

“By His Own Blood He Entered in Once into the Holy Place”

Jesus in Hebrews 9

Richard D. Draper

With penetrating and inspired insight, the author of Hebrews bore a powerful witness of the nature and work of Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, history has not preserved who that inspired author was. Though from the second century onward, many attributed the work to the apostle Paul, the epistle itself gives no clear indication as to who wrote it. Because of both the epistle’s strikingly different style and treatment of subject matter from that found in Paul’s writings, the authorship of Hebrews has been much debated, both anciently and today.¹ Nevertheless, this work, and chapter 9 in particular, presents a commanding christological argument that underscores the work’s inspiration and status as scripture. This paper, by taking an in-depth and careful look at Hebrews chapter 9, explores the witness of this author concerning the effect, power, and result of the self-sacrifice of Jesus for the believer.

The Author's Purpose in Writing

Hebrews 9 reveals that the author's purpose in writing was twofold. The first was to fully expose the insufficient nature of the sacrifices of the old covenant to make a change in the worshipper's "conscience" (*syneidēsis*). The Greek noun denotes a sense of moral awareness, but in a broader sense, the word carries the nuance of the pain people sense when they knowingly break a moral law.² The author played on this nuance. He insisted that, through participation in the observances of the Mosaic law, each person could be ritually cleansed, *but* a cleansing of the conscience did not take place. An inward uncleanness remained that caused discomfort among the participants and acted as a barrier between the worshipper and God.³

The author's second purpose was to stress that by his obedient sacrifice, Jesus Christ made the all-sufficient atonement through which the believer's conscience could be fully cleansed. To have a cleansed conscience meant being freed from the pain of guilt. The author expanded on this idea and in doing so gave the idea of a cleansed "conscience" an even stronger thrust: the sanctification of the soul. In this way, the cleansing of the conscience provided the way for the disciple to gain access to the transforming power of grace. By that means, the believer was prepared to enter into God's glory. In sum, "Christ's obedience empowers the faithful to live in obedience and in fellowship with God (see [Hebrews] 10:5–10). [Each disciple comes] through him to God's 'throne' in order to find grace for living this life of faithfulness (4:14–16; 10:19–25)."⁴

A High Priest of Good Things to Come

It would appear that the specific audience to which the author directed his epistle were Jewish Christians who, because of the difficulty of belonging to the faith, were tempted to leave the gospel and return to Judaism. The author thus appealed to them on the basis of

Old Testament practices and teachings, but he gave these a decidedly Christian spin.⁵

The epistle states that the Levitical high priest ministered in a holy but earthly tabernacle, “but Christ being come an high priest [ministered in] a more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands” (Hebrews 9:11). The author’s use of the phrase “but Christ” presents a sharp contrast between his focus in verses 1–10 that looked at the work of the mortal high priest with his focus in verses 11–14 that looked at the work of the eternal High Priest. The author of Hebrews has shown that the earthly holy place provided no access to heaven, “but Christ” has now opened the way. The emphasis in the first set of verses is on the tabernacle itself,⁶ while that of the latter is on the full sufficiency of the Lord’s sacrifice that provides complete access to God. In 9:12–14, the author provides his most thorough analysis of Christ’s fulfillment of the typological sacrificial rites established by the Mosaic covenant. Throughout the verses the author emphasizes “blood,” “self-sacrifice,” and “cleansing.” He makes it clear in these verses that the reason the Lord was able to enter the heavenly realm and make way for others to do so was because he did what the old covenant failed to do; he purged sins and cleansed the conscience of the worshipper. The author is careful to help his readers see that the whole of the Levitical system was restricted exclusively to external purification. The best it could do was but point to that internal purification so necessary to enter the presence of God.⁷

From an Old Testament perspective, it was a victim’s blood that contained a vital force capable of opposing and subduing evil and quashing spiritual death. In instituting the Mosaic rites, Jehovah explained that “the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for its blood shall make atonement for the soul” (Leviticus 17:11;⁸ compare Deuteronomy 12:23). “But in the sacrifice of Christ, the relationship was reversed: whereas in the Old Testament, it was the blood that gave value to the sacrifices, in the case of Christ, it is his sacrifice that gave value to his blood.”⁹

