

## HEBREWS CHAPTER 9

Reminder about class party Aug 20<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 PM

This morning we're in Hebrews Chapter 9. Hebrews is hard. It's a challenge. One reason for that is we are not Jewish. We just aren't that familiar with all the O.T. references in Hebrews. The original target audience came from a Jewish background so there was no need for the author to explain all those O.T. references. Another reason why Hebrews is so hard to study for us N.T. believers is because many of us have known Jesus as our Savior most of our life. So this idea of comparing what we have in Christ to something else is foreign to us. Through most of this letter the author is trying to convince his Jewish brothers and sister that... But WE don't have to be convinced of this, do we? We believe Jesus is better! You don't have to "preach to the choir."

So that begs the question, "Why are we studying Hebrews?" (1) To remind ourselves WHY Jesus is better. It's good that we remind ourselves of this; (2) Hebrews is in the N.T. and it is here for a reason. The Holy Spirit inspired its writing. He then preserved it all of these centuries for us. For that reason alone we ought to study it. (3) The Book of Hebrews ties together so many things in the O.T. for us. I remember years ago when I was in my 30s studying the O.T. priesthood, offerings and sacrifices in a Bible study. They pointed out how this thing and that thing all pointed to Jesus. I thought the teacher was just really smart. No, they had been studying Hebrews. It's all right here.

We left off last time in Ch 8 making the point that because the new covenant in Christ is in place, the old covenant is obsolete. It is null and void. It is no longer necessary. It doesn't apply to us anymore.

So, what exactly is a covenant? Webster's Dictionary defines a covenant as "a formal, solemn and binding agreement." This agreement is made between two or more parties. We have these in our world today. We usually refer to them as contracts. *[Example of me hiring a contractor].*

The old covenant, the agreement that God made with Israel at Mount Sinai had a lot of rules. It was often referred to as the Law. Like any contract it was conditional. If the people did what God told them to do then He promised that He would bless them. If they did not do as He commanded then there would be curses (severe consequences). That old covenant was agreed to by both parties and it was ratified (set into force) in Exodus Ch 24 by a blood sacrifice of oxen.

But the old covenant had its limitations. The writer of Hebrews refers to these as "faults" in Ch 8. It couldn't save anyone. All it could do was point out a person's sin and then provide a temporary way for them to deal with that sin. Salvation was not its purpose. Righteousness was achieved the way it has always been achieved – by faith IN THE ONE TRUE AND LIVING GOD. By believing what God says and trusting in His promises. One of the great verses in the O.T. is Genesis 15:6: "And [Abraham] believed the Lord, and He (God) counted it to him as righteousness." Hebrews Ch 11 is called the Faith Chapter. It recounts what the various O.T. characters did as a direct result of their faith. True faith produces action.

But the old covenant is no longer in force. It's been replaced by a better covenant. The new covenant is based on what Jesus accomplished by His death and resurrection. Keep in mind that the new covenant is still a covenant. So it is also an agreement between two parties. It's conditional. God promises salvation, eternal life thru Jesus. But we have to fulfill our part of the agreement. What do we have to do? What do we have to do to receive that "eternal salvation" (Heb 5:9), the "eternal inheritance" (Heb 9:15) made possible for us thru Jesus? What is it that we must do in order to enjoy all the benefits of the new covenant? Believe. "For by grace you have been saved thru faith..." (Eph 2:8). "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved..." (Acts 16:31). In order for me to receive the free gift of eternal life, I must believe in the Lord Jesus, place my faith entirely in Him, fully trust that what Jesus did on the cross was sufficient payment for my sins. "In a life I did not live, in a death I did not die, in a God I cannot see, I stake by eternity."

READ Hebrews 9:1-5

All the things here relating to worship and holiness in the first covenant were merely pictures, shadows, symbols, likenesses, and images of the real thing to come.

