

Hebrews

Chapter 9:1-15

October 1, 1995

- **Hebrews Outline:**

- Chapter 1 Christ is greater than the prophets and the angels.
- Chapter 2 Christ's message is greater than the angel's.
- Chapter 3 Christ is greater than Moses.
- Chapter 4 Christ is greater than Joshua and His rest is superior.
- Chapter 5 Christ's High Priesthood is greater than the Aaronic Priesthood.
- Chapter 6 God's faithfulness to Abraham and his descendants is confirmed by an oath.
- Chapter 7 Christ is a Priest in the order of Melchizedek and Christ is greater than Abraham.
- Chapter 8 Christ is Mediator of a new covenant.
- Chapter 9 Christ offered a better sacrifice at a better sanctuary.

- **Introduction & Review**

In the prior chapter, the author explains that the problem with the old covenant rested not with the covenant but with the people. When the perfect law of God crossed the path of the sinful heart of man, it produced sin not righteousness. As we discussed then, God had no intention of this covenant being the means by which righteousness was imparted. The law was given that sin might increase, that is, that we might know what sin was. The reason why the new covenant is superior is that it is able to change the heart and produce righteousness by making us a new creation and giving us the righteousness of another. He concluded the prior section by warning the readers that the old is ready to vanish. Most scholars will take this as a warning regarding the pending destruction of Jerusalem and its temple.

As we have been considering many different aspects of the Old Covenant and how they are types or shadows of those things to come, it is imperative that we do not make the error of the dispensationalists.

Dispensationalism - The primary tenant of this school of thought is that God has dealt with His people in different ways at different times (dispensations) throughout history. At one particular time, God had one plan in mind and then as time moved on God changed the plan and moved onto another even to the point of conflicting with the prior plan. It is very true that God has progressively revealed things to His people and unrolled His plan of salvation. But the primary point is this: There has only been one plan of salvation in the mind of God from first to last - the just shall live by faith.

- **Exposition**

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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.

- The author continues comparing the things of the old covenant with the new and moves on to discuss the physical sanctuary at which the priests ministered. Moses had been given very specific instruction on how the tabernacle (the portable temple) was to be built. Later, Solomon built the temple of the Lord but of a similar pattern. The author goes into a little detail about the divine ordinances of service but ends by saying that he cannot dwell on this aspect of teaching—clearly he wants to move on to more important matters.

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.

- Continuing with the divine ordinances of service, he moves on to the work of the High Priest. The author states that by the fact that the High Priest alone was allowed to enter the Holy of Holies once a year, indicates that there was a way of access to the presence of the Father but that the access had not yet been made available to the Elect. It is worth noting that the way of access into this section of the temple was only accomplished by the remission of sins by blood.
- The most important fact that the author is going to make in this section is in verse 9—he states that the gifts and sacrifices that were offered were not able to make him who offered them perfect in regard to conscience.

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. (NKJV)

- It is evident that the building itself was a type or a shadow of a reality to be revealed. These being the better things to come. Now, our High Priest hasn't entered some little room that a carpenter built, but has entered the heavens and the very throne room (whatever that means) of the creator. In addition, He did not enter this new Holy of Holies with the same sacrifices but entered with the perfect, spotless, priceless sacrifice of all, Himself; the Son of God.
- It is interesting to consider the reference in verse 13 where the ashes of a heifer are used for the purifying of the flesh. In Numbers 19:1-10, these ashes are stored outside the camp for the people of Israel to bathe and cleanse themselves. It is believed that this combination of heifer ashes (tallow) and the cedar ashes combined to make soap and this combination is what they used to clean their bodies. The author then moves on to his *a fortiori* argument which states that if this mixture was able to cleanse the body, how much more will the blood of Christ cleanse our consciences from dead works.
- Here is a tremendously important understanding that the author provides. Given that we have now learned that the sacrifices offered by the Priests and High Priests were not able to make the people perfect and that the cleansings only washed the people with regard to their flesh what is to be said of the spiritual condition of the people? How could they be saved with such ineffective sacrifices? Clearly this questions would have greatly raised the emotions of the readers for fear of the condemnation of the faithful saints under the old covenant. He provides us the answer. The sacrifice of Christ was retroactive. The other sacrifices were just a picture or a type of the one to come. When the perfect sacrifice came, its effectiveness reached backwards and forwards to save the elect.