

December 24

Hebrews 6-10

Hey Everybody – It is Christmas Eve. We focus on Jesus today, his birth and coming. The wait is over, Christmas says. Jesus is here. Hebrews teaches us that there were signposts all the way to point us to this very day.

Like a movie preview. Kelle loves to get to movies early. She loves the commercials and the previews and the best seats to see what is coming soon. You know, the Old Testament is a lot like movie previews. Clips that hint at the real thing to come. One big idea in Hebrews is that the Old Testament is like a long series of previews and Jesus is the main thing. Jesus is better.

The preacher of Hebrews says that the Tabernacle and its form of worship were pointing forward to the work of Christ. You see, the old testament has a series of pictures or 'types' of Jesus that point to him in two ways. It was to show the inadequacy of man's way, and to paint a picture beforehand of God's way of getting things done that will later be fulfilled in Jesus.

The worship of the Old Testament Tabernacle was inadequate - its sacrifices were not able to clear the conscience of the worshipper. They were only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings, external regulations applying until the time of the new order. The Tabernacle was a type or a shadow - Jesus Christ is the real thing. He is a better tabernacle, constructed not by the hands of men but by the hand of God. He could do what the old Tabernacle did not do; He could provide real redemption, not just a foreshadowing. The price He paid for our redemption was His blood. Christ is a better tabernacle than the one that Moses built and Christ's blood is better blood than the blood of the Old Covenant. Hebrews 9 points to the finality of Christ's sacrifice.

MEN

Entered a manmade tabernacle
Offered blood often
Offered blood of others
Offered many sacrifices
Are sinful
Died once and are judged

CHRIST

Entered heaven
Offered blood once
Offered His own blood
Made one sacrifice
Put away sin
Died once for salvation

Isn't that cool? Jesus is the fulfillment of the whole sacrificial system. Thousands of years of warm up acts to point to the one real event. Jesus is a better sacrifice.

Jesus is a better priest, too. You need to get the background to understand this. In the fourteenth chapter of the Book of Genesis, Melchizedek appears out of nowhere as the king-priest of the city of Salem. This passage in the Book of Hebrews makes him much more than an intriguing bit of historical trivia, for here

in his effort to show that Christ is better, the author of the epistle makes Melchizedek to be a type of Christ.

The King of Salem in Abraham's day was a preview too. The argument of Hebrews 7 runs something like this: Melchizedek's priesthood can be said to be a different priesthood than that of Aaron's sons because his priesthood was not in any way dependent upon his physical lineage, but was directly related to a divine appointment. He is introduced into the Genesis account with no word at all about his parentage - an idea unheard of in later times when no priest could ever be recognized without a full accounting of his ancestors. Melchizedek's priesthood could even be said in a way to be superior to the Aaronic order because Abraham, from whom Aaron was descended, offered the tithe to Melchizedek.

Christ was a different kind of priest from Aaron and his sons - a "Melchizedek priest", if you will. He was not of the tribe of Levi - everyone knew He was from Judah - but like Melchizedek, His office was dependent, not upon lineage but upon direct appointment from God. And unlike the sons of Aaron who passed down their office from father to son because they got old and died, Jesus is a priest forever. There will never be another High Priest to succeed Him.

The new, "forever High Priest", Jesus, is better, and the covenant that He made on our behalf with God is infinitely superior to the one that attached itself to Aaron and his sons. Christ is better - don't look back - that is the message!

Chapter 10 serves as an exclamation point to the argument that Jesus Christ's death has the effect of setting aside the old covenant and establishing a new perfect one. Cleansing, Consecration, and Perfection. All three ideas show up in Hebrews 10. Christ's once-for-all sacrifice could and did take away sins. The result? We have been cleansed.

Consecration - Not only are your past sins forgiven, but you have been consecrated, made holy, set apart for the exclusive use of God.

Perfection means that not only have we been cleansed and consecrated, but by the finished work of Christ and by His indwelling Spirit we have been fully equipped for the work he has been given us, which is simply to let Him live His life through us! We have finally been prepared to do what we were created for!

You see friends, every way, every day... Jesus is better. And now, he lives inside of you! This is good news. And today, on Christmas Eve, we celebrate that Jesus broke through time and space to save us and that Jesus is better.