

Hebrews 9

What was the first covenant (v. 1)? The Old Covenant, the Mosaic Covenant. **What two things characterized the first covenant?** Regulations for worship and an earthly sanctuary.

The tabernacle was a tent-like structure in which God dwelt among the Israelites from the time of their encampment at Mount Sinai to the building of the temple.¹ What were the two main sections of the tabernacle (vv. 2-3)? The Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. A veil (a thick curtain) separated the two sections (Exodus 26:31-33). It had the effect of separating God from man. It was not a picture of intimacy

What were the articles of furniture in the tabernacle (vv. 2-5)? The lampstand, the table and the consecrated bread (twelve loaves of showbread, each representing God's fellowship with the twelve tribes of Israel (Exodus 25:23-30) were in the Holy Place.) The Golden Altar of Incense and the gold covered Ark of the Covenant were in the Most Holy Place (also referred to as the "Holy of Holies"). The Golden Altar of Incense actually stood at the veil before the Most Holy Place and was used to burn incense (Exodus 30:1-8).

What was in the Ark of the Covenant (v. 4)? The gold jar of manna, Aaron's staff and the two stone tablets containing the Ten Commandments. **What was on the Ark of the Covenant (v. 5)?** The cherubim – two winged figures made of pure gold - and the Atonement Cover.

The Atonement Cover was also called the Mercy Seat. This was the ornate "lid" for the Ark of the Covenant. The blood of sacrifice was sprinkled upon it for the forgiveness of Israel's sin on the Day of Atonement (Exodus 25:17-22). As God looked down into the ark, He saw the symbols of Israel's sin, rebellion, and failure. But when the blood of sacrifice was applied to the mercy seat, God saw blood covering over the sin of Israel, and He took into consideration the blood instead of the sin of Israel.

The author is now going to contrast Christ's offering with the offerings of Judaism. What is the function of the priest (v. 6)? The priests entered daily into the outer room (The Holy Place) to perform their priestly functions such as tending the lampstand and replacing the showbread.

What did the high priest do (v. 7)? Once a year, on the Day of Atonement, he entered the inner room (the Most Holy Place). He carried a basin of blood which he offered for the sins of himself and for the people sins committed *in ignorance*. It was assumed that *known* sin would be taken care of through the regular sin offerings and the daily sacrifices. In this respect, Jesus' work is far greater than the work done on the Day of Atonement. Jesus' work on the cross is sufficient to atone for both the sins we do in ignorance and sins that we know.

What did the practices of the priests described in vv. 6-7 indicate (v. 8)? The Holy Spirit was teaching that sin had created distance between man and God, that man must approach God through a mediator and that the mediator could approach God only through the blood of a sacrificial victim. It was an object lesson to teach that the way into God's presence was not yet opened for worshippers. That lesson remained in effect during the time of the temple until the veil was ripped in two from top to bottom (Mark 15:38).²

What is revealed about the inadequacy of the Old Covenant (v. 9)? It is possible to fulfill all the outward obligations of religion and still have a conscience that is not right with God. This is one of the tragic inadequacies of a religion that did not meet the deepest need of God's people, namely, intimate personal relationship with God. The worshippers were never free from the guilt of sin. Relationship with God purifies the conscience.³ Old Covenant sacrifices for sin on the Day of Atonement only provided temporary cleansing, but the sacrifice (blood) of Jesus Christ provided permanent cleansing.

What were the purposes of the Old Covenant sacrifices (v. 10)? They were "*external regulations applying until the time of the new order*" (New Covenant). The weakness of the priestly service under the Old Covenant was its inability to address the need for inner transformation in man.

In contrast, what did Christ do when He appeared as a High Priest (vv. 11-12)? Entered the Most Holy Place not made by human hands, i.e. the sanctuary of heaven, the very throne room of God.

What did Jesus do differently than the high priests of the Old Testament (v. 12)? He entered the Most Holy Place not by the blood of goats and calves but by His own blood. He entered once as opposed to annually. He secured eternal redemption vs. annual atonement. He entered for all not just the Jews.

In what sense was Jesus' sacrifice "unblemished" (v. 14)? He was a morally perfect sacrifice (i.e. without sin). Whereas the animal sacrifices were physically without blemish. **Why was this important?** It permanently satisfied the wrath of God?

What provision was made for the sins of people under the first (Old) covenant (v. 15)? The death of Christ for their sins – the same provision offered by the second (New) covenant. God saved them on the basis of what He knew Christ would accomplish. God reckoned the value of the death of Christ to their account when they believed whatever revelation He gave them of Himself.

Jesus' payment on the cross accomplished redemption for those under the first covenant. Every sin offering made in faith under the Law was an IOU cashed in at the cross.

What is the principle of a will or testament (vv. 16-17)? In certain respects the covenants God made with humankind are similar to wills. With all wills, the person who made the will must die before the beneficiaries experience any effects of the will.⁴ Before a last will and testament can be probated, evidence must be submitted that the testator has died.⁵ **How does this apply to us?** The death of the person who drafted the will (the covenant), the testator, has been duly attested. Now we, as the beneficiaries, get to enjoy our inheritance.

How was the first covenant dedicated/ratified (vv. 18-19)? By the shedding of blood. When Moses had proclaimed every commandment 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 (Exodus 24:4-8). The blood was a pledge that the terms of the covenant would be fulfilled. The New Covenant went into effect along parallel lines, when Jesus Christ shed His blood, and God applied it to its beneficiaries (Christians) spiritually (Matthew 26:28).⁶

What is the Biblical principle (v. 22)? Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness or remission of sin.

What is the contrast (v. 23)? It was acceptable for the copies of the heavenly things (the earthly sanctuary) to be "purified" with imperfect sacrifices. But the heavenly things themselves could only be purified with a perfect offering, i.e. the death of Christ.

Where did Christ enter, and where did He not enter (v. 24)? Christ did not enter the earthly, man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one, to serve and intercede for us. Rather, He entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in the presence of God Himself.

What was required of the High Priest (v. 25)? Repeated sacrifices every year offering blood that was not his own. **Why did the sacrifices need to be repeated?** They didn't cover future sins.

How often did Jesus offer His sacrifice (vv. 26, 28)? Once. **Why was Jesus' sacrifice needed only once?** It was the perfect sacrifice, sufficient to satisfy the wrath of God and paid the sacrifice for sins for all people for all eternity. It was the sacrifice of His own life which was not repeatable.

What two things are appointed/certain for man (v. 27)? Die once then face judgment.

Explain the purpose of Jesus' first and second comings. His first coming was "*to take away the sins of many people*" through His atoning death. His second coming is "*to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.*"

¹ Believer's Bible Commentary, William MacDonald, 1995 Edition, (published by Thomas Nelson Publishers), p. 2183

² Ibid. p. 2184

³ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on Hebrews, 2017 Edition, (published by <http://planobiblechapel.org/soniclight/>), p. 103

⁴ Ibid. p. 109

⁵ Believer's Bible Commentary, William MacDonald, 1995 Edition, (published by Thomas Nelson Publishers), p. 2186

⁶ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on Hebrews, 2017 Edition, (published by <http://planobiblechapel.org/soniclight/>), p. 109