

THE NEW WORSHIP

Hebrews 10:19–25 — *"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."*

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace" was the call at the end of chapter 4 introducing the central section of this epistle expounding on the truth of Jesus Christ as the great High Priest of the new and better covenant.

We now read that we have boldness — "therefore". That means that this boldness is based on all that went before, mainly in this section boldness because as the verse previous to this paragraph states "where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin". It can be easily inferred that there is no more offering for sin because no more is needed. "Jesus paid it all", as the hymn rejoicingly says.

Now to be technically correct, the thrust of this epistle is not so much about payment, although it is not inconsistent to speak of it that way, but about worship. What I mean is that it is regarding how one can approach the Holy God. It is against the backdrop that we saw previously about the high priest, going back to chapter 9 verse 7:

"But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood..."

But now the one who would approach the Holy God does not reach only to where the veil kept all but the high priest out. It was at the mercy seat where God said to Moses "there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat" (Exodus 25:22). Yet the mercy seat was on the ark of the testimony behind that veil. That veil is said to "divide unto you between the holy place and the most holy" (Exodus 26:33).

Leviticus 16:2 gives a clear command of even the priest's limited access:

"And the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the vail before the mercy seat, which is upon the ark, that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat."

16:17 emphasizes that he must come alone — *"And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth to make an atonement in the holy place, until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel."*

But because Christ, "by one offering...perfected forever them that are sanctified", the lowliest of Christians, i.e., one who is "in Christ", has boldness — not in timidity, but with boldness, because that Christian belongs there — to enter into the place which is the antitype of the holiest of all that was on earth. He can approach unto God, at all times, boldly, to the throne of grace, because he is going with

Christ, by virtue of the blood of Christ. It is boldness to enter in, “by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh.”

Matthew gives us witness that when the Lord Jesus had yielded up the ghost that “the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom” (Matthew 27:51). This is quite significant here, for that which had separated the rank-and-file Israelite from the “holiest of all” was no more separating him. Nor is it separating anyone else. Through Jesus Christ the Great High Priest who put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself the approach to God is open to all, but exclusive through Jesus Christ. I cannot emphasize enough the all inclusivity of what Christ has accomplished. It avails to all, as none will be excluded who comes through Him. But none will be excluded that COME THROUGH HIM. But those that come must COME THROUGH HIM! “No man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6) is important here. The entrance of the meagerest of sinners cleansed by the blood of Christ is available because that former sinner now saint has come through Christ, by the new and living way that He made by His flesh.

“There is no more sacrifice for sins” is a wonderful truth because no more is needed. But remember, a few verses later, we must be reminded, that “there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins” (10:26). It is Jesus or nothing!

As we go on to verse 21, we’re again reminded of the great High Priest that invites us and leads us in. This High Priest is over the house of God and bids us to come “with a true heart in full assurance of faith”. You have full access to this “grace wherein we stand” (Romans 5:2) and should approach as those invited.

We again have this look back to the Old Testament priest and the consecration that he had to do before entering in, as we saw in Leviticus 16:4. “He shall wash his flesh in water”. We also see this again in Ezekiel 36:25 in one of the great New Covenant promise passages in the prophets:

“Then I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.”

This is a yet future event when the entire Israelite nation will enter into the blessings of the New Covenant that they refused to enter into when they were first offered in Acts 2, 3, etc. All was ready then for the New Covenant, except for the people of Israel at-large. But those that did believe enjoy with us the many blessings of the New Covenant as a present reality, even though the land and physical geography parts of it are not yet being enjoyed³⁸.

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

That again is an invitation to enter boldly. Don’t fear wondering if He will accept you. He said that He would. Come, enter into the Holy of holies. And hold on to your faith. God is faithful.

Now, we also have here that this entering in unto God and living for Him in this new and living way is not something that we do all on our own. Yes, there is that fact that sometimes we have to stand alone if none will go with us, and as that hymn says “though none go with me, still I will follow”, and we should

³⁸ Israel in the land now in unbelief is not New Covenant blessings. As Ezekiel 36 continues, there is reference to land and flocks and trees and cities. The word of the prophets also calls this a time of peace. Israel in the land now has never been at peace. There is no peace without the Prince of peace.

stand alone if that is necessary. But we should not want to stand alone. We are in this together, so we should walk in Christ together. We should be, as the writer and the hearers are grouped (“let us”) to provoke one another to love and good works. Not all provocation is bad. Our examples should be such that provokes others in a good way. We should love as examples that cause others to love. We should do good things that cause others to follow, because we are in Christ; because we are invited within the veil, without the barrier that separated all from God. We have access, now use it, for God, in God’s way, *together*.

When we get to verse 25, we come to a place that is usually considered a command for Christians to make sure to go to church. While it should be understood that the church meeting is the place where we can do this provoking of one another, there is more here. The outcome of assembling ourselves corporately is a privilege and a blessing. No Christian should be in isolation from the rest of the body. It will be a wonderful day when our full gathering together unto Him (2 Thessalonians 2:1) happens and we have that great meeting in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:17) where for the first time in all history all who are in Christ will fully be together. It will be wonderful for the one Body to finally be one in location too!

But to this Hebrew audience, there is more here. The temple and synagogue gatherings were a central part of Jewish social life and culture. The temple sacrifices and offerings are all done away, what now? Do we not come together as a people in worship of our God as we used to?

That’s where this really fits with the context of Hebrews 10. The sacrifices and offerings for sin are done away. But now with this new and living way; this better way that is open to the simplest believer we (Israelites who have taken hold of the new and living way in Christ) should gather together even more. We are not limited to a once-a-year atonement. We can gather at all times.

It says at the end of the verse “as ye see the day approaching”, we see looking for the coming of the Lord. But we should also realize the truth about *the day* that should be characteristic of us now. “Ye are children of light, and children of the day” is what the apostle Paul wrote to the Thessalonians to contrast them to the night. To the Romans he said “the night is far spent, the day is at hand” (Romans 13:12), and there should be consequentially a way that we as children of the day conduct our lives in the presence of the Lord. We are Christians, and as such we bear the name of Jesus Christ, so we must needs walk as those in Christ. And we provoke each other to do this as we gather together.

So this is a call to “go to church” but we should understand its immediate context. While the temple ritual and sacrifice is done away, the community should not be. It should be stronger and greater than ever, for it is in a new and living way, through the veil, through the flesh and blood of Christ. It is His flesh and blood that we share and by which we are in communion. That is how we live, and we should live in actuality as though this is true as well.