

**Jesus is... Mediator pt. 2**  
**Heb 9: 11-22**

Well Brothers and sisters have you ever been part of a group where everyone else has been in the group for a while and they all know each other and they all know what is going on in the group... but you're new and trying to fit in and find your place and figure it all out so you can be a part of what is going on in this group. Do you remember what that was like?

How many of you had that kind of experience in becoming a Christian? You went from being on the outside of the church – and then God showed up in your life somehow, you were convicted of sin, realized that Jesus was the savior, turned to Him for forgiveness and were saved, and then suddenly you found yourself inside church trying to figure out this whole “being a Christian” thing and it was all new and confusing.

And one of the most confusing things for someone who is a new Christian is figuring out what to make of the Old Testament – because as I remember it, it was pretty confusing even for a pastor's kid who grew up in the church.

Especially when you are start reading about the Laws of God – all the strange laws about what you can or can't eat, laws about what kinds of clothes you can wear, how to style your hair, all the different kinds of sacrifices that had to be offered to make amends for what you had done wrong - There's a lot of laws for God's people in the Old Testament.

And as a new Christian, or a young Christian, you start to wonder... if the Bible is God's Word and these laws are in the bible then why aren't we Christians following them anymore? I mean we seem to follow the Ten Commandments but what about the rest of these commandments?

Are we actually breaking these laws, is it actually wrong before God to eat bacon? What about getting a tattoo? What about shopping or working on Sunday? Maybe you're **still** wondering about all these laws?

Now imagine what it would be like if you one of the early Gentile converts to Christianity... You're a new convert to following Jesus and you're part of this group of people who

are all excited about following Jesus and some of them are also Jews. And these Jews then begin to tell you that you need to get circumcised and start observing the Laws of Moses like they had been doing – because Jesus was Jewish if you are going to follow Jesus you need to follow the religious practices that Jesus himself had observed and that God had specifically commanded because that’s what it meant to be a part of God’s Covenant people.

So it wasn’t easy for the early Gentile Christians, last Sunday we saw how the early church was excluding them - in part because of Gentile persecution, but also because God’s people always struggle with turning God’s grace into merit and self-righteousness.

So – Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, writes to Pastor Timothy’s church about how Jesus is the mediator between God and ALL of humanity, not just the Jews – problem solved right, now the Early church is reaching out to make disciples of the Gentiles and bringing them into the family of God. Well...

yes... but there’s this issue around what to do with the Old Testament and the Law of Moses for these Gentiles.

This isn’t just a matter of sinful self-righteousness that can be corrected by a reminder about God’s grace in Christ. The Law of Moses was something good, it had been given by God to Israel as part of His Covenant relationship with them. It guided them to know how to live in ways that pleased God, it was something that gave life, the Psalmist says it is a lamp unto his path... When Israel lived according to the Law of Moses it would show the other nations God’s truth and the truth about God.

So, we need to understand that once the Gentiles became followers of Jesus – who was a Jew and part of God’s covenant people – it wasn’t a simple matter of just brushing off the Law of Moses and saying - like we tend to say - *“ Ah... that’s just Old Testament stuff that we don’t have to worry about anymore. Jesus saves us from all those rules – its about having a relationship with Him now.”*

And truth be told brothers and sisters – when we resort to simplistic explanations and solutions like this, it undermines our ability to be at our best as followers of Jesus Christ.

When we dismiss the Old Testament, especially the Law of Moses and the Old Covenant as irrelevant, we become shallow Christians who have no roots, no grounding, and we will become cultural Christians who believe that whatever is culturally acceptable defines right or wrong and thus defines what it means to be a good follower of Jesus.

This is why the most recent Barna survey found that 72% of America Christians would argue that people are basically good, 64% are ok saying that all religious faiths are of equal value, 58% actually believe that if a person is good enough, or does enough good things, they can earn their way into Heaven, and 52% claim that determining moral truth is up to each individual; there are no moral absolutes that apply to everyone, all the time. And these are followers of Jesus – not unbelievers! And I suspect these numbers would be even higher for us in Canada.

So, it's no surprise then that denominations like the PCC can't seem to recognize what the bible actually teaches about marriage between one man and one woman for life. But you've heard enough from me on these sorts of matters, I just want you to know and understand the consequences of simplistically brushing off the OT and Law of Moses, and I'm sure you'll agree this is not what it looks like when followers of Jesus are at their best.

So what's the solution then? Should we be observing the Law of Moses like the early Jewish Christians believed that the Gentile Christians should? Do we pick certain parts of the Law of Moses that are helpful, to go with the Ten Commandments, in an attempt to acknowledge these are God's commands? It's a bit of a dilemma for us... a lot of Christians don't know.