Evidencing the fully sufficient work of Christ is the epistle's note in Hebrews 9:12 that Jesus entered heaven "once for all" (*ephapax*), "a term that excludes both the necessity and the possibility of repetition."¹⁰ The Lord's redeeming work was full, complete, and final—requiring nothing more, forever.¹¹

In Hebrews 9:14 the work clearly states the benefits of Christ's atonement. The author first describes what it cleanses: "our conscience" (*syneidēsis*). When God established his covenant with Israel, he also gave them his law. In doing so, he laid down the standard he expected his people to follow. At the same time, he created a condition in which the individual conscience had a standard external to itself. That meant that a person did not decide what was right and what was wrong—the law did. The person, however, could choose to conform to the law or not. The result of choosing not to conform is a transgression (*parabasis*).¹² The word denotes a heavy sin because the person knows the law and the consequences of breaking it and yet chooses to do so. Even so, the atonement of the Lord is so strong that it can reach even those who have broken the law in this manner and redeem them if they will but repent and follow him. This option places the consequences of a person's choice squarely on her or his shoulders.

The effect of the Lord's self-sacrifice was directed not at an outward cleansing as was the old covenant. Instead, it focused on the inward cleansing of "the conscience." The atonement also had the deeper effect of *purifying* it. Both cleansing and purifying "refer to the same reality." Cleansing emphasizes "the removal of sinful pollutions," while purifying refers to "the readiness of the cleansed heart to approach God."¹³ Taken together, they denote the "moral transformation of the worshipper."¹⁴

The term *conscience*, as used by the author, carries much of the same scriptural nuance as does the term *heart* (*kardia*). Both refer to the center of a person's religious life that "embraces the whole person in relationship to God" and where each individual confronts God's holiness.¹⁵ It is on the basis of the conscience and the heart that people

decide for themselves if they want to remain with the Father and Son in the heavenly realm (2 Nephi 9:46; Alma 5:15–25; 34:33–34).

The author next states that the conscience is cleansed from “dead works” (*nekrōn ergon*). His reference is likely not to the works of the Mosaic law that, though not fully effective, were able to point the faith-filled follower to Christ. Rather, it refers to the inner state of impurity that the old covenant could not remove—that of an “evil, unbelieving heart” (Hebrews 3:12), which acted as the seat for faithlessness, disobedience, and, all too often, outright rebellion (3:7–4:11), and became an effective barrier between the sinful soul and God. The fault of the Levitical performances was that, though they prepared the worshipper outwardly for temple service, they did not transform the heart such that it became the pure receptacle of faith resulting in obedience. As a result, the worshipper was not freed from propensities that led to misdeeds and the threat of spiritual death.

The author of Hebrews emphasizes that this condition stands opposite the atonement’s positive result, namely the worshippers’ ability to “serve the living God.” With the sinful pollutions removed from the conscience, the soul is cleansed and the barrier between it and God is removed. This cleansing not only delivers the soul from the wrath of God but also enables it to enter the most holy place, God’s true sanctuary.¹⁶ But it does more—it acts in mortality to empower the worshipper to follow God’s ways and have fellowship with him. Thus, having realized the promise of the atonement, the saints are not only prepared but also anxious to serve him in his way.

Mediator of a New Covenant

In 9:15, Hebrews clearly states how those who transgressed under the old covenant “might receive the promise of eternal life,” and in doing so the work intimates that the same is true for those under the new. It was because of the role Christ played. He was the *mesitēs*, which the King James Version translates as “mediator”; however,

that translation falls far short of the nuance of the Greek noun. A more accurate understanding would be that of one who stands as a guarantee that promises will be realized. How so? Though the idea of a go-between is an ever-present aspect of the Greek word, the requirements for the salvation of humankind "necessitated that the Mediator should Himself possess the nature and attributes of Him towards whom He acts, and should likewise participate in the nature of those for whom He acts (sin apart); only by being possessed of both deity and humanity could He comprehend the claims of the one and the needs of the other; further, the claims and the needs could be met only by One who, Himself being proved sinless, would offer Himself in expiatory sacrifice on behalf of men."¹⁷ In that way, he became the guarantee of salvation to the faithful. He did so by securing the salvation that could otherwise not be obtained. Thus, as the author states, Jesus is the "surety" (*engous*) of the "better covenant" (*kraittonos diathēkēs*; see Hebrews 7:22; 8:6; 9:15; 12:24) by guaranteeing that the terms of the new covenant would be fully met for his people.

