

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MARCH 22ND–23RD, 2025 // HEBREWS

## SYMBOLS OF THE TABERNACLE (HEBREWS 9:1–10)

In Chapter 8, we read that Jesus is the High Priest of a new and better covenant—one that replaces the old one given to Israel through Moses.

- The old covenant was based on laws, animal sacrifices, and priests working in the temple, but it was only temporary and pointed forward to something far greater—Jesus.
- Jesus is the mediator of the “New Covenant.”

Now, we will explore, in Chapter 9, how Jesus’ sacrifice replaces the old system forever.

- All the structure, ministry, and sacred objects within the Tabernacle were very detailed, orderly, and regulated (v. 1).
- Ultimately, the Tabernacle was an “earthly sanctuary.” It was a physical, man-made place that was an imperfect, temporary copy of the true sanctuary in heaven.

### THE FIRST ROOM—THE HOLY PLACE (V. 2)

The Tabernacle was essentially a tent—a portable sanctuary made of wooden frames, curtains, and animal skins.

- That tent was 45 ft. long, 15 ft. wide, and 15 ft. high, divided into two rooms.
- The first room (the “Holy Place”) was 15 ft. by 30 ft. and contained the lampstand and the table of showbread.

### THE SECOND ROOM—THE MOST HOLY PLACE (V. 3)

Behind a thick veil was a smaller room (15 ft. by 15 ft.) called the “Most Holy Place,” or the “Holy of Holies,” that could only be entered once a year by the High Priest on Yom Kippur.

- This is where God’s presence dwelt in a unique way. The veil was a sign of sin’s separation.
- Within the Most Holy Place was the golden altar of incense and the Ark of the Covenant.

### THE ARK OF THE COVENANT (V. 4)

The Ark was a gold-covered chest that was around 45 in. long, 27 in. wide, and 27 in. high.

- The Ark represented God’s presence with Israel.
- Within the Ark, there were representations of God’s communication (the tablets of the law), God’s provision (the manna), and God’s protection and divine appointment of the priests for Israel (Aaron’s staff that budded).

### THE MERCY SEAT (V. 5)

The lid of the Ark was made of pure gold with two golden cherubim with their faces turned towards each other and their wings stretched out covering the seat itself.

- The cherubim symbolized divine guardianship and holiness, showing that no one could approach God’s throne or presence without God’s permission (Gen. 3:24).

The priests would enter the first room of the Tabernacle daily to perform their ministry (v. 6), but only the high priest could enter the second room (v. 7).

- The high priest could only go once a year, and He could never go without the blood of a sacrificed animal to sprinkle on the mercy seat.
- He would first offer a sacrifice for his own sins, and then he’d offer one for the sins of the people.

Jewish tradition states the high priest would enter the Most Holy Place with bells on his robe and a rope tied to his waist.

- The high priest would also not want to prolong his prayer because otherwise, people would think he had been struck dead!
- On the Day of Atonement, sacrifices were offered for sins committed in ignorance (known sins were covered by regular sin offerings).

### “A SYMBOL (PARABOLE) FOR THE PRESENT TIME...”

All these practices represented and were illustrations of deeper truths—parables that pointed ahead to the New Covenant.

- These things could not fully clear people’s consciences or make them truly clean (v. 9).
- These “physical regulations” were meant to last only until “the time of the new order” when the Messiah/Christ would appear (v. 10).

### ONLY A SNEAK PREVIEW

The regulations and practices in the Tabernacle were incomplete and pointed ahead to something (someone) greater.

- Jesus came and offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice that dealt completely with sin once and for all.
- We need more than religious observance to cleanse us of our sin.

### THE SHEDDING OF BLOOD (HEBREWS 9:11–22)

#### A SUPERIOR SANCTUARY (V. 11)

The Tabernacle served as a copy/illustration of God’s dwelling place (heaven).

- Jesus willingly offered Himself as the atoning sacrifice.
- Then, as our great High Priest, He entered the “perfect tabernacle” with the blood of that atoning sacrifice to offer to God for us so we could be forgiven and cleansed of our sins.

#### A SUPERIOR SACRIFICE (VS. 12–15)

Our great High Priest, Jesus, entered the actual Most Holy Place (the very throne room of God) once and for all time.

- What did He offer to God? Not the blood of an animal, but His own blood that obtained our eternal redemption!
- If the blood of animals could clean people on the outside and take away their guilt for a while...
- ...how much more can the blood of Christ (Who is absolutely perfect) truly cleanse our hearts and make us right with God forever?
- The blood of Jesus can cleanse our conscience from “dead works:” sinful behavior, choices that bring death, AND works we do to try to earn God’s forgiveness (that get us nowhere).
- The outcome of our redemption is that we are cleansed so that now we are free to “serve the living God.”
- We are not cleansed so that we can remain in sin and continue to serve ourselves.
- Jesus’ death was necessary to establish this new covenant between us and God. Under it, we now have an “eternal inheritance.”

### SPEAKING OF AN INHERITANCE... (VS. 16–17)

A will is a legal document outlining how an individual wishes their assets to be distributed after their death.

