

Once for All

A fundamental difference that separates Roman Catholicism from biblical Christianity is their respective views on the sacrifice of Christ. Christians believe that His sacrifice is complete and finished; whereas Catholicism takes the view that it is carried on, perpetuated, renewed and re-presented during the mass.

The Bible gives indisputable evidence that Christ's sacrifice is finished and its purpose has been achieved. For example, the author of Hebrews contrasts the work of Jesus with that of the Old Testament priests, who had to keep offering animal sacrifices time and again because they could never take away sin. Jesus is superior for, "by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Hebrews 9:12b).

Let's ask two simple questions:

1. Is Christ presently *entering* the holy place repeatedly, or has he *entered* once with his own blood?
2. Is Christ at present in the process of *obtaining* redemption, or has he already *obtained* redemption?

The answers are straightforward. Jesus 'entered in once'; a non-continuous action that has already occurred and that has happened only one time. Moreover Jesus is not in the process of obtaining redemption for He has already 'obtained' eternal redemption. Clearly, this verse supports the Evangelical doctrine about the finished work of Christ on the cross, and opposes the Catholic notion of a 'carrying on' of the work of redemption.

How does the Catholic magisterium deal with such passages in the Bible? Surely they know about them and they must have some form of explanation that accommodates the sacrifice of the mass. It is interesting to see what Pope John Paul II says about Hebrews 9:12 in his popular book, [Crossing the Threshold of Hope](#). He wrote: "Through the shedding of His own blood, Jesus Christ constantly 'enters into God's sanctuary thus obtaining eternal redemption'" (cf. Heb 9:12).

We immediately notice two facts. The word 'entered' is changed to 'enters' – giving the impression that this action is continuous rather than a simple action in the past. Moreover, the word 'once' is omitted, and the quotation is preceded by the word 'constantly.' Secondly, instead of 'having obtained' he writes 'obtaining', as if redemption is in the process of being accomplished. The meaning of this scripture is reversed!

If He 'constantly enters' the holy place, Christ is no better than the Levitical priests. If He has not obtained redemption, his blood is as powerless as that of goats and calves. But thanks be to God, His Word teaches the very opposite: "By his own blood he *entered* in once (not *constantly enters*) into the holy place, having *obtained* (not *obtaining*) eternal redemption for us."

What do you do when your beliefs do not match the teaching of the Bible? You can do one of two things. You can either change your beliefs or change the Bible. You can either trust in Christ's finished work or go to mass, but you can't do both.