Hebrews 9:15 points out how Christ became the guarantor of the blessings of the new covenant for those who failed in the old—it was because his blameless life made his self-offering acceptable to God. As a result, Jesus was able to redeem those who transgressed because of the weakness inherent in the first covenant. His sacrifice brought to an end all Mosaic sacrifices that could only cleanse "the flesh" (9:10). "Thus, by establishing an effective way of approaching God, [Christ] terminated the Old Covenant as a way of salvation and inaugurated the New that it typified."¹⁸ His sacrifice was, then, one of covenant inauguration. Of its new promise, he became not just the mediator but the guarantor.

Hebrews 9:15 then stresses the result of Jesus becoming the guarantor of the new covenant for those who failed under the old one. The author focuses on "former transgressions" committed under the Mosaic law because the Israelites' redemption from those sins laid the foundation that made the new covenant possible. Their forgiveness made way for the new law to be written on their hearts because

they were justified and could, thereby, receive the influence and power of the Holy Ghost (Hebrews 8:10; 10:16; Jeremiah 31:33).¹⁹

Remarkably, the Lord's sacrifice was retroactive—reaching back to all people of all ages. The author of Hebrews makes a point in line with that of the angel who declared to King Benjamin that Christ's "blood atoneth for the sins of those who have fallen by the transgression of Adam." The angel went on to teach Benjamin that those who lived before the coming of the Lord who believed "that Christ should come, the same might receive remission of their sins, and rejoice with exceedingly great joy, even as though he had already come among them" (Mosiah 3:11–13).

Hebrews refers to those whose conscience has been cleansed as "those who have been called" (*hoi keklēmenoi*). This group is composed not only of those whose lives are directed by faith and the resultant obedience but also of those who continually persevere in the service of the Master.²⁰ The author's words do not exclude those who rebelled during the Mosaic era.²¹ There is a subtle hint here of vicarious work for the dead through which even those rebellious souls can become "the called" and, with the living, receive the promise of an eternal inheritance (see 1 Peter 3:18–20; 4:6; compare D&C 76:73).

The author's words reveal both the length and width of the Lord's atonement. Its length is vast, covering all those who come to him throughout the entire history of the world. Its width is very narrow, for it excludes all those who do not come to him. The Lord himself made it abundantly clear that all must enter "at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:13–14; see also 2 Nephi 31:18; 33:9; 3 Nephi 27:33; D&C 132:22).

The epistle makes clear that redemption comes to all only by the means of the Lord's death (Hebrews 9:15). As we look at the substitutionary or ransom model of the atonement used by the author of Hebrews, the question naturally arises: Why would God demand

the suffering and death of Jesus as the means of removing the consequences of sin from the Father’s other children? Was there no other way the Father could free them except through such a brutal and torturous means? Neither in Hebrews nor in the New Testament as a whole—nor specifically in the recorded words of Jesus—is this question ever addressed. The Lord made it clear that “the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). These words are revealing because they show the voluntary nature of the self-sacrifice affected by the Lord. To stress the point, Christ’s words emphasize that his atonement was a deliberate, willful act of obedience to God that allowed for a substitution in which one life could be given for others. That life paid the ransom that freed, potentially, all others from the consequences of sin and spiritual death. Hebrews 9:14 clarifies that the ransom is paid to God, allowing him to free others from the demands of justice and, if they will, to come under the power of his mercy (see also 2 Nephi 9:26; Alma 42:13–28).

The author of Hebrews takes this idea for granted. It was “fitting” (*prepō*), he insists, that Christ should suffer and die to redeem his people and make them “perfect [*teleiōō*] in respect to conscience” (9:9). Thus, the author never questions why it was necessary for the Father to treat the Son in such a manner. He is satisfied to understand that it was simply necessary for the Lord Jesus to bow to the will of God by giving himself as the ransom. The author’s writing, therefore, leaves unexplored the reason behind the divine will.

