

HEBREWS 9:1 – 10:18

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3. The superior new covenant offering (9:1-10:18)

a. Introduction: The pattern of old covenant worship – place, with blood, effect (9:1-10)

Now [even] the first covenant had regulations for ministry and the earthly sanctuary. ²For [the] tabernacle was constructed, the front [room], in which were both the lampstand and the table for the presentation of the loaves, which is called [the] Holy Place. ³And behind the second curtain [was] a room that is called [the] Holy of Holies, ⁴having a golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant, having been covered on all sides with gold, in which [were] a golden jar having the manna, Aaron's rod that sprouted, and the tablets of the covenant. ⁵And above it [were] the cherubim of glory overshadowing the place of atonement, about which things it is not now [possible] to speak in detail.

⁶And these things having been prepared in this way, the priests enter continually into the front room, performing ministry duties, ⁷but into the back [room] only the high priest enters once a year, [and] not without blood which he offers for himself and [for] the people's sins of ignorance. ⁸By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way [into] the [real] sanctuary had not yet been disclosed while the front room still had standing, ⁹which [is] an illustration for the present time, according to which [arrangement] both gifts and sacrifices are offered that are not able with respect to [the] conscience to perfect the one ministering ¹⁰[but deal] only with foods and drinks and different washings, regulations of flesh imposed until the time of [the] new order.

(1) The author provides a brief description of the sacrificial worship carried out under the old covenant. He says in v. 1 that there were regulations for ministry, meaning there were commands regarding how the priestly ministry was to be conducted, and he also mentions the structure in which that ministry was performed, the "earthly sanctuary." He then expounds on those two themes in reverse order in vv. 2-10.

(2) He says that in the front room of the tabernacle, the Holy Place, there was the lampstand and the table and loaves. He says that in the inner room, the Holy of Holies, there was the golden altar of incense and the ark of the

covenant which contained a jar of manna, Aaron's rod, and the tablets of the covenant. Though he says now is not the time to discuss these things in detail, his description raises some questions.

(a) It appears from Ex. 30:1-10 and 40:1-5, 20-27 (see also Ex. 30:10 with Lev. 16:18-19) that the altar of incense was located in the front room of the tabernacle, the Holy Place, rather than in the Holy of Holies. That's how it was understood by Philo, Josephus, and in the Mishnah.

[1] Perhaps the altar of incense that normally was right in front of the curtain into the Holy of Holies was moved into the Holy of Holies by the high priest on the Day of Atonement. This may be implied by the fact the incense that was burned on the Day of Atonement covered the mercy seat with smoke so that the priest would not die (Lev. 16:12-13). This smoke apparently was thick enough to prevent the high priest from gazing upon the holy presence. That seems difficult to achieve if the altar of incense was on the other side of the curtain into the Holy of Holies.

[a] If the implied quantity of smoke does indeed require the incense to be burned in the Holy of Holies, the only alternative to the altar of incense being moved into the Holy of Holies is the claim that the incense was burned in the Holy of Holies in a censer rather than on a repositioned altar of incense. However, the word translated "censer" (μολυβδα) in Lev. 16:12 also refers to the utensil that was used to transfer live coals to an altar. Lev. 16:13 simply says the priest shall "put the incense on the fire before the Lord." In 2 Chron. 26:16-19 Uzziah was using a "censer" (μολυβδα) to burn incense on the altar of incense.

[b] 1 Chron 6:49 indicates that the priests presented some kind of offering on the altar of incense in connection with the Holy of Holies (the Most Holy Place). That supports the idea that the incense burned on the Day of Atonement, the day in which the high priest entered the Holy of Holies, was burned on the altar of incense.

[c] According to Wenham (*Leviticus*, p. 232, fn. 11), most commentators accept that the altar referred to in Lev. 16:18 is the altar of burnt sacrifice rather than the altar of incense. The fact that altar was not in the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement says nothing about whether the altar of incense was there on that day.

[d] Ex. 30:10 indicates there was a sin-removal ceremony for the altar of incense that was performed annually with blood from the Day of Atonement offering. This probably is included in the reference in Lev. 16:16b to making atonement for the "tent of meeting" (in distinction from the atonement for the Holy of Holies). However, nothing is said about the location of the altar of incense at that time.

