

引言 INTRODUCTION

Once and for all. You know how that feels when you reach an important milestone of your life. Perhaps it is when you passed a big exam. I said to myself when I graduated from seminary: “No more school!” That does not mean I will stop learning. But I do not intend to study for another degree. You will experience a sense of relief when you submit the last payment for your car loan or mortgage. Or it is the last day of work before you retire. You accomplish something big after months and even years of effort. The past burdens are off your shoulders. I wonder if our Lord felt the same way when He breathed the last on the cross. He cried out: “It is finished!” There will be no more pain and suffering. Or it was when He rose from the death in that morning. Jesus had conquered sin and death for us. Anyone can be saved by God’s grace through faith in Jesus. However, non-believers throughout ages still try to earn salvation in their own ways. They rely on good work or they put their hope in various religions. They will only fail. Some Jewish Christians among the readers of Hebrews were tempting to go back to the old way. But as the author states over and over again, obeying the Law and offering animal cannot save anyone. He continues his comparison between earthly ceremonies and the heavenly worship as we come to the second half of chapter 9. The priests served in a cloth tent. This mobile worship place was but a copy of the true sanctuary in heaven. Those rituals only provide temporary cleansing. But Jesus’ death can give us eternal salvation. Since Jesus offers us this one and only redemptive grace, we should commit to Him once and for all.

解釋 EXPLANATION

1. 神的子民得潔淨 God’s People Sanctified (v. 16-22)

We said before that covenants in the Bible are closely related to the Law and the sacrificial system. God’s people must be sanctified before they could get close to Him. Let us begin by reading **verse 16-22**. The passage reviews some sanctification rituals in the Old Testament. The sin barrier between humans and God must be removed before the two sides can meet. The author uses an interesting analogy in verses 16 and 17 to illustrate this point. A person prepares a will when he is still alive. This legally-binding document specifies how he wants to allocate his inheritance. Perhaps his wife will get a portion and the rest will be divided among his children. Everything is written clearly to avoid future dispute. Those terms will not be carried out until after the death of the person. A specific condition must be met to trigger the result. Other examples will be like a student has to finish all the required courses and maintain a certain GPA before he/she can graduate. An employee has to attain particular performance before getting a year-end bonus. Similarly, the death of an animal will result in ritual cleansing. The idea is that an animal dies for the sins of people. The author relates the cleansing effect of blood with the making of a covenant. He recalls the incident in Exodus 24 when God made a covenant with His people at Mount Sinai. After God gave them the Ten Commandments and other regulations, Moses set up an altar and presented animal offerings. Next, he sprinkled animal blood on the altar and read the Law to his people. Everyone responded that they agreed to follow what God said. Then Moses dipped the same blood and sprinkled it on the people. The author quotes what

