Summary of the Book of Hebrews so far:
The theme of the Book of Hebrews is found in the word ‘better’. Jesus Christ provides/is ...

- Hebrews 1 – Better revelation;
- Hebrews 2 – (Warnings to pay attention);
- Hebrews 3 – Better than Moses (Jewish superhero);
- Hebrews 4 – Better Rest;
- Hebrews 5 – Better High Priest; (More warnings)
- Hebrews 6 – Better expectation; Better Promise;
- Hebrews 7 – A Better Priesthood, A Better hope;
- Hebrews 8 – A Better Covenant, Better Promises, A Better Sacrifice
- Hebrews 9 – A Better Sanctuary, a Better Service & a Better Sacrifice

This week we move on to Chapter 9 in the Book of Hebrews. We are talking this week about a better sanctuary (the eternal Tabernacle in Heaven), a better service (internal not external) and a better sacrifice (once-and-for-all sacrifice of the spotless Lamb of God).
Chapter 9 is all about the blood. No blood … no forgiveness!

Let’s read through Hebrews Chapter 9 together

Let’s pray …

Gracious God & our Heavenly Father, open our minds so we may see you in all your glory today, reigning in heaven. We thank you for shedding your blood once and for all, so that we might be redeemed, cleansed and have eternal salvation in heaven. Show us today how important your death for each of us was, and still is. Show us that there is power only through the blood of Jesus. Teach us from your Holy Word again today. Reassure each one here today that you have bought them with a blood price – a covenant that is better than all other covenants.

Bless your Holy name Jesus. Amen

The background for the first section of Chapter 9 (i.e. the first 10 verses) is Exodus 25-31 and 35-40. We are dealing with the 4th of the contrasts showing that Christ’s New Priesthood is superior to the Old Testament Levitical Priesthood because it is a priesthood that functions in Heaven, not on earth.

But even though the New Priesthood of Jesus is far more superior, you have to admit that the old system was still impressive & orderly. The writer points out the some of the glories of the old Tabernacle, but only to demonstrate the greater glory of the new Tabernacle. He does that because the readers of Hebrews would have been familiar with the Old Tabernacle and it’s glorious past.

In contrasting the old with the new, firstly the writer talks about the Tabernacle Furniture:

The Tabernacle Furniture (v1-5)

Verse 1 – the author outlines the old order. Even though it was man-made, weak, frail and temporary, it was still a valuable teaching tool. He gives a quick summary of the Tabernacle in these first few verses.

Verse 2 – the author is dealing with the Holy Place – the first room. It has 2 things – the golden menorah (7 branched candlestick/lampstand) and the Table of Showbread.

Verses 3-5 – the author describes the second room, the Holy of Holies, separated from the Holy Place by a curtain/veil. The first veil was the entry from the courtyard into the Holy Place. The second veil separated the Holy Place from the
Holy of Holies. The second veil was the veil in the Temple torn from top to bottom when Jesus died on the cross (Matthew 27:51).

**Verse 4 – 5** – the writer deals with the contents of the Holy of Holies. First, the alter of incense, which was located not in the Holy of Holies, but the Holy Place. It stood in front of the veil separating the 2 sections. Although it stood in the Holy Place, its function and ministry was for the second room, the Holy of Holies. The purpose of the incense was for the Holy of Holies. The smoke from the incense would rise through the veil and into the Holy of Holies where the presence of God was located.

Next he deals with the Ark of the Covenant and its contents. It contained 3 things:
- Golden pot of manna;
- Aaron’s rod that budded;
- Two tablets of the Covenant (10 Commandments);

The Ark box was overshadowed by cherubim – two cherubs, one on each side of the Ark of the Covenant box lid.

The author doesn’t go on to say too much more about the articles, rather at the end of verse 5 he spells out their intent. The aim is to contrast the old with the new. The important thing here is the typology and what it pointed to – the reality (not the shadow).

The Tabernacle is a type of the Messiah in outline. The old system consisted of a system of barriers between the worshipper and God.

- The Outer Court separated the Gentiles from the Jews;
- The Inner Court separated Levites from Non-Levites;
- The first veil separated priests from non-priests, and
- The second veil separated the High Priest from common priests.

**Service of the Priests (v6-7)**

What the writer calls the first Tabernacle is the first room, the Holy Place. The emphasis is on the routine day-to-day work of the priest.

