The Book of Hebrews

Chapter 9

We are looking into a review of what the author of Hebrews is giving to the people regarding the old ways as relating to the new ways. The usual way things work, is when a new way of doing things is instituted, it should be at least better than the old way of doing things, don’t you think? That is what this author is striving to get the reader to understand. The old is passing away, and the new is what is now relevant. Things have changed, and we have the difference from the old way of worship via the Tabernacle with the Priestly worship and sacrifice, under the Law of Moses, which now gives way to the new Covenant and worship, and with Jesus as the Sacrifice already given.

A] Hebrews 9: 1 through 5; (read)

1] “*Then, indeed, the First Covenant had ordinances of divine service and earthly sanctuary.”*

Again, as always, we have to deal with the chapter and verse designations, when this truly reverts back to Chapter 8 verses 5 and 6, in explaining the Tabernacle worship. When God made the covenant with Moses, He also gave Moses the Law and the ordinances of the Tabernacle and the worship. We can see some of this in Exodus 25. The writer will be showing what was the old form of worship and then later on what the difference is to the new Covenant worship.

2] “*For a tabernacle was prepared: the first, in which was the lampstand, the table and the showbread, which is called the sanctuary;--”*

The writer is describing, what was; that is the original tabernacle which was a demountable structure of specifically designed and constructed, knock-down, cable guyed, columns, then, strung between these columns was a massive curtain that enclosed a large gathering area of about 75’ x 150’ where the sacrifices were brought to, slain on tables, and burned on the great brazen altar. Within was a double tent structure, total length was 45’ x 15’ width; with the first part being, 30’ x 15,’ having within it, the altar of incense, table of the bread (showbread), and the lampstand. (see provided pictures)

3] *“--and behind the second veil, the part of the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of All, 15’x 15’ (also called the Holy of Holies), 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, Aarons rod that budded and the tablets of the covenant;--”*

The writer goes on to detail what the holiest of Holies consisted of, by what was told, as very, very few ever got to go in there. Only the High Priest and at only select times.

4] *“--and above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail.”*

The writer is giving details he has read about and really not seen. The Tabernacle was a thousand years ago and they were into the third temple period, so the writer is repeating what he read in Exodus.

B] Hebrews 9: 6 through 10; (read)

1] “*Now when these things had been thus prepared, the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing the services.”*

So, now the writer takes us from the description of the tabernacle and the things in it, to the services performed.

2] “*But into the second part the High Priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the peoples sins committed in ignorance;--”*

This refers to ‘Yom Kippur’ or ‘Day of Atonement’ where the High Priest alone went into the Holy of Holies, bringing with him to present before God on the Mercy Seat, a bowl of the blood sacrifices, his included, because, remember he too is a sinner.

Now we must keep reminding ourselves since we are studying this a week at a time, that this is the old way of worship, isn’t it? The author has to explain, what the Jewish believers have come from, and frankly, I doubt many actually knew what went on in the temple when they presented their sacrifices, except what they may have been told, right or wrong.

3] *“--the Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way to the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing.”*

Class, as this tabernacle was only temporary, noting it was demountable, and the latter temples were also destroyed none of this was permanent, and as the writer noted near the beginning, all were simply copies of God’s heavenly tabernacle. God cannot look upon sin, it IS an abomination to Him, yet even the High Priests were sinners and could approach the Mercy Seat ONLY AFTER offering their own sacrifices.

4] “*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 food and drinks various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation.”*

So, truth be told, all of the given ordinances or laws were more symbolism, weren’t they? Because all were performed by imperfect man, even the high priest, was not sinless. These were all temporary. Does washing of your hands in a special laver bring one any closer to God? Does eating specific meals, in a specific way bring one any closer to God?

C] Hebrews 9: 11 through 15; (read)

1] “*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.”*

After all the descriptions of what was, regarding the approach to God through the ordinances, the gifts and sacrifices and the use of the priesthood and it finding all deficient in its whole, the author then, broaches the subject of what IS the better way. He returns to Jesus and what Jesus offers that is so superior to what the author just discussed. He is making the case that the ‘Religion' the people followed was a temporary approach to the copies of worship that God instituted, until God Himself would intervene.

2] “*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.”*

The Jews, at least, knew they had to follow the ordinances of sin offerings, but class, do we understand the complete thought of the blood sacrifice required by God? This goes back to the beginning where God created mankind but mankind is a sinful creature, and rightfully deserves death for his crimes. But God in His Mercy, chose to use a substitutionary death of an animal in lieu of the sinners own death when he was repentant.

God gave the ordinances as written in the Pentateuch, and the most important one was the on the ‘Day of Atonement’ where the high priest took his own blood sacrifice into the Holy of Holies, and poured in on the Mercy Seat, but the writer now makes the distinction. That this was imperfect, and that Jesus used His OWN BLOOD as the sacrifice and eternally entered the Holy of Holies, where He intercedes.