Moses said that day in verse 20: **“This is the blood of the covenant that God commanded for you.”** The animals died on behalf of people and cleansed their sins. That enabled them to draw near to God in a covenantal relationship. Those animals also suffered from the curse in the covenant that death would be the result if anyone violated the terms. Therefore, the slaughtering of animals removed sins and also reminded people of the penalty. People knew that they were in God’s covenant when they felt blood splashing on them. It is like a stamp on people’s hands to indicate that they are in. But such security can easily lead to complacency. People might be glad to make a covenant with God while overlooking their obligations to stay in that relationship. They must observe the Law. For example, they had to treat each other fairly in the society. They must also avoid some customs of the Canaanites. They should stay pure by not marrying foreign people. In essence, they must do their parts and remain loyal to God. A good start is important. But one must also finish well. Parents hope to send their kids to good schools. But young people have to study hard in every course. Job seekers will be excited if they are hired by prestigious companies. But employees with inferior performance will not stay long in their jobs. Brothers and sisters: do not be satisfied that you are saved and you have received baptism to confirm your faith. Continue to build up your relationship with the Lord. Love God, love His Word and His people. Use the gifts and talents God has given you to serve in the church. Then your spiritual life will keep growing. The ritual cleansing was not only done on humans, but it was also for cleaning various utensils in the ceremonies. Besides animal blood, the author of Hebrews also mentions water, scarlet wool and hyssop. Unlike humans, objects like the tabernacle and altar will not commit sin. The purpose is to sanctify those items to be used by God. Remember the structure was built for worshipping God. He would descend into the Most Holy Place when people called on His name. He is the recipient of animal sacrifice. He is the audience when people sang. The worship place must be clean to welcome God. That was why Jesus was mad when He saw some people turning the temple court into a market place. They sold animals to be used as offering and they set up booths to exchange money, because there was only one acceptable currency for transaction. During major Jewish festivals, people came from all over the place to Jerusalem. They had to pay temple tax and buy animals for sacrifice. Many merchants took advantage of others by charging extra. But more importantly, they blocked the way for people to enter the temple. Therefore, Jesus cleared the temple court by chasing the animals away and turning over the booths. Our hearts also need to be sanctified before we come to worship. We can easily be distracted by little things. Perhaps your children get up late and you are not quite happy about it. I have that situation before too. That negative emotion will affect my relationship with family members and with God, not to mention that I come here to serve God and you! I need to clear those obstacles even before I step into the building. I need to apologize to my family and confess to God. Jesus said if we have a conflict with someone when we present a gift to God, we should leave the offering aside and reconcile with the person first. If we find it uneasy to see a person with whom we have glitches, how much more uncomfortable it will be to meet God when we hold onto our sins? Therefore, I strongly encourage everyone to come in here a few minutes earlier. Spend some time to quiet before God. If the Holy Spirit reminds you about a disagreement with another member, or even unconfessed sins, go settle those issues first. Another frequent distraction comes from our phone. I know it is very tempting to check incoming messages. Put it away and silence it. That is why we encourage everyone to bring a Bible instead of using a phone App. Other times our mind will drift to things like lunch, grocery shopping, Chinese school, laundry, etc. Plan things ahead! We must make an effort to minimize any possible interruption so that we can full focus on worshipping God.

2. 神的兒子被犧牲 God's Son Sacrificed (v. 23-28)

People must be sanctified before they can approach God. But offering animals can only provide temporary and incomplete cleansing. In comparison, God's only Son Jesus Christ sacrificed Himself and gave us eternal salvation. Now we will read **verse 23-28**. The author presents an argument from the lesser to the greater in verses 23 and 24. The tabernacle was only a copy of the true and heavenly sanctuary. If a cloth tent requires detailed cleansing before a ceremony, then the real sanctuary in heaven will need more thorough cleaning. But why? Heaven is the dwelling place of God. Everything up there should be holy and spotless. Let us go back to the tabernacle for a moment. Both the earthly worship place and the priests must be sanctified to prepare for God's presence. Likewise, the heavenly sanctuary also needs cleaning, not for God but for us. Our sins must be removed before we can meet the holy God. Moreover, once we enter heaven we will stay there forever. Therefore, it needs Jesus' death like a stronger detergent to cleanse us. He sacrificed Himself on our behalf. He removes all our blemishes like scrubbing food residues off dishes. I worked in a plant research lab before I went to the seminary. I handled plant tissues growing in petri dishes. Everything must be germ-free, otherwise bacteria and fungi will render the cultures useless. Every person has a special work-bench. Air blowing out from it passes through filters to strain off microorganisms. We wipe down the work area with alcohol or bleach. All the tools have to be sterilized too. Those of you who work in a biology lab know exactly what I am talking about. A little impurity will ruin an experiment. How much more thorough we have to be purged from sin before we meet God? Thanks to Jesus! He completely removes our sins when we confess to Him. The author elaborates that Jesus' sacrifice is much more superior to the work of the priests. Jesus offered Himself one time on the cross. But priests have to repeat their services. Jesus entered into the heavenly sanctuary and stays there forever. But the high priests can only go into the Most Holy Place once a year and leave soon after the ceremony is finished. Jesus' redemption is also effective. His grace can cover the sins of people from any background in any era. No one is too broken beyond repair. Jesus redeems us to be God's children. The old covenant damaged by disobedience has been superseded by the new covenant. Jesus said to His disciples in Mark 14:24 when He set up the communion: ... **"This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many."** The words are very similar to what Moses said to the Israelites on mount Sinai. The ineffective and old covenant established by animals' blood has been replaced by the new and eternal covenant inaugurated by Jesus' own blood. Maintenance of covenantal relationship is no longer through observance of the Law. We obey God out of love instead of duty. Jesus affirmed us with His never-failing promises. He will never leave us nor forsake us. He will be with us until the end of the world. Before Jesus went back to heaven, He guaranteed His disciples that one day He will return. Verses 27 and 28 of the Hebrews passage tell us two things Jesus will do when He comes back: **27 And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, 28 so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.** When Jesus arrives, He will carry out a final judgment for sin. As much as we do not want to think about it, the Bible clearly states this fact. We hope that the world will remain peaceful and prosperous forever. However, the Bible says that natural and man-made disasters will be more frequent and severe. Every now and then we show concerns when we watch the news. We are afraid that some dictators may shoot a few nuclear missiles and end it altogether. Even without any catastrophe, life itself is full of uncertainties. Accidents can

