



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Hebrews 10:11-18

“The Conclusion of the Theological Argument”

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for another opportunity to look at the Epistle to the Hebrews and reflect upon the saving work of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We thank Thee for the magnificent treatise, we thank Thee for its exaltation of our Lord and all that he’s done for us. And we thank Thee, as well, for the admonitions which remind us that there is a responsibility that each of us has with reference to the divine revelation, that when we read and ponder the word of God things happen in our own heart and in our own lives either positively or negatively. And we ask, Lord, that by Thy grace we may respond to the ministry of the word in a positive way in order that the positive things that Thou hast promised may be our experience. We know there are difficult trials that all of us must face, but one of the most important things is the responsibility to the Scriptures that have been made known to us, given to us, preserved for us, and we know that our responsibility is to submit to them. Lord, enable us, by Thy marvelous grace, through the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, to be in submission to the word of God. We pray that our studies may direct us into a deeper understanding of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and through that more submission to him. We pray for each one present. We thank Thee for them, for their interest in the word of God. We pray Thy blessing upon them, upon them in their lives and in their families and among their friends; and may the aspirations and desires of their hearts be met, Lord. We thank

Thee for the assurance of the presence of the Holy Spirit with us as we turn to the Scriptures and think the thoughts of our great sovereign God after him. We pray now for each one present.

May our meeting honor our Lord Jesus Christ. In whose name we pray. Amen.

[Message] Well, tonight we are coming to the conclusion of the theological argument. That’s the title that I’ve chosen for our subject tonight and I don’t want to imply by that there is no further theological thought because there is, but that which he began in the first chapter reaches something of a climax here in chapter 10 in verse 18, almost universally recognized by the commentators who have written books on the Epistle to the Hebrews. So we’re calling it “The Conclusion of the Theological Argument” reflected in that 18th verse, especially, “Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.”

Let’s read beginning at verse 11 through 18, last week we looked at verse 1 through verse 10. These eighteen verses belong together but there was so much in them that I did something contrary to what I usually do; I’ve divided it up into two messages. It could be divided, of course, into many. But verse 11, the author writes.

“And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified. But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after He had said before, ‘This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord; I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,’ then He adds, ‘Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.’ Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.”

Now, if you followed along, you’ve noted, of course, that the new priesthood, after the order of Melchizedek, which the Lord Jesus ministers in, is a final priesthood. The New Covenant that we have looked at, particularly, in the 7th, 8th and 9th chapters, is a final covenant; and the new sacrifice that he has just spoken about in detail, in chapter 10, although he’s referred to it in other places, is also a final sacrifice. No replacements are necessary for the priesthood, for the covenant or for the sacrifice. They are as we said last week, done deals. There is one priesthood after the order of Melchizedek. There is one New Covenant. And, there is one final sacrifice.

Now, in these verses, there are three evidences for the finality of the Son’s atoning offering. First of all, in verses 1 through 10, he has pointed out that the priests offered animal sacrifices. Now, animal sacrifices served a purpose. They were given by God; they were as a matter of fact ordained by him. And so those animal sacrifices were very significant for a time. But they were animal sacrifices. And as he cites the passage from Psalm 40, “Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me.” The Lord Jesus came, not offering an animal sacrifice but offering a human sacrifice and a human sacrifice of himself. A human sacrifice of some other human would not have availed but the sacrifice of the God-man does avail. So that’s the first evidence for the finality of the Son’s atoning offering.

The second evidence that he points to is that the priests generally stood in their work in the tabernacle. They did not sit down. They were constantly in movement. So they stood; but in the case of our Lord Jesus Christ, he sat down. Now, that means, of course, he had nothing further to offer. He sat down and so having sat down is, itself, an evidence of the fact that there is no longer offering for sin a point that he will make in a moment. So the author’s argument at this point is not specifically on the one sacrifice forever, but on his session at the right hand of the Father. Now, of course, he is elucidating Psalm 110 again. “Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies the footstool of Thy feet.” So he’s thinking about that and in the fact that the priests stood constantly, going in and out of the tabernacle, but he has sat down. He finds in that evidence, again, of the fact that the offering has been offered, that is, the final offering.

