

## THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MARCH 23RD, 2025 // HEBREWS

### OLD COVENANT SANCTUARY (HEBREWS 9:1–10) SACRIFICIAL PRACTICES AND THE SANCTUARY

Following the discussion of the superior covenant in Chapter 8, the author begins Chapter 9 by unpacking the old covenant sanctuary.

- Where the law points to our sin, the Tabernacle and its traditions, point to a time before Jesus. The Tabernacle was an earthly sanctuary and therefore temporary. **Through Jesus, the Holy Spirit lives in the hearts of Believers.**

### THE TABERNACLE

Exodus 25–26 and 36–37 explain, in much greater detail, the layout of the Tabernacle.

- The courtyard was where the Israelites would gather for worship. The Holy Place was reserved for priests, and the Holy of Holies was reserved for the high priest. A curtain, or veil, separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies.

### SYMBOLIZATION AND REMINDERS

- **Gold** symbolized God's deity and worth.
- **Lampstands** symbolized, and literally gave off, light.
- **Bread** on the table symbolized God communing with His people.
- **The veil** was a separation between God and sinful people.

### SYMBOLIZATION IN THE HOLY OF HOLIES

- **The Ark of the Covenant** was a representation of God with His people.
- **The golden pot** with the manna was a reminder of God's provision and Israel's ungratefulness.
- **Aaron's staff** was a reminder of their rebellion and complaints (Numbers 17).
- **The tablets** contained the Ten Commandments and were a reminder of the broken law.

### ATONEMENT

The high priest would enter the Holy of Holies one day a year, on the Day of Atonement, and offer a blood sacrifice on the mercy seat atop the Ark. On this day, they would enter two times; once for their own sin and again for the sins of the people (Leviticus 16:12–16).

- **This foreshadows the need for a greater sacrifice in the precious blood of Jesus.**

### THE OLD VS. THE NEW

Under the old covenant, an ordinary Jew would have no access to the presence of God. The only person who was allowed to access the Holy of Holies was the high priest.

- **How great is it that through our great High Priest, Jesus, we have full access to the Father?!** Through Jesus' perfect blood sacrifice, we are privileged with a VIP all-access pass.

### "COMMITTED IN IGNORANCE"

On the Day of Atonement, the people's sins, "**committed in ignorance**," were covered by the blood sacrificed by the high priest. "Known sin" would be taken care of during daily sacrifices and offerings.

- Jesus' sacrifice covers the multitude of sins. "...Where sin multiplied, grace multiplied even more" (Romans 5:20).

### THE OLD MUST PASS AWAY

For there to be a new covenant "the first is [declared] obsolete. And what is obsolete...is about to pass away" (Hebrews 8:13).

- When Jesus died, the curtain/veil of the sanctuary was torn from **top to bottom** (Matthew 27:51). The veil had to be torn for a new covenant to happen. **There was no longer separation after the perfected sacrifice.**

### NEW COVENANT SACRIFICE (HEBREWS 9:11–22)

#### BUT CHRIST

Under the old covenant, sacrifices were made outside the curtain/veil at the altar, and the blood for the atoning sacrifice was brought behind the curtain and placed on the mercy seat. In the same way, Jesus died here as a sacrifice and the debt was paid in Heaven.

- Christ is a perfect sacrifice, and His blood is presented in a more perfect Tabernacle.

#### HOW MUCH MORE?

The intended audience was very familiar with animal sacrifices, and therefore the emphasis on Jesus' sacrifice, through the phrase, "...how much more," is extensive.

- Many times, to communicate the extent, we see this phrase in Scripture (Luke 11:13; Luke 12:24; Romans 5:10). In v. 14, we see the extent of the superiority of Jesus' sacrifice.

### A CLEANSSED CONSCIENCE FROM DEAD WORKS

Again, we must take the intended audience into account regarding v. 14. **Our conscience usually speaks to us on behalf of our past experiences and draws from our moral compass.**

- The Jewish audience would have most likely desired to run back to old covenant sacrifices, and that is precisely the dead work from which the author is encouraging cleansing.

### NEW, NOT REVISED

We must heed the same warning in running back to dead works. If the things we were used to before we followed Christ, including our past self, have been cleansed and renewed through the blood of Jesus, why do we sometimes desire to follow temptation to return to those dead works?

- **We must resist selfishness and realize our priestly duty of serving the living God!**

### "WHERE A WILL EXISTS..."

Starting in v. 16, the author mentions a will. In the Greek, the words for "covenant" and "testament/will" are both used.

- For a will to be relevant, the individual to whom the will is referencing must have passed. For redemption, and for the New Covenant to be relevant, Jesus' bloodshed was necessary just as Moses' blood sacrifice was (Exodus 24:6–8).

### "THIS IS THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT"

V. 20 quotes Exodus 24:8 when Moses conducts a blood offering with the Israelites, and during the last supper, Jesus' words are similar: "For this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Matthew 26:28).

- **Absolute forgiveness and sufficient grace are a result of the sacrifice of the perfect lamb.**

### ONE OFFERING (HEBREWS 9:23–28)

#### JESUS IS OUR MEDIATOR

- As verses 24–25 state, Jesus appears in the presence of God for us. Just as the high priest would, Jesus appears before God in Heaven on our behalf!
- "We...have a High Priest who is [able] to sympathize with our weakness" (Hebrews 4:15). Not only can He sympathize, but He is interceding to the Father on behalf of His people.

### "...NOT TO OFFER HIMSELF MANY TIMES."

Since Jesus is the perfect sacrifice and eliminates the need for multiple sacrifices for our sin, there is **finality** in His sacrifice.

- **We must never think that our sin is so insurmountable that Jesus' sacrifice was insufficient.** The wages of sin is death, and because of our sin, a perfect sacrifice must have been made. Therefore, we receive life!

### WE HAVE ONE LIFE; DO NOT WASTE IT

The importance of people having one life and one death is not to open the subject of reincarnation. This is to exemplify the likeness of the flesh that Jesus bore, and the importance of our opportunity to respond to the gospel.

- We have this life to respond to the gospel; **there are no second chances.** We will all die, and we will all face judgment.

### "CHRIST...WILL APPEAR A SECOND TIME"

**Jesus is coming back, not to deal with sin, but to retrieve His people. If we are faithfully following Jesus,** the knowledge of inevitable judgment should not make us fearful.

- "It ought to be a daily disappointment when our Lord does not come; instead of being, as I fear it is, a kind of foregone conclusion that he will not come just yet" (Charles Spurgeon, 1891).

### NOTHING LIKE THE REAL THING

- Through animal sacrifice, the Israelites had no direct access to the Holy of Holies, but through Jesus, we not only have a perfect sacrifice but a great High Priest.
- Do we operate in our faith as if Jesus is our mediator?
- **Have we become comfortable with a replacement for the only great High Priest?**

### A NEW COVENANT

- "For this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Matthew 26:28).
- There is no perfect forgiveness without perfect sacrifice.
- **If we are a Christ follower, do we understand the finality of His sacrifice? And are we eagerly awaiting His return?**