

The Sufficiency of Christ's Sacrifice

Christ's Permanent and Complete Purification of Sins

Hebrews 1:3 (Heb. 7:27; 9:26; 10:4; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14; 2 Pt. 1:9; 1 Jn. 1:7)

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Introduction: Hebrews 8:1-2 is the real “key” to the whole book of Hebrews, which says, “Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.” Jesus Christ is central to all things and what He has done is sufficient.

Within the section of the “seven” descriptions of exalting Christ (Hebrews 1:3-4) is a brief statement which prepares the reader for the departure from the Old Testament system of the priests, the sanctuary, the altar, the sacrifices, and the temporary fix for sin, and prepares the reader for the introduction to the New Testament and the new system which incorporates many new things one of which is Christ as the High Priest.

In this preparation for the reader, the subject is introduced about the “sufficiency of Christ’s sacrifice.” Questions come to mind, “Does the individual need to make satisfaction for his sins?” or “Did Christ make full satisfaction for all sins of the individual?” “Does the individual need to suffer to purge his sins?” or “Did Christ purge all the sins of the individual?”

The book of Hebrews strikes at the heart of many religions and cults with the truth about Christ. One such example is the Roman Catholic Church and its view of purgatory.

When we look at the book of Hebrews, particularly Hebrews 1:3 which states: “...When He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high....”

Let us look at the text of Hebrews 1:3.

The words “by Himself”

There are some scholars who reject these words as something added. However, evidence from the best manuscripts show this is in the original and the phrase is common with the author, “by His own blood,” (9:12), “by the sacrifice of Himself” (9:26), and “when He offered up Himself” (7:27). (Hewitt, p. 52) “...The work of purification was done by Christ personally, and was not something which he caused to be done by some other agent.” (Vincent, p. 384)

The word “purged”

“The verb ‘had purged’ literally means ‘having made a purification’ (Greek ‘katharismos poiesmenos’). The English term ‘catharsis’ is based upon this Greek noun. ...His sacrifice therefore was designed to produce a thorough moral cleansing.” (Gromacki, p. 29)

The word “had”

“The aorist tense of the participle (‘having made’)[Greek ‘poiesmenos’] shows that He completed His redemptive work once and for all.” (Gromacki, p. 29) “The participle is in the aorist tense, which indicates that His act of making purification for sins was a single definite act, and a once-for-all act.” (Wuest, p. 41)

The words “our sins”

“The genitive ‘of sins’ probably means that Christ took the sins away rather than that the person was cleansed ‘from sins.’” (Morris, p. 15)

The words “sat down”

This shows Christ’s authority and dominion not only over sin, but “all” things. “The seated posture indicates that His work was finished, in contrast to the Levitical priests who never sat down so far as their tabernacle work was concerned, and for the reason that their work was never finished...” (Wuest, p. 41)

Summary statement: We find the following teaching from Hebrews 1:3:

1. Christ did the purging for sin “by himself”

2. Christ did all the purging for sin
3. Christ is done purging for sin

See the attached chart on “the purging of sin” which compares the Roman Catholic Church’s teaching on “Purgatory” and the Bible’s view on Christ’s purging.

Conclusion: The doctrine of Christ in the area of “purging” of sin is not the only doctrine where the Roman Catholic Church deviates from God’s Word. The book of Hebrews addresses many of these departures from the truth.

1. Purgatory

The RCC teaches individuals go to purgatory to pay for their sins, however, Hebrews 1:3 shows us it is Christ and not man who purged our sins

2. Amillennarianism

The RCC teaches there is no millennium, however, Hebrews 2:5 shows there is a future Millennium coming.

3. Mass/Eucharist

The RCC teaches that the mass with the Eucharist is a re-enactment of the sacrifice of Christ, so that Christ is re-sacrificed for sin each hour of each day all over the world, however, Hebrews 2:7; 9:18,25; 10:10,12 shows us that Christ only needed to die once and does not need to be re-sacrificed.

4. Eucharist

The RCC teaches that when an individual receives the Eucharist he is actually receiving the actual body and blood of Christ each time he partakes, however, Hebrews 3:13-14 shows us that we partake of Christ through faith once.

5. Centrality of the altar

The RCC teaches the altar is central to the worship service, however, Hebrews 13:10 shows us that the altar is not for today being part of the past Levitical system.

6. Priesthood (sanctuary, altar, sacrifice, etc.)

The RCC practices a whole system based on the Levitical system of the priests after Aaron, however, Hebrews 5:1-6; 7:17,21,26; 8:4-5; 9:1, 6-9; 10:1-4 teaches us that Christ ended the Levitical system and the priesthood after Aaron and made a new system after Melchizedec.

7. Priest as mediators

The RCC teaches that priests are mediators on behalf of God, however, Hebrews 8:6 shows us that Christ is the mediator for God.

8. Prayer

The RCC teaches individuals to offer prayers to God through mediators, however, Hebrews 4:16 shows us that Christians can go directly to the throne of grace with prayer.

9. Theistic evolution

The RCC teaches God started creation and then allowed it to evolve into what we have today, however, Hebrews 1:3; 11:3, shows Christ created all things and nothing created was made from what already existed.

References:

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