And then, the final evidence is the evidence of the testimony of the Holy Spirit, given in verse 15 through verse 18. Notice how he begins verse 15, we won't say anything more about it, but just notice that, later on we'll talk about it. “But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after that He had said before,” and then, he cites the passage regarding the New Covenant.

So for these three reasons, the Son's atoning work is a final atoning work. He has offered not an animal; offered himself, the Divine Son, they stand, he has sat down and then, the testimony of the Holy Spirit is to the fact that there is no more offering for sin.

Now, we're going to look at these last two evidences; that is, that they stand, he sat down, and then the testimony, the prophetic testimony, of the Holy Spirit. So let's turn now to verse 11 through verse 14, and what he is trying to set forth here is that there is an unrepeatable offering and a royal enthronement for our Melchizedek.

Remember, when he argues that our Lord is a priest after the order of Melchizedek, he is talking about a king-priest. So our Lord's priesthood is not a priesthood like the Aaronic priests, even a high priesthood not like Aaron's, except in their functions. They both carry out priestly functions. Our Lord is a royal priest for Melchizedek, remember, was a king-priest and our Lord's ministry is likened to him, typically. So Melchizedek is a typical royal high priest; our Lord is the reality.

And, of course, a complete provision for remission and worship is the point that he makes in verse 11 through verse 14. And just to make this very plain in case I haven't to this point, what our author is thinking about, of course, is the Old Testament Scripture. Almost everything that he thinks about is right in the Old Testament and when he argues his points, almost always behind them, is some specific scriptural testament. That's why it's so important to read the Bible, because you'll understand how the New Testament authors set forth their truth. He said, in Psalm 110, verse 1, “The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand till I make Your enemies Your footstool.’”

Now, that text is upon his mind. And so now, he's going to talk about the fact that in the case of the priests of Aaron, they stand daily. Verse 1, “Every priest stands ministering daily and

offering repeatedly the same sacrifices.” Not only do they keep offering but they offer the same sacrifices. Our Lord, of course, is one who offers an unrepeatable sacrifice. So right at the beginning there’s something different. But if you think about the priests of the Old Testament and realize what they did for year after year after year, decade after decade, century after century, the priests of Aaron engaged in what has been called “the priestly treadmill of sacrifice.” And, they have often been described, too, as being “Levitical drudges,” who carried out constantly the work that the Old Testament set for them, day after day. Think of the many offerings that were made? They offered every morning, they offered every afternoon, every day and then all through the year they had other kinds of specific offerings, so that literally the tabernacle was filled with smoke and the temple, as well, through the year every priest standeth daily.

And, of course, our author makes the point that they are standing daily. There were no chairs in the tabernacle when they walked into that area there was no place for them to sit down. As a matter of fact, it was a strange place for them because they had to be constantly in movement and when they went into the tabernacle itself there was nothing there but the pieces of the furniture that were designed to represent the priest that would come in the future.

So, these Levitical drudges engaged in the priestly treadmill of sacrifice, as it has been described, carried out their ministry. The forgiveness that was related to what they did was very short-term. For example, if a person committed some particular sin and he was required to bring his offering, so he brought his sin offering, for example, if he had broken the Mosaic sin offering law, or the trespass offering, or the peace offerings or the burnt offerings. All the offerings that spoke of various aspects of the types of ministry or the types of sins that individuals were guilty of. So they would come in, they would bring their animal, their animal would be slain and he would go out with his conscience, so far as that sin was concerned, clear, but it wouldn’t be just a short time before he has sinned again. And so as far as the Levitical system is concerned, the forgiveness that was offered in it was very short-term.

That, in itself will give you some idea of the burdens that spiritual people must have felt. Constantly, they would have felt it necessary to offer some kind of sacrifice. And after they've done it, and received a short term kind of sense of freedom, immediately they found themselves again guilty of the sins of the Mosaic Law.

So you might wonder even if there were such a thing as forgiveness. But, there was such a thing as forgiveness because in the offering, the animal sacrifices, it was said that his sin shall be forgiven him. But knowing again, the human heart, you would know how often they would have to be coming back.

Now, someone might ask the question at this point then, was there any forgiveness ever in the Old Testament? Well, there was no final forgiveness. But those men and women who had spiritual minds were able to see beyond the Levitical system. You may remember that David, in Psalm 51, speaks along those lines because in verse, I believe, it's verse 16 and verse 17, he comments upon the fact that the offerings and sacrifices did not take away sin. He says this, “For You do not desire sacrifice or else I would give it. You do not delight in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart. These, O God, you will not despise.”