[e] The close association of the altar of incense and the Holy of Holies is evident in 1 Ki. 6:22b. Referring to Solomon's temple, the writer says that Solomon overlaid with gold the altar that "belonged to the inner sanctuary." 2 Baruch, which is a Jewish document from the early 2nd century A.D., also refers to the altar of incense being in the Holy of Holies of the temple (6:7). Perhaps these references are rooted in the practice I am suggesting.

[2] Others resolve the issue by appealing to the fact the word translated "golden altar" may be translated "golden censer." In that case, no statement is made about the location of the altar of incense. Others argue that the writer means the Holy of Holies "has" the altar of incense in the figurative sense that the altar is specially connected to the Holy of Holies despite being located in the adjacent room.

(b) It appears from Ex. 16:32-34 and Num. 17:10-11 that the jar of manna and Aaron's rod were located in front of the ark of the covenant in the Holy of Holies rather than in the ark of the covenant. If that is indeed where they originally were located, then as presupposed by certain rabbinic evidence (see Lane, 221), they subsequently were placed inside the ark. However, by the time of 1 Ki. 8:9 (see also 2 Chron. 5:10), after the ark had spent seven months in the hands of the Philistines (1 Sam. 6:1) and the people of Beth Shemesh had looked into it (1 Sam. 6:19; removed anything?), they had been removed. At that time, the only thing in the ark was the two stone tablets of Moses.

(3) Above the ark of the covenant were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the place of atonement.

(a) The cherubim were winged figures made of gold (Ex. 25:18-22). They were at each end of the ark facing each other, and their wings extended out over the ark. They are here called "cherubim of glory," which probably means cherubim of God's glory. "God promised to meet with Moses 'from between the two cherubim' (Exod 25:22; Num. 7:89), and God was said to be 'enthroned on the cherubim' (e.g., 1 Sam 4:4; 2 Sam 6:2; Ps 80:1)" (Koester, 396).

(b) The place of atonement, which sometimes is translated "mercy seat," was the top of the ark (Ex. 25:22; Num. 7:89).

(4) The writer explains in vv. 6-10 that under the old-covenant cult access to the Holy of Holies was restricted to the high priest, and even he could only enter once a year and could do so only with sacrificial blood which he offered for his and the people's sins.

(5) This Spirit-given arrangement symbolized the truth that access to the real sanctuary, true intimacy with God, was not available while the old-covenant arrangement still was applicable (expressed as "while the front room still had standing," meaning still had cultic status). The reason is that the offerings under that

covenant – the regulations of flesh imposed until the time of [the] new order – were unable to resolve fully one's sense of guilt because there was an intuitive awareness of their inherent inadequacy for atonement. Guthrie comments (p. 300):

The outer room of the tabernacle, therefore, illustrates the whole era managed by the older covenant. It was a time in which the general populace could not draw near to God because provision had yet to be made for their consciences to be cleansed.

. . . The problem under the old covenant consisted of the sacrificial system's inability to resolve one's awareness of personal guilt. Thus, the outer room of the tabernacle illustrated the inner, spiritual condition of the people. Ultimately the conscience, not a material, earthly space, keeps a person from intimacy with God. Consequently, more than external regulations that dealt with practices regarding food, drink, and certain washings would be required to make entrance to the presence of God possible. These rituals simply were provisional, given until the new covenant system could be established.

b. Introduction to Christological arguments concerning superiority of the Son's offering for sin (9:11-12)

¹¹But when Christ appeared [as] high priest of the good things that have come,* [passing] through the greater and more perfect room not made with hands (that is, not of this creation) ¹²he entered once for all time into the [real] sanctuary, not by the blood of goats and calves but by his own blood, thus securing eternal redemption.

(1) When Christ became the great high priest of the new covenant he ushered in, the good things that have come, he passed through the front room of the heavenly tabernacle and entered once for all time into the true Holy of Holies, into the very presence of God in heaven.

(2) Unlike the high priests of the old covenant who each year entered the earthly Holy of Holies with the blood of animals, Jesus entered once for all into the heavenly Holy of Holies by his own blood, by his sacrificial death on the cross. Through that offering he has secured eternal redemption; he has provided for all eternity deliverance from sin's penalty.

c. Christ's superior blood (9:13-22)

¹³For if the blood of goats and bulls, with sprinkling ashes of a heifer, sanctifies those who have been defiled for the purity of the flesh, ¹⁴how much more will the blood of Christ, who through [the] eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works in order to minister to the living God.

