

We see, then, a clear correspondence. The sprinkling of blood ratified the Sinai covenant and the blood of Yeshua ratified the New Covenant. Moreover, the sprinkling of blood in the ongoing sacrifices of the Tabernacle and Temples effected temporal cleansing (cleansing of the flesh) while the application of Yeshua's blood (His death) to the elect effects eternal cleansing, that is, full and complete atonement.

But were not the blessings of the New Covenant applied to the believer before it was ratified by the death and resurrection of Yeshua? The answer, of course, is "yes." But the same is true of the Abrahamic covenant which was given and established with Abram in Gen 12, but awaited its ceremonial ratification until Gen 15. In similar fashion the New Covenant is promised by Jeremiah with its blessings enumerated (Jer 31:31–34) long before Yeshua's incarnation and His subsequent death, resurrection, and ascension. In the same way, those whose eyes were opened to see the divine plan of salvation revealed in the tabernacle and its priestly services, i.e., the final and ultimate payment for sin that the coming Messiah would effect, and who put their faith in Him, were given assurance of sins forgiven, of unending acceptance by God the Father through the Messiah, and eternal communion with Him.

with better sacrifices than these. – This is our author's main point: the Sinai covenant was ratified by the sprinkling of blood of animals while the New Covenant is ratified by the application of Yeshua's blood, offered once-for-all-time and applied to the elect through His intercession on their behalf in the heavenly tabernacle.

24–25 For Messiah 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; nor was it that He would offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood that is not his own.

now to appear in the presence of God for us; – Having ascended to the Father, Yeshua as High Priest "always lives to make intercession" for those who are His and who have been "drawn near to God through Him" (7:25).¹ Even as the high priest in the earthly tabernacle entered the most holy place as representative of the people of Israel, so Yeshua has ascended to the right hand of the Father as our advocate and intercessor. John also writes of Yeshua's advocacy on our behalf in the

1 See vol. 1, pp. 307ff for a more detailed discussion on Yeshua's present intercession for His people.

heavenly realm:

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate (*παράκλητον, paraklētos*) with the Father, Yeshua Messiah the righteous; (1Jn 2:1)

Indeed, the word here translated “to appear” is the Greek verb ἐμφανίζω (*emphanizō*) which is a forensic term and was used to mean “to appear in court” as a plaintiff or advocate. It is used of a plaintiff appearing in texts such as Acts 24:1; 25:2, 5, of Tertullus, the chief-priests and elders against Paul. Here, however, it is used to emphasize that Yeshua appears in the presence of God (τῷ προσώπῳ τοῦ θεοῦ, literally “to the face of God”¹) as our advocate.

Surely this truth should engender praise in our hearts for our Messiah!

Awake sweet gratitude, and sing, the ascended Savior’s love;
Tell how He lives to carry on His people’s cause above.
With cries and tears He offered up His humble suit below;
But with authority He asks, enthroned in glory now.
For all that come to God by Him, salvation He demands;
Points to their names upon His breast
and spreads His wounded hands.
His covenant and sacrifice give sanction to His claim;
“Father, I will that all My saints be with Me were I am.
By their salvation, recompense the sorrows I endured;
Just to the merits of Thy Son, and faithful to Thy word.”
Eternal life, at His request, to every saint is given;
Safety on earth, and after death, the plenitude of heaven.

(August M. Toplady, 1771)

Here, once again, we see the particular focus of Yeshua’s atonement. For since the priestly service in the earthly tabernacle was given as a shadow of that which is real, i.e., the heavenly tabernacle, it is clear that in the Yom Kippur ritual, the atonement was not effected until and only when the blood was applied to the mercy seat of the Ark. Now

1 This is a Hebraism since the Hebrew of the Tanach has no word directly equivalent to the idea of “presence.” Thus, in Ex 33:15, “Then he said to Him, ‘If Your presence does not go with us, do not lead us up from here,’” the phrase “Your presence” is actually “Your face” (פָּנֶיךָ).

when the high priest entered the most holy place on Yom Kippur, he did so representing Israel. On all other days he wore the breast plate with the names of the tribes and the stones likewise engraved, one on each shoulder, and for what purpose? To indicate that his duties were directed specifically toward the tribes of Israel, God's chosen nation.