strike us at any time. True and everlasting peace can only be found in Jesus. His return is a great news to Christians. He will save us into heaven. We have been saved the moment we received Jesus. Our eternal destiny is secure. However, we still live in this mortal body. The Bible says that God will give us a new body at Jesus' second coming. Sin will be no more. Once we enter heaven, we will forever be in God's presence. Our hope is not in Wall Street or our government, but in God. His promises stay forever. No one knows when Jesus will return. But the time is getting closer. We should seize opportunities to share the gospel with those who do not know Jesus. There will be no second chance if a person does not receive Jesus in this life. I do not like to use fear as a tactic to persuade people to accept Jesus. What is the point of believing in Jesus under compulsion just because they do not want to go to hell? Salvation is about making Jesus our Savior and our Lord. If we love Jesus in this life and obey Him, then we cannot wait to spend eternity with Him. Christianity is about transformation of our lives. It is not a transaction to give us a ticket to heaven. We need God's help to change our mindset. Then attending church will not be as burdensome as going to school or work. Money offering will not be painful like paying tax or bills. Serving in the church will be a joy too. We need to realize that it is an utmost honor to become God's children. Jesus loved us first by sacrificing Himself. We should practice loving Him in this life so that we will love Him more in eternity.

結論 CONCLUSION

Since Jesus offers us this one and only redemptive grace, we should commit to Him once and for all. We can never go to God on our own terms. But Jesus paved the way for us with His own blood. Let me conclude with a true story. Pastor Max Lucado writes about a missionary in one of his books. A contagious disease broke out in a tribe in Brazil. People died of the sickness every day. Treatment was available at a hospital nearby. But there was a problem. A river separates the village and the hospital. The local people were afraid to swim across the water because they believed that there were some evil spirits in it. To immerse into that water meant risking their lives. The missionary tried to convince them that everything was safe. He told them that he swam across the river many times. They were not impressed. He took them to the river bank and he walked into the water and even splashed water on the villagers. But nothing calmed their fear. Finally, the missionary dived into the water and moments later he emerged on the other side. Everyone erupted in cheers. They followed him and got into the water. To the tribal people, the man entered into a dead zone but he came out unharmed. That was what Jesus did. He told people that there should be no fear of death. But they would not listen. Jesus caused three dead persons – a boy, a young lady and a good friend who had buried in a tomb for four days – to come back to life. But not even Jesus' disciples believed in Him. Eventually, Jesus entered into death and came out alive. Jesus proved to be the Son of God. Easter is not only a fascinating spring-time story. It is the gospel every Christian needs to keep in their hearts and to proclaim at any time.

