

Sunday January 8<sup>th</sup> 2012  
The Letter to the Hebrews  
Part Twenty Eight

1). Last week we had spent some time in review of our Book, especially with regards to the progressive revelation of the 5 parts of the warning that we find there. And it seems no accident that the Lord requires us to be focused on this very thing at this particular time.

a). I am sure we will remember this particular incident from the Book of Ruth - Ru 1:12 *"Turn back, my daughters, go-for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, if I should have a husband tonight and should also bear sons, 13 "would you wait for them till they were grown? Would you restrain yourselves from having husbands? No, my daughters; for it grieves me very much for your sakes that the hand of the LORD has gone out against me!" 14 Then they lifted up their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her. 15 And she said, "Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law." 16 But Ruth said: "Entreat me not to leave you, Or to turn back from following after you; For wherever you go, I will go; And wherever you lodge, I will lodge; Your people shall be my people, And your God, my God. 17 Where you die, I will die, And there will I be buried. The LORD do so to me, and more also, If anything but death parts you and me." 18 When she saw that she was determined to go with her, she stopped speaking to her.*

b). When we had studied the Book of Ruth we had seen this particular event in the same way that we saw Rebekah's decision to go with Abraham's servant – we saw both as a type of the offer that is made to all the eternally saved – to follow the leading of the Spirit, through the Word, to make the journey in order to become part of the Bride of Christ – in other words to choose to commit ourselves wholeheartedly to the race of faith.

c). This is an absolutely correct interpretation, but along with this we will realize that we what we see here in Ruth, what we have come to call an 'Orpah Moment', is not a one-time event for us, but rather it pictures the many opportunities that we have during the course of our race to turn back, to leave our pursuit of the narrow path to walk the broad way that leads to destruction.

d). For Orpah, and indeed for anyone who chooses to turn back there will be rationalization and justification, however we should remember what the scriptures

say - Pr 14:12 ¶ *There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.*

e). And so to state the obvious, we are at one of those Orpah moments right now, both individually and collectively. It is a moment of tremendous excitement and incredible potential and at the same time a moment of the gravest danger.

f). So we might ask the question, ‘Why is this Orpah moment different from any other?’ Well in one respect it isn’t as always we are faced with the choice to go on or to turn back. Then in another respect it is significantly more pertinent because of our study of the Book of Hebrews, and particularly because of where we find ourselves in the Book of Hebrews at this time.

g). Have we ever realized that Hebrews is a Book that deals with going on and the consequences of turning back, and all of course within the context of the coming Kingdom?

h). Heb 6:1 ¶ *Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, 2 of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. 3 And this we will do if God permits.*

i). Heb 10:37 *"For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry. 38 Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him." 39 But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.*

j). And then we find ourselves within the Book coming to the end of Chapter 9 and therefore ready to move into Chapter 10 – a Chapter in which we find the 4<sup>th</sup> facet of our warning which talks to us very clearly about a point of no return for those who choose to walk like Demas walked - 2Ti 4:10 *for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica*

k). Heb 10:26 *For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. 28 Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29 Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The LORD will judge His people." 31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

l). In the Book of Ruth we see the Lord’s focus upon the one who pictures for us the Christian who is successful in the race of faith, Ruth, and we had noted at the time that nothing further is said about Orpah after she has turned back and

that we have to look elsewhere in scripture if we wanted more information about those Christians whom Orpah pictures. Well, that which we have just read here in Hebrews would give us the commentary on that which awaits the Orpah Christian; the Christian who has begun the journey to Bethlehem, the House of Bread, and then turns back, considering this present world of more value than the great and precious promises that still remain yet future.

2). Hebrews is also a Book that provides extra commentary for us on that which is written about the Church of Ephesus in the second Chapter of Revelation in which the recipients of our letter are admonished to remember their first works, their first love as they continue in trial and tribulation - Heb 10:32 *But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings: 33 partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated; 34 for you had compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven. 35 Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. 36 For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise:*

a). Now many of us are struggling under trial and tribulation even now. Many of you I suspect feel as if you are in the olive press and are being squeezed and squeezed – well it's only by squeezing the olive that you get the oil and only by our squeezing that the flesh will die that we may live according to the spirit.

b). And no wonder of it really – if we remember, we have studied the Book of Ephesians, we then re-visited Ephesians – we have studied 1 + 2 Peter and Jude along with them – and now the Book of Hebrews. Given all of this are we really surprised that our faith will be tested? – 1Pe 1:6 ¶ *In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, 8 whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 receiving the end of your faith--the salvation of your souls.*

1Pe 4:12 ¶ *Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; 13 but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.*

c). And then given the way that the Holy Spirit has opened the scriptures to us in the way that we see in - 1Co 2:9 *But as it is written: Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared*

*for those who love Him."10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.11 For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.13 These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*