3] “*For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh,--”*

The heifer is referred to in Numbers 19 where the red heifer, that the yoke has never touched, will be burned to ash, and the ash will be mixed with water and used for purification rites for the year. (here is a whole bunch of things to happen here regarding the sacrifice, and what else was burned with the red heifer, but too lengthy to describe at this time).

4] --”*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.”*

However, because of the shed blood of Jesus, we are then purified in the blood of the lamb, aren’t we? The writer tells the people, that this act shall cleanse you heart and mind from the life you have lived to the new life serving the living God. Those ‘dead works’ are the works that they did to assure their forgiveness. The sacrifices are now over and done, because the final sacrifice was made.

5] “*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.”*

So, with Jesus having died and risen and entered the Tabernacle of God as High Priest and now mediator, we have actual, real, and eternal access to God the Father, and as believers of Jesus as the Son and God as the Father, we are now children of God, and as children of God, co-heirs in His kingdom.

D] Hebrews 9: 16 through 22; (read)

1] “*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.”*

This verse is referring back to the statement of receiving the promise of the eternal inheritance, and simply means a last will and testament, and as we are the co-inheritors of God promises, there is a last will and testament, that New Covenant, but for this last will and testament to be in force, the issuer of the will and testament must have died. That is what Jesus has done, He died so the will can go into force, and then rose again that we might have life to fully enjoy the inheritance.

2] “*Therefore, not even the first covenant was dedicated without blood.”*

Notice how many times the blood in emphasized. The blood is the lifeforce of all living things. Even plant live has a sap flowing through it providing the life-giving nutrients to the very edges of the plant. The blood does the same thing, and right from the beginning the letting of blood whether animal or man, affected their life span. Here the writer, after bringing the New Covenant (will and testament) into play, invokes the covenant of Moses with God.

3] “*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.”*

What we have here is the writer going right to Moses, and as Moses has finished up all the written law as given to him from God, and the teaching of all this written law to the people, and now the dedication begins. As told in Exodus 24. He gathers the people and has the law laid out before them, and taking Hyssop and the scarlet wool sponge, anoints the law, the priests and the people with the shed blood of the calves and goats. (Can you imagine standing under a major shower of blood?) So, we note death played a part in the anointing doesn’t it? The substitutionary death of the calves and goats.

4] “*Then likewise he sprinkled with the blood, both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry. And according to the Law, almost all things are purified with the blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.”*

Frankly from what I can imagine, the whole place has quite a rosy hue as the blood sprinkling goes on and on. But what we should be keeping in mind was taught earlier, that the Tabernacle is a copy of the real one in heaven, and is built by human hands, as well as the vessels and utensils being copies so all have to be purified by this shed blood. Also figuring there are close to 3 million people that are sprinkled on, that HAS to be a lot of calves and goats slain for the ritual. The priests carry bowls of blood and other priests carry the hyssop reeds which they dip into the bowl and then wave it over the crowds.

E] Hebrews 9: 23 through 28; (read)

1] “*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.”*

Now this gets a bit complicated, but here goes: Explaining the verse before, where the shed blood of calves and goats was sprinkled over the tabernacle, the holy implements, the presentation of the written law, and then the people, was sufficient for the purpose of sanctifying all of these man-made things and the people. Again, remembering that the tabernacle, the holy implements and the Law are simply copies of heavenly things, Therefore the calves and goats blood is a substitutionary sacrifice, as a stand in for the real thing that is not yet to come.

Then the heavenly things must be sanctified by something much holier than earthly, substitutionary blood-letting. That is the Blood of Christ Himself, that this being the ‘once for all’ sacrifice, it is the Blood of Jesus Christ that sanctifies all.

(Does that explain this verse sufficiently) whew!

2] “*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;--”*

When Jesus was crucified, died, buried and risen to ascend into heaven, what was the first important fact to appear? The Holy of Holies was forever opened, the curtain into the Holy of Holies was torn top to bottom, and the way of the high priest to God was over. Now the way of the True High Priest interceding to God is Jesus Christ Himself.

3] “--*not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with the blood of another---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.”*

This goes to further put the full explanation of the true reason for the sacrifice Jesus made. As the high priests HAVE to make a real sacrifice EVERY year for their sins, Jesus, because He is God, He is already sinless and He is Holy, therefore His sacrifice is not substitutionary in and of itself, but it is for us and our sin. He is OUR substitutionary sacrifice, that His sacrifice covers our sin once for all time.

4] “*And as it appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ 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.”*

Ready for this? Every ‘man’ (person) is going to die at some point. We have a life span. However where is it we are appointed to go? Have we accepted Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior? That is, have we accepted Jesus as OUR sacrifice for our sins, past, present, and future and trusted in His forgiveness? Or do we face eternal damnation?

We also know Jesus is coming again, don’t we? But this time He is not coming to deal with the sin situation as another sacrifice, but He will come in judgment and as King, and he will complete the picture of salvation. To help us understand this a little better let is see a verse from 1 John 3:2 “Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He has been revealed we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”