This was also revelatory in that the ultimate high priest, Yeshua, would interceded for all who had been given to Him. Thus our author writes: "...now to appear in the presence of God *for us*," literally His intercession is specifically for those who would be drawn by the Father (cf. Jn 6:44) and granted faith to believe. This corresponds with His prayer in the garden when He said:

I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom You have given Me; for they are Yours; and all things that are Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine; and I have been glorified in them... I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; (Jn 17:9–10, 20)

Thus, the redemption He accomplished, and the cleansing from sin which His work of atonement effects, assures that all the elect will be saved and none lost, for Yeshua's intercession is also for all those who have been given to Him by the Father.

nor was it that He would offer Himself often – Our author's focus upon the sacrificial system in the tabernacle brings to the fore the question of on-going defilement, both that which is symbolic (ritual impurity) as well as the defilement of sin, something that can be of the heart as well as of the hands. In the earthly realm that which was ceremonially clean could, at any moment, become unclean. Thus, the Torah provides rituals of cleansing for utensils, sacred objects, common objects, and people. Moreover, the presence of the sinful nature in all of mankind means that guilt offerings and sin offerings were offered day after day. Our author therefore asks an obvious question: "Is it the same with the heavenly tabernacle? Must ongoing sacrifices be given in order to provide ongoing cleansing?"

His answer is a clear "No!" If it were the case that ongoing sacrifices were necessary, then Messiah would have to offer Himself over and over again, even as the high priest went into the most holy place each year, year after year, to perform the Yom Kippur service. But as we have noted earlier, the fact that the high priest goes into the most holy place only one time in the cycle of the yearly festivals was a revelation

pointing to the fact that the coming One, Messiah Yeshua, would need to offer the ultimate and final “Yom Kippur” sacrifice only one time. Here, once again, our author is showing the superiority of Yeshua’s sacrifice when compared to animal sacrifices. The temporal quality of the Yom Kippur sacrifice was obvious from the fact that it had to be repeated every year. Further, as our author has already stated, the sacrifices offered under the Levitical priesthood had no ability to “cleanse the conscience” (9:9), something that can only be effected by the work of Yeshua (9:14).

Furthermore, while the Aaronic high priest took the blood of the sacrificial animal into the most holy place on Yom Kippur, Yeshua entered the heavenly tabernacle, as it were, with His own blood. This means that He ascended to the right hand of the Father in order to secure the merits of His sacrifice on behalf of all the elect. This He does through His ongoing intercession on their behalf.

26 Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

Yeshua has entered into the true sanctuary, there to secure our eternal redemption through His constant intercession on our behalf. He has done this by appearing in the presence of God for us, by entering to cover the mercy seat with His own blood. He pleads the merits of His sacrifice at the throne of God (cf. 4:16) and obtains grace on our behalf.

Our author, in contrasting the merits of Messiah’s sacrifice with those of the Levitical priesthood, is struck by the “once-for-all” aspect of Yeshua’s sacrifice. Unlike the priests of old who entered in on Yom Kippur, only to repeat the same act each year, Yeshua entered one time only. Yet what can this mean if our author has already taught us that He constantly is active in the work of intercession, or as our author puts it, “He ever lives to make intercession for us” (7:25)?

When our author proclaims the once-for-all aspect of Yeshua’s sacrifice, it is clear that he is speaking of Yeshua’s crucifixion, as the context makes clear. The Levitical priests sacrificed yearly, but Yeshua *sacrificed Himself* (διὰ τῆς θυσίας αὐτοῦ) only once, now, at the consummation of the ages. The finality of the redemption and atonement which He secured for all who have been given to Him is clearly the point our author is making. Nothing more needs to be done in terms of payment for sins in order to secure our eternal salvation—all has been accomplished. Any who may think that a Eucharistic ritual actually (even if in some

mystical manner) is a repeating of Yeshua's self-sacrifice, has missed an essential teaching of the Scriptures.