Is it any wonder that we find the world, the flesh and the devil ranged against us? - 1Pe 5:8 ¶ *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. 9 Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.10 ¶ But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.*

d). Now here is the thing – as we continue under trial and tribulation, besieged by the world, the flesh and the devil, we can become weary, we can become frustrated and if we are not careful we can even become bitter. And then in the midst of this the Word of the Kingdom can become dull and common place and appear to be far removed from the enthusiasm and excitement when the scriptures were first opened to us.

e). And it is in this place that we may find ourselves at that Orpah moment – hence the warning we see in Hebrews, the judgment we see in Revelation Chapter 2 of the Church of Ephesus; the reason why the Lord wants us to see this right now.

f). The Lord has not moved and nor does He change; if our relationship with Him is not what it was it is because we have chosen to change it, because we have received the lie in place of the truth – ‘Remember therefore from where you have fallen.....’

3). We've probably never realized this, but our pursuit of the Kingdom must of necessity be a pursuit of the One who is to be King and like that pictured in our earthly marriage relationship it requires deliberate, intentional work so that the joy, the passion, the intimacy are continually renewed. If we have lost our love for His appearing, if we long for the rapture just so we can get out of the grind of life then it's high time to get back to our first love; it is high time to give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard; it's time to take back that which we have allowed our enemy to take from us - Ps 51:10 *Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. 11 Do not cast me away from Your*

*presence, And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. 12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me by Your generous Spirit.*

a). There is just so much more to be opened in God's Word that is tantalizingly close - Mt 7:7 ¶ *"Ask,[and continue asking] and it will be given to you; seek,[and continue seeking] and you will find; knock,[and continue knocking] and it will be opened to you.*

4). Now, not only is the Book of Hebrews a Book of warning and a Book of commentary, it is also a Book of tremendous encouragement and incredible promises. There is so much that we have seen that is an encouragement to us not the least of which is all that has been revealed about our Lord past, present and future. And so with all this in mind let's continue to work our way through Chapter 9 towards the warning of Chapter 10 - Heb 9:6 *Now when these things had been thus prepared, the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing the services. 7 But into the second part the high priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people's sins committed in ignorance; 8 ¶ the Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing. 9 It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience-- 10 concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation.*

a). We had seen in our previous studies the contrasts that are made in Hebrews between the earthly tabernacle and the Heavenly Tabernacle and the earthly priesthood after the order of Aaron and Christ's Priesthood after the order of Melchizedek.

b). We had seen how the earthly tabernacle was a shadow of the Heavenly, how it was 'symbolic' for the time it was in operation, and how it demonstrated the inadequacy of the ministry of the Levitical priests whose ministry could bring no one to completion.

c). And we had also seen, referenced in v8 of our scripture, that access to God in the Holiest of All was never possible while the earthly tabernacle remained in operation – In fact the Holiest of All was closed off from everyone, with the exception of the high priest who could enter only once a year on the Day of Atonement. And when he did enter the whole room had to be shrouded in a cloud of incense - Le 16:12 *"Then he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from the altar before the LORD, with his hands full of sweet incense beaten fine, and bring it inside the veil. 13 "And he shall put the incense on the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of incense may cover the mercy seat that is on the Testimony, lest he die.*

d). This would be so that the sinful high priest could not look directly at the Holy God – lest he die - Ex 33:20 *But He said, "You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live."*

e). There was then no open access to the presence of God as the tabernacle and its furniture and its ministry were mere shadows of that which was to come. Even the high priest himself merely pointed the way to the One who would be the Great High Priest after the order of Melchizedek.

f). On the earth the high priest had to re-enter the tabernacle every year, always with the cloud of incense and the blood of a newly slain animal. His work on behalf of the sins of the saved could neither bring those on whose behalf the sacrifices were made to completion and nor could the work ever of itself be completed.

5). Heb 9:11 *But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. 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.*

a). Christ on the other hand is the fulfillment of the shadow. His High Priestly ministry brought to reality that to which the types pointed. The ministry of the Aaronic priests pointed to the ‘good things to come’ and then these ‘good things’ are realized in Christ’s ministry.

b). Christ did not enter the heavenly Tabernacle with the blood of goats and calves but with His own blood.

c). Through His sacrifice He both sought out and lay hold of the age lasting redemption that could never be attained through the earthly tabernacle, and as a result He entered the Most Holy Place ‘once for all’.

d). So inexpressibly superior was Christ’s sacrifice to the sacrifice of animals and His blood to the blood of animals that there was no need for Him to have to reenter the Most Holy Place as the earthly priests had to. He entered once as all that needed to be done was now completed - Joh 19:30 *So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.*

e). And the Heavenly Tabernacle itself is clearly seen to not be ‘of this creation’. It is not a part of the material world which we know, but rather has existed in the heavens beyond the scope of time and space, awaiting the fulfillment for God’s purposes for it.

