

Candlelight Christian Fellowship

Hebrews (Chapter 9)

Hebrews 9 (NKJV)

“Then indeed, even the first covenant had ordinances of divine service and the earthly sanctuary. 2 For a tabernacle was prepared: the first part, in which was the lampstand, the table, and the showbread, which is called the sanctuary; 3 and behind the second veil, the part of the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of All, 4 which had the golden censer and the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which were the golden pot that had the manna, Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant; 5 and above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail.

6 Now when these things had been thus prepared, the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing the services. 7 But into the second part the high priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people’s sins committed in ignorance; 8 the Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing. 9 It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience—10 concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation.

11 But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. 12 Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once-for-all, having obtained eternal redemption. 13 For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, 14 how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? 15 And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

16 For where there is a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. 17 For a testament is in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives. 18 Therefore not even the first covenant was dedicated without blood. 19 For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water, scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, 20 saying, ‘This is the blood of the covenant which God has commanded you.’ 21 Then likewise he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry. 22 And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.

23 Therefore it was necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. 24 For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; 25 not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another—26 He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. 27 And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, 28 so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.”

Obsolete, Growing Old, and Ready to Vanish Away

At the end of chapter 8 we read, *“In that He says, ‘A new covenant,’ He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away”* (vs. 13).

The fact that the Old Covenant is *“obsolete”* has been a great struggle for many. Moreover, many Gentile Christians desire to cling to the Old Covenant laws as though they had been given to the Gentiles—even as they had been to the Jews, but they never were!

Clues

“Then indeed, even the first covenant [referring to the “Old”] had ordinances of divine service and the earthly sanctuary. For a tabernacle was prepared: the first part, in which was the lampstand, the table, and the showbread, which is called the sanctuary; and behind the second veil, the part of the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of All, which had the golden censer and the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which were the golden pot that had the manna, Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant; and above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail” (vss. 1–5).

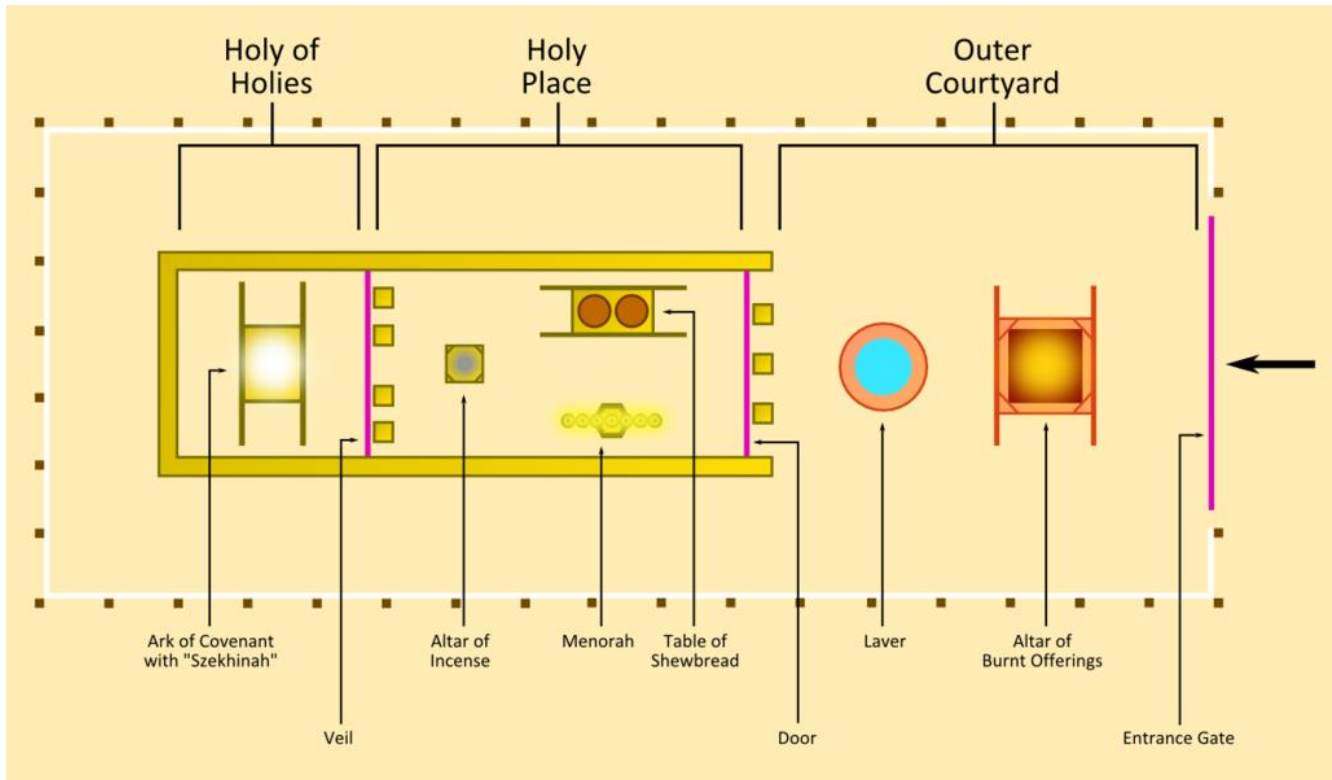
As we begin to look at chapter 9, we can easily identify some of the particulars of the “Old Covenant.” They are identified by a direct connection to the *“divine service”* provided by the priests, *“the earthly sanctuary,”* the furnishing of the *“tabernacle,”* and, in particular, the *“tablets of the covenant”*—which contained the Ten Commandments.