The same is true regarding the other New Testament writers (compare Matthew 11:25–26; Mark 13:32; 14:35–36; 15:34). We can say that the

complete subjection to God’s will is an integral part of the service which Jesus renders to God. For Jesus, God does not owe anyone, not even the Son, a manifestation of His reasons, let alone a justification of His acts and demands. What God wills and does, He does for reasons which are holy, just and

wise. But this does not mean that He will disclose the reasons. There is a purpose behind God's will; it is not caprice. But man can know this purpose only if and in so far as God reveals it to him. What is here revealed to man is that the death of Jesus is service to God, and that it is a vicarious death for many in virtue of which they find freedom from sin.²²

Whatever else the case, Jesus serves as the model for devotion to God; therefore, what he requires of the rest of us is no more than what he has given. His obedience is the essence, ground, and revelation of the law of sacrifice we as Christians are asked to follow. *And no one knows the cost more than does he.*

In Hebrews 9:18 the author makes his point: as with most covenants, the Mosaic law was inaugurated and ratified by the death of the sacrificial victim and the administration of its blood. Having validated his position by the use of scripture, the author makes this point: Blood, and only blood, brings forgiveness. His appeal is to Jehovah's statement in Leviticus 17:11 that he has given to Israel the blood "on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for [the sacrifice's] blood shall make atonement for the soul."²³ The Hebrew verb translated "to atone" (*kpr*) carries the basic meaning to "cover over" with the extended sense of "atone, make amends."²⁴ The purpose of such covering is to put a barrier between a wrongful deed and its ill effects. When such a deed broke the relationship between persons, the purpose of the *kaphar* was to expiate the wrongdoing and propitiate or placate the offended party. It was by this means that the offense was covered over and a good relationship restored.

The purpose of the Mosaic sacrifices was to atone for sin and thus bring about a reconciliation between the offender and Jehovah.²⁵ According to the view of sin during the Mosaic period, committing a transgression could not simply be forgotten and walked away from. The only way sin could be forgiven was by one of the expiatory rituals defined in the law. Jehovah allowed for the transgression to be passed onto a sacrificial animal and, with its death, the guilt to be removed

from the person (Leviticus 16:20–22; compare 17:11). The act emphasizes that it is God alone who can forgive sins but that this requires an act of atonement.⁷

Hebrews emphasizes that, on the basis of the Mosaic law, no forgiveness could be achieved without the shedding of blood. This fact becomes the ground on which the author will next make his case for the necessity of the Lord’s sacrifice. He has carefully shown that both purification and redemption were associated with the new covenant’s inauguration. Both old and new covenants required the death of the sacrificial victim. In Hebrews 9:23–28 the author stresses the finality of the Lord’s “once for all” cleansing (*ephapax*, Hebrews 10:10) at the time when he inaugurated and put in force the new covenant (9:12). To stress that finality, he contrasts it with both the initiation of the old covenant and the ritual of the Day of Atonement. On the basis of his model, he insists that since everything associated with the first covenant had to be cleansed by sacrificial means so, too, did all corresponding heavenly things.

A Pattern of Things in Heaven

Having made that point, the author of Hebrews presents his definitive evidence for the full effectiveness of the Lord’s sacrifice. He boldly affirms that Christ, the High Priest, has entered into the holy place, that is, heaven itself, and proclaims that the all-sufficient sacrifice of the Lord has procured for the disciple an entrance into heaven (Hebrews 9:23–24).

Extrapolating based on tabernacle typology, in Hebrews 9:23 the author uses both the necessity and the method of purification of the tabernacle to explain why there had to be an atonement. As the earthly tabernacle with its furnishings had to be purified and dedicated through the administration of blood, so too did the heavenly tabernacle. He stresses, however, that heavenly purification requires far more than the mere fleshly sacrifices that worked for the temporal order (9:23).

The author's comments that "heavenly things themselves" needed to be cleansed and that what Christ offered were "better sacrifices" brings two questions to mind. First, how is it that "heavenly things" must be cleansed? and second, why does the author denote the Lord's offering as "sacrifices"? To answer, it is best to address the second question first, for it lays down the basis for understanding the first.

Hebrews uses the plural term *sacrifices* to equate what the Savior did with that of the continual offerings the high priest had to administer annually on the Day of Atonement. The author states clearly that the very necessary purification rites associated with the earthly tabernacle typify the need for the same to be done to the true heavenly things themselves. His point is that, by analogy, the way the sacrificial offering cleansed "the pattern" (*typos*, that is, the Mosaic tabernacle and all its furnishing), so Christ cleanses the heavenly. Furthermore, since cleansing the tabernacle was a prerequisite to a priest's entrance into it, the cleansing of the "true" was necessary for entering it. This the Savior accomplished by his one-time sacrifice (9:12) that allowed him, as the eternal High Priest, to enter the heavenly holy place.²⁶

