



The Book of Hebrews

Free At Last Good things to come!

Background: The book of Hebrews teaches a contrast between the realities of the old covenant and the new covenant. In the old covenant, the law and its ceremonies were a shadow of the good things to come. They only reflected the reality of the “heavenly things”. The inauguration of the new covenant is described as a change in priesthood and law that brings about a change in reality because of the cross.

Introduction: Hebrews chapters 9 and 10 is a bit like the popular History Channel series, “Modern Marvels” where the program theme is the history of how something is made and sustained. Here we see the ‘behind the scenes’ working and making redemption (salvation) possible.

A. History of the Old *Heb 9:1-10; 16-22 (Handout side 1)*

1. The Earthly Holy Place. [9:1-10] This section describes the OT tabernacle, its furnishings, and its worship practices. This depiction of the “first covenant” lays the groundwork for the discussion of the new covenant in the next section.

2. The tent: [9:2-5] The tent or tabernacle was divided into two portions—the Holy Place and Most Holy Place. Ex 25:9; 26:1-37.

3. The sanctuary: [9:2] Or the ‘first part’ or the ‘holy place’. See Ex 25:23-40; 40:22-25; Lev 24:5-9 for more information.

4. The Most Holy Place: [9:4-5] **The Golden censer**—The preacher pictures the golden altar inside the Most Holy Place because of its role in the liturgy of the Day of Atonement. On that day, the High-Priest brought incense from that altar into the Most Holy Place. The altar marked the boundary of the Holy of Holies as well as the curtain. The High Priest went beyond the altar of incense only once a year.

5. Worship and access in the Old [9:6-10]

Ministering to the Lord: [9:6-7] The priests ministered daily but only the High Priest could go into the Most Holy place once a year.

The Old is limited: [9:8-10] Ministry in the Holy Place and behind the veil were limited to the Levitical Priesthood. The rest of God’s people could not draw near to God’s throne of mercy since the way was not yet opened.

6. Last will and testament: [9:16-22] A Last Will and Testament illustrates the necessity of Christ’s death. The benefits and provisions of a will are only promises until the one who wrote the will dies. Death activates the promises into realities.

Symbolic blood of the Old: Since a covenant cannot begin until a death occurs, the Mosaic covenant also began with blood. The Mosaic covenant-initiation ceremony (Ex. 24:3-8) is recalled here in 9:19-20.

Purified with blood: In the Mosaic law, the initial purification of the people of God required sacrificial blood, and such sacrifices continued to be required in the law on behalf of God’s people. The OT sacrifices were given by God as types of Christ’s greater, perfect sacrifice to come.

Hebrews 9:1-28 (NKJV)

The Shadow—the Earthy Sanctuary

1 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.

Last Will and Testament

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.

B. History of the New *Heb 9:11-15; 23-28 (Handout side 2)*

Redemption through the Blood of Christ. When compared to Mosaic tabernacle worship (vv. 1–10), the new covenant high priesthood of Jesus provides a single superior sacrifice in a superior heavenly tabernacle (which stands for God’s very presence); and thus it brings complete forgiveness of sins, eternal salvation, purified consciences, and direct access to God.

1. The greater more perfect tent: [9:11] The greater and more perfect tent is the area that immediately surrounds God’s very presence in heaven, and is not a literal tabernacle at all. This tabernacle is superior to the Mosaic tabernacle since it is not made by mortal hands and is not of this creation—i.e., it is not earthly but heavenly.

2. How much more: [9:12-14] “...how much more shall the blood of Christ...” (9:14) is one of the most wonderful statements in the Bible. See also Hebrews 4:16 “We can come boldly...”

3. Mediator of the New [9:15] Jesus’ death retroactively redeemed all those who had believed in God under the Old Covenant (cf. Rom. 3:24–26). This is in keeping with symbolism of the Day of Atonement. Annually the High-Priest would atone for or cover the sins that the people had committed in the preceding year (Lev. 16:16,21,30).

The called of God: Lit. here, “the ones having been called,” looking back to those under the Old Covenant who were called to salvation by God on the basis of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ to come long after most of them had died.

4: Christ has done it all: [9:23-28] This section makes a great conclusion to the chapter and an introduction to more details that the preacher will share in chapter 10.

Christ is the REAL thing: [9:23-27] No copies here...Christ was and is the Messiah who shed His blood for the salvation of all.

He is coming again: [9:28] On the Day of Atonement, the people eagerly waited for the High-Priest to come back out of the Holy of Holies [the Most Holy Place]. When he appeared, they knew that the sacrifice on their behalf had been accepted by God.

In the same way, when Christ appears at His second coming, it will be confirmation that the Father has been fully satisfied with the Son’s sacrifice on behalf of believers.

At that point salvation will be consummated (See 1 Pet. 1:3–5).

Apart from sin: This phrase testifies to the completed work of Christ in removing sins by His sacrifice at His first coming. No such burden will be upon Him in His second coming.

Conclusion: Christ is a more excellent High Priest than any under the law, who but prefigured the work He came to do. He has entered once for all within the Holiest place. Having undertaken to be our High Priest He could not have been admitted into heaven without shedding His blood for us, having no errors of His own to offer for, and neither can any of us enter God’s glorious presence except by a saving trust in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus, without which remission for sins is impossible.

The Heavenly Sanctuary

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.

The Greatness of Christ’s Sacrifice

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.