

Hebrews Chapter 9B

The portion of scripture that we have before us this morning might well be titled: *“The Last Will and Testament of Jesus Christ.”*

- Throughout the previous 2 Chapters the Author was carefully delineating the superiority of the New Covenant.
 - This new covenant is mediated by a better priest, one who is eternally seated at the right hand of the throne of the majesty in heaven. (8:1)
 - By one single sacrifice this High Priest was able to save completely those who draw near to God through Him.
 - And Since this High Priest is immortal, possessing eternal life there is NO end to the intercession he offers up on behalf of his people.
 - The sacrifice of atonement provided by this Priest cleanses a man both inside and out, releasing him from every shadow of guilt and condemnation.
 - Without doubt this is a better covenant, established on better promises by a superior priest in a greater tabernacle.

The question the author will address TODAY is this: How do we know that the New Covenant has actually been put into effect? How can we know for certain that the benefits of this covenant are available to us today?

- To answer that question the author will employ legal terms borrowed from what we would call Estate law.
- His argument is this: A Will can only be put into effect upon the death of the one who established it. The death of Jesus Christ has released to us the gracious provisions of the New Covenant.

Hebrews 9:16 **For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established.** 17 **For a will takes effect only at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive.**

Preparing for this sermon I did a little research into the last will and testaments written by a few famous people. DID you know:

2. Gene Roddenberry

The creator of Star Trek and inventor of the quote "*to boldly go where no man has gone before.*" He wanted people to remember that statement long after his passing. His last will and testament included instructions to have his ashes scattered via satellite orbiting earth. The act was carried out in 1997.

3. Charles Vance Millar

A Canadian attorney well known for his practical jokes kept people laughing even after he was in the grave. His last will and testament bequeathed a great inheritance that was up for grabs to any Toronto woman who could produce the most offspring in the decade

following his death. The result became known as the "Great Stork Derby." There were four winners who emerged in a tie giving birth to nine children in 10 years. Each of the women received about \$125,000.

4. Julius Caesar

Most of us are familiar with the words of Mark Anthony from William Shakespeare's famous play, Julius Caesar, "**Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears; I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him.**"

- But as it turns out Mark Anthony actually used the occasion to praise Caesar as he stood to read the famed emperor's last will and testament.
- Anthony addressed the crowd that gathered that day saying, "*If you have tears prepare to shed them now*" Then pointing to the wounds of Caesar's body he recited the names of the conspirators who were responsible for Caesar's death. And as he moved from wound to wound he disclosed name after name.
- After that Mark Anthony read the portion of Caesar's will in which he provided each and every Roman citizen with two and a half month's wages.
(That would be like President Obama leaving each American 10,000 in his will)

The Scripture records an inheritance that is immeasurably greater in wealth and infinitely more generous, bestowed upon an even greater host of beneficiaries than that of Caesar.

- Of course I speak of the inheritance belonging to the Saints of God.

1 Peter 1: 3 **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,**

4 **to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,**
5 **who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.**

- Mark Anthony pointed to the wounds of Julius Caesar from which his great wealth was poured out on the citizens of Rome.

Today We will consider the wounds of Christ through which we have received an eternal inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled great wealth that never fades away.

- How do we know that the New Covenant has actually been put into effect? How can we know for certain that the benefits of this covenant are available to us today? Let's find out!

Our Outline for Hebrews Chapter 9:15-28

1. A Will or Testament requires death.
2. Old and New (*testaments were*) Inaugurated with Blood
3. Christ's Death assures eternal benefits

1 A Will or Testament Requires Death

Hebrews 9: 15 **Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant.**

- Through his Life, Death and Resurrection Jesus has become the Mediator of a New Covenant. *We heard this before in Chapter 8:6*
- BUT as this author often does, he mentions something in passing in one chapter and then elaborates on it later in another chapter.

Here in Chapter 9 the Mediatorial work of our Lord is likened unto that of a good estate lawyer.