But there is a distinction between that which Yeshua accomplished in His death, resurrection, and ascension, and the application of that finished work to those whom the Father has given to the Son.¹ The application of Yeshua's finished work is an ongoing reality, and has been from the beginning of time. For even though the event of Yeshua's incarnation and His sacrifice on behalf of sinners took place in a point in time of earth's history, those who lived before His coming exercised precisely the same saving faith as those who were saved during His life upon the earth, and those of us who have come to faith in Him in the centuries subsequent to His ascension. So His accomplishing all that is necessary for the salvation of the elect in terms of payment for their sin is finished and nothing more needs to be added to it, nor could anything more be added. Yet Yeshua's current ministry as our heavenly High Priest is His intercession for all those who have been given to Him by the Father, and it is through His intercession that the finished work of redemption and atonement is applied to all those whom He has chosen to be eternally saved.

...at the consummation of the ages – The phrase “the consummation of the ages” translates the Greek *συντελεία τῶν αἰώνων*, which is literally “the end of the ages.” We find the same phrase used four times in Matthew (13:40, 49; 24:3; 28:20) and the Lxx uses *συντέλεια* (*sunteleia*) in Dan 9:27 with the meaning “end” or “bring to an end.”

In our context the term is used to denote the present age as the final or last in the scope of redemption: This is the perspective of our author at the beginning of the epistle as well: “...in these last days has spoken to us...” This concept is very much akin to similar phrases used elsewhere in the Apostolic Writings: “end of the age,” “end of the ages” (1Cor 10:11); “fullness of the age” (Gal 4:4); “end of the times” (1Pet 1:20). The Apostolic perspective was not that Yeshua happened to come at the time of fulfillment but that His coming marked that era as the time when the promises of the prophets began their final fulfillment. It is on Him and His work that the ages have been and are focused.

1 For an excellent book on the entire scope of redemption, see John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* (Eerdmans, 1970)

27–28 And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment, so Messiah also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him.

The focus of our author in this section has been upon the manner in which Messiah, as the covenant mediator, took upon Himself the curse of the covenant, i.e., the penalty of death for one who breaks the covenant. Yet Yeshua, rather than being put to death over and over again (even from the foundations of the world, v. 26), died once by which death He accomplished eternal redemption for all He represents as the heavenly high priest. For it is in the application of His death as payment for sin that atonement is made for all who come to Him in faith.

But as the divine, incarnate One, Yeshua proved His true humanity not only by His life but also by His death. Indeed, His death above all other things proved His true humanity, for He came as the incarnate Man with the purpose to die for those of mankind who would be saved (cf. 2:9, 14). His clear identity with true humanity is seen, then, in that He died *once*, for, as our author states, “it is appointed for men to die once.” The Greek word translated “appointed” (*ἀπόκειμαι, apokeimai*) generally means “to put away for safe keeping,” “to reserve something as an award or recompense,” and “something that is unavoidable in view of inevitable circumstances.”¹ It is this final sense that the word conveys in our context.

Some might argue that it is not a universal axiom, as our author states, that “it is appointed for men to die once.” Consider Enoch who, according to our own author (11:5), did “not see death,” or Elijah who was taken up alive (2Ki 2:11). Likewise, Paul speaks of those who have not died and who meet the Lord in the air at His coming (1Thess 4:15ff). Further, John in the Apocalypse refers to a “second death” (Rev 2:11; 20:6, 14f; 21:8). But these do not constitute proof that our author is mistaken in his claim that death is an inevitability for human beings. Rather, the fact that Enoch and Elijah were taken into heaven without having died offer a clear exception to the rule which establishes it rather than disproving it. For in all of the generations of mankind, these two form a particular exception proving that God, in His omnipotence, has the power of life as well as power over death.

Nor does Paul’s teaching, that there will be those alive when Yeshua

1 Cf. BDAG, “*ἀπόκειμαι*”; the word is used only 3 other times in the Apostolic Scriptures: Luke 19:20; Col 1:5; 2Tim 4:8.

returns and who will meet Him in the air without experiencing death, contradict our author's categorical statement regarding the inevitability of death for all who are human. Once again, the situation Paul describes is an exception to the rule, an exception which applies only to those believers who are alive when Yeshua returns. And with regard to John's use of the phrase "second death," by this he refers to death as eternal separation from God, not the death of the physical body. Thus, the general axiom, that it is "appointed to men to die once and after this comes judgment," is a statement of a general truth in order to establish the specific truth that Yeshua, being Himself true man, died once, not multiple times.