And so those who were spiritually minded were able to find a forgiveness that was not found finally in the Levitical system, but beyond the Levitical system. They understood that finally they had to appeal to the Lord God and walk by faith as the Epistle to the Hebrews will point out in the 11th chapter.

One might ask the question at this point, if the Levitical system, which was a system that was ordained by God, could never give an individual a sense of peace, except a short-lived sense at best, then what could be said about the Church of Rome or other religious entities which offer sacrifices, supposedly, making it possible for us to have a measure of forgiveness? If Jerusalem, which had the Law ordained by God, has no sacrifice in all her flocks that is acceptable to him, what use can it be for an individual to look to the Church of Rome, which has no scriptural foundation for its sacrifices,

which they offer Sunday after Sunday? For the Mass is the continuation of the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There's another thing about this that I'm sure must have impressed you, if you thought about it at all. When those priests went into the tabernacle, how do you think they went into the tabernacle? I've thought about this recently, thinking about the Epistle to the Hebrews. But I want you to know I am old enough to occasionally forget things. Don't laugh out loud, Martha. And I find myself forgetting things that I knew that I should and would do thirty minutes before.

Now, it was on penalty of death that the high priest went into the Holiest of All, except on the Day of Atonement. Now, I'm just going to suggest to you, it was suggested to me too in the reading that those priests must have entered the tabernacle very timidly, and very uneasily in that holy place, in the Holiest of All, of course, only Aaron could go. And I suggest to you that when they were in the tabernacle, they were always hastening to get out because they knew what might happen if something untoward happened. There were individuals who sought to offer offerings when they shouldn't, and they were immediately destroyed by the Lord God. So I imagine they went in very, very carefully, uneasily, remembering that it was a place in which part of it they had no free access. And so they could never really feel at home in the tabernacle.

But now, think of our Lord Jesus Christ? He carried out his ministry, offered himself on Calvary's Cross, rose on the resurrection day, ascended to the right hand of the throne of God, and there sits in the full confidence of the acceptance of what he has done, and the acceptance of himself, with his Father. He feels perfectly at home in Heaven having accomplished the work for me and for you. So every priest standeth daily, but this man sat down. His offering is one of a kind. Scholars like to say it was *sui generis* of it's own kind. It was unique, it was alone, there is nothing like it.

In fact, Mr. Spurgeon says, “It stands alone, it shines as a lone star or a solitary rock in the midst of a raging sea.” The propitiation which God has set forth was and ever must be one. The Lord Jesus offering Himself once, once only, once only, forever. There is no other atoning priest, no other sacrifice. There is no repetition of that one sacrifice.

What does that say about Rome continuing the sacrifice, Sunday after Sunday, in the thousands of churches? They are insults to the efficacy of the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ. It's as if to say he did not do enough when he died on Calvary's cross; we must do something. Now, I know, there are many earnest Roman Catholic priests, who would be very upset at that and would not think of themselves in doing that. But if we seek to offer again a sacrifice of Christ, that is precisely what we are doing. We are downgrading what he has done. We may do it unwittingly, but that is what we are doing.

This Man sat down. And, I like to think of this, too, as he sat down at the right hand of the Father. If the priest had gone into the Holiest of All, had sat down, it would be like this is my home, I'm taking possession of it. But, in the case of our Lord, He ascends to the right hand of the Father. He sits down. He's taken possession of that which is the reality of what the tabernacle represented. He's home, and it's his home. It belongs to him. He's done his work. There isn't any thing else to do.

Now, let's go on and notice in verse 13, we read, “From that time waiting till His enemies were made the footstool of His feet.” Now, you can see, again, he's thinking again of Psalm 110, verse 1, “Waiting until His enemies are made His footstool.” When is that to be? Well, the author has said in the 9th chapter in verse 28, “So Christ was offered once, to bear the sins of many, to those who eagerly wait for Him, He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.” So evidently, he's thinking about the Second Coming. The end, the time when his enemies are made the footstool of his feet is his second advent. And so we look forward to that.

