

Hebrews Chapter 9

The author has just described the new covenant. He finished chapter 8 saying in vs13 “In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away”. The Author here continues to speak about the new covenant. He made the claim in 8:6 that Jesus had attained a better ministry and covenant. Here in chapter 9 he shows how it is better. He does this through a comparison between the sacrificial work of both covenants. In vs1-10 he shows the work high priest working in the earthly tent (1-7) and highlights the problem (8-10). Then in vs11-14 he shows Jesus the high priest entering the heavenly tent (11-12) and completes the work (13-14).

vs1-2a “the start of comparison”

*1*Now even the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly place of holiness. *2*For a tent was prepared,

- The author begins his comparison by claim that the first (covenant) had (1) regulations for worship and (2) an earthly place of holiness.
 - The author will show the earthly sanctuary in vs2b-5. He will focus on the regulations in vs7-8.
- The proof the author gives is in vs2a saying “For a tent was prepared”.
 - Tent = tabernacle, he is pointing to the tent which was built by Moses in the wilderness. He is still continuing his wilderness theme. Looking back to chapter 8 where this tent was a copy of what he saw.
 - Prepared = built/made ready.
 - The proof is that there was regulations for worship and an earthly sanctuary in the first covenant is seen in the fact that a tabernacle was prepared in the wilderness by Moses.

Vs2b-5 “the tabernacle”

*...the first section, in which were the lampstand and the table and the bread of the Presence. It is called the Holy Place. 3*Behind the second curtain was a second section called the Most Holy Place, *4*having the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron's staff that budded, and the tablets of the covenant. *5*Above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail.

- The tent was divided into 2 parts, the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place (Holy of Holies). The 2 sections of the tabernacle were said to represent earth and heaven.
 - The Holy Place contained the lamp-stand, the table and the bread of presence. The Lamp stand was located to the left. Practically it was necessary because there were no windows in the tent. The table was located on the right, and had the bread on top of it.
 - The Most Holy Place had the golden altar of incense and the Ark of the Covenant belonging to it.
 - The altar of incense was not located inside the Holy of Holies. It was located just outside the veil. So why does the author say it was in the holy of holies? Was he mistaken?
 - Because it was used on the day of atonement, it was seen as an object which belonged to the Most Holy Place with the ark (**Art Azudia – Hebrews Series**).
 - Within the Ark was the Jar of Manna, Aaron's staff and the tablets of the covenant. Above the Ark were the Cherubim that overshadowed the mercy seat.
 - The 10 Commandments were the most important thing in the ark. They were the covenant the people had with God. That is why the ark was called “the ark of the covenant”.
 - Here the Cherubim are called “Cherubim of Glory”. The very presence of God was said to dwell between the Cherubim above the mercy seat.
 - The mercy seat was the gold lid on the ark. Blood would be sprinkled on it on the day of atonement. Here the HP made atonement for the sins of the people on the Day of Atonement.
 - *Hilasterion* is the Greek noun used to refer to it. It means “the place/means of forgiveness”. It is only found twice in the NT, Heb 9:5 (showing the *place*) and Rom 3:25 (showing the *means*).
 - here as the blood was sprinkled upon that gold lid, the sins were forgiven.
 - The verb form *hilaskomai* is used in Heb 2:17; Luke 18:13 and means to “forgive, show mercy”.
 - The related noun *hilasmos* is used in 1 John 2:2; 4:10 and shows really “the means of forgiveness/mercy”.
 - The related adjective *hileos* is used in Heb 2:17; Heb 8:12a. It means to be “merciful”.
 - All of these words can be translated “propitiation”, in the sense of turning away wrath and bringing mercy.
 - Mercy/forgiveness is connected to the place of mercy.
 - The author only gives us a brief description of these objects. He is not wanting to explain the significance of each of these things.
 - All these objects are glorious. The surprising thing is that they belong to the covenant which is vanishing away. ==> this passage was used in church history for the importance of proper worship.

Vs6-7 The “Regulations for Worship”

6 These preparations having thus been made, the priests go regularly into the first section, performing their ritual duties, *7* but into the second only the high priest goes, and he but once a year, and not without taking blood, which he offers for himself and

for the unintentional sins of the people.