So far as the first question is concerned, what polluted the earthly tabernacle was not its location but the sins of the people (Exodus 30:10; Leviticus 16:16, 19). "Their sins formed a barrier that prevented them from coming into God's presence and exposed them to his wrath. If sin erected a barrier forbidding entrance into the earthly sanctuary, how much more did it bar the way into the 'true' Sanctuary in which God dwells."²⁷ Thus, such defilement was an objective impediment to entrance into God's presence and had to be cleansed.²⁸

In sum, it seems likely that Hebrews uses the imagery of the need for a cleansing of the heavenly holy place as a metaphor for the need to cleanse the people in preparation for their entrance into heaven. It is human intransigence that produces an impregnable barrier that threatens the soul with eternal recompense. The cleansing represents Christ's removal of that barrier so that the repentant can enter into the presence of God. In doing what he did, the Lord

made it possible for genuine fellowship with the Father to occur.²⁹ Furthermore, we must stress, a rite of the purification does not necessarily imply the object was previously impure any more than a rededication of a holy site means the first dedication did not work.³⁰ Even so, there is no doubt that Christ’s act was one of both consecration and inauguration.

Hebrews points out clearly that Jesus did what he did in behalf of the saints (9:24). On the basis of the author’s temple imagery, entrance into the “true” holy place involves not only the consecration of the place but also the purification of those who would enter. In this way, the work expresses both the subjective and objective significance of the Lord’s sacrificial act. The subjects are the individuals within the Christian community and the object is to bring them eternal life by preparing the way.

In Hebrews 9:25 the author points out the vast difference between what the Levitical high priest did and the work that Christ did. In doing so, he sets the stage to showcase the grandeur of the sacrifice the Lord had to effect in order to cleanse heavenly things. He shows that there were three differences: First, the Lord presented himself as the sacrifice, while the high priest presented an animal; second, Christ did not have to perform the sacrifice over and over as did the high priest; and third, he used his own blood, not that of some sacrificial animal like the high priest used.

In 9:26, Hebrews shows that through his sacrifice, Jesus did more than merely weaken or restrain the effects of sin; he brought about their abolishment (*athetēsis*) once for all. He took the entire weight of the consequences of sin—not just the believers’ deserved punishment—and bore it away.³¹ Doing so enabled him to deliver people from its demands. In other words, the Lord did more than deliver his people from the consequences of sin. He also delivered them from its pollution and domination and thus made way for their total liberation from its demands.³² Through his self-sacrifice, he annulled the effects of sin, reducing them to nothingness. As a result, sin will never be able to regain its destructive power. In short, Christ vanquished

sin with all its consequences “once for all” (Hebrews 10:10). Through that act, he inaugurated the purification of the cosmos (Hebrews 8:10–12). Thus, his atonement, inaugurated in Gethsemane, implemented on Golgotha, and climaxed at the tomb on Sunday, dominates all history from the beginning to the end of time.³³

Through his work, Jesus provided for humankind the perfect antidote for what has been called the universal human predicament. All face impending death, and, whether they know it or not, they will also face judgment. The latter will become appallingly clear to the ignorant, the denier, and the wicked upon the moment of death. If death has its sting, so much more will be the fear of judgment (Jacob 6:13; Alma 40:11–14; Moses 7:1). Since judgment was a well-known principle among the readers of Hebrews (6:2; compare Alma 12:27), the author’s words would have rung abundantly clear.

Jesus was the Father’s offering “to bear the sins of many,” the author states in Hebrews 9:28. Christ’s return will confirm the Father’s faith in that offering. The focus of the Son’s first coming was on the atonement with the objective of obliterating sin. And it worked for all those who had and would have faith in him. Because of his successful efforts, sin no longer had force and therefore could not determine the final state of its once victims. That work having been accomplished, the Lord has now moved to the work of his second coming. To those who look for him to appear, he shall come to their vindication and bequeath their reward (Revelation 6:9–11; 21:1–4).

RICHARD D. DRAPER is a professor emeritus of ancient scripture at Brigham Young University.