¹⁵And for this reason he is [the] mediator of a new covenant, in order that, a death having occurred for redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, those having been called might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. ¹⁶For where there is a will, it is necessary to establish the death of the one who made it. ¹⁷For a will is effective in the case of dead persons, since it is never in force when the one who made it is living. ¹⁸Therefore not even the first [covenant] was instituted without blood. ¹⁹For when every command of the law had been spoken to all the people by Moses, he took the blood of the calves [and the goats]*, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people ²⁰saying, "This is the blood of the covenant that God commanded for you." ²¹And in the same way, he sprinkled with the blood the tabernacle and also all the vessels of the ministry. ²²Indeed, according to the law nearly everything is purified by blood, and without [the] shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

(1) Given that the blood of bulls and goats was accepted by God as purification for people, albeit purification at an external level, something that restored a formal degree of fellowship but which left a barrier to intimacy in the form of a lingering sense of guilt, then certainly the blood of Christ will *utterly* purify, will purify even our consciences from sin that we might serve God in a greater state of intimacy.

(2) Sprinkling ashes from a heifer is a reference to the procedure described in Numbers 19. A specially prepared mixture of water and ashes from a burned cow were sprinkled to cleanse the people from the ritual contamination of touching a dead body.

(3) As the sacrificial animal under the old covenant was to be without blemish or defect (Lev. 4:28, 9:3; Deut. 17:1), so Jesus offered himself without blemish to God in the sense he was morally flawless, absolutely sinless.

(4) Jesus offered himself through the eternal Spirit in the sense that the Holy Spirit strengthened and empowered him throughout his ministry, including his sacrificial death. Gerald Hawthorne writes in *The Presence & the Power* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1991) 183-184:

Understood in this way the phrase, "through the eternal Spirit," means that it was by the aid of, through the morally strengthening support of, by the power of the Spirit that Jesus offered himself as the perfect sacrifice to God. It thus is possible to conclude that the Holy Spirit even now at the end of Jesus' life, as throughout the whole of it, was playing a tremendously vital part in his ministry. For the Spirit was the instrument, the agent, the enabler by whose power Jesus achieved his greatest work on earth, that of providing eternal redemption for all (Heb. 9:12).

(5) The writer says in v. 15 that Jesus is the one through whom God's new covenant was brought into effect, and it was brought into effect in order that those having been called might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

(a) The new covenant was necessary for people to receive the promised eternal inheritance because the forgiveness available under the old covenant was based on the coming sacrifice of Christ. God forgave sins under that covenant on credit, so to speak, because Christ, the true efficacious sacrifice to which all the shadows of the old covenant pointed, was coming into the world.

(b) If Christ had not in fact become the sin offering, which act inaugurated the new covenant, there would be no eternal inheritance because the essential basis of all divine forgiveness, including that available under the shadows of the old covenant, would not exist. Put differently, the forgiveness of the old covenant required the coming of the new covenant because it required the Son's efficacious sacrifice and forgiveness is necessary to receive the promised eternal inheritance. See also, Rom. 3:24-26.

(c) Donald Hagner writes (p. 141):

The real answer to sins against the commandments of the Mosaic law is found not in the sacrifice of animals, but in the sacrifice of Christ. The new covenant thus contains within it the answer to the failure to abide by the requirements of the old covenant (cf. 8:12; 10:17-18). And, forgiveness experienced during the OT period depended finally – although this was hardly understood at the time – upon an event that was to take place in the future. The sacrifice of Christ is the answer to sin in every era, past and present, since it alone is the means of forgiveness.

(6) Verses 16-17 emphasize the link between Christ's death and the establishment of the new covenant. The writer does so by analogizing a covenant to a will, which analogy is invited by the mention of inheritance at the end of v. 15 and the fact the Greek word *diatheke*, meant both covenant and will. (In seeing a shift in meaning from covenant to will, I am in agreement with Bruce, Lightfoot, Thompson, Attridge, Koester, Ellingworth, Hagner, Johnson, Pfitzner, and DeSilva and in disagreement with Lane and Guthrie.) As a death is necessary for a will to become operational, so a death was necessary for the new covenant to take effect.