A Lawyer records the Last Will and Testament of the one who is called the Testator (*the owner of the estate, the one with all the money*)

- But the Owner's will cannot be put into effect until He dies. Until that time the benefits and provisions of the will are only promises to be fulfilled in the future.
 - (*my granddaughter wants my truck when I die – hopefully it will be a classic*)
- Upon the death of the Testator, the Mediator carries out the owner's desires according to the terms recorded in the Will.
- It is the responsibility of the lawyer, the Mediator to see that those individuals named in the will as "Beneficiaries" receive the inheritance in accordance with the desires of the Testator.

Hebrews 9: 15 **Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance,**

- In this case the Beneficiaries are designated as "Those who are called."
- Who are they? I believe that they are the same people spoken of by the Apostle Paul:

Romans 8: 30 **And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.**

- These are individuals of God's own choosing that he has marked out for salvation. He calls them to himself through an effective calling, He acquits them of all guilt through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and eventually takes them to glory where they receive the fullness of their inheritance.
- The word "Call or Called" in the New Testament speaks of God's powerful, life-changing and effective call in the life of believers.

Because of Jesus' mediatorial work establishing the New Covenant those who are effectively called by God are guaranteed to obtain "**The eternal inheritance.**" WHY?

- Because his death did not merely remove the penalty and power of sin from their lives it also provided believers with the adoption as sons guaranteeing their inheritance.
- The writer of Hebrews moves on to explain:

Hebrews 9: 16 **For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established.** 17 **For a will takes effect only at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive.**

- Through His death, Jesus provided believers with all of the riches that are found in him, included in those riches is the blessing of his covenant obedience.
 - You see, the righteous demands of the Law required by God were never able to be fulfilled by man because his very nature had been corrupted through the fall.
- But the wealth of Christ's perfect righteousness has been apportioned by the grace of God to all who believe so that when we are joined to him in faith we are made heirs of this great inheritance.

Colossians 2: 12 **giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.**

- God himself, through Jesus Christ has qualified us to share in the inheritance. WE who believe, are beneficiaries of His last will and testament. (new covenant)
- As if the promise of future blessing was not enough He actually provided, here and now a down payment, the first installment of our future inheritance.

Ephesians 1: 13 **In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,** 14 **who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.**

- The Holy Spirit serves as God's pledge, the first installment or guarantee of a grand inheritance that we will one day enjoy.

SO we see that the death of Jesus instituted the New Testament through which all who believe have become beneficiaries. NEXT the author will confirm the effectiveness of the New Testament to his Hebrew readers by pointing to the Old.

2 Old and New inaugurated with blood

As we move on in the text the Author carries the same analogy, that of a last will and testament back to the institution of the Old Testament showing us that the First Covenant was also put into effect with blood.

Hebrews 9: 18 **Therefore not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood.**

- It is important that we know when the author speaks of "Blood" he is speaking of death.
- In the O.T. they didn't simply drain a little blood from an animal and sprinkle it on the people; no, they killed the animal. The same is true of the N.T. they did not take a pint of blood from Jesus for our redemption, He died;
 - Look at Leviticus:

Leviticus 17:11 **The life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life.**

- When we speak of sacrifices and covenants, Blood is representative of the life of the sacrifice, offered up in sacrifice for the worshipper.

Here in verses 19-21 we will see that even the Old Covenant (*first will and testament*) was established, put into effect through blood.

- To show that, the author takes us back to the Exodus:

Exodus 24 tells us that Moses began by reciting the whole Law, after which the people replied "**All the words that the LORD has spoken we will do.**"

- After writing all of the Words of the Lord in a book, Moses offered sacrifices to the Lord. Then he took the blood of those sacrifices and sprinkled it all over the altar.
- When the people affirmed their obedience a second time, Moses sprinkled them.