- Every day, twice a day, the priest had to enter the Holy Place and burn incense (Exodus 30:7-8).
- Every day twice a day, the priest had to tend to the lampstand, adding oil and trimming the wick, making sure that it was still burning.
- Every week the showbread had to be changed (Leviticus 24:5-8).
Each of these things denote repetition – every day, the same things took place. Therefore, the priest’s work was never finished. I mentioned this in Chapter 8 two weeks ago.

**HOLY of HOLIES**

**Verse 7** – now we move to the Holy of Holies, the second room. Only one man, out of one family out of one clan, out of one tribe, out of one nation, out of one race, out of all humanity – the High Priest – could enter this room. AND EVEN THEN ... he could only enter one day a year – an annual observance - the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur).

On that one day he would enter at least twice, but maybe up to four times. When he entered he had to carry blood. That was the only way he could enter – the blood was his ticket for entry.

When entering the earthly Tabernacle, as the earthly High Priest, he needed the protection of blood just like all the others. It was a basin of blood. He first entered to offer blood for his own sins. Only after that, could he enter to offer blood for the sins of the people. This was repeated once a year, year after year for hundreds of years. More repetition! Only once a year, only with blood, and only the High Priest.

**Verses 8-10** – The Holy Spirit is the interpreter of the Levitical System, which was limited in its service. We pick up 3 things about the limitations of the service:

1. **The first Tabernacle was unable to provide a way of access to God because the Holy of Holies was limited to the High Priest only (v8).** There were also other exclusions – Gentiles (outer court only), Non-Levites (not allowed in Inner Court), Non-Priests (no access to Holy Place), Priests (not allowed in the Holy of Holies, only the High Priest).
2. **The Old System was merely a figure for the present (v9).** It was not able to make the worshipper perfect in relation to his conscience. When the High Priest walked away from offering sacrifices, he knew that sins were covered, but was still conscious of sin. It was just a figure (Greek origin – means ‘parable’). The Tabernacle was simply on ongoing parable.
3. **Verse 10 points out the weakness of the Levitical system.** Based upon externals – ‘They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings—external regulations applying until the time of the new order.’

The old system was dependent upon the strength of the flesh, therefore only temporary. A temporary illustration until a future time of reformation, a new age which will bring a perfection, a total cleansing of the conscience. The Greek word
for reformation is used here in the New Testament and nowhere else. It means to make straight or to correct/make right, to restore to its natural order, back to a satisfactory state. It means to set things right between God and man.

The earthly Tabernacle could NOT do that. It was only temporarily enacted until the final sacrifice was made. The final sacrifice came with the establishment of the New Covenant (in Christ). The time of reformation had arrived. Jesus (our Messiah) serves in a better sanctuary, in heaven. That’s the original one – the Tabernacle in heaven. The earthly Tabernacle is only a copy. Jesus is superior to any priests, including Aaron. The New Covenant and its system provides unlimited access to God with an adequate sacrifice - which leads us into the next section of Hebrews 9.

**A BETTER SACRIFICE (v11- 28)**

Up till now in Hebrews, we’ve discussed the New Priesthood of Christ being:

- A Better Position
- A Better Priest
- A Better Covenant
- A Better Sanctuary

Now the writer talks about the fifth contrast – a better Sacrifice.

The Old Priesthood had animal’s blood. The atonement was only temporary. But the New Priesthood is based on the Messiah’s blood, which provides for an eternal redemption. So why was the sacrifice better or more superior?

**The Messiah’s sacrifice was superior in 3 ways (verses 11-12):**

1. **The place where He functions – it’s a BETTER sanctuary** (proved by contrasting the earthly sanctuary with the divine/heavenly sanctuary). The heavenly Tabernacle is both greater and more perfect than the old earthly Tabernacle. The old was made with sinful human hands. The new made not by human hands.

   In verse 11 it says that Christ came through the Heavenly Tabernacle – greater and more perfect. Why? Because it can bring the Believer to spiritual maturity.

   The writer draws a contract between the work of the High Priest on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16) and the work of the Messiah, and what He accomplished through His death.
2. The nature of His Offering (v12a) – here is another contract this time on the offering of the blood of bulls & goats and the blood of Jesus.

The blood of goats was for the people (Leviticus 16:15) and the blood of bulls or calves was for the priests (Leviticus 16:11).

Jesus didn’t enter the Heavenly Tabernacle carrying the blood of bulls or goats ... He entered through His own blood – a memorial of His sacrifice. His blood is a remembrance. When we get to Chapter 12 of Hebrews we will see that His blood is still in the Heavenly Tabernacle and will continue to exist for all eternity in the New Jerusalem.

The priests entered WITH blood but Jesus entered THROUGH the blood.

The priest had to carry blood for his own sins as well as the sins of the people. But the blood was not his own. Jesus had no sins, and that’s why He went THROUGH the blood (not WITH the blood) ... and the blood was His own.

The High Priest had to go into the Holy of Holies once a year, but Jesus entered once-for-all. Jesus entering once left the way open forever for every believer.

Let me give you an example. A bank note has no intrinsic value. It is based upon how much gold is backing the currency. In the same way, animal’s blood has no intrinsic value because its value is based upon the Messiah's blood that is backing it.

3. The sacrifice is continuing & eternal (v12b) – When Jesus entered through His own blood He obtained eternal redemption in place of the temporary annual subscription for atonement. This verse strongly supports eternal security.

So, from these two verses 11 & 12 the Messiah entered the Heavenly Tabernacle
  • Through His own blood;
  • It was once-for-all;
  • It resulted in His obtaining eternal redemption.

So we know that the Messiah’s sacrifice was superior, but what was the results of this superior sacrifice. The writer goes on to tell us in the last part of this Chapter.
The 3 RESULTS of Messiah’s Sacrifice (v13-28)


Verse 13 shows why the redemption is eternal. The Old Testament sacrifices were limited to outward cleansing (flesh). But the work of the Messiah (Jesus) in the spiritual realm results in inner cleansing.

Animal blood was only good for cleansing ceremonial uncleanness (priests & people). The ashes of the red heifer were used for the cleansing of someone who had touched a corpse (Numbers 19:1-22). This was only for the purification of the flesh (outward).

This is not true of Jesus’ blood (v14). If animal blood could purify the flesh, how MUCH MORE (a rabbinical logic contrast called kal ve-chomer) could the Messiah’s blood do?

Jesus’ cleansing reaches up into Heaven. It is a spiritual cleansing. It doesn’t just cleanse the flesh, it is a cleansing of the conscience. There’s the difference! The blood of Jesus does what the Mosaic Law could not – it cleanses the conscience. Jesus’ blood therefore is a BETTER blood. Animal blood was under the curse (of sin), but Jesus’ blood was not affected or tainted by sin. That’s why His blood is a better sacrifice. It was voluntary (not so with an animal); It was rational (not so with an animal); It was spontaneous and in obedience to a command (not so with animals); and it was a moral choice, not just a ceremonial ritual.

Jesus willingly laid down his life. His death not only removed the defilement of sin, but it also removed the source of this defilement, and that’s why the conscience is cleansed.

The goal of Jesus’ death was for the believers to serve the Living God. They are not to return to the dead works of the Levitical System, but to serve the Living God.

2. Signing of a New Covenant – verse 15 talks of an eternal inheritance.

Because the death of Jesus cleansed the conscience, certain things are true. He is a mediator of a new covenant. Mediator = one who intervenes between 2 people either to make peace, or ratify a covenant. The Old Testament sacrifices did not remove the sins of the Old Testament saints. The Hebrew word ‘kippur’ means ‘to cover’. Animal blood couldn’t remove sins, it only covered them. That’s why when an Old Testament saint died, he went down to Paradise (or Abraham’s Bosom section of Sheol/Hades) to await the death of Jesus. At the time of Jesus’ death, this is when the Old Testament saint’s sins were removed.
Here’s the interesting part – when Jesus died, he didn’t just die for all the sins to be committed after His death. He also died for the sins that were committed before His death (i.e. the sins committed under the first covenant). Romans 3:25 states this same point.

When an Old Testament saint first believed, he was saved at that moment. However, his sins were only covered, not removed. His sins would be removed in exactly the same way a New Testament saint’s sins were removed by the death of Jesus. An Old Testament saint was saved/called to salvation at one point in his lifetime (becoming a believer), but only later did he receive the promise of eternal inheritance. He received the fulfillment of the promise upon the death of Jesus. The death of Jesus atoned for (removed) the sins of both the Old Testament saints and the New Testament saints. Jesus’ death deals with sin under the old covenant and turns the old covenant’s condemnation into a covenant that now brings blessing.