(7) Verses 18-20 show how this was true even of the first covenant, meaning the Mosaic covenant. Given the necessity of a death for the operation of a will, which is analogous to a covenant, not even the first covenant took effect without a death. As Ex. 24:3-8 shows, that covenant was instituted with the blood of a sacrifice.

(a) It is doubtful that the words "and the goats" were part of the original text of Hebrews, which is why the phrase is omitted in the NIV, REB, and TNIV. The earliest manuscript of Hebrews (P⁴⁶) does not contain them.

(b) The Hebrew writer reveals some details about the institution of the covenant in Exodus 24 that are not mentioned there. Specifically, he notes that water, scarlet wool, and hyssop were involved in the sprinkling and that the book of the covenant from which Moses read was sprinkled in addition to the people. Presumably the writer's audience was familiar with these additional details by way of tradition, and the Spirit, through the writer, confirms that tradition as accurate.

(8) Verse 21 focuses on the cleansing effect of blood in the later dedication of the tabernacle. It's not clear when Moses sprinkled the tabernacle and vessels with blood.

(a) Presumably it was in Exodus 40 where the Lord tells Moses (v. 9) to "take the anointing oil and anoint the tabernacle and all that is in it, *and consecrate* it and all its furniture, so that it may become holy." He was told at that same time (v. 13) to anoint *and consecrate* Aaron that he might serve the Lord as a priest. The anointing and consecration of Aaron reported in Leviticus 8 includes the application of both oil and blood. Bruce writes (p. 216), "But as Aaron and his sons were hallowed with the blood of the ram of consecration as well as with the oil of anointing when they were installed in their sacred office (Lev. 8:23f., 30), it might be inferred that the tabernacle and its furnishings, which were hallowed at the same time, were sprinkled with the blood in addition to being anointed with the oil."

(b) That this was a current understanding is clear from Josephus who remarked that Moses purified "the tabernacle and its vessels, both with oil . . . and with the blood of bulls and rams" (Bruce, 216). The Spirit is confirming through the author of Hebrews that this understanding is correct.

(9) The bottom line is given in v. 22. The purifying effect of sacrificial blood is all over the O.T., and it is central to divine forgiveness. See Lev. 17:11.

d. A sacrifice in heaven (9:23-24)

²³Therefore it was a necessity [that] the copies of the things in the heavens be purified with these things, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. ²⁴For Christ did not enter into a sanctuary made by hands, a representation of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God on our behalf.

(1) Given the purifying effect of blood, it was necessary for the earthly tabernacle and vessels to be purified with animal sacrifices, but purifying the

heavenly sanctuary required better sacrifices than those. Just as the high priest on the Day of Atonement sprinkled blood on and in front of the ark cover to make atonement for the Holy of Holies because of the defiling effect of the Israelites' uncleanness (Lev. 16:15-19), thereby making that space fit for continuing interaction between God and his people, so access to God's heavenly presence was opened by Christ's supremely efficacious sacrifice for sin.

(2) He appeared on our behalf in heaven itself paving the way for us to enter into God's presence (10:19-22). Guthrie notes (p. 315): "Attridge makes the important observation that the Day of Atonement analogy breaks down at this point. Our author says nothing about Christ sprinkling the blood in the heavenly realm since he does not wish to speak of the heavenly offering as separate from his death on the cross; they are one and the same."

e. The once-for-all offering (9:25-28)

²⁵Nor [was it] so that he would offer himself repeatedly, like the high priest [who] enters into the sanctuary with blood belonging to another, ²⁶for then it would have been necessary for him to suffer repeatedly from the foundation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages for removal of sins through the sacrifice of himself. ²⁷And just as it is destined for men to die once, and after this judgment, ²⁸so also Christ, having been offered up once in order to bear the sins of many, will appear for a second time for those who are eagerly waiting for him, without relation to sin [but] for salvation.