Some examples: Tabernacle complex had one door – Jesus is THE door, THE only way to God. The lampstand that lit the rooms – Jesus is the light of the world. The altar where sacrifices for sin were made – Jesus was our perfect sacrifice for sin. The laver for cleansing – Jesus cleanses us, He brings restoration and renewal. The Most Holy Place (Holy of Holies) – heaven, the presence of God. The altar of incense w/ smoke rising – prayers of intercession going up from God's people.

V 5 ends by saying, "Of these things we cannot now speak in detail." In other words, we don't need to take up any of our time talking about these things. There's no need to waste time looking at the picture when we can experience the real thing. *[Story of woman in nursing home holding picture of her grandson]*

READ Hebrews 9:6-7

The priests performed their duties every day in the first section of the tabernacle called the Holy Place (v 6). The high priest entered the second section, the Most Holy Place, Holy of Holies (v 7) one time a year on the Day of Atonement. On that day he would take the blood of the animal sacrificed on the altar in the outer court into the Holy of Holies and sprinkle it on the mercy seat. Throughout the year the sins of the people were dealt with on a regular basis. But once a year the high priest dealt with all of the "unintentional sins," the forgotten sins.

READ Hebrews 9:8

The average Jewish person when they came to the O.T. tabernacle complex to worship could only go into the outer court. The "holy places," the two sections described in v 6-7 were off limits. Only the Levitical priests

were allowed to enter those places and they could only do that when performing their assigned duties.

So then, under the old system there was no direct access for the people into the presence of God.

READ Hebrews 9:9 parenthesis

That old system has been done away with in the present age. All of that old stuff we now see as merely symbolic, a picture. It's been replaced with a better system based on the real thing, Jesus.

Did this change under the new covenant? YES.

READ Hebrews 9:9-10

So now that Christ has come and completed His mission of redemption we CAN have direct access to God, but only thru our great High Priest, thru Jesus.

People in O.T. times could only look forward to a time when the holy places would be opened up giving people direct access to God. The writer of Hebrews says this happened when Jesus came. When Jesus died on the cross we're told in the Gospels that the curtain, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom (Matt 2:51). This was the curtain that blocked the entrance to the Holy Place. So now the way into God's presence, symbolically, has been opened.

The O.T. sacrifices and offerings could not "perfect the conscience of the worshipper." They could not save, could not forgive sins. They were only temporary pictures of a future reality – "until the time of reformation," when the new covenant was put into force by the blood of Jesus, by His sacrificial death on the cross. Under the new covenant Jesus does everything the old covenant could not do.

"But when Christ appeared," everything changed --- Look what He did.

READ Hebrews 9:11-12

V 12, Under the old system the sacrifices for sins had to be done over and over again. But Jesus's "once for all" sacrifice secured for us an "eternal redemption."

READ Hebrews 9:13

And they did... Those O.T. animal sacrifices and the sprinkling of blood sanctified – they cleansed a person on the outside. They temporarily dealt with a person's sin. The blood of those sacrifices covered their sins for a while. Until when? Until they sinned again. Then it had to be repeated.

By contrast, look what the blood of Jesus does ---

READ Hebrews 9:14

The blood sacrifice of Jesus doesn't just cover a person's sins. It changes a person – from the inside out. Those O.T. sacrifices could not "perfect the conscience," but the blood of Jesus thru the indwelling Holy Spirit "purifies our conscience."

READ 2 Corinthians 5:17

In Christ I am not the same person I was before! I am a new creation.

READ Hebrews 10:22

My heart, my very person is cleansed. The death of Jesus changes me – my goals, priorities, ambitions, interests, motives, yes, my whole purpose for living transformed.

"Therefore" – because of the sacrificial work of Jesus, His death ---  
READ Hebrews 9:15 and Message paraphrase

This verse explains that everyone's sins – past, present and future – were dealt with by Jesus's death on the cross.

So how did the people that lived before Jesus came have their sins forgiven? The same way we do. The difference is that they looked forward in faith to God's future provision for them even though they didn't know all

of the details. We look back in faith at what Jesus sacrifice did for us even though we weren't even born yet. One commentary I read said that the people in the O.T. (before Jesus came) received payment for their sins on credit. The blood sacrifices under the old covenant merely pictured the real all-important sacrifice of Jesus would be making later as part of God's sovereign plan of redemption.

V 15 says "those who are called... receive the promised eternal inheritance." Believers in O.T., N.T. and down thru the centuries that followed all were, are and will be saved thru their faith in the work of Jesus on the cross.

From verse 16 all the way into Ch 10 the author discusses at length the sacrificial death of Jesus. It is a critical point to his discussion of the new covenant in Christ being better. So it is very important that we understand why Jesus' death was required. Q 10 asks, "Why did Jesus have to die?" The writer of Hebrews gives several reasons.

READ Hebrews 9:16-18

The first reason Jesus had to die, v 17, is so that the new covenant would take effect. Here the author uses the analogy of a last will and testament. [*my wishes stated in my will go into effect only after I die*]. The same thing goes for the new covenant. In order for it to be "in force," v 17, allowing us to benefit from it, Jesus had to die first. Both the old and new covenants were put into effect, ratified, by blood. Of course the term "blood" is synonymous with death.

READ Hebrews 9:19-22

The second reason Jesus had to die is stated in v 22: "Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins." Blood means death. Under the old covenant the blood of the animal sacrificed, killed was sprinkled just about everywhere in the tabernacle complex. In God's economy, forgiveness is very costly! God's justice must be satisfied. He would not be a just God if He said, "It's OK. Your sin is no big deal. I'll just

forgive you." NO! Romans 6:23 tells us "For the wages of sin is death..." God's required payment for sin is death. That's bad news for us. The good news is the rest of Romans 6:23: "...but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

This brings us to the third reason Jesus had to die. READ Romans 5:8

God's mercy provides a substitute for you and me. In the case of the O.T. believers under the old covenant their substitute was an innocent animal killed on a Jewish altar. As N.T. believers under the new covenant our substitute was the perfect Lamb of God, Jesus. He took our place on the cross. He died for us. As the words to that great hymn say: "He bore my sins and my sorrows and made them His very own."

READ Hebrews 9:23

The O.T. tabernacle was a picture of heaven. All those religious practices given in the Law by God somehow reflect heavenly realities.

READ Hebrews 9:24-26

Jesus's sacrifice was offered on our behalf in God's presence (v 24). It was a better sacrifice because it was done only once, not repeatedly (v 25-26). This point was made earlier in v 12 when the writer said "once for all." And His was a better sacrifice because it removed sin completely. V 26 says that Jesus's sacrifice of Himself "put away sin." He defeated sin and Satan. His death dealt with the human sin issue once for all. Under the new covenant Jesus only had to die once. There is no need for us to place Him on the cross and have Him suffer every time we sin. His one-time death was the satisfactory payment for all sin.

READ Hebrews 9:27

Every person will physically die some day and we will all face divine judgment. There will be two different judgments – "the judgment seat of Christ" for believers (2 Cor 5:10) and the "great white throne judgment" for unbelievers (Rev 20:11). If you are saved you have nothing to fear. You

won't be judged for your sins because Jesus already dealt with them. Your sins are covered by the blood of Jesus.

READ Hebrews 9:28

What does all that mean? Jesus' death impacts us as believers past, present and future. When Jesus came the first time He made payment for our sin. His work on the cross provided the only way for us to be saved. We responded by faith to what Jesus did for us and were justified by that faith. This initiated our salvation and the saving work of the Holy Spirit continues throughout our lifetime in us in a process called sanctification. But that's not the end of the story. There is much more waiting for us. First Peter 1 says that our inheritance is being "kept in heaven for us" that will be "revealed in the last time," at the end, when Jesus returns. What happens when Jesus returns? When He comes the second time it will be "to save those who are eagerly waiting for Him." That's the consummation of our salvation. That's when we will finally receive a huge part of our inheritance, which is an imperishable, glorified, resurrected body. You hear this talked about in just about every Christian funeral you go to. It's a very real promise that we have that to look forward to.