And it was a dilemma for the early church as well – and the efforts of Paul and the other apostles to explain and apply how it worked out is the reason for 90% of the letters that make up the New Testament scriptures.

And its in one of those New Testament scripture passages that we read this morning, that all the concerns we have identified thus far, come together and are addressed....in who Jesus Christ is. It's Hebrews 9:15 *"For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant."*

So just as we learned in 1 Tim 2:5 last week that there is one Mediator between God and mankind - Jesus the Mediator the God/Man who bridges the gap between God and ALL humanity resulting in all kinds of people being saved – not just the Jews... this week in Hebrews 9:15 we learn that Christ is the Mediator of a new covenant because of His death to pay for the sins committed by Israel under the first covenant.

And in this role as the Covenant Mediator, Jesus is **the** solution to the dilemma of how we respond as Christians to the Old Testament and the Law of Moses, because its all about his function as the go-between for the first covenant and the

new covenant, the Old Testament to the New Testament. And Jesus is able to bring about this transition from the first covenant to the new covenant because He is able to function as the go-between in the first covenant.

So – if you are still feeling like you are on the outside and confused about this... pay attention because I'm going to bring you up to speed so that you have all the inside information.

It should be somewhat obvious by now that the first covenant – which is to say the first covenant God made with the people of Israel – was characterized by the Law of Moses, so much so that biblical scholars will usually call it the Mosaic Covenant.

Now a Covenant is kind of relationship agreement, and as we've studied God's Covenants at Valleyview in the past we've learned that a *"covenant is a Bond in blood, sovereignly administered"* and there are obligations with rewards and consequences attached to it.

And we can certainly see this with the Mosaic covenant, Hebrews 9:19 -20 describes how blood was connected to it: *“Moses said, “This is the blood of the covenant, which God has commanded you to keep”*

This also illustrates the Sovereign nature of this Covenant as God commands Israel to keep these Laws, its not a suggestion or a request...

And the benefits along with a description of the relationship bond are found in Ex 19:5-6 God says *“if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. [bond] Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. [benefit]”*

And Moses reminds Israel of the Covenant consequences in Deut 8:19-20 saying *“If you ever forget the Lord your God and follow other gods and worship and bow down to them, I testify against you today that you will surely be destroyed.”*

So a Covenant is a Bond in blood, sovereignly administered with obligations that have benefits or consequences.

Now just in case you think this means that the first time anyone broke the Law of Moses they were destroyed by God with a lighting bolt from heaven, let me remind you that the Law also contained the provision of animal sacrifice so that those who broke the Law could make restitution, and would avoid having to pay with their own life.

This is what the writer of Hebrews is referring to in 9:13 when he talks about *“The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer [are] sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean.”*

So even though it was common practice in the ancient world that anyone who proved unfaithful to their Covenant obligations and broke them had to forfeit their life for their unfaithfulness – in the Mosaic Covenant God graciously allowed Israel to substitute animal sacrifices for their sins instead of having to pay with their own lives. Which is why

Heb 9:22 says *“without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.”*

So, the Mosaic Covenant was not only characterized by the Law but also by the sacrificial system and the priests... who were appointed by God to help the people bring their sacrifices to God and assure the people that the sacrifice for their sin had been acceptable.

The priests were go-betweens for God and the people in this covenant relationship taking the blood of the sacrifice and presenting it to God as payment for sin in the most Holy place in the Tabernacle, and later on in the Temple.

And so in Hebrews 9:11-12 the writer wants us to understand that this priestly go-between and sacrifice in the first covenant was pointing ahead to what Jesus would eventually do in physical fulfillment, So he writes *“when Christ came as high priest of the good things that are now already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not*

*made with human hands, that is to say, is not a part of this creation.”*

The greater and more perfect tabernacle Jesus goes through is His own body – it is the incarnation where in the person of Christ – God and Humanity meet and are connected and reconciled. Jesus is the greater Tabernacle... Jesus is the more perfect and fulfilled Temple. This is how he functions as the go-between in the first covenant.

And no priest would ever enter into the presence of God to offer payment for sin without blood and neither does Jesus. But instead of animal blood, Jesus brings His own blood as Heb 9:12 says *“He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood...”*

So I think you can start to see how this falls into place right, the writer of Hebrews follows though with the logic by stating that if animal blood was effective in making sure that our sins

were paid for, then how much more effective will the blood of Christ be?

This was Human blood, blood from the line of Israel – blood from one who fully represented the guilty and unfaithful Covenant partner who owed their life for their unfaithful law breaking, and yet Himself had kept the Law and been perfectly faithful.