- Here the author deals with the work of the tabernacle. This is what he wants us to think about.
 - The priests enter the Holy Place daily performing their duties.
 - The priest would maintain the 7 lamps, and light them every evening at twilight.
 - They would stoke the coals on the altar of incense and take handfuls of incense and pour it on those coals so that the room was continually filled with this beautiful aroma.
 - Every Sabbath they would replace the 12 loaves on the table with 12 fresh loaves.
 - The high priest enters the Holy of Holies once a year. This is the day of atonement. He would go in with blood, and offering it for the unintentional sins of himself, his family, and the people.
 - He is comparing the ministry of the ordinary priests and the high priest.
 - There were *multiple* priests who *continually* go into the *first section* (representing earth), performing their *many duties* not dealing with sin.
 - The *one* High priest went into the *second section* (representing heaven) only *once* a year with *one* duty of *offering blood* for sin.
 - He is showing the superiority of the High priest over the many priests. Later he will use this picture to show Jesus as the superior high priest.
 - He also says the blood was offered for himself and the unintentional sins of the people.
 - It is not clear whether the author has used “unintentional sins” - (sins through ignorance) as a statement to show the weakness of the sacrifice (it could only atone for these sins... not intentional), or the superiority of it over the work of the many priests (it could atone for even these unknown sins!).
 - Because he is going to point out a negative conclusion, it may seem to be a sign of weakness.

The Lesson learned (Hebrews 9:8-10)

8 By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the holy places is not yet opened as long as the first section is still standing **9** (which is symbolic for the present age). According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper, **10** but deal only with food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until the time of reformation.

- **The Holy Spirit indicates** = makes this clear. **The way... is not yet opened** = made known, caused to be seen. **Holy places** = “holies” ie. the sanctuary (including holy places and holy of holies) or “God’s people”. Same word we saw last week. The way of God’s people is not yet revealed, or, the way into the holies is not yet revealed. Either the road to be travelled by God’s people or the destination the road reaches is in focus. **As long as the first is still standing** = while the first has its existence, implying it has a place and position.
 - The road itself (for God’s people, leading to the Holiest) has not yet been fully known while the first tabernacle is in existence (implying it has a place and position).
 - People did not have access to God. Only the priests could enter the tent. Only the high priest could enter the holy of holies. But he could only enter once a year. When he was in there he would place coals before the Lord and pour incense on them. This would create a cloud. The cloud would act as a screen so the priest did not look upon God presence and die.
 - The tabernacle actually did more to conceal God from the people than to reveal God to the people.
 - **The author is showing the need** for some one to “open the way”. He is going back to the language of Jesus the pioneer, the forerunner, who goes before the people, behind the veil, opening up the way for them to follow. (6:19-20).
- **Which is symbolic for the present age** = the deeper meaning of the Levitical system.
 - **Symbol** = parable or archetype. Archetype is a model which anticipates or precedes a later realisation, ie; foreshadow, figure, symbol.
 - **For** = marking the extent of time. “it was hot for 3minutes”.
 - **Present age** = present time. But who’s present time? The author’s present time? Our present time? Or the time before the New Covenant was inaugurated? Edmund J. Wolf - This present age, the period in which the types are being fulfilled and the shadows are passing away.
 - In other words, it refers to the time before the New Covenant was inaugurated and which is presently now passing away.
 - The Levitical system is a picture which makes us look forward to the reality to come. This symbolic role of the tabernacle will pass away in the age to come, it is only for the extent of “the present age”.
- **According to this** = in line with this fact (that the way is not yet opened, that it is symbolic). **Gifts and sacrifices are offered** = the sacrificial work of the Levitical system.
 - The sacrificial work of the Levitical system is also along the lines of a foreshadow.
- **that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper** = lit. *not being able with regard to the conscience to make perfect the one worshipping*.
 - In Hebrews “perfection” involves purification and access to God. How are we to understand this statement? Why couldn’t the sacrifices make perfect the conscience of the worshiper? Vs10.
- **The sacrifices only deal with the external**.
 - Food, drink, washings, for the body. They did not cleanse the heart.

- The problem is not simply that these sacrifices were for the external, but that they were not complete. Those who have a clean body but a defiled conscience are not in a state to draw near to God. A more complete cleansing is required.
- **imposed until the time of reformation** = when did the dietary and purification laws of the first covenant cease being imposed? When the reformation came. **Reformation** = correction, or new order.
 - When the new covenant came into being, these external regulations ceased being imposed “*being in force*”. When did this happen? Luke 22:18-20.

Illustration: make up ==> covers age, doesn't get rid of it.