The author does this in order to make a clear distinction between the “Old” and the “New.” Moreover, he avoids an explanation of the details because they were clearly understood by the Hebrews. Moreover, the unneeded specifics are not part of the present focus the author is bringing.

However, in dealing with Jesus—The Mediator of the New Covenant—the author will make direct mention. He intends to show—as he did earlier—the greater priesthood of Jesus and His greater priestly work.

A Quick Reference

“Now when these things had been thus prepared, the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle [the Holy Place], performing the services. But into the second part [the Holy of Holies] (see graphic below) the high priest went alone once a year, [on the Day of Atonement] not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people’s sins committed in ignorance; the Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle [“the earthly”] was still standing. It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience—concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation” (vss. 6–10).



Concerning the Day of Atonement (vs. 7), please review again Leviticus 16–17 as needed.

Sins of Ignorance?

A brief mention of the expression, *"the people's sins committed in ignorance"* is in order. We need to recognize that known sins were dealt with when recognized by the offender through immediate sacrifices, required restorations, and (at times) via the death penalty. (Some sins were not covered by the blood sacrifice of an animal, but required the life blood of the offender. Such sins were bestiality, homosexuality, adultery, incest, intentional murder, causing harm to a child in the womb, child sacrifice, blasphemy, witchcraft, kidnapping, cursing or striking your father or mother, profaning the Sabbath, etc.) (See Exodus 21:12–29; 22:19; Leviticus 20; 24:16–17, 21, etc.)

"Sins committed in ignorance" (as are committed by all men) were dealt with during this annual Day: The Day of Atonement. On this day *"the high priest went alone"* (vs. 7) into the Holy of Holies to offer a very unique sacrificial service. Not only did this Day and its sacrifices continually remind the people that they were sinners in need of forgiveness, but also put forth the fact that a redeemer would be coming who would remove sin altogether (see Jeremiah 31:34). The author has mentioned this earlier and is building up to a revisit. This fact will show that Jesus is the only one who could enter *"behind the veil"* (see Hebrews 6:19–20; 9:12) and thus provide complete and total forgiveness of sin—sin that will be remembered no more.

The reason the sacrificial system and its sacrifices could not free the *"conscience"* (vs. 9) of the offender was simply by virtue of the fact that sins were not taken away under the Old Covenant but were simply *"covered"* until *"the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world"* came—as indicated in the expression *"the time of reformation"* (vs. 10).

It is clear that the author links “*foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances*” as a part of the “*dead works*” (vs. 14) required by the Old Covenant—just as he did the sacrificial systems, the earthly priesthood, etc.

The Time of Reformation

“But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance” (vss. 11–15).

As the author has pointed out the fact that the Old Covenant has become obsolete, he re-visits and re-emphasizes the fact that Jesus, the “*High Priest of good things to come*” (vs. 11), is greater, and that the “*perfect tabernacle*” is not earthly but heavenly—“*not of this creation*” (vs. 11). This should be understood by the fact that Moses was shown a heavenly tabernacle, and that the model fashioned after it was only the earthly.