f). Whereas direct access to the Holiest of All was barred in the earthly tabernacle Christ’s Priestly ministry after the order of Melchizedek has opened a way into the Holiest of All, pictured in the tearing of the veil in the Temple in Jerusalem following His death, for each and every one of us –

Heb 10:19 ¶ *Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, 21 and having a High Priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.*

g). Heb 4:16 *Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

6). The contrast that we see between the blood of animals and Christ's blood is then continued in the verses that follow - Heb 9:13 *For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, 14 how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*

a). Within God's economy He allowed for the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer to bring ceremonial cleansing to the flesh of an individual, but this was an external and therefore a superficial cleansing only – a cleansing that would need to be repeated time and again with new animals, new blood and new ashes.

b). And we should also note something that I guess is pretty obvious if we think about it – the sacrificial animals did not willingly, of their own choosing, go to their slaughter.

c). Christ on the other hand was without spot not just in an outward appearance, but with regards to His nature and character also and He, willingly chose, through the 'eternal spirit' to offer Himself to God as the sacrifice.

d). The reference to the 'eternal Spirit' here is not speaking of the Holy Spirit – it was not the Holy Spirit who empowered Christ to choose to be the sacrifice; it is rather a reference to that which God is – Spirit - Joh 4:24 *"God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."*

e). God being 'Spirit' is eternal and so the eternal God, who is Spirit, choose to willingly make Himself the sacrifice for His fallen creation in the person of Son.

f). Of how much more infinite value then is the blood of the sinless sacrifice, the blood of God Himself offered as the Son of Man? Just how much more then can the blood of Christ accomplish than the ceremonial cleansing of a physical body?

g). Well, according to our scripture, and therefore by faith according to our experience, the blood of Christ is more than sufficient to provide an inward cleansing that takes away sin allowing us to have a good conscience before God

1Pe 3:21 ¶ *There is also an antitype which now saves us--baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,*

h). The blood of animals could never take away sin, but the blood of Christ can; the blood of animals could never cleanse the conscience from dead works, but the blood of Christ can.

7). Heb 9:15 ¶ *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. 16 For where there is a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. 17 For a testament is in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives. 18 Therefore not even the first covenant was dedicated without blood.*

a). ‘And for this reason’, because of the infinite superiority of His sacrifice, He is the mediator, the reconciler, of the new covenant that is inaugurated ‘by means of death’ – the word translated ‘covenant’ here should be understood in the sense of a last will and testament in which an inheritance is bequeathed. And as with any will and testament, it only comes into effect after the ‘testator’ is dead.

b). Therefore even the first covenant was dedicated with blood, God accepting the substitutionary death of animals as the fullness of the time for Him to be the sacrifice as God the Son had not yet come.

c). The redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant would relate specifically to the nation of Israel, and although the verse seems to appear difficult I wonder if the transgressions spoken of here refer to the slaying of the nation’s Messiah and their defilement through their association with His dead body, which happened while the first covenant was still in place, for which the nation has still to be forgiven and cleansed, so that as a result of the nation’s repentance and cleansing the terms of the new covenant would come into effect enabling those who are called, Israel, to receive the inheritance that is promised – rulership over the nations in the land given to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

8). Heb 9:18 *Therefore not even the first covenant was dedicated without blood. 19 For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water, scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, 20 saying, "This is the blood of the covenant which God has commanded you." 21 Then likewise he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry. 22 And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission. 23 ¶ Therefore it was necessary that the*

*copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. 24 For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; 25 not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another-- 26 He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.*

a). And so, as we see, the first covenant came into effect through the substitutionary death of calves and goats.

b). The blood of these animals was then used to purify the book of the law, the people, the tabernacle and all the articles that were in it. And this was done because ‘according to the law almost all things are purified with blood’ – that which wasn’t purified with blood was purified through washing with water.

c). And so, because of the requirement of the law, the copies of the things in the heavens were purified with the blood of animals.

d). The actual things in the heavens themselves however were purified with ‘better sacrifices’, they are purified by the blood of Christ. Now the things of themselves do not need purifying, but because of our sin that is dealt with by our High Priest defilement takes place.

e). According to v24 Christ did not enter into the earthly tabernacle, ‘but into heaven itself’ – now to appear in the presence of God for us. Now in stark contrast to the Levitical priests Christ does not have to ‘offer Himself often’ – He doesn’t have to come out of the Holy of Holies and then reenter again the following year. If that were the case then He ‘would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world’ – for every generation in fact. But rather than that He has appeared ‘once at the end of the ages’, ‘to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself’.

f). The contrasts we see here are not just between the inferior and the better, but rather between that which doesn’t come close and that which is off the charts incredible. It is little wonder that the Holy Spirit refers to this as ‘so great salvation.

g). And with that thought we will stop until next week – if the Lord is willing.