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一次搞定。當你到達人生的一個重要里程碑時，你知道那是什麼感覺。也許是當你通過一次重要的考試的時候。我從神學院畢業時對自己說：「我從此不用再上學了！」這並不等於我會停止學新東西。但我不打算讀另一個學位。當你付清車子或房子的貸款時，你會感到如釋重負。或者是你退休前的最後一天上班。經過幾個月甚至多年的努力，你達到了目標。過去的重擔已經卸下了。我不曉得耶穌在十字架上呼吸最後一口氣時是否也有同樣的感覺。祂呼喊：「成了！」不再有任何的痛苦。或者是那天早上祂從死裡復活的時候。耶穌為我們戰勝了罪和死亡。任何人都可以因信耶穌而蒙恩得救。然而，歷代以來的非信徒仍然試圖以自己的方法獲得救恩。他們靠做善事或將希望寄託在不同的宗教上。他們最終只會失敗。希伯來書讀者中的一些猶太基督徒想要回到舊的方法。但正如作者一再地強調，遵守法律和獻動物為祭無法救任何人。當我們來到第9章的後半部分時，他繼續比較地上的儀式和天上的崇拜。祭司們在會幕中事奉。這個流動的敬拜場所不過是天上聖所的一個模型。那些儀式只暫時洗淨人的罪，唯有耶穌的死可以帶給我們永遠的救恩。既然耶穌賜給我們這唯一的救恩，我們就應該向祂永遠委身。

解釋 EXPLANATION

1. 神的子民得潔淨 God's People Sanctified (v. 16-22)

我們之前說過，聖經中的盟約與律法和獻祭的制度有密切關係。人必須先潔淨自己，然後才能靠近神。讓我們先讀**第 16-22 節**。這段經文回顧了舊約中的一些潔淨儀式。人與神之間罪的障礙必須先除去，雙方才能接近。作者在第 16 和 17 節中用了一個有趣的類比來說明這一點。一個人在他還活著的時候準備他的遺囑。這份法律文件詳細說明他希望怎樣分配他的遺產。也許他的妻子會得到一部分，其餘的將分配給他的孩子。一切都寫得很清楚，以免日後發生爭議。這些條款要等到那個人去世後才能生效。必須滿足特定的條件才會導致結果。其他例子就像學生必須完成所有課程並保持一定的成績才能畢業。員工必須達到要求的表現才能得到年終獎金。同樣，動物的死亡帶來潔淨的功效。其中的含義是動物為人的罪而犧牲。作者將血的潔淨效果與立約聯繫起來。他回憶起出埃及記 24 章中神在西奈山與祂的子民立約的情形。神給他們十誡和其他規條之後，摩西設立了一座祭壇並獻上動物。接著，他將動物的血灑在祭壇上，並

向他的子民宣讀律法。每個人都回答說他們同意按照神的要求去做。然後摩西蘸一些血，灑在百姓身上。作者在第 20 節引用摩西那天所說的話：「這血就是神與你們立約的憑據。」這些動物代替人們死去，洗淨了他們的罪。如此人與神立約，並且可以靠近祂。這些動物也承擔了盟約中的詛咒，如果任何人違反條款，就會導致死亡。因此，宰殺動物可以除罪，也警惕人們罪的後果。當人們感到血灑在他們身上時，他們就知道他們是在神的約中。這就像在人的手上蓋一個印章，證明他們符合資格了。但這種安全感很容易導致自滿。人們可能很高興能與神立約，卻忽略了保持這種關係的義務。他們必須遵守法律。例如，他們必須在社會上彼此公平對待。他們還必須避免一些迦南人的風俗。他們要保持血統純正，不能與外國人通婚。整體來說，他們必須做好自己的本分並對神忠心。一個好的開始很重要，但也必須有美好的結束。父母希望把孩子送到好學校，但是年輕人也必須用功學習。一個人被大公司聘用肯定會很興奮，但如果他的工作表現不好，可能很快便會被解雇。弟兄姐妹們：不要滿足於你已經得救，已經接受浸禮來見證你的信心。你必須繼續建立與主的關係。愛神、愛祂的話語和祂的子民。運用神賜給你的恩賜和才幹在教會中服事。這樣你的屬靈生命就會不斷成長。潔淨的儀式不僅是做人的身上，也要做在敬拜用的器具上。除了用動物的血，希伯來書的作者還提到了水、朱紅色絨和牛膝草。會幕和祭壇不像人會犯罪。潔淨的目的是要使這些東西成為聖潔，供神使用。我們要記住，會幕是為敬拜神而設立的。當人們呼求神的名字之時，祂就會降臨到至聖所。祂接受人所獻上的動物。當人們唱歌時，神是聽眾。敬拜的地方必須潔淨，以便迎接神。因此當耶穌看到有人把聖殿的院子變成市場時，祂便很生氣。他們賣動物作為祭品，並設立攤位兌換金錢，因為當時只有一種可以用作交易的貨幣。在主要的猶太節期，人們從四面八方來到耶路撒冷。他們必須繳納聖殿稅並買動物作為祭品。許多商人趁機謀取暴利。但更重要的是，他們擋住了人們進入聖殿的路。因此，耶穌將動物趕走並推倒攤販的桌子，從而清理聖殿的院子。在我們來敬拜之前，我們的心也需要先被潔淨。我們很容易被一些小事情分散注意力。也許你的孩子晚了起床，你因此不高興。我也曾經碰過這種情況。那些負面情緒會影響我與家人、與神的關係，更何況我來這裡是為了事奉神和你們！因此在我踏進大門之前，我必須清除這些障礙。我需要向家人道歉，和向神認罪。耶穌說，當我們準備向神獻禮物，如果我們想起與某人有衝突時，我們應該要把禮物放在一邊，先與那個人和好。如果我們與有過節的人見面時覺得尷尬，若我們不肯認罪，接近神之時豈不是會更難為情嗎？因此，我鼓勵大家提前幾分鐘進來大堂，花一點時間安靜在神的面前。如果聖靈提醒你與其他弟兄姐妹有分歧，甚至是有未承認的罪，你應該先把問題解決。另一個常見的干擾來自我們的手機。我知道每當有信息進來時，我們都會有衝動看一下電話。請把你的手機收起來，並把聲音關掉。這就