Notes

1. For a discussion of this issue from an LDS perspective, see Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, Eric D. Huntsman, and Thomas A. Wayment, *Jesus and the World of the New Testament* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2006), 254–56. Latter-day Saint scholars are not agreed on this issue. For two examples of those who favor Pauline authorship, see Richard Lloyd Anderson, *Understanding Paul* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983), 197; and Terrence L. Szink, “Authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews,” in *How the New Testament Came to Be: The 35th Annual Brigham Young University Sidney B. Sperry Symposium*, ed. Kent P. Jackson and Frank F. Judd Jr. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2006), 243–59. For an example of those who do not favor Pauline authorship, see Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and Thomas A. Wayment, *Making Sense of the New Testament: Timely Insights and Timeless Messages* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2010), 446–47.
2. Frederick William Danker, ed., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 967–68 (hereafter cited as BDAG). On the moral aspect, see Moisés Silva, ed., *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegeses*, 5 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 4:405 (hereafter cited as NID).
3. NID, 4:402–6.
4. Gareth Lee Cockerill, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012), 386.
5. The greater audience of Hebrews likely included proselytes and God-fearers (gentiles attracted to Judaism) who also came into the Christian fold. See Holzapfel, Huntsman, and Wayment, *World of the New Testament*, 258. The epistle’s view that much of the Mosaic law witnessed the work and ministry of the Lord through types and shadows follows the same trajectory as the Book of Mormon (see Mosiah 13:31; 16:14; Alma 25:15–16).

6. Albeit in Hebrews 9:9b–10, the epistle does note that the insufficiency of the sacrifices of the old covenant were the reason access to God could not be obtained.
7. Cockerill, *Epistle*, 397.
8. My translation throughout.
9. Albert Vanhoye, *Letter to the Hebrews: A New Commentary*, trans. Leo Arnold (New York: Paulist Press, 2015), 148.
10. William L. Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, Word Biblical Commentary 47b (Dallas: Word Books, 1991), 239.
11. Gustav Stählin, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1967), 1:383–84 (hereafter cited as *TDNT*).
12. For a study, see Johannes Schneider, *TDNT*, 5:739–40.
13. Cockerill, *Epistle*, 401.
14. Luke Timothy Johnson, *Hebrews: A Commentary* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2006), 238.
15. Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, 240–41.
16. The main object of the Day of Atonement ritual was to accomplish such a purification. See Johnson, *Hebrews*, 71.
17. “The New Strong’s Expanded Dictionary of the Words in the Greek New Testament,” in James Strong, *The New Strong’s Expanded, Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 161. For additional studies, see Albrecht Oepke, *TDNT*, 4:598–624; *NID*, 3:284–88.
18. Cockerill, *Epistle*, 402.
19. Vanhoye, *Letter*, 151–52.
20. Cockerill, *Epistle*, 403. Those who composed this group may have roots that go back to the premortal existence. See Orson F. Whitney, *Saturday Night Thoughts* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1921), 129–30, <http://gospelink.com/library/contents/620>. This applies to those who are called to priesthood authority. As the author of Hebrews states, people do not take this honor upon themselves, but they must be called of God (Hebrews 5:4). Some of those to whom he wrote were members of this group (see Hebrews 3:1). In modern history, the Lord has noted that “many are

called" but because of unfaithfulness do not remain part of this group (D&C 121:40; compare Matthew 24:14).

21. By this means, the author shows that "the called" could include even those who rebelled under Moses if they repented. Johnson, *Hebrews*, 240.
22. Friedrich Büschel, *TDNT*, 4:344.
23. In the LXX, the verb translated as "atonement" is *exilaskomai* and means "to appease" (see BDAG, 350). In its religious but broader context, it portrays the idea that sin causes the gods to become angry and this can bring upon the offending party divine wrath. To appease them, a gift had to be given or some action completed. When such was offered and accepted, then the gods were appeased and good relations restored.
24. Frances Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, reprint 1987), 497–98 (hereafter cited as BDB).
25. BDB, 497–98.
26. Cockerill, *Epistle*, 416.
27. Cockerill, *Epistle*, 416.
28. Lane, *Hebrews* 9–13, 247.
29. Cockerill, *Epistle*, 416–17.
30. Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015), 477.
31. The singular here stands in contrast to the plural "sins" used in 1:3; 2:17; 9:28; 10:1 and thereby connotes, with emphasis, "sin" as *the* principle and force that stands between the individual and God. Cockerill, *Epistle*, 422–43, 427.
32. F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), 232.
33. Cockerill, *Epistle*, 423n22. For the cosmic nature of the Lord's atonement, see D&C 76:23–24.