

## Holy Monday Meditation

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Text: Hebrews 9:11-15

The High Priest. The Tent. The Holy Place. The Sacrifices. The Blood. This is what the people of Israel needed for God to dwell with them. A way to cleanse them from their uncleanness, to purify them from their sin, so that God could dwell with them and His holiness would not destroy them. This was the Old Covenant, or Old Testament.

There had been many High Priests over the years - first Aaron, then his sons, and then down through the generations. The mobile tent became a permanent Temple once the people had settled in the Land. How many sacrifices had been offered over the years? Burnt offerings, sin offerings, guilt offerings, peace offerings, fellowship offerings, thank offerings. The number was countless. And the blood? If you could capture it all in one place at one time, a flood to rival Noah's, I'm sure.

Yet just as Noah's flood could not wipe out evil, neither could this flood of blood. As soon as one sacrifice was completed, another one was needed. There was always more sin, more guilt, more atonement needed.

But the Old Testament was never meant to be the final answer. It was never meant to last forever. It had a time and place, but it was always a pointer to what God really had in mind; what God really had up His divine sleeve. All those high priests who served and died would be surpassed by the One to come who would serve and die and then rise. The tent which became a Temple was destroyed, but another was raised in three days. All the sacrifices that weren't enough and never could be, anticipated the One to come that would be enough. And the blood . . . all that blood, poured about, sprinkled, splashed, *but never drunk*, awaited a time when a Lamb would shed His blood and fill a chalice for the whole world to drink.

And so in the fullness of time would appear God's High Priest, the mediator of a New Covenant, a New Testament. His tent a tent of flesh and bone, born of a virgin, without blemish or sin. The Lamb of God who takes away not just the sin of the offerer, but the sin of the world. The altar, a cross of wood. Here, the High Priest is the Lamb and the Lamb the High Priest, and His blood does what all the blood of goats and calves never could - an eternal redemption. A redemption for the ages. A redemption that never need be repeated. The blood of Christ for the life of the world.

And this - yes, this was meant to be the answer. The reality that the shadows of the Old Testament pointed to. The purification of body and soul. The cleansing of *our consciences from dead works to serve the living God*. To serve the living God in faith and love. For we have a promised eternal inheritance, the one provided by our Mediator, our

Saviour. And so we are free. Free from having to sacrifice for our sins, and so free to love and serve and forgive.

So if you are tempted to make others earn your love and service and forgiveness, to sacrifice something in exchange for your kindness - repent of that. That's the old. That's not you. Not anymore. You've been made new. You live in the new. Christ's baptismal flood raising you to a new life. The Body of Christ given to you. The Blood of Christ poured into you. The Spirit of God living in you. And so His service, His love, His forgiveness now living in you for others. Your service and love and forgiveness a reflection of His.

That's what this week is all about. We call it Holy Week because it is the week when your holiness was provided for you. This is the week Jesus has made all things new.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son (+) and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.