Thus Hebrews 9:14 states *“Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God...”* and to answer the question of how much more effective the perfect blood of Christ is the writer states it will *“cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death.”*

Now I know its easy to think this means that the blood of Christ gets rid of our guilty feelings – which is nice...

But by comparison this would seem to indicate that the blood of animals can't deal with guilty feelings and therefore the shortcoming of the first covenant is that everyone walked

around with guilty feelings all the time, wondering if their sin was really and truly forgiven, and if you've read the OT you know this is not the case.

What this means is that Christ's blood corrects the deceptive internal effect which sin has on our consciences. Sin is responsible for what Proverbs 16:12 says about our consciences *“There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end... it leads to death.”* By contrast the blood of Jesus *“cleanses our conscience from acts that lead to death.”*

The blood of animals was acceptable instead of our own life to pay for sin, but because our conscience, our internal guide and compass on what is right and wrong is affected by sin, we continue to sin – even when God has given us an external guide in His Law to guide us, the internal effect of sin still causes us to sin – and thus animal sacrifices had to be offered continually because we sin continually.

But the blood of Christ is more effective because it is human blood, it is perfect blood, it is Covenant mediator blood and

thus it can cleanse our conscience - eliminating the need for any further animal sacrifice, fulfilling the first covenant while simultaneously beginning a new covenant.

God himself promised this long ago through the prophet Jeremiah, 31:31-33 *"The days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them," declares the Lord. "This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time," declares the Lord. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts."*

The blood of Christ cleansing our conscience is the Law of God being written in our mind and on our hearts brothers and sisters. And Jesus accomplishes this by means of the same Eternal Spirit by which He offered himself unblemished to God, as it says in Heb 9:14.

This is what Jesus is speaking about in John 14:26 when He says *"the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."* And then two chapters later in 16:13 Jesus says *"when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come."*

And it is why Paul can write emphatically in Rom 9:1 *"I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying, my conscience confirms it through the Holy Spirit"*

This is the Law being written in our minds and on our hearts brothers and sisters, this is the New Covenant.

And Jesus has mediated this as well because He entering into the first covenant, being born as an Israelite and perfectly kept the Mosaic Law – everything that God had required of Israel, Christ accomplished perfectly. Jesus Christ is the perfect human covenant partner that Israel could not be –



but... since Jesus is from Israel – they can now be what they could not be, through Jesus.

In Jesus humanity God's Law is perfectly inscribed in His human mind and human heart and when the Holy Spirit connects us to Jesus through Baptism of the Spirit we are included in this New Covenant relationship between Jesus and God, we are in the New Covenant through Jesus and thus God's Law is being written in our minds and on our hearts.

And we know this is a New Covenant relationship – not simply because it is a new way of being able to fulfill all the demands of the First Covenant of Law through Jesus – but because a Covenant is always a bond of blood, sovereignly administered and Jesus began this covenant by shedding blood on the cross.

The blood that was shed to pay for all the sins of the first covenant simultaneously began a new and unbreakable covenant, the joining of humanity and God in his person will never be undone, the payment he offered for our ALL sins will never be insufficient, and Jesus will never be an unfaithful

covenant partner to God – the Son always fulfills the Father's plans and will do so forever.

And... as Hebrews 9:21 explains how Moses sprinkled the Tabernacle and everything in it used to serve God with the blood of the sacrifice to cleanse it and make it acceptable to serve God, when we are Baptized with the Holy Spirit, He sprinkles us with the blood of Jesus in the New Covenant so that as our consciences are cleansed from acts that lead to death, as Heb 9:14 concludes – *“we may also serve the living God.”*

Now if that doesn't describe followers of Jesus at their best – I'm not sure what does.

And this all comes about as we press in to understand and learn more about who Jesus is, and what it means that He is the Mediator of the New Covenant.

Now – what are the implications of all this for what we do with the OT and the Law of Moses?

Well, for starters that instead of being dismissive and saying *“that’s OT stuff we don’t have to worry about it anymore, Jesus saves us from all those rules”* be biblical...

Say *“Israel gave it their best shot and wasn’t able to keep this, so Jesus came and kept it for them – and for us... Jesus saved us from having to pay with our own lives and paid with his instead... we don’t see the Law as an external restriction or obligation - rather it is becoming our internal motivation in our conscience helping us not only to serve Jesus Christ but to trust Him as our mediator”*

So do we need to observe the Law of Moses brothers and sisters? We need to at least observe how it points us toward Christ – and then knowing Him as the Mediator of the New Covenant, with our consciences cleansed by His blood, we can live out the Law of God that has been inscribed in our mind and on our hearts.

Brothers and sisters, Jesus is our covenant mediator! Amen.