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer the gifts according to the Law.

The simple point here is that Jesus didn't qualify as an earthly high priest according to the law. He wasn't a Levite. The law required that all priests be able to trace their origin back to Levi. And if they couldn't? Well, then they couldn't be priests. Furthermore, Jesus wasn't a priest on earth. Nor did He ever claim to be a priest. He never attempted to offer any sacrifices. But, He is a priest in heaven. The reason for this is that He's a heavenly priest according to a different order. His priesthood is of the order of Melchizedek. This was the discussion of the first half of chapter 7. A thousand years before Jesus came on the scene, David spoke of the Messiah, who would come from his line, the kingly line of Judah, and be a priest. "You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek" (Ps. 110:4).

A few weeks ago, I mentioned that the book of Hebrews is the only New Testament book that mentions the priesthood of Jesus. Perhaps now we can understand why the priesthood of Jesus is only mentioned here in Hebrews. It is because, the rest of the New Testament is focused upon the earthly ministry of Jesus. The gospels tell of His life on earth. The epistles interpret His life on earth. Very little is mentioned in the New Testament of His current life in heaven, but Hebrews does mention it. That's why he is called a high priest here. Jesus' priesthood is different than all others, because other priests offered up animals, but Jesus offered up Himself as a gift.

3. His Things of Ministry (verse 5)

This is an awkwardly named point. I know that. "His 'Things' of Ministry" I racked my brain; I talked with my wife; I used a thesaurus, but I couldn't come up with anything better than "things." But, as you verse 5, I hope that it will become clear to you why I named this point this way. Talking of the earthly priests, we read, ...

Hebrews 8:5

who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned by God when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for, "See," He says, "That you make all things according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain."

In verse 5, we are talking primarily about the priests of the Old Testament. They served "a copy and shadow of the heavenly things." But, Jesus ministers in and among the heavenly things, as His ministry is centered in heaven. That's where I get my word, "things," in my point. There are "heavenly things" and there are "earthly things." The "heavenly things" were the basis of the original blueprints shown to Moses for the "earthly things." That's the clear idea that you get from the Old Testament quote here in verse 5, "See that you make all things according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain." Picture the scenario: Moses is on the mountain. He is shown the blueprints of what is to be made. The tabernacle, the altar, the ark of the covenant, the lampstands, the table: Moses is to make them exactly as shown. The writer here quotes from Exodus 25:40, in which God is giving Moses directions as to how to build the tabernacle and the articles in the tabernacle. This verse is one of several verses in the Pentateuch that gives this same command. Exodus 26:30 instructs, "You shall erect the tabernacle according to its plan which you have been shown in the mountain." Exodus 27:8 says, "You shall make [the altar] hollow with planks; as it was shown to you in the mountain, so they shall make it." Moses was to make a copy of what he was shown.

Now, here's the million dollar question: to what extent do the "earthly things" represent the originals? Moses made an exact copy of what was shown him on the mountain. But, I suspect that what was shown Moses on the mountain were mere "copies and shadows" of what's in heaven (verse 5). All the "stuff" that Moses built (actually Bezalel and Oholiab built) has the ideal in heaven. As I searched the book of Revelation, I found that there were several references to the things in heaven, which Moses was commanded to build. There are several references to a temple in heaven (Rev. 7:15; 11:19). There are several references to altar that exists in heaven (6:9; 8:3, 5; 9:13; 11:1; 14:18; 16:7). In Revelation 11:19, we even read of the Ark of the Covenant that appears in the temple. We also read of lampstands that are in heaven, although they are symbolic for the churches. We read of the golden bowls of incense, which are the prayers of the saints (Rev. 5:8).

We aren't told anything about the size or dimension of these things to know how closely they approximate the original. But in the end, it doesn't much matter what we know and what we don't know. Because, the point here in verse 5 is that the earthly things are mere copies and shadows of the real, heavenly things, around which Jesus ministers. And the original is always better than a copy. Take a copy machine and try it sometime. The original looks much better than a copy. I used to work in a hospital. As I mixed with the folks in the radiology department,

there were times when copies of x-rays needed to be sent to a doctor's office. The picky orthopedic surgeons hated copies of film (of which my father was one). They always requested the originals, because they were so much better. But, the manager of the radiology department didn't like releasing the originals. It was a little squabble that they always had.

But, here's the thing! The ministry of Jesus is better, because Jesus ministers in the real temple with the real altar in the real presence of God. Those Jews who were being told that they needed to come back to the temple and the priest and the sacrifices and the festivals needed to realize that those were only copies and shadows of the reality. And when you realize the things of the ministry of Jesus, you realize that His priesthood is much greater.

4. His More Excellent Ministry (verse 6)

This comes straight from the wording of verse 6, ...

Hebrews 8:6

But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises.

This verse is the hinge of the whole book of Hebrews. Until this point, the focus has been upon the person of Jesus, and how He is better than anyone in the Old Testament. At this point, the focus will be upon the ministry of Jesus, which is better than anything done by those in the Old Testament. The "more excellent ministry" here in verse 6 is His ministry of mediation. A mediator stands in the middle of two parties and brings them together. Fundamentally, this is the ministry of a priest. A priest brings people to God. He does whatever is necessary to make sure that peace exists between them. In the Old Covenant, this meant, bringing sacrifices and offering them up in smoke before the Lord. But, in the New Covenant, this has all changed. In the New Covenant, Jesus Christ brings us to God on the basis of His own blood, thereby, mediating our way to God.

On two occasions the writer mentions the mediatorial role of Jesus. Hebrews 9:15 tells us that, "For this reason, He is the mediator of a new covenant." Hebrews 12:24 says, "to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant." First Timothy 2:5 clarifies that, "There is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Jesus Christ." The way of the New Covenant is much better than the way of the Old. "The Levitical priesthood was good and useful in its time and season." [\[2\]](#) But, the ministry of Jesus Christ is much better.

First of all, it's God who is doing the mediating. It's not merely another human priest. Rather, it's God's Son who mediates. Business men know the difference between a cold call and a call made by referral. In a cold call, you have no leverage. But, when someone recommends you to another, you can use their name, which helps get you in the door. And there is a huge difference when Jesus is our mediator. He has the ear of His heavenly father unlike any human priest does.

Second, the mediation of the New Covenant is done at the heart level. It's not merely external. "This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days says the Lord: I will put My laws into their minds, And I will write them on their hearts. And I will be their God, And they shall be My people" (Heb. 8:10). We'll get into this more next week. But, I want to give you a taste of things. In the Old Covenant, the mediation was strictly on the basis of externals. But, the New Covenant brings the mediation into the heart. Time and time again, the book of Hebrews talks about the change in conscience that comes in the New Covenant.

Hebrews 9:9-10

Accordingly both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make the worshiper perfect in conscience, since they relate only to food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until a time of reformation.

Here we see the external nature of the Old Covenant. We can then skip down to verse 13.

Hebrews 9:13-15

For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? For this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that, since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

The gifts and sacrifices merely dealt with the externals. They cleansed the flesh, but they were powerless to do anything for the heart and for the conscience. However, the blood of the New Covenant is much better. It cleanses deep into the conscience, and thus, makes it better. Let us close by considering the words in chapter 10.

Hebrews 10:19-25

Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

May we enter the holy place where our heavenly high priest is.

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on May 16, 2010 by Steve Brandon.
For more information see www.rvbc.cc.

[1] John MacArthur, New Testament Commentary pp. 207-208

[2] John Owen, p. 141