(1) Christ's entrance into the heavenly sanctuary was not to offer himself repeatedly, as in the earthly ritual of the Day of Atonement in which the high priest entered the Holy of Holies each year with the blood of animals, for in that case he, having existed eternally, would have had to die repeatedly from the foundation of the world, which obviously had not happened. Rather, he appeared at one time in history, in the first century, to provide forgiveness for all sinners through the sacrifice of himself. As Guthrie remarks (p. 316), "His sacrifice, because of its superior quality, is able to reach back to the time of creation and forward to the time of the consummation of the ages, fully cleansing the people of God."

(2) Christ appeared "at the end of the ages" in the sense his appearance marked the arrival of the last days, the inauguration of the final stage of redemptive history. As I said regarding Heb. 1:2, Jesus' coming, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, and pouring out of the Spirit, that complex of events, was the beginning of the last days.

(a) For example, Peter in Acts 2:17 identifies the outpouring of the Spirit as an event of the "last days," and in 2 Tim. 3:1-5 Paul describes

how people will be in the "last days" and then commands Timothy to avoid such people. See also, Jas. 5:3 and 2 Pet. 3:3.

(b) As Douglas Moo states in *The Letter of James*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000) 224:

With the death and resurrection of Jesus and pouring out of the Spirit, the "last days" have been inaugurated. This final age of salvation will find its climax in the return of Christ in glory. But – and here is the crucial point – the length of the age is unknown. Not even Jesus knew how long the "last days" would last (cf. Mark 13:32). What this means is that the return of Christ, as the next event in the salvation-historical timetable, is, from the time of the early church to our own day, "near," or "imminent." Every generation of Christians lives (or should live!) with the consciousness that the *parousia* could occur at any time and that one needs to make decisions and choose values based on that realization.

(c) John Stott puts it like this in *Romans* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994) 352:

[W]hat the apostles did know is that the kingdom of God came with Jesus, that the decisive salvation events which established it (his death, resurrection, exaltation and gift of the Spirit) had already taken place, and that God had nothing on his calendar before the *parousia*. It would be the next and the culminating event. So they were, and we are, living in "the last days." It is in this sense that Christ is coming "soon" (16:20). We must be watchful and alert, because we do not know the time.

(3) In verses 27-28 the writer compares Christ's death to that of ordinary humans and asserts that it is both similar to and different from the normal pattern (Koester, 429). Like other people, Christ died once; but unlike other people who after death face judgment, Christ after his death returns to bring salvation to others, that is, to deliver them from a negative judgment of condemnation.

f. An eternal sacrifice (10:1-18)

(1) The limited abilities of the law (10:1-4)

For the law, being a shadow of the good things that are coming not [the] very form of the things, is never able, by the same sacrifices which they offer continuously every year, to perfect those who approach. ²For otherwise would they not have ceased being offered, since the worshipers, having been cleansed once for all, would no longer have consciousness of sins? ³But in them [there is] a reminder of sins every year. ⁴For [it is] impossible [for] blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

(a) The annual sacrifices on the Day of Atonement prescribed by the law of Moses were unable to perfect the people in the sense indicated in 9:9; they were unable to perfect them with regard to the conscience, unable to resolve fully one's sense of guilt because there was an intuitive awareness of their inherent inadequacy for atonement. There was a nagging sense of guilt that was an impediment to intimacy with God.

(b) The law's sacrificial system was only a shadow of the real substance, a shadow of the true efficacious sacrifice it represented, the sacrifice of Christ. That sacrifice and the good things connected to it were in the future when the law was given to Moses – the law was a shadow of the good things that are coming – but as the writer made clear in 9:11, those good things have now come in Christ. As Pfitzner remarks (p. 136), "The 'good things' to which the Law pointed, like the cult upon which it was based, have become a reality (9:11). They are the 'better things . . . that belong to salvation' (6:9): a better covenant based on better promises and sacrifices (8:6; 9:23). They are the true 'form' (literally, 'image') in which God's will finds expression."

(c) If the sacrifices of the law had been the genuine basis for atonement for sins rather than simply a shadow of that genuine basis then there would be no need for them to be repeated annually because the first time would have been sufficient to get the job done. The assumption is that the substance, the true sacrifice, is perpetually effective and thus requires no repetition.

(d) The fact of the matter is that it is impossible for the blood of animals to be the actual basis of divine forgiveness. They do not have atoning efficacy; rather, the offering of them is merely the occasion for which forgiveness was granted under the old covenant on the basis of Christ's future sacrifice. Because they are shadows that lack atoning efficacy, animal sacrifices are inadequate to deal finally and fully with one's conscience, one's sense of guilt, and thus their repeated offering serves as a reminder of sins rather than as an ultimate cleansing.

