

Chapter 9

Hebrews 9:1 Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. The worship of the old Covenant is contrasted with the worship of the new covenant. Let's define a few terms. The **first covenant** refers to the Law of Moses. **Ordinances of divine service** refer to the worship under the Law of Moses which was commanded by God. The **sanctuary** here refers to the tabernacle. It would include the temple in its implication. It was a sanctuary made by men of material things. This is different from the sanctuary made by God and not made with human hands. Verses 2-5 reminded the readers and us as well about the architecture of the Old Testament tabernacle.

(2) For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary. The tabernacle consisted of two sections. The first room was called the Holy place. The furniture of the Holy place is described here. KJV calls it the sanctuary.

The second section was called the Holy of Holies, or the most Holy place. ***(3) And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; (4) Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant;*** The first veil was at the east end of the Holy place where the priests entered. The second veil separated the Holy place from the Holy of holies. The veil represented the barrier between the Holy God and sinful man. When Jesus died on the cross, the veil of the temple was rent from top to bottom (Matthew 27:51).

The KJV says golden censer. The Greek word for censer may be translated either censer or altar of incense. When the veil was opened on the Day of Atonement, the altar of incense would be right in front of the ark of the covenant where it was used by the high priest on the day of atonement.

The ark of the covenant was made of acacia wood and overlaid with gold. It contained three objects in it. They were a **golden pot holding the manna** (Exodus 16:33), **Aaron's rod that budded** (Numbers 17:10), and **the tables of the covenant**, which are the tables of stone with the Ten Commandments (Exodus 25:16, 21; 40:20; Deuteronomy 10:2-5). Here the author is speaking as it was in the tabernacle during the time of Moses. Over time something had happened to Aaron's rod that budded and the golden pot of manna (I Kings 8:9). But when the ark of the covenant was put into the temple that Solomon built, only the tables of stone containing the Ten Commandments were in it.

(5) And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly. The lid or seat of the Ark of the Covenant was called the *mercy seat* or *place of propitiation* because this was where the high priest sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice on the Day of Atonement (Exodus 30). Connected to the lid of the Ark of the

Chapter 9

Covenant were the two cherubim made of gold. They were placed one on each end looking at each other and their wings extended over the mercy seat (Exodus 25:18-22; 37:7-9). Here the writer calls them the *cherubim of glory* which means the glory of God.

The author now turns to the work of the priests. *(6) Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God.* The priests went into the Holy place every day. They did three things. (1) Each day they trimmed the lamps morning and evening (Ex 27:20); (2) each day they offered incense on the altar of incense morning and evening (Ex 30:7-8); and (3) once a week, on the sabbath, they changed the showbread (Lev 28:8). Every priest could do these acts; however, they were not allowed to go into the presence of God in the Holy of holies.

The high priest went once a year into **the second** (the Holy of holies). *(7) But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people:* When he went into the Holy of holies, he had to take the blood of the sacrifice first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. **Errors** in this verse it is used in the general sense for the sins of the people. He is telling what happened on the Day of Atonement each year, which was the tenth day of the seventh month of the year, which would be October on the present calendar. The high priest actually went into the Holy of holies at least two times that day. Since the Day of Atonement was the only day the high priest could go into the Holy of holies, it counted as one time.

(8) The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: The purpose of this illustration concerning the high priest going into the Holy of holies once a year was to show that while the law of Moses (**the first tabernacle**) was still in force, the way to heaven would not be revealed. When Jesus died upon the cross, the Law of Moses was taken out of the way (Colossians 2:14-17). After it was taken out of the way, Jesus rose from the dead, ascended into heaven.

(9) Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; (10) Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.

The tabernacle and its ordinances were a figure looking forward to the Christian age. The sacrifices they offered under the Old Testament could not purify the soul from sin. **The meat and drinks** refer to the food laws which were imposed upon Israel. **The divers washings** refer to the many ceremonial types of washing commanded. Many of these food laws and washings were good medical practices for the prevention of disease, but they helped only the body, not the conscience or the soul. These washings along with

Chapter 9

the sacrifices could not take away sin and make the inward man clean. They could help only the outer man – they were carnal. God gave them as a teaching, a figure device until the **A time of reformation.**

(11) But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; (12) Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. The central person of the Bible is Jesus Christ. The Old Testament looks to his coming. When Jesus came, he was to reconcile man to God by his death upon the cross. He was the one who brought the forgiveness of his sins thus the right relationship with God. In order to do this, he had to become a high priest. When he died upon the cross, and arose from the dead, Christ ascended into heaven to sit on the right hand of God in a **greater and more perfect tabernacle**, which refers to heaven. By his sacrifice Jesus paid the price for the redemption of sinners from their sin.

(13) For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to 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, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? Vs. 13-14 must be considered together, as it is the argument of the lesser to the greater. If the blood of animals cleansed them who had been defiled by physical defilement, how much more will the blood of Christ cleanse men who have been defiled by sin? **The blood of bulls and goats** refers to the sin offering made on the Day of Atonement and throughout the year. **The ashes of the heifer** is taken from Numbers 19. If someone defiled themselves by touching a dead body or going into a tent where a dead body was, they had to have the ashes of the red heifer sprinkled on them with water to be clean again. The ashes of the red heifer could take away ceremonial pollution, but it could not take away spiritual defilement.