是為什麼我們鼓勵大家帶自己的紙本聖經而不用電子版的聖經。此外，我們有時候也會想到其他事情，例如午餐、買菜、中文學校、洗衣服等等。建議你預先做好計劃！我們必須儘量減少任何可能的干擾，以便我們可以全心地敬拜神。

2. 神的兒子被犧牲 God's Son Sacrificed (v. 23-28)

神的子民必須先得到潔淨，才能靠近神。但是獻上動物只能提供暫時和不完全的潔淨。相比之下，神的獨生子耶穌基督犧牲了自己，賜給我們永恆的救恩。現在我們讀 **23-28 節**。作者在第 23 和 24 節提出一個從小到大的論點。會幕只是真實的天上聖所的副本。如果用布造的帳篷需要在敬拜之前要詳細的清潔，那麼真正的天上聖所便需要更徹底的潔淨。但為什麼呢？天堂是神的居所，上面的一切都應該是聖潔，一塵不染的。讓我們先回到會幕。地上的敬拜場所和祭司都必須先潔淨，迎接神的降臨。同樣，天上的聖所也需要清潔，不是為神，而是為我們。我們必須先除掉罪，然後才能朝見聖潔的神。而且，一旦我們進入天堂，我們就永遠住在那裡。因此，耶穌的死像更強力的洗潔精可以潔淨我們。祂為我們犧牲了自己，除去我們所有的瑕疵，就像擦掉盤子上食物的渣滓。在去神學院讀書之前，我在植物研究實驗室工作。我處理在培養皿中生長的植物組織。一切都必須無菌，否則細菌的感染會使實驗前功盡棄。每個人都有一個特殊的工作台，吹出來的空氣通過過濾器過濾掉微生物。我們用酒精或漂白劑把工作區域擦乾淨。所有工具也必須消毒。在生物實驗室工作的人都知道我在說什麼。想想看，我們來到神面前的時候，我們豈不是更需要徹底地除掉罪？感謝耶穌！當我們向祂認罪時，祂就完全洗淨我們的罪。作者詳細解釋耶穌的犧牲比祭司的工作更超越。耶穌在十字架一次獻上自己，但祭師必須重複他們的服事。耶穌進入天上的聖所，並永遠住在那裡。但大祭司每年只能進入至聖所一次，儀式結束後他便要離開。耶穌的救贖也是有效的。祂的恩典能夠遮蓋任何時代任何背景的人的罪。沒有任何人是破碎到無法修復的。耶穌拯救我們成為神的兒女。因人的悖逆而被破壞的舊約已經被新約所取代。耶穌在馬可福音 14:24 設立聖餐時對門徒說：…「**這是我立約的血，為多人流出來的。**」這句話與摩西在西奈山對以色列人所說的話非常相似。以動物的血所立無效的舊約，已被耶穌自己的血所立的新而永恆的約所代替。維持盟約關係不再是通過遵守律法。我們順服神是出於愛而不是責任。耶穌向我們肯定祂永不改變的應許。祂永遠不會撇下我們，也不會丟棄我們。祂與我們同在，直到世界的末了。耶穌回到天堂之前，祂向門徒保證有一天祂會回來。希伯來書第 27 和 28 節告訴我們耶穌回來後要做的兩件事：**27 按著定命，人人都有一死，死後且有審判。28 像這樣，基督既然一次被獻，擔當了多人的罪，將來要向那等候他的人第二次顯現，並與罪無關，乃是為拯救他們。**當耶穌回來的時候，祂