(2) The superior sacrifice of Christ (10:5-10)

⁵Therefore, when entering into the world he says: "Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but you prepared a body for me. ⁶You did not take pleasure in burnt offerings and [offerings] for sin. ⁷Then I said, Look, I have come – it has been written about me in [the] scroll of [the] book – to do your will, O God." ⁸Saying first that sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and [offerings] for sin, which are offered according to [the] law, you did not desire or take pleasure in, ⁹then he said, "Look, I have come to do your will." He takes away the first in order to establish the second, ¹⁰by which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

(a) Because the sacrificial system of the law was a shadow that lacked atoning efficacy, Christ entered the human world in the incarnation, speaking the words of Ps. 39:6-8 (LXX; 40:6-8 MT) to God the Father as he embarked from heavenly glory.

(b) The point of the quotation is that, though God through the law prescribed offerings for sin, those offerings were never the fulfillment of his purpose, never what he desired in a final, ultimate sense. Rather, his ultimate intention was the complete and perfect forgiveness provided through Christ's obedient offering of his own body in sacrifice. The shadows were unsatisfactory in the sense they were not the substance.

(c) In accomplishing his ultimate purpose in Christ, God supplanted the old covenant's sacrificial system with the true sacrifice of Christ. In the words of v. 9b, he took away the first to establish the second. And as a result of that divine will, we have been sanctified through the offering of Jesus' body once for all. Praise God!

(3) Christ's priestly activity contrasted with that of the Levitical priests (10:11-14)

¹¹And every priest stands day after day ministering and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices which never are able to take away sins. ¹²But this one, having offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, sat down at [the] right [hand] of God, ¹³waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. ¹⁴For by one offering he has perfected for all time those being sanctified.

(a) Unlike the old-covenant priests whose ministry has a perpetually unfinished character, who stand day after day to offer repeatedly shadow sacrifices that lack true efficacy, Jesus sat down at the right hand of God after offering himself as the one-time, supremely efficacious sacrifice for sin. By that one offering he has perfected for all time those who come to God through him.

(b) Having completed his sacrificial offering, Jesus is at the right hand of the Father where he intercedes for us (7:25; 8:1-2). Lane writes (p. 267), "Although no priest of Aaron's line ever sat down in the presence of God in the earthly sanctuary, Christ has done so in the heavenly sanctuary (8:1-2)."

(c) Jesus will remain in the heavenly realm until his second coming, referred to in 9:28, at which time the kingdom he inaugurated at his first coming will be consummated. All things that in the interim have been allowed to resist his rule, all that has been allowed to conflict with God's ultimate will for creation, will be removed, including death itself through the resurrection. It is at the second coming that

the victory won at the cross will be fully manifested, but the writer does not here dwell on the matter.

(4) A reflection on the finality of Christ's sacrifice in light of the new covenant (10:15-18)

**¹⁵And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us, for after saying,
¹⁶"This [is] the covenant which I will make with them after those days, says the Lord; I will put my laws on their hearts and write them on their minds," ¹⁷[then he adds] "I will not remember their sins and lawless deeds any longer." ¹⁸Now where [there is] forgiveness of these things, [there is] no longer an offering for sin.**

(a) Returning to Jer. 31:33-34, the writer asserts that what he has argued is in precise accord with what the Spirit said earlier through the prophet Jeremiah. God promised to make a new covenant after the making of the Mosaic covenant. As I said when commenting on 8:10, I think the statement that God's laws will be on the hearts and minds of the members of the new covenant means that all members of the new covenant will have the indwelling Spirit and by virtue of his transforming work have a greater desire and ability to obey the will of God. We will be more internally motivated and empowered to live godly lives than were those under the Mosaic covenant, generally speaking.

(b) The effect of v. 17 is to connect the new covenant prophesied by Jeremiah with the experience of a new level of forgiveness, the fuller, perfect forgiveness provided by Christ's atoning death.

(c) Where a sacrifice has been provided that achieves full and perfect forgiveness, there is no need for any further sacrifice. They all are rendered obsolete and superfluous.