We may recall that the author pointed this out in chapter 8 when he said, “*Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man*” (8:1–2).

A Cleansed Conscience

As stated, Christ, through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, in order to cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God (see vs. 14). This fact points to the fact that the “*new*” and “*better*” covenant does indeed allow for the cleansing of the conscience and the total removal of sin and its eternal consequences. Moreover, as stated above, the “*dead works*” of the Law have been abolished and superseded by the “*greater*” work of Jesus the Messiah—Who fulfilled the Law on behalf of those who believe. He has therefore “*perfected forever*” those who trust Him for salvation (see 10:14).

Redeemed by His Death and Given an Eternal Inheritance

Jesus paid the price to redeem mankind from sin and sins consequences. The Old Covenant could not provide this redemption. “*For this reason He [Jesus] is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance*” (vs. 15). Moreover, it is in the simple fact that Jesus not only died to redeem mankind, but also that He rose from the dead securing eternal life for all who trust in Him. “*This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him*” (2 Timothy 2:11 NKJV), and, “*if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection*” (Romans 6:5 NKJV). “*Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law*” (Romans 3:28 NKJV). “*And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven*

you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross” (Colossians 2:13–14 NKJV).

The “Testament”

The author helps us understand the meaning of the word “*testament.*” In effect, it is what we know today as a “will.”

It is noted that when a person prepares a “will,” it involves instructions concerning the inheritance left for those thought of and prepared for in advance of the person’s death. With this concept in mind, the author explains the same of the New Covenant regarding its blessing for believers. *“For where there is a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives” (vss. 16–17).* Moreover, he links the shedding of Jesus’ blood (His death, vs. 14) as necessary in order to introduce and make effective the “New.”

By the Shedding of Blood

Harkening back to verses 11–15, and pulling from the history of Israel under the Old Covenant, the author points out that *“not even the first covenant was dedicated without blood. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water, scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, ‘This is the blood of the covenant which God has commanded you.’ Then likewise he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry. And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission” (vss. 18–22).*

These facts re-emphasized the fact that *“it was necessary that the [earthly] copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these [methods of the Old Covenant and their typological significance], but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these” (vs. 23).*

The “*better*” is by Jesus (by His blood), therefore pointing out that *“Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us” (vs. 24).* It is obvious then that the earthly “*things*” were temporary but that the “*heavenly things*” are eternal. The temporary “*things*” were thus typologically purified by the “temporary” sprinkling of “*the blood of calves and goats*” but the “*heavenly things,*” being eternal, by the permanent once-for-all sacrifice of Jesus.

Almost all things?

The comment made by the author pointing out that *“according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission” (vs. 22)* is simply a reference to the fact that provisions were made for the very poor through the offering of grain/fine flour where a handful was burned on the altar (presumably atop the blood offerings offered earlier) (see Leviticus 5:1–13).

Sacrifices? Only One!

Jesus' once and final sacrifice, inaugurating the New Covenant, ended the typology needed until "*the end of the ages*" (vs. 26) had come to fruition.

The "*end of the ages*" referred to the ages *then* in the past—leading up to that time. The author knew this, and therefore, anticipating this event (the inauguration of the New Covenant promised), he stressed the fact that Jesus' finished work was the fulfillment of and end of the Old Covenant. (See also Matthew 5:18). We know that there is nonetheless a future day when Israel will come to see and experience the climactic fulfillment of *all* promised in the New Covenant. This will take place at and during the Millennial Reign of Jesus the Messiah.

Jesus' once-for-all sacrifice was and is sufficient in and of itself; therefore, the "Old" system is no longer needed. For this reason, the author stresses the fact that Jesus' once-for-all sacrifice, as compared to the "Old" methodology found in the typology of the Law, was superseded by saying, "*not that He should offer Himself often, as the [earthly] high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another—He [Jesus] then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself*" (vss. 25–26). Jesus' once-for-all sacrifice completely "*put away sin*" forever, and therefore ended the first (Old) covenant (please review 8:10–13).