Vs11-14 The sacrifice (priestly work) of Jesus (Hebrews 9:11-14)

11 *But the Messiah has appeared, high priest of the good things that have come. In the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands (that is, not of this creation), 12 He entered the most holy place once for all, not by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. 13 For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a young cow, sprinkling those who are defiled, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, 14 how much more will the blood of the Messiah, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse our consciences from dead works to serve the living God?*

The author contrasts Jesus sacrifice with that of vs1-10. It could be helpful to read Vs1 as “on the one hand” and vs11 as “on the other hand”. This is a contrast. In **vs11-12**, the author shows Jesus as the high priest of the more perfect tent. Here he is contrasting Jesus ministry and place of ministry with that found in vs1-7.

- **Messiah... high priest** = Jesus is above all the other high priests that have come before Him.
- **Of the good things that have come** = having come to exist. Goes back to reference to the tabernacle which had its existence, showing the way was not opened. Now the good things have come to existence.
 - Good things = the new covenant, where God no longer remembers the sins of the people.
 - Have come = Jesus blood inaugurated the new covenant.
 - He opened the way through his death and resurrection. Jesus is the high priest not of the symbol, but of the good things!
- **In the greater... more perfect** = contrasts the heavenly tabernacle with that of the earthly tabernacle. Jesus presented his blood before God in heaven, in the tabernacle that was not made with hands, not of this creation. Not the copy, but the real deal.
- **He entered... once-for-all** = once, excluding any other similar event. Contrasting Jesus to the high priest who entered *annually*. Why only once? Because he entered by his own blood. He will explain the significance of Jesus blood in 13-14.
- **By his own blood** = contrasting Jesus with the high priest who would enter the holy place with the blood of bulls and goats to present before God on the mercy seat. Jesus entered the heavenly holy of holies and presented his own blood before God.
- **Having obtained eternal redemption** = aorist tense, done, a fact. Redemption = deliverance, setting free. Goes back to 2:14-18, Jesus died setting free those who were held captive by the fear of death, rising again, becoming a high priest and making propitiation for their sins.
 - It is put before the entrance, his death preceded his entrance into the heavenly holy of holies. In keeping with the day of atonement metaphor Jesus death provided redemption (rescued from the consequence of sin, death -Fear-) and His blood present before God provides forgiveness/cleansing (rescues from the defilement of sin -Guilt-).
 - Thus Jesus ministry and place of ministry is superior to that of all before him. His ministry is that of the “good things” and his work is placed “in the heavens”, and completed “once-for-all”.

Vs13-14 contrast Jesus presentation of blood with that of the ineffective offerings of 8-10.

For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a young cow, sprinkling those who are defiled, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, 14 how much more will the blood of the Messiah, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse our consciences from dead works to serve the living God?

- The author uses an argument from the lesser to the greater. The blood of bulls and goats cleanse the flesh, how much more than is the blood of Christ able to cleanse the conscience. The contrast is clear, the blood of the first covenant purifies the external, Jesus blood purifies the internal.
 - The blood is different ==> Blood of bulls/ blood of Messiah.
 - The manner is different ==> through the eternal Spirit.
 - Sacrifices were usually made through fire. God raised Jesus from the dead by the power of the Spirit.
 - **1 Peter 3:18** *For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit,*
 - The effect is different ==> purifies the flesh/ cleanses our consciences from dead works
 - Craig Koester “Christ's blood does not cleanse by physical contact, but through proclamation. Dead works proceed from sin, and sin is a matter of one's stance toward God – unfaith rather than faith. The conscience is cleansed when faith is evoked, and faith is evoked through the proclamation of Christ's death, for Christ's blood

speaks of God's grace and mercy". Hebrews – Anchor Bible, pg415-416.

- I would include proclamation of his death *and resurrection/exaltation*. It is because he lives that he is able to make intercession for us, and save us to the uttermost. His blood, presence, before God provides us with a continual source of forgiveness.

Illustration: breaking your neighbour's window, cleaning up the class doesn't stop you from feeling bad. ==> Neighbour forgiving you, you can move on ==> Sin defiles you, you feel dirty. You need to be made clean. ==> God forgives you because of the blood of Jesus, calls you his son ==> guilt is cleansed.

- The consequence is different ==> leads to worshippers serving the living God. **Serve** = can be translated "worship".
 - Animal sacrifices ended with purification, Christ's sacrifice brings men to serve/worship the living God. This is because the conscience has been cleansed. You can come boldly to the Father, sing out with songs of forgiveness.
 - Is this true? ==> Look at all the hymn books we have!

Q. How do you deal with a guilty conscience?

Q. The question of guilt... is guilt valid motivation to serve God? What is? ==> forgiveness.

Vs15-22, Jesus The Mediator

15 Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant. **16** For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established. **17** For a will takes effect only at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive. **18** Therefore not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood. **19** For when every commandment of the law had been declared by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, **20** saying, "This is the blood of the covenant that God commanded for you." **21** And in the same way he sprinkled with the blood both the tent and all the vessels used in worship. **22** Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.

- Here the author now wants to show them the benefit that comes from Christ death. Because Jesus offered His blood He has become **the mediator of a new covenant**.
 - A mediator is a person who helps two people come to an agreement. Like a reconciler. The implication is that he also guarantees the certainty of the arrangement.
 - Through His blood, he reconciled man to God, made a certain agreement between God and man. New covenant is the forgiveness of sins.
 - For the people who are worried about God's promises, this is providing them with assurance. The fact that Jesus died and rose again assures them of the reality of the new covenant.
- The benefits of this is that we **who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance**. This is possible because his death redeems from the transgressions they had committed.
 - **Death redeems from the transgressions** = the picture is of us being held captive by our transgressions (going against God's Law, implying intent). No sacrifice for wilful sins. Needing rescue. Jesus death provided that rescue. His death set us free from our transgressions.
 - Now there is nothing stopping them from reiving God's eternal inheritance.
- The author uses an argument from the picture of a will to show this.
 - Just as a will is not establish without death, so also a covenant is not established without blood.
 - He gives an example from when the covenant was established by Moses. He sprinkled the people with blood, also the objects used for worship and the tent. Before this could happen something had to die!
 - Why did he sprinkle? Because in order to establish a covenant between God and the people, the sins of the people had to be dealt with. Sin does more than make God angry, it pollutes you, the land and the sanctuary.
 - **Sanctuary - Num 19:13** Whoever touches a dead person, the body of anyone who has died, and does not cleanse himself, defiles the tabernacle of the LORD, and that person shall be cut off from Israel; because the water for impurity was not thrown on him, he shall be unclean. His uncleanness is still on him.
 - **People – Land - Leviticus 18:24** "Do not make yourselves unclean by any of these things, for by all these the nations I am driving out before you have become unclean, **25** and the land became unclean, so that I punished its iniquity, and the land vomited out its inhabitants.
 - When the people sin against God, they defile themselves, the land, the tabernacle and God's wrath comes upon them.
 - The sprinkled blood rescues the people from their sins, pollution and God's wrath.
 - **Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins**. The author does not explain why blood is necessary or how it works, but simply states that it is necessary. This statement goes back to vs16-17 "for where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established". ==> pointing forward to Jesus, he died, His blood established the new covenant where our sins are no longer remembered. His blood cleanses us completely, reconciling us to God, bringing to us the promise of the inheritance.

Vs23-28, The Single Sacrifice of Jesus

23 Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. 24 For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. 25 Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, 26 for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. 27 And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, 28 so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

The author speaks of the need for **the heavenly things to be purified with better sacrifices than these**. He is building off the example of Moses, sprinkling the blood, providing atonement/purification for the sins of the people. Here the author wants to show us the final nature of Jesus sacrifice. He does by showing us 3 things.

- The place Jesus entered (24), the superiority of his sacrifice (25-26), and the outcome (27).
 - The place was **heaven itself**, into the presence of God on our behalf. Jesus is accomplish what the high priest's sacrifice could only foreshadow.
 - His sacrifice is superior to Levitical sacrifices. He shows us what it would have meant if his sacrifice was like the Levitical, he would have had **to suffer many times from the foundation of the world**. To imagine Christ doing this is foolish, and this indicates that His sacrifice was superior to them.
 - **He appeared once for all to put away sins**. Jesus once and for all death and entrance into the heavenly tabernacles was for the purpose to “put away sins”. This can be translated to annul/remove sins. Here it points to the the wrath of God being turned away from us, and also our consciences being cleansed/purified from guilt.
 - Because of Jesus, the way is open, nothing stops the way, sins have been removed.
 - Christ death has a different outcome. People die once and then receive **judgement**. Jesus offered himself and **saves those who wait for Him**. His death does not lead to judgement but salvation.
 - We can see the author's pastoral concern once again with the phrase **“those who are eagerly waiting for him”**. You can translate this “eagerly expecting”, the sense is that they are waiting for something to happen in the future.
 - Thus the author has shown the people what they have. They h ave Jesus who is their high Priest at the right hand of God. He has removed their sins unlike any other priest, cleansing the conscience. He is coming back. ==> don't throw this confidence away, wait for him.

There were 3 problems with the old.

1. It showed the way was not open,
2. the conscience was not perfected,
3. because the sacrifices only dealt with the external.

==> the way has been opened, our consciences have been cleansed, because of Jesus greater sacrifice once and for all time.