So any Old Testament saint now has eternal inheritance, has their sins removed and are in Heaven, having ascended into Heaven with Jesus (Ephesians 4:8-10).

In verse 16-17 he uses the analogy of a will. A will provides for an inheritance. But it cannot be executed until someone dies. Until that happens, the will is just a list of promises. In the same way, God who bequeaths salvation to the lost sinner is only operative after the sinner dies. He only enters Heaven (the promise) upon death. Yes, he is saved now, but he will only enter Heaven when he dies (or if the Rapture occurs in his lifetime). Upon death, believers inherit something. It’s in God’s New Covenant ‘will’ – a heavenly home.

Verse 18-22 the writer reminds us that the first covenant was ratified in blood. The death of an animal took place. Even though it was only animal blood, it was a pledge that the covenant would be fulfilled. It was a blood covenant, but the terms could be changed right up till the point of shedding the blood. But once the blood was shed, the contents of the covenant were unchangeable.

Jesus now offers His blood – a better blood. Jesus went a step further and ratified a new covenant by the shedding of His own blood (a better blood). In verse 19, Moses uses a blood covenant when he received the Law (Exodus 20-24). He sprinkled the scroll & the people. The people were to obey, and if they did, God would bless them.

In verse 20, the sprinkling of the blood pledged the life of the people if they failed to obey. In verse 21, Moses sprinkled everything in the Tabernacle with blood. Everything in the Tabernacle had come into contact with man and therefore had to
be cleansed with blood. In verse 22, the author reminds us that forgiveness of sin demands the shedding of blood.

3. **The Ministry in the New Tabernacle** – verses 23-28. The third result of the Messiah’s sacrifice is His ministry in the New Tabernacle. The copies (the earthly Tabernacle) had to be purged with blood – all the furniture and articles used. They were only copies, therefore animal blood was sufficient to cleanse them. However, the original Tabernacle in Heaven required better blood to cleanse. Only the blood of Christ was sufficient to cleanse.

The Old Testament sacrifices were all fulfilled in the one sacrifice of Jesus. His sacrifice had to be better because of the Heavenly Tabernacle and its nature.

Now you might ask, “**Why did the Heavenly Temple have to be cleansed?”**

When Satan rebelled against God it was in Heaven, and so Satan had brought sin into Heaven (Isaiah 14:12-14 & Ezekiel 28:11-19). Heaven was not clean. When man sinned, his sin reached to Heaven. Colossians 1:20 states that when Jesus died He reconciled things in Heaven as well as earth. So that’s why the Heavenly Tabernacle needed cleansing … with a better blood.

Verses 24-26 talks about Messiah’s entrance into God’s presence once-and-for-all. On Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) the earthly priest entered the Holy of Holies alone. His work was essentially secret. Before going in the incense smoke would precede him in to the Holy of Holies so that his face was hidden. The smoke protected him from looking at the Shekinah presence of God. In contrast, Jesus entered boldly into the Heavenly Holy of Holies where the original Tabernacle is located. Jesus appears before God in the presence of God, on behalf of all believers.

Jesus entered with a finished atonement – a once-and-for-all offering (not a year by year offering). Jesus didn't have to offer himself many times, just once. Not carrying animal blood, or even human blood (which was still sinful), but his own blood. If sinful human blood was used, then the High Priest would’ve had to suffer many times because the blood was not sufficient for a once-and-for-all sacrifice. The fact that it was repeated indicates that it was not eternally sufficient. The High Priest was not able to suffer & die physically more than once.

So after Jesus entered into Heaven with a finished work of atonement (v26b) He has vanquished sin forever. His key purpose was to put away sin. This time not just merely achieving forgiveness (Old Testament) but a complete and total annulment of sin. A perfect work!! Sin put away forever. It was a personal sacrifice by himself.
By His own blood. Not temporary atonement, but Jesus achieved permanent atonement.

In verses 27-28 believers expect the return of the Priest to announce His finished work. Just like on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), the High priest after sprinkling the blood in the Holy of Holies, eventually came out. It was a witness that he had finished his work inside. At Jesus’ ascension, he went into Heaven. He is presently still there, but one day He will return in like manner. He will come out of the Heavenly Tabernacle and His return will be a witness of his finished work.

Verse 27 says that judgment follows death. Even under the old Mosaic system there could be no more offering for sin after death. So judgment would be determined by what he was while living. There are a few exceptions to man dying once. Some died twice – example: Lazarus. He was resurrected before Jesus but died again later. Some did not die at all – example: Enoch & Elijah.

The judgment following death is a manifestation of what the person who died was. But in Jesus’ case (v28) His Coming is the manifestation of what the One who died was. He will show His perfection. His return will not concern the sin question this time. That was dealt with on the cross in His First Coming. In His Second Coming He is coming for those who wait for Him to bring them salvation. All the redeemed wait for His return. That’s when the redemption process will be complete. Redemption of the body (full salvation).

Since judgment follows death, then either the one who has died will be judged or there must be a substitute. For the believer, Jesus is that substitute.

Hebrews 9 summarized tells us:
- Of the completeness of Jesus’ single act (a once-and-for-all sacrifice that was perfect);
- It never had to be repeated – it was a finished work of atonement;
- Jesus is now present in Heaven, the Heavenly Tabernacle is cleansed, sin has been put away forever, and insures God’s favourable verdict when Jesus re-appears.
- Jesus has come as a sin-bearer at His First Coming. He will appear in the future for the second time to fulfill believers’ salvation. When this happens, believers will receive their inheritance spoken of in verse 15 which is the Messianic Kingdom.
CONCLUSION

Hebrews 9 spells out that the blood of Christ – His very own blood – is our access into Heaven. Without it we would never have the sin question answered once and for all in our lives. The access all areas pass for us sealed & stamped in Jesus’ blood.

That is the best news you will receive all day ... all year ... in your lifetime. There is power over sin & death only through the blood of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Next week we will look at Hebrews Chapter 10. If you get a chance, read Chapter 10 ready for next week. We are looking at Christ’s once-and-for-all sacrifice for you & me and the call to persevere to the end.

Let’s Pray ...

Gracious God & our Heavenly Father,

Thank you for Jesus and His willingness to make it personal – giving Himself, His own blood, so that our sin can be wiped away. Without Jesus’ blood we are just dead men walking. Thank you that by faith we who believe can now trust in the finished work of Jesus our Saviour. We await that glorious day when He will return to redeem His own. Strengthen our faith, keep us watching and waiting for our Lord, so that the promise will be fulfilled. Let our love for you and what you have done for each one never diminish.

We pray in Jesus’ name, Amen.

Closing Song ~ There is Power in the Blood
Worship in the Earthly Tabernacle

1 Now the first covenant had regulations for worship and also an earthly sanctuary. 2 A tabernacle was set up. In its first room were the lampstand and the table with its consecrated bread; this was called the Holy Place. 3 Behind the second curtain was a room called the Most Holy Place, which had the golden altar of incense and the gold-covered ark of the covenant. This ark contained the gold jar of manna, Aaron’s staff that had budded, and the stone tablets of the covenant. 5 Above the ark were the cherubim of the Glory, overshadowing the atonement cover. But we cannot discuss these things in detail now.

6 When everything had been arranged like this, the priests entered regularly into the outer room to carry on their ministry. 7 But only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance. 8 The Holy Spirit was showing by this that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still functioning. 9 This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper. 10 They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings—external regulations applying until the time of the new order.

The Blood of Christ

11 But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that are now already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not made with human hands, that is to say, is not a part of this creation. 12 He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. 13 The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. 14 How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself
unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

15 For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.

16 In the case of a will, it is necessary to prove the death of the one who made it, because a will is in force only when somebody has died; it never takes effect while the one who made it is living. This is why even the first covenant was not put into effect without blood. When Moses had proclaimed every command of the law to all the people, he took the blood of calves, together with water, scarlet wool and branches of hyssop, and sprinkled the scroll and all the people. He said, “This is the blood of the covenant, which God has commanded you to keep.” In the same way, he sprinkled with the blood both the tabernacle and everything used in its ceremonies. In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

23 It was necessary, then, for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made with human hands that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God’s presence. Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. Otherwise Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But he has appeared once for all at the culmination of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.