Having an eschatological (end times) understanding of the future timeline fulfillment of all promised in the Kingdom Age/Millennial Reign of Jesus, the author reminds his readers to recall the fact that "*it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment*" (vs. 27). He likewise reminds his readers that "*Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many*" and "*To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation*" (vs. 28).

The expression "*it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment*" documents the biblical teaching of life, death, and judgment/accountability. Jesus' once-for-all sacrifice has therefore provided deliverance from the fear of death, the eternal consequences of sin, and a promise of the full acceptance every believer does and will enjoy as the result of the work of Jesus—over and against the Law and its insufficiency to save. Moreover, it is of note to see that the false teaching of reincarnation is clearly in contradiction to the truth found here in the Scriptures.

Note: Belief in reincarnation is really a hopeless "faith." The basic idea is that a person, upon death, is granted another life and life form wherein they are provided opportunity to live again. The common belief is that those who have lived a "good life" and acted from "good intentions" are provided a better "next life" and are therefore provided the opportunity to live again—with the hope of improvement. On the other hand, those who live poorly and do not act from good intentions come back and suffer the consequences of the past/earlier life. Therefore, the individual is always striving to suppress the propensities of the flesh and hopelessly looking ahead to the unknown re-incarnational state of that "next life." Moreover, following repeated cycles of striving, suffering, and a blind hope in what may follow, the person eventually loses their personhood and personality only to be absorbed into the "divine consciousness" as "one with the universe."

Of interest is the fact that no one has ever come back from the "universe" to testify to the state and condition anticipated. Thus, the faith of those who embrace reincarnation have no testimony or proof to base their faith upon, and only a blind hope of something better, based upon human performance. This "faith" is really an evil deception that ultimately leads to hopelessness of the greatest kind: hope in human performance—sure to disappoint. Moreover, reincarnation is in direct

contradiction to the Christian Faith wherein we are told that we have only one life to live, that our performance has nothing to do with our eternal destiny, and where we have the personal testimony of the Risen Savior who has provided us all that pertains to life and godliness (see 2 Peter 1:3).

The Second Coming of Jesus

Jesus will be coming again to bring about the final and full fulfillment of all things promised to the Hebrews. This is why the author reminds his readers to be watchful and eagerly await that day. Jesus' Second Coming is not to be feared, but anticipated with joy. No believer need fear because Jesus' complete work of redemption has made perfect (see Hebrews 10:14) all who believe. He said, *"To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation"* (vs. 28).

The Sins of Many?

The Scriptures make clear the fact that Jesus died for the sins of the whole world, i.e. all mankind. (See 1 John 2:1). However, it could be suggested that Jesus did not provide redemption to the Devil, nor the (fallen) angels. Therefore, the expression *"Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many"* (vs. 28) might appear to be an endorsement of a limited atonement—providing the opportunity to salvation for a limited number of individuals. However, it is not the case. Jesus is *"the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe"* (1 Timothy 4:10 NKJV). Moreover, Jesus said, *"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God"* (John 3:14–18 NKJV).

Questions:

- 1) **True or False:** Gentile Christians should cling to the Old Covenant laws because they were given to Gentiles and Jews alike.
- 2) **True or False:** We can easily identify some of the particulars of the "Old Covenant." They are identified by a direct connection to the *"divine service"* provided by the priests, *"the earthly sanctuary,"* the furnishing of the *"tabernacle,"* and in particular, the *"tablets of the covenant"*—which contained the Ten Commandments.
- 3) **True or False:** Under the Old Covenant some sins were not covered by the blood sacrifice of an animal, but required the life blood of the offender.
- 4) **True or False:** To Moses was revealed a heavenly tabernacle. The tabernacle he fashioned was only an earthly model.
- 5) **True or False:** The *"new"* and *"better"* covenant allows for the cleansing of the conscience and the total removal of sin and sin's eternal consequences.
- 6) **True or False:** The *"end of the ages"* referred to the ages leading up to the cross.

- 7) **True or False:** Jesus' once-for-all sacrifice was and is sufficient in and of itself, but the "Old" system is still needed for Jews who do not believe.
- 8) **True or False:** Reincarnation is not in contradiction to the truth found in the Scriptures.
- 9) **True or False:** Jesus only died for the men and women who will believe.

Notes: