

## The “Truth” in Spirit and Truth Worship

Hebrews 9:6-12

We have seen in our study of Hebrews that early Christianity radically departed from Temple worship. The early followers of Christ, most of them Hebrews, would gather at the Temple and *proclaim* ‘the new way’ of approaching God (see Acts 7-9). This ‘new way’ (the New Covenant) was to approach the Lord through the person and work of Jesus the Messiah. Christ gives to those who trust Him the promise that they will never be ‘*cut off*’ from God’s goodness (Heb. 7:25). There is no longer a need for the Temple, the priesthood, the sacrifices and festivals; all were fulfilled in Christ. How then do Christians worship? The worship of God is to be intensely personal, deeply intimate, and transformative from the inside/out. Jesus told the woman at the well that the true worship of God is “*in spirit and truth.*” What is the truth?

Hebrews 9:6-12 reminds us of the customs of worship in the Old Covenant, called ‘regulations’ in v. 1. These Old Testament regulations kept the worshipper at a distance from God, with only the high priest entering behind the veil once a year (Yom Kippur) to apply the blood of the sacrifice on the mercy seat. Old Covenant worship was designed by God as a tangible, visible reminder of a spiritual, *eternal truth*. The best way to learn is through being visually stimulated so that the abstract is understood via forms. In the Old Covenant, Israel failed God. Were it not for the blood of the sacrifice applied on the mercy seat, they would have been totally cut off from God. The application of blood points to Christ’s death. The old way is given in vs. 6-10, and then in v. 11 there are the beautiful words, “*But when **Christ...***”

### I. Christ appeared

“*When Christ appeared*” (v. 11) are the words of the music at Bethlehem. It is the song of Simeon and Anna, it is the meaning of His name Emmanuel – God with us. Christianity is not so much a moral code of conduct as it is a miraculous coming of God. The Incarnation is a historical event. “*When Christ appeared.*” Think about it. For Christ to enter into the heavenly tabernacle with what is needed for the remission of our sins (the presentation of His blood), He had to first appear to us.

### II. Christ offered

Christ offered Himself. He came as the willing Lamb of God. He was both the High Priest and the offering. It is not the blood of bulls and goats that is shed for our sins; it is the blood of God Himself. There are those who think that Christianity is just another religion from a buffet line of religions. No. Not even close. Christianity is the only religion that even supposes God came to die for man. When Christ gave His life, He laid it down Himself. “*Greater love has no man than this*” (John 15:13).

### III. Christ entered

Christ entered the veil, the Tabernacle (the dwelling place) of God that is not made or created. He entered within the veil “once for all,” which is the same phrase used Hebrews 7:27. The Greek word *ephapax* is translated “once” in the KJV and “once for all” in the NIV and NAS. The powerful meaning of this text is found in translating it as “Christ entered once and for all,” meaning there is no continuing application of Christ’s blood to cleanse us of sin. We are cleansed by Christ’s work.

### IV. Christ obtained

“*Having obtained redemption*” (v. 12). Redemption is deliverance through payment. Your sinful life is in need of redemption. You have violated God’s Law. You are guilty. God pays the price that the Law demands: “*The soul that sins, it shall die*” (Ezekiel 18:4). This death is separation from God. Christ has obtained for you what you cannot gain through rituals, ceremonies, ordinances, etc.