將執行對罪的最後審判。儘管我們不願意去想，但聖經清楚地指出這個事實。我們希望世界永遠保持太平與繁榮。然而，聖經說自然和人為的災難會更加頻繁和嚴重。當我們看新聞時，我們會有憂慮。我們擔心一些獨裁者可能會發射幾枚核子彈同歸於盡。就算沒有任何災難，生活本身也充滿了不確定性。意外隨時可能會臨到我們身上。只有在耶穌裡才能找到真正永恆的平安。耶穌的再來對於基督徒來說是一個好消息。祂會拯救我們進入天堂。我們在接受耶穌的那一刻就得救了，我們永恆的結局已經確定了。然而，我們仍然生活在這個暫時的身體裡。聖經說，當耶穌回來時，神會賜給我們一個新的身體。罪惡將不再存在。一旦我們進入天堂，我們將永遠與神同在。我們的盼望不是在華爾街或我們的政府，而是在神。祂的應許永遠堅定。沒有人知道耶穌什麼時候再來，但時間肯定是越來越近。我們應該把握機會與不認識耶穌的人分享福音。如果一個人在今生不接受耶穌，就沒有第二次機會了。我不喜歡用恐懼作為勸籲人們接受耶穌的手段。只是因為怕下地獄而勉強相信耶穌有什麼意思？接受救恩是讓耶穌成為我們的救主和生命的主。如果我們在今生愛耶穌並順服祂，我們便會熱切期待與祂共度永恆。基督的信仰是關乎於我們生命的轉變，而不是拿到天堂門票的交易。我們需要神幫助我們改變心態。這樣來聚會就不會像上學或上班那麼乏味。奉獻金錢也不會像交稅或付賬單那樣痛苦。在教會服事也一定會充滿喜樂。我們需要意識到，成為神的兒女是一種莫大的榮幸。耶穌犧牲自己先來愛我們。我們應該在今生操練愛神，以便在永恆中更愛祂。

結論 CONCLUSION

既然耶穌賜給我們這唯一的救恩，我們就應該向祂永遠委身。我們永遠無法靠自己的方式去見神，但耶穌用祂的血為我們鋪路。讓我以一個真實的故事作結束。馬克斯·盧卡多牧師在他的一本書中提到一位宣教士。那時在巴西的一個部落發生傳染病，每天都有人死於那個疾病。在附近的一所醫院就有解救的辦法。但是有一個問題，村莊和醫院被一條河隔開。當地人不敢游泳過去，因為他們相信水裡面有精靈，進入水中就等於冒生命危險。宣教士試圖說服他們會沒事的。他指出他多次游過河，但他們卻無動於衷。他把他們帶到河邊，他走進水裡，甚至把水濺到了村民身上。但沒有什麼能挪去他們的恐懼。最後，宣教士跳到水裡，過了一會，他從對岸冒出來。每個人都發出歡呼。於是他們便學宣教士那樣，鑽到水裡。對於村民來說，那個人進入一個死亡區域，但他竟能毫髮無傷地出來。這就是耶穌所做的。祂告訴人們不用害怕死亡，但他們不聽。耶穌使三個死去的人復活：包括一個男孩、一個年輕女士和一個埋在墳墓裡四天的好朋友。但就連耶穌的門徒也不相信祂。最後，耶穌親自進入死亡，然後活過來。耶穌證明祂是神的兒子。復活節不只是一個春天的精彩故事，乃是每個基督徒都需要牢記並隨時宣講的福音。