

The season Lent is almost over. When it ends with Palm Sunday, next week, we begin Holy Week, where we celebrate and remember the last week of our Savior's earthly life – his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, his celebrating the Passover with his disciples and instituting what we now know as the Lord's Supper, his betrayal, his arrest, his trials, his scourging, his death and finally his glorious resurrection.

We know a couple of things as we compare Scripture with Scripture. And remember, that I have told you that is the best way of interpreting Scripture and not taking things out of context.

The first thing that we have seen is that all that happened to our Savior was prophesied in the Old Testament. From his birth, his ministry, his betrayal, his death and resurrection were all predicted in the Old Testament. We have looked at the number of prophecies that were fulfilled on numerous occasions, so that is not what I'd like to focus on today.

What I would like to focus on is how all the Old Testament Sacrifices looked forward to the one final and perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross at Calvary.

After God, through Moses, led the children of Israel out of Egypt, He set up a series of sacrifices for the people to follow. There were daily sacrifices, weekly sacrifices and yearly sacrifices, that need to be repeated continually in order for the people to have forgiveness of their sins.

God had instructed the people to build an altar and gave very specific instructions on how the sacrifices were to be offered. One thing that must not be forgotten, is that you had a sinner in the person of the High Priest offering the sacrifice, so it was an imperfect sacrifice, but none the less, it was still commanded by God. And then again, the other important point is that they had to continually be repeated – and the reason for that is that they were only shadows of things to come.

We read these words in Hebrews 8:3-5: *“For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Therefore it is necessary that this One also have something to offer. For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law; who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, “See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.”*”

And then in the verses just prior to our Epistle lesson from Hebrews 9, we read: Hebrews 9:6-10 (READ). Notice that it clearly tells us that it was symbolic. As we see in both passages it was symbolic of heavenly things and it looked forward to what our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ would do on the cross at Calvary where he died for the sins of those who believe in him.

Turn with me then to our passage from Hebrews 9, beginning at verse 11, which I'd like to read again – Hebrews 9:11-15 (READ).

Now, as we look at verse 11 we see how this all looked forward to Christ. 11:9 (READ). Notice clearly that our Savior came as our High Priest to offer the one final sacrifice for sins. Again, as we compare Scripture with Scripture we see that our Savior fulfilled the three most important Old Testament offices – Prophet, Priest and

King.

As we go on we see that he did not offer the blood of goats and calves – but his own blood that he shed for us at Calvary. And he did this, as the text says, 11:12: “*Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.*”

The High Priest would enter the Most Holy Place, otherwise known as the Holy of Holies with the blood a sacrificed animal. Not so with Christ – he entered with His own blood.

His own blood, and as the text says – *once for all* – in other words, he made the one final and perfect sacrifice for sins and obtained, eternal redemption. There did not need be any more sacrifices.

This is why we as Protestants do not celebrate “The Mass”, as do Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches. The Mass is a sacrifice – in fact, it is often called the Sacrifice of the Mass. And that is why most Roman Catholic altars are made of Marble, because that is what the sacrifices were offered on.

So, in effect they are doing two things. First, they are sacrificing Christ every time they celebrate the Mass and secondly, and very importantly, they are saying that the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross was not sufficient, and therefore has to be repeated. Which we do not agree with.

But, as our text says, the sacrifice of Christ was *once for all*. It does not have to be repeated.

The other important truth that we see from our passage is that the sacrifice of Christ, *once for all* was necessary. This is what we read in 11:13-14 (READ).

Again, as we compare Scripture with Scripture we read these words in the next chapter of Hebrews 10:1-4: “*For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.*”

We see again that the Old Testament sacrifices were a shadow of things to come. When offered in faith they looked forward to the one final and perfect sacrifice of Christ on the Cross. Because as we read: *For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.*

The reason for all this is seen in the concluding words of the section that we are looking at today: 11:15: “*And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.*”

The original covenant that God made with man – the covenant of works – was broken by Adam and Eve. God had given them everything, but they were not to eat of the fruit of the tree of Knowledge and good and evil. When they did, they sinned, and that is when sin entered the world.

You might remember that immediately after the fall of man, God promised a Savior. So again, taking the

scriptures as a whole, we know that those Old Testament Sacrifices that God established looked forward to the one final perfect sacrifice of Christ, as we have seen today.

That new covenant that our passage talks about is the Covenant of Grace, where God saves us by His grace through faith in Christ. As we read in the familiar words of Ephesians 2:8-9: *“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”*

We are not saved by keeping the law, but by faith in the completed work of Christ on the cross, where he shed his blood for us and our salvation.

So, as we think about this season of Lent, and what follows – the last week of our Savior’s earthly life, let us remember that he shed his own blood for us, once for all.