Exodus 24: 8 **And Moses took the blood and threw it on the people and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words."**

- The blood of the covenant served a twofold purpose:
 - **FIRST:** It clearly displayed the seriousness of the covenant. Breaking it in any way would invoke the penalty of death.
 - It was meant to impress on them the fact that God cannot simply overlook sin. His justice will not allow that. Look at what God said to Ezekiel:

Ezekiel 18:4 **Behold, all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine: the soul who sins shall die.**

- God's perfect justice demands the payment of death for the soul that sins.
- Secondly the blood sacrifices of the Old Testament point forward to the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ who is the mediator of the New Covenant.
 - Every Lamb, every bull, every turtle dove offered on the Bronze altar looked forward to the perfect sacrifice of the Son of God.

Hebrews 9:22 **Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.**

- In God's perfect justice death is the penalty for sin so without the shedding of blood there can be no forgiveness.
- Let's stop and think about that for a moment:

Forgiveness is a costly thing. The pardon for sin that we enjoy today as believers came to us through the horrific spiritual and physical suffering of Jesus Christ on the cross at Calvary.

- And yet how many of us, me included, take for granted the forgiveness that came to us at such a cost.
- When we lay our heads on the pillow at night and we review the events of the day offering our prayer and confession for those things that we ought not to have done it seems such a light and momentary thing.
 - If there is one thing that we can learn from the detailed repetition and focus on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ recorded for us here in this book of Hebrews it is this: GOD does not take the sacrifice of His Son lightly.

SO we see clearly that Both the Old and the New Testaments were put into effect through the shedding of blood, NOW we move on to see how the Last Will and Testament of Jesus Christ affects us personally.

3 Christ's Death assures eternal benefits

In these final two verses the last will and testament that was instituted by God becomes applicable to each and every one of us.

- There is a day coming when all men will come face to face with their creator.

Hebrews 9: 27 **And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment,** 28 **so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.**

- There is no way of getting around it, as human beings each one of us will one day face our inevitable death.
 - It was appointed by God (Genesis 2:17, 3:19) As a result of the fall.
- According to the truth contained in God's word, when we die, there will be No Reincarnation, No Do Overs, No Purgatory, there is only judgment.

Contrary to the Nihilistic philosophy of the modern era the Bible teaches the eternal existence of man. It affirms what we know in our hearts to be true, that the souls of all men saved and unsaved will continue to live beyond the grave.

The author of Hebrews tells us that when we die we will immediately face a Judgment

- As soon as we close our eyes in death, God instantly assess our life and initiates our eternal existence.
- This fact is clearly portrayed in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus.

Luke 16: 22 **And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;** 23 **And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.**

- Both the Rich man and Lazarus passed directly from this life into their personal reward. (*good or bad, pleasure or torment*)

- How you feel about the immediacy and the inevitability of divine judgment says a lot about your faith.
 - If you are trusting in your personal performance, your good works to get you into heaven... You should be concerned about that Day of Judgment.

Since death is a once-for-all event for all men, it stands to reason that Jesus death would not be repeated.

- The Good News is this: His singular death, his one sacrifice effectively removed the stain of sin forever from those who are “**the called, justified, glorified**”

For those who believe this is GREAT NEWS!

- Every sin you have committed, large and small, every sin you ever will commit has been Paid in Full by the ONE Atoning Sacrifice of Jesus Christ.
- Nothing you do can add to His finished work.
- King David saw this from a distance and wrote:

Psalm 103: 10 **He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.** 11 **For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.** 12 **As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.**

- The Author of Hebrews tells us that Jesus will NOT return TO DIE again,
- He will, however, come again to establish his Kingdom and institute the full benefits of His Last Will and Testament.

This, my friends is when we will personally and eternally experience the fullness of the benefits that Christ provides through the New Covenant.

- This is when peace and prosperity will finally and fully be realized on the earth. Isaiah tells us: “**with righteousness he shall judge the poor,**”
- All of nature will dwell at peace, “**The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.**” Isaiah 11:7
- **The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.**
- This is when war will come to an end, sickness, disease and infirmity will be a thing of the past.
- This is when He will wipe away every tear from our eyes.....

All of these things and so much more are confirmed for us in the document we know as the New Testament.