Details with reference to it are spelled out by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15. We don't have time to look at those verses, verse 23 through verse 28, and he talks about that very fact, even citing Psalm 110 and Psalm 8, putting them together in a little sermon and then, of course, talking about finally all things being handed over to the Father that God may be God. So the advent, waiting until his enemies be made the footstool of his feet.

Then in verse 14, he says, “For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.” Eternally qualified for access. He has perfected forever those who are being set apart. Now, the ones who are being set apart are the believers; those who have believed and are believing in the Lord Jesus Christ as they believe, they become saints. Don’t they? Yes, they become saints. If you’re a believer, you’re a saint. Pardon me from smiling. But you are a saint; that’s precisely what you are. As a matter of fact, you’re a true saint! You’re not one made by a church body on earth, you’re a true saint. You’ve been made by God. You’ve been set apart. And that work is constantly going on. I look out over the audience here and I know the salvation experience of many of you. I see one person that I taught in Dallas Theological Seminary years ago, and he’s here. And then others who have become Christians in more recent years, you have become one of the sanctified ones, the saints.

Now, he says, “He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.” And as individuals believe in Christ, they are made saints; they are set apart by the Lord God and those are perfected forever.

Now, why are they set apart? Well, they are set apart not simply to be saved, ultimately, they are set apart for access to the Father, because we are talking about priestly work. Notice how the 19th verse, the first verse of our next section says, we’ll talk about that next week, the Lord willing, “Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus.” So we are set apart for access, for worship. And we are not really doing what God wishes that we do, if we are not worshiping him if our human experience is not characterized by access to the Lord God; enjoying access to him, looking forward to access to him, perhaps even moment by moment, as you are by yourself, wherever you may be, in your automobile or elsewhere, be a little careful, of course, when you are driving the automobile in traffic, but, nevertheless, communion should be an experience that we enjoy all of the time.

So we have been “perfected forever” for access, a perfection that cannot be improved upon. Notice, it’s forever! It’s not for a thousand years, it’s not for a million years. It’s forever. And even

after a thousand or five thousand or ten thousand years, the efficacy of the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ is still perfect and complete. This is perfection forever. There is no such thing as being saved and lost tomorrow. No such thing as being in the covenantal company of the saints and then next week because we have failed the Lord some where being turned out of the covenantal company. We are perfected forever, if we have been set apart for him. That in such marvelous source of comfort. Perfected forever.

We often sing a hymn around the Lord’s Table that has a stanza, “Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood shall never lose its power, Till all the ransomed church of God be saved, to sin no more.”

Now, the second of, this is the third, the first is our Lord offered not an animal sacrifice, he offered himself. And now, we have looked at the unrepeatably offering and the royal enthronement of our Melchizedek as the second evidence of the final offering. But now, in verse 15 through verse 18, we have the third of the testimonies. And here, we read, “But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us.” Now, this is a witness not to the heart but to the word. Now, there is a difference. The Spirit does testify internally to us that we belong to the Lord God. But he’s not talking about that at this point. That’s genuine, because he says, “The Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after that He said before, “This is the covenant.” Verse 17, then he adds, “Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.” So he’s talking about the testimony of the word of God itself and, specifically, Jeremiah chapter 31, and Jeremiah’s unfolding there or declaration there of the new covenant. That’s the fundamental revelation which our Lord had in mind when he took the cup and he said, “This cup is the New Covenant in My blood which is shed for many,” at the last Passover, the first Lord’s Supper.

So this is not his testimony in the heart but it’s his testimony to the word. And notice that he says, “The Holy Spirit also witnesses to us.” Now, the author is writing this, of course, and he includes himself with those who receive this epistle from him. So this “us” assumes the identity of the faith of those individuals and the conviction that he, himself, has concerning his relationship to

the Lord. In other words, the faith and conviction of his readers, he believes is the same faith and conviction that he has. The Holy Spirit has testified to us; that’s very comforting, isn’t it? That someone as magnificently learned in the Scriptures and obviously a highly spiritual man should include us with him, in Scripture. But of course, that’s legitimate.

So, he says, verse 15, “The Holy Spirit also witnesses to us.” Now, most of you as Christians have come to your faith in Christ as a result of testimony. There are some of you perhaps who just read the Bible. I do know one man in Birmingham, Alabama. He was a traveling man and he was having trouble during the depression years and he went into a motel and a Gideon Bible was there. And he opened up the Gideon Bible and began to read it and was converted. That’s not very common. Usually, individuals have some kind of testimony given to them. But he was saved through the word of God. He later became the Bible teacher whose class I first studied, when I was still in the insurance business. When I was converted, I attended his Bible class and he was teaching dispensational truth. And I got my instruction in dispensational truth right after I’d been converted. Clarence Larkin’s big book, *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth* or some similar name was the book that we used. And that was about all he knew. But he had been converted and he had this book, and he taught a number of businessmen and women in the Bible class. And I attended it for a couple of years.

Most of us have had some personal testimony, a friend. In my case, mother-in-law, I don’t recommend getting your first testimony from your mother-in-law [laughter] because it’s not always easy to respond. But from my wife, from my mother-in-law, and then from their friends who were also my friends, I received testimony. Most of us come to know the Lord, I say, through the witness of a godly friend. Or, if not, someone puts a book in our hand, a book about scriptural truth, that’s a marvelous way, of course, to open up conversation that might lead to an opportunity to explain the gospel to your friends. Give them a book. And I was given a book. In fact, I was given the Bible. I was given the Scofield Reference Bible after I was converted. And I read it all the way through. I’m not going to say a word. [Laughter]

At any rate, most of us come to faith in the Lord from the witness of a godly friend, a valued author, but look, it's even more significant to come to the knowledge of the Lord through the testimony of the Holy Spirit. That's marvelous. “The Holy Spirit also witnesses to us.” So and the Holy Spirit witnesses to us, of course, we have the genuine witness. As John the Apostle says in the 5th chapter in the 9th verse of his first epistle, “If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son.”

When we are reading the Bible, we are reading the ultimate testimony. Read the books that friends give us. If they are good books, we have some testimony. Listen to their personal testimony if they are true to the word of God, we have a valid testimony we may believe. But the best of all is the Holy Spirit, and our author refers to it. And he refers to it as he refers to the passage in Jeremiah 31, having to do with the new covenant.

And, specifically, he takes out of that section these words. “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them.” The divine Law of God internalized by divine regeneration. When a person comes to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit is the one who begins the work, of course, and gives it, and all that is represented by the new covenant, as he says here. “I will put My laws into their hearts, I will write them in their minds,” takes place. This particular thing is simply the internalizing of God's will for us. The outward work is no longer desired. We have appreciation for his inner work. We are not looking for ways to justify ourselves when this has taken place. When his laws are set in our hearts and in our minds are written.

It follows then, from this, “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,” what follows from that? Well, what follows from that is this that the new covenant must be the end of Old Testament sacrifices. If, for example, by the work of the Holy Spirit, in regeneration, we have had written in our hearts, as he says here, God's laws, and in our minds they have been written, then, of

course, it follows that the new covenant is the end of Old Testament sacrifices. They have been done away, the one sacrifice has taken place and its benefits we are now a receptor of.

And then in verse 17 he says, I wish it were possible for us to talk about a few of these details, but it's not necessary. Actually, he has quoted this lengthy section in chapter 8. In chapter 8 in about verse 5 through verse 13, he has cited a much longer passage than here. But here he cites the beginning of the section and then the conclusion of it because he's primarily interested in the conclusion of it and that expression in verse 17, “Then He adds, “Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.” So he in a sense, he lets his readers know where he is in the Scriptures when he writes verse 16. But then in verse 17, he skips to the end and the climax of the New Covenant promises, adds the words, “Then He adds,” actually, that's only one word in the Greek text. It's a little word *kai* but the force of it here is “then.” “Then their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.” That's what he's specifically interested in. “Their lawless deeds I will remember no more.”

One might ask the question at this point, does this mean that God does not remember our sins? Does this mean that God forgets? What a comfort! I can say to Martha, “Even God forgets!” [Laughter] Even God forgets. That would relieve me of considerable burden. But no that's not, of course, the force of it. God knows the end from the beginning. He never forgets in the sense of his omniscience. He knows everything. What our author is talking about is not a mere act of memory, as a mere act of memory God cannot forget. But as sins that condemn us, God has no remembrance. In other words, it's simply that he remembers that his saving work is sufficient for our salvation, and the questions are not raised again with regard to each one of us.

I have a little statement here, by an individual who, if I can find it, I'm not sure I can find it, however. I've been writing so many things as I've been studying these particular verses. But, anyway, Ms. Marsh, Ms. Marsh once said, “There was quoted to my father, the Reverend W. Marsh, a saying of old Fuller's. ‘He that falls into sin is a man. He that grieves at sin is a saint. He that boasts of sin is a devil.’ My father replied, ‘There is only one thing more, he that forgives sin is God.’” He

does forgive and those sins, so far as their condemnation is concerned, are wiped clean. But He knows about them just as you know about them.

Now, finally, in verse 18, he comes to the climactic statement, “Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.” No more remembrance of sin, he has said earlier, no more offering of sin, no more conscience of sins because there is no more offering for sin.

This is a truth Mr. Spurgeon said, “That might well make David dance before the Ark of the Lord.” In a sense, this is the last, it’s the decisive word of the argument of the section of the Epistle to the Hebrews from chapter 1 until here. Verse 18, “Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.” What does that do? That unmask the Mass. The Mass is an insult. One offering has been made forever. It was made, approximately, two thousand years ago by the Lord Jesus Christ. Romanists like to say they don’t believe in repeated offerings, they believe that the one offering is continued by their sacrifices to the present time. This is an unrepeatable offering that was offered, as I say, almost two thousand years ago. It unmask the Mass. It impoverishes penance, the idea that we can do something in order to gain acceptance with the Lord God, which itself is just another way of saying Jesus Christ did not do enough.

Let me read you something that Spurgeon said. I thought this was very interesting. “I do not care who it is that prescribes the penance, nor what it is, whether it is licking the pavement with your tongues or wearing a hair shirt or laying on the whip. If it be supposed by the mortification of the flesh, men can take away my sin, this test is like a two-edged sword to pierce the inmost heart of such teaching,” that is the text one offering for sin, “where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.” “Take off thy hair shirt, poor fool, wash the stones with a dish cloth and keep thy tongue clean. You need not, like Luther, go up and down the staircase of Pilate, and think that your poor sore knees will find favor with God.” He’s referring to an early experience of Luther, when he went to Rome, walked up and down the ladder and staircase, went step by step as a form of penance, seeking to gain acceptance with the Lord God.

“Christ has suffered. God exacts no more. Do not try to add to His matchless robes, the rags of your poor penance. There is no more sacrifice for sin. This also shuts the gates of Purgatory. The dying thief, by rights, ought to have gone to Purgatory, for he hadn’t done a single good work that is a single biblical good work. No one who is not a believer in Jesus Christ can do a “good work.” Oh, that might surprise you. I’m not talking about good works in the eyes of men, I’m talking about biblical good works. Biblical good works must satisfy two conditions: one, they must arise from true faith in God and second, they must be designed to glorify God, that is, the God in Heaven.” No unbeliever can do any good work. That’s just one of the many reasons why we cannot be saved by works. Why it’s a hopeless task. We don’t have faith if we are not believers and we do not do our humanly thought to be good works for the glory of God.

So the Lord Jesus has offered the one sacrifice. Don’t try to add to His marvelous robes of righteousness the rags of your poor penance. There is no more sacrifice for sin. He shuts the gates of Purgatory. The thief on the cross, remember, he didn’t have anything that he could offer to the Lord, and he finally called out to him and the Lord Jesus said, “Today, thou shall be with me in Paradise.” In other words, no Purgatory intervenes. “Today, you shall be with me in Paradise.” As a result of that one offering, which he was in process of offering then. The fundamental basis for man’s admission to Paradise and the presence of the Lord is the one sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, there is one other thing that we can say about this, too, and this is something that refers to the Protestants. There are many Protestants, belong to Protestant churches, who think that one of the ways in which we gain acceptance with the Lord God is by coming to the understanding of how sinful we are and laying great stress on that. In fact, there are some who like to say that there are individuals who are not saved, who so far as they say, have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, but they have not come to understand the terrors of the human conscience, and what they need to do is experience those terrors of divine judgment more fully before they are qualified to turn to the Lord.

In other words, we invent another way of salvation by works, but we call it coming to a deep understanding of our sin and requiring a certain understanding of it. The Scriptures say, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”

Now, I know, that there are many believers who have great experience of deep pangs of conscience before they are saved. The Mourner’s Bench was something that characterized evangelicalism in the country, down front, people came down to the front, wept and cried, in order to develop some sense of their own unworthiness that they might then appeal to the Lord God for mercy. There’s no doubt that some of us have felt more strongly than others of us, how guilty we were. But the Scriptures say that if we feel, if we know from the word of God that we are sinners, and if we appeal to the Lord God for salvation, that salvation is granted on the basis of what Christ has done on Calvary’s cross.

The Scriptures do not say that there is any other condition for salvation but belief in our Lord Jesus Christ. Now, that does not mean, simply, to make a public confession of Him. Believe in scriptural terms is to have a certain knowledge of what Christ has done, to assent to the facts of what Christ has done, the cross, and then to trust those facts.

We’ve often said this in Believers Chapel, that genuine faith is composed of *notitia*, *assensus*, *fiducia*. Those three facts: knowledge, assent, trust. It sounds much more significant if you cite the Latin, doesn’t it? But the point is what they refer to; knowledge, assent, and trust. That’s what Scripture says is true faith. It is possible for a person just to make a confession, “Yes, I believe.” And not be one who has assented to the Gospel or has trusted in what Christ has done. It’s possible to have knowledge and to have made an assent, and then later on discovering you were lost because you had never truly trusted Christ.

Many of us had the experience of joining churches and making professions, as children or even as adults and then discovering later that we were not really converted. The basic fundamental trust was not there. So Protestants themselves need to realize, if that’s their failing, that there is no more offering for sin. There is nothing we can add to Christ’s saving work. Our sense of guilt and

the sense of weeping and crying is unnecessary. Those experiences may be ours but they are not required. Scripture says, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.”

I know, many of you know that but it’s important that we repeat it over and over again because there are evangelical friends of mine, they are friends of mine, we are friends, but in [my] mind they have occasionally overstepped what Scripture has said and made becoming a Christian more significant and, in fact, more wrongly interpreting Scripture than is given in Scripture, itself. And they have, in a sense, I believe hurt some believers.

Well, our time is about up. Let me just close with these two notes. We’ve been talking about the finality and the un-repeatability of Jesus Christ’s redemptive work. It is perfect. It is eternal.

As Philip said, “We have found Him of whom Moses and the Law and the Prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph,” and in finding him we have found the one offering which removes sin.

One of the great glories of the New Covenant is expressed by Franz Delitzsch in something that he wrote. He said that, “The super angelic character of the divine Son and Prophet, in comparison with whom Moses and Joshua were but servants, the high priestly character of Him, who for our sakes has been made like unto His brethren, and the royal dignity associated with it of Him who has returned to God and now is reigning with God, all this now stands clear before our minds. The glory of the New Covenant is as that of the sun when it goes forth in its strength and the moonlight of the old has faded away before it.”

For believers, our responsibility is set forth in that word “sanctified” and “access.” That is, if we have been set apart for the Lord, we have a responsibility to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus. Is it contradictory to say, “I have been perfected in Christ and still live in sin and love it.” Why of course it is!

The individual who has been born again, who has come to understand the Lord Jesus Christ has been given within his heart a love for the Lord God and a love for His word and a love for His

will; and for him to say, “I have been saved in the Lord Jesus Christ and I still live in sin and I love living in sin, but I have believed.” That individual does not have any reason to say I know that I belong to him.

Two things: Our Lord is one of two things to every one of us here, as this text puts it. “Whoever falls on this stone will be broken. But on whomever it falls, it will grant him to power.”

I hope and pray as do, I’m sure, those of you in this audience who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ that we are those who have fallen, not under that stone, but upon that stone in order to have the confidence and assurance of eternal life. We invite you, as an ambassador of the Lord Jesus, to believe in him and trust in the one offering which has been offered forever.

Let’s bow in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for Thy word. We thank Thee for this marvelous section, and we thank Thee for the confidence that it gives us to know that we have a great High Priest, who is seated, not standing as if there is further work to do with reference to atonement, but who has sat down in the presence of the Lord God, having finished the work. And we thank Thee, Lord, that as Aaron carried the names of the tribes of the children of Israel on his shoulders and on his breast in the work that he did, our Lord Jesus has carried our names upon his breast in the work that he has done. He is our representative Savior, who has acted for us and on whom we lean for time and for eternity.

And we say this, to the glory of our great Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.