- A will only goes into effect when the “testator” (the one who wrote the will) dies.
- While that testator is still living, the will hasn’t gone into effect and none of the beneficiaries have received their inheritance yet.

### THE BLOOD COVENANT (VS. 18–21)

Jesus had to die for “the will” (the covenant) to go into effect.

- Even the first covenant God made with Israel was established with blood (v. 18).
- Moses followed God’s instructions by sprinkling blood on the people and the Tabernacle as a way of confirming the covenant (vs. 19–21).

### WHY BLOOD?

1. A Seal of the Covenant: a sign of a serious and binding agreement, showing that the promise was a matter of life and death (Ex. 24:8).
2. A Symbol of Life: blood is what gives life, and shedding it takes life (Lev. 17:11).
3. The Consequences of Sin: sin brought about the shedding of an animal’s blood (Gen. 3:21).

### NO FORGIVENESS WITHOUT BLOOD (V. 22)

Some of us prefer (and have reimagined) a God who deals with humanity’s sin problem by simply overlooking it.

- Some find the concept of God requiring blood for the forgiveness of sins barbaric, violent, and brutal.
- But the idea of atonement reveals more about the realities of evil than we even know.
- Humanity is the perpetrator of unspeakable evil.
- Anytime we commit sin, there is always a price to pay—whether we pay for it ourselves or someone else bears it for us.
- The ultimate consequence of sin is death, and God, in His perfect justice, does not simply sweep it under the rug.
- Sin is serious, and so is the cost of reconciliation.

### WHY CAN’T GOD JUST OVERLOOK SIN?

Imagine a judge who overlooks a truly horrible, barbaric crime, something terrible like a violent act that harmed children or innocent people.

- The perpetrator is guilty, but the judge says, “I don’t want to make anyone uncomfortable or seem too harsh; you are free to go!”
- Is that judge just? Could anyone simply “overlook” and ignore the pain and hurt caused by that crime? Evil that serious demands justice.

### NO FORGIVENESS WITHOUT BLOOD (V. 22)

The damage caused by sin to our relationship with God was so great that it required an ultimate sacrifice to fix it, and that ultimate sacrifice was Jesus’ death.

- In an ultimate act of divine love, God became man and willingly shed His blood so that humanity could be forgiven and reconciled.
- This is how we know God’s love (1 John 3:16).

### ONCE AND FOR ALL (HEBREWS 9:23–28)

#### HEAVENLY THINGS, NOT EARTHLY (VS. 23–24)

The Old Covenant required purification with things like the blood of animals, but the heavenly things need a better kind of purification. The idea of “cleansing heaven” is a symbol for the cleansing of Believers before God.

- After His death, Jesus did not go into a physical temple on Earth; He went into the true, heavenly sanctuary to present Himself before God.

### A FINAL AND VOLUNTARY SACRIFICE (VS. 25–26)

Jesus did not have to offer Himself over and over again like the high priests did with the annual animal sacrifice.

- Jesus only needed to sacrifice Himself once because He came at the right time to take away sin permanently by offering Himself.
- Jesus “offered Himself”—He voluntarily gave Himself up as a sacrifice for our sins.

### ONCE TO DIE (VS. 27–28)

Just as God has appointed every person on Earth to die once (no reincarnation) and then face judgment, so Jesus only had to die once (not repeatedly) to bear our sins.

- We can not avoid death. We all have a standing appointment with death and the same God who gave us life. We must all answer to Him about what we did with Jesus’ sacrifice.

Jesus’ first coming was to “offer Himself up to bear the sins of many,” but His second coming is to bring final

“salvation to those who are waiting on Him” (v. 28).

- The idea of Christ’s appearance a second time is an allusion to the reappearance of the high priest after he had completed his task in the Most Holy Place on the Day of Atonement (Lk. 1:21–22).

Jesus has dealt with the problem of sin perfectly and His atoning sacrifice was completely sufficient.

- At Jesus’ second coming, our “faith will be made sight,” and we will see firsthand the glories of our inheritance in God’s presence forever.
- Christians are those who are “waiting for Him.” Our lives on Earth are temporary and we are awaiting our heavenly home.

### SIN BRINGS DEATH

- It is so easy for us to see moral evil and depravity in our world, but it is often so difficult for us to recognize it in ourselves.
- Sin has consequences for us and others around us. God does not overlook, ignore, or sweep our sin under the rug; it must be paid for.
- The blood sacrifices demonstrated these realities of evil in a powerful way.

### GOD IS LOVE

- We are so confused and misled about what love means; we see infatuation, sexual desire, or emotionalism as love.
- The greatest act of love is seen in Christ’s willing and voluntary sacrifice on our behalf.
- Jesus’ blood was shed in our place; we did nothing to earn or deserve it. This is how we know that God loves us (1 John 3:16).

### JESUS’ BLOOD IS ENOUGH

- The blood of Jesus is the sign of how serious God is about having a relationship with you.
- If you have trusted in Christ for salvation, you are totally, completely, and forever free from God’s wrath and punishment—Jesus paid it for you.
- You were cleansed of your sin upon salvation and can continue to be cleansed from any sin that would hinder your relationship with God.
- 1 John 1:7–9, ESV