Our text is quite clear that "it is appointed for men to die once." This means that one's death is a matter of God's appointment. Like all other events, it is ordained and not random. This entirely destroys any notion of reincarnation, a hoax which many of the newer cults have copied from Eastern religions. Contrary to some, the early Apostolic message left no room for any notions of reincarnation. Man was appointed to live and die, after which comes the judgment.

In fact, this is the very issue sinful man wants to avoid. If death were not followed by the judgment, then there would be no fear in dying. But man has been created with an innate sense that after death there is to be a reckoning—a standing before one's Creator to give an account (cf. 2Cor 5:10). This unavoidable reality which exists in the consciousness of us all is the target of many efforts in our day to eradicate. The supposed "near-death experiences" by people who confess no belief in God or His Messiah, Yeshua, yet tell us there is light and peace on the other side of this existence, claiming to be witnesses that there is nothing to fear in death, are nothing more nor less than an attempt to sidestep the inevitable judgment which the Scriptures teach always follows death.

The view of the "judgment day" in rabbinic Judaism and whether one will be judged or escape judgment, seems to depend upon the individual himself. While the Mishnah lists those for whom there is no share in the world to come (m.*Sanhedrin* 10.1ff; cp. m.*Sota* 9.15), it also goes to great lengths to find an exception for each category of Jews who may have lost their share in the world to come for one reason or another, for "all Israel has a share in the world to come" (m.*Sanhedrin* 10.1). The rabbinic authorities do teach that there would be a judgment day and that the coming of Messiah would, in some manner, coincide with it. Yet the judgment would consist of an assessment of one's collective deeds which would then be taken into consideration as to whether

this rendered the person righteous or not. Yet the keeping of even one commandment perfectly would “tip the scales” and therefore qualify a Jewish person for a share in the world to come (b.*Makkot* 24a; cf. b.*Sanhedrin* 81a).

It is easy to see how the later rabbinic Judaism took an entirely different view of “salvation” than does the author of Hebrews.

having been offered once to bear the sins of many – As already noted, it was the very purpose of Yeshua’s incarnation that He would die to pay the penalty of sin on behalf of all those He would redeem (cf. 2:14; 10:5). In theological terms, this is called the doctrine of penal substitution, meaning that by His death, Yeshua paid the debt of sin for each one whom He would redeem, and that in paying the debt of sin in full, He freed His people from any condemnation that their former debt required.

These words make it clear that our author is emphasizing the truth of penal substitution in the death of Yeshua. Indeed, the terminology of “bearing sins” which our author employs rests upon Is 53:11, using the same Greek verb (*ἀναφέρω*, *anapherō*, “to bear”) as does the Lxx.

As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see light¹ and be satisfied; by His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, as He will bear their iniquities (*τὰς ἀμαρτίας αὐτῶν αὐτὸς ἀνοίσει*). (Is 53:11)

In this regard, note also 1Pet 2:24.

and He Himself bore our sins (*τὰς ἀμαρτίας ἡμῶν αὐτὸς ἀνήνεγκεν*) in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed. (1Pet 2:24)

The obvious theological import of the scriptural doctrine of penal substitution is that a real payment for sin was made at the cross for those who would be saved and that this payment for sin was actual, not potential. This fact was dramatized in the Tabernacle and Temples whenever a person brought a guilt offering, for before the sacrificial animal was slaughtered and its blood poured out upon the altar, the priest as representative of the one bringing the sacrifice would lay his hands upon the head of the animal, symbolizing that sin was transferred to the

1 Both the Lxx and the Qumran Isaiah (1QIs^{a,b}) have the word “light” (*נֹרָא*). On the basis of these textual witnesses the word should be restored.

sacrifice.¹ This one-for-one correspondence is what our author pictures when he writes that Yeshua “bore the sins of many.” Such a transference of sin is not defined as potential but actual. Paul speaks in the same manner when he talks of that which condemns as being nailed to the cross.

When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. (Col. 2:13–14)

To put it simply: if Yeshua bore the sins upon Himself of those who would be saved, then those He has redeemed could never be condemned for their sin, i.e., be required to make payment for their sin. For God is just and does not require payment twice. Unfortunately, in modern times the doctrine of penal substitution has been set aside by much of the church, judging that it impugns the “free will” of man. Unwittingly, however, attempts to overturn the biblical doctrine of penal substitution have produced a doctrine of salvation that depends almost entirely upon man and not upon God, a salvation that therefore, in the end, saves no one.²

will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin – While His first coming had as its primary purpose to give Himself as payment for sin, His second coming, since He can no longer die (having died once), has a different purpose. This purpose will be to bring to completion the full salvation of those who eagerly await His return. Our author uses the phrase “without reference to sin” in order to show the primary distinction between Yeshua’s first and second comings. The Greek of this phrase, however, simply states that Yeshua’s second coming will be *χωρίς ἁμαρτίας*, literally, “without sin.” This does not mean that in His first coming He was Himself culpable of sin, but that (as the previous verse makes clear) He bore the sin of many. This is imputed sin, not sin of His own doing, for He bore the sins of those for whom He made atonement, or to say it another way, the sins of the elect were imputed

¹ E.g., Ex 29:10, 15, 19; Lev 4:15; 8:14, 18, 22; 16:21.

² A somewhat technical though quite readable treatise on the biblical doctrine of penal substitution may be found in the book, Jeffery, Ovey, Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions: Rediscovering the Glory of Penal Substitution* (Crossway, 2007).

to Him and He therefore bore the righteous wrath of the Father as their sin offering.

This is precisely Paul's meaning in 2Cor 5:21.

He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (2Cor 5:21)

However, the phrase "He made Him...to be sin" would be better understood as "He made Him...to be the sin offering," for as we know, the Hebrew word *חַטָּאת* (*chata't*) can mean "sin" or "sin-offering" depending upon the context.

Thus, in the same manner that Paul refers to Yeshua being the "sin-offering on our behalf" in His first advent, so the author of Hebrews characterizes Yeshua's second coming as being "without a sin-offering," that is, as coming not again to pay the penalty of sin (for He died once for all time) but to bring to consummation the salvation of the elect.

to those who eagerly await Him. – The words "eagerly await" translate one Greek word, *ἀπεκδέχομαι* (*apekdexomai*), "to wait for someone or something." But this form of the primary verb *dexomai* is appended with two prepositions: *apo* and *ek*, which together give the sense of a strong anticipation in regard to what one is awaiting. Thus those English translations which give the sense of "waiting eagerly" have properly given the sense of the Greek.

Here we receive an interesting insight into the Apostolic perspective on faith. Those who are truly of faith will evidence their faith, not only by righteous deeds that characterize their daily lives, but also by the evident faith they have in the promised return of their Lord, a faith that keeps them eagerly awaiting His return. We may rightly say that, in general, "those who eagerly await His coming" characterize the true followers of Yeshua.

See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. (1Jn 3:1–3)

From a theological perspective, one could imagine the return of the High Priest out from the most holy place on Yom Kippur as picturing the return of Yeshua. For as our author has emphasized, the ascension of Yeshua into heaven signals His entering into the most holy place of the heavenly tabernacle, there to appear in the presence of the Father on behalf of His people. His return, then, is analogous to the return of the High Priest to the people who anxiously awaited his appearance as confirmation that the yearly atonement had been made. The poetic description in the apocryphal book of Sirach of the High Priest coming forth from the Temple on Yom Kippur might give a sense of the awe people felt.

How glorious he was when the people gathered round him
as he came out of the inner sanctuary!
Like the morning star among the clouds,
like the moon when it is full;
Like the sun shining upon the temple of the Most High,
and like the rainbow gleaming in glorious clouds;

Like roses in the days of the first fruits,
like lilies by a spring of water,
like a green shoot in Lebanon on a summer day;
Like fire and incense in the censer,
like a vessel of hammered gold adorned with all kinds of
precious stones;
Like an olive tree putting forth its fruit,
and like a cypress towering in the clouds. (Sirach 50:5-10)

While Yeshua's first coming was marked by humility as that of a servant coming to do His Father's will, when He returns He comes as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, as the One to Whom every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that He is LORD to the glory of the Father (Phil 2:11).

And so we await our High Priest, or Lord and Savior, the risen, triumphant Messiah as He returns from His heavenly Tabernacle to declare our salvation fully accomplished, and then we will forever be with the Lord (1Thess 4:17).