What animal blood failed to do, the blood of Christ did completely. The blood of Christ took away men's sins and gave them a right relationship with God. There are three reasons given why the blood of Christ could do this: (1) Christ offered himself **through the eternal Spirit**. It seems to refer to the eternal nature of Christ rather than by the Holy Spirit. (2) The sacrifice of Christ was rational and voluntary. Jesus offered himself. (3) Jesus offered himself without sin to God. He was a perfect sacrifice, not just outwardly, but inwardly as well. Jesus had committed no sin-without spot. He provided the means whereby man could be forgiven of his sins.

The Mediator

(15) And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they

Chapter 9

which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. Christ is the mediator of the new covenant because of his sacrificial death. That Jesus is mediator has already been affirmed in Hebrews 8:6. By his death, Jesus fulfilled the promise made by God in Jeremiah 31:34, *"I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more."* The fact that the new covenant would be by the blood of Christ was introduced by Jesus when He instituted the Lord's Supper (Mark 14:24). **This verse also points out that the blood of Christ was retroactive to include those under the first covenant.** The law could not save men; however, those who kept the law to the best of their abilities were saved by the blood of Christ. His blood flowed forward and backward.

They that have been called refers to children of God under both the old and new covenants. In the Christian age, men are called by the gospel (2 Thessalonians 2:14). The result of obeying the gospel is an eternal inheritance. This is the hope which all have who believe and obey God. Notice the word **Testament**. The Greek word for covenant is "**diatheke**" which also means covenant, testament or will. In verse fifteen he speaks of a covenant. In verses sixteen and seventeen, he speaks of a will (testament). In verses eighteen to twenty, he returns to the covenant.

Verse 16-17 he uses the other use of **diatheke (dee-ath-ay-kay)**. Before a testament or will can have any legal force the death of the testator must occur and be a public fact.

Hebrews 9:16-17 For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. (17) For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth. A covenant is an agreement between two parties and a death does not have to be associated with it. A will is an arrangement of possessions and has force only when the death of the person who made it has been established. Therefore, it was essential for Christ to die in order for the promised inheritance to pass to the believer. Without the death of Christ, the New Testament would not be in force. This is a timestamp.

■ Necessity of Blood

(18) Whereupon neither the first testament 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 of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, When Moses read to the people the laws he had received from God, they said, *"all the words which the Lord has said, we will do."* Then Moses wrote all the commandments in a book and read them to the people again. Next he took the blood of the calves and goats with water, scarlet wool and hyssop and sprinkled both the book and the people. The point is that the first covenant was ratified with blood.

Chapter 9

(20) Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. (21) Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. This quotation is from Exodus 28:8. **The blood of the covenant** means this is the blood by means of which the covenant is ratified and the people consecrated to God. **Enjoined (Commanded)** shows that this covenant was not an agreement between two equals, but rather it was an arrangement worked out by God and presented to the people which when they accepted it unconditionally had to be ratified by blood.

(22) And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. It was the general rule under the law that **all things were purified with blood**. Since there were some exceptions, he says **almost**. In some cases purification was made by means of water (Leviticus 16:26-28; Numbers 31:24). And in other cases purification was made by fire and water (Numbers 31:22-23). However, **apart from the shedding of blood there is no remission**. The rule is seen in Leviticus 17:11, *For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul. Forgiveness is costly.*

(23) It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. (24) For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: It was necessary for the old covenant things to be cleansed with the blood of animals. They did their work of making things clean, but these were mere patterns (copies) of spiritual (heavenly) aspects of the new covenant. The author has shown the necessity of Jesus' death and now he shows the lasting effects of his death. Since the things of the old covenant were copies, the new covenant needed a better sacrifice than these, which is, of course, the sacrifice of Jesus. Christ did not enter into the Holy place that was a figure of the real thing, but he entered into heaven itself which is the true Holy of holies where he stands before the face of God for men today.

(25) Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; (26) For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Christ offered himself once for all. He did not do like the high priests of the Old Testament who first had to offer a sacrifice for themselves and then for the people of Israel. The high priests had to repeat this every year. He offered the blood of an animal, not his own blood. Christ offered his own blood once for all for those of the old covenant as well as the new covenant. If it had been

Chapter 9

necessary for Jesus to make many sacrifices, he would have had to die many times since the beginning of the world. However, he died once for all. He died for all those before him and all those who lived after him. Men are saved by the blood of Jesus Christ. The sacrifice of Jesus was so great that one sacrifice accomplished salvation for all men of all time.

The end of the ages means the same as the last days, which is the entire Christian age. Jesus died at the end of the Mosaic Age and ushered in the Christian Age, which is the last days.

(27) And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: (28) So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation. Just as Jesus died once, so man dies once, and after this the judgment. This is sure and certain. Jesus died once for the sins of all mankind. Jesus is coming a second time not to die for sins, but to take the redeemed to heaven where he has mansions prepared (John 14:1-3). Those who have availed themselves of the benefits of Christ's death upon the cross by believing in him and being baptized for the remission of their sins are waiting for his Second Coming so that they can receive eternal salvation in the fullest sense.