

LESSON 5

THE NEW COVENANT: GOD'S ULTIMATE PLAN

Hebrews 9:1-10:39

Introduction

In Judaism, two influential groups were the Pharisees and the priests. The priesthood was predominantly in the hands of the Sadducees who represented a laxer religious stance. The Pharisees were strict observers of the Law. The ceremonial law was only a portion of the legalistic structure of Judaism. Judaism was built on the Law, which provided for ceremonial sacrifices. The traditional background of every Jew, whether he was a Pharisee, Sadducee, or of the masses who were of neither party, was to depend on the Law for a right relationship with God. Although the author of Hebrews had shown previously that the Law was inadequate and must be replaced, he pursued this subject in greater detail. Perhaps this was necessary because of the deep roots the Law had in the thinking of every Jew.

The Nature of the Old Order

Hebrews 9:1-10

The Ark of the Covenant

Religion is man's concern to establish a right relationship with God. Universally, man recognizes his need of God, but his guilt of sin makes him conscious of his unworthiness of fellowship with his Creator. The Covenant was established to overcome the barrier of sin which separated Abraham and his descendants from God. Abraham's covenant responsibility was to be loyal in the worship of the one God and to live righteously by serving Him. God's covenant commitments were to bless His people by making their name great and by giving to them a land. This was the first Covenant which was elaborated at Mount Sinai with laws and rules which instructed man how to live in God's will (v. 1). In order to express gratitude and loyalty to Yahweh, a place of worship, "a worldly sanctuary," was established in the midst of the Israelites (v. 1). The procedures and rules for conducting Temple worship were given, even to the detail of describing the dress of the priests.

Judaism was built on the \_\_\_\_\_ which provided for ceremonial \_\_\_\_\_ and was the means for a right relationship with \_\_\_\_\_.

(Law, sacrifices, God)

Rearrange the following phrases to express the responsibilities of each party in the Covenant. After writing the two responsibilities, identify each as man's or God's.

by making their name great---only one God---to be loyal in worshipping---by serving Him---to bless His people---and giving them a land---and to live righteously

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(Compare your answers with the text.)

The author of Hebrews focused on the Tabernacle, which was used during the wilderness journey, instead of the Temple, built by Solomon in Jerusalem or the Temple rebuilt by Herod. Perhaps his reason for turning to the Tabernacle was the extensive treatment he found concerning it in the Old Testament. His approach in the letter was to show his readers why Christ supersedes the old order. He proceeded by pointing out the logical implications of the Scriptures. The elaborate descriptions of the Tabernacle, surrounded by the priestly laws, offered more Scripture for the author to examine than the Temple of Solomon. Also, the Law of Moses was associated more closely in the Scripture with the Tabernacle than with the Temple. The Tabernacle was quite elaborate for a structure which had to be moved constantly. It is estimated that it required one and one-fourth tons of gold, four and one-fourth tons of silver, and three tons of bronze, in addition to the jewels, the wood, and the other materials. It represented God's dwelling in the midst of His people.

The Tabernacle was divided into two rooms. The outer room was referred to as the Holy Place and was separated from the room behind it, the Holy of Holies, by an embroidered veil which hung from golden hooks fixed at the top of four pillars of acacia wood. The Tabernacle faced towards the east. The candlestick and the table of shewbread were outside the veil in the Holy Place (v. 2). The candlestick was on the south and the shewbread on the north. The candlestick or lamp-stand was made of pure gold. From a massive central stem, three branches on each side bent outward and upward, each ending in a cup with decorations shaped like almond blossoms. The seven lamps placed on the stand probably were lit each night and symbolized the presence of the Lord who gave guidance and light to the people. The Holy Place also contained the table of the consecrated bread. It was made of acacia wood and was overlaid with pure gold with a golden rim about its border. Golden rings were attached to the frame and poles, which were overlaid with gold and were made for transporting it. On it were vessels of gold for wine libations and for the bread of the presence. The bread possibly acknowledged the Lord as the Sustainer of life.

Only verse 2 describes the Holy Place, but verses 3-5 are given to a description of the Holy of Holies behind the veil. Priests could enter the Holy Place, but only the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies which represented the presence of God. The items of furniture in the Holy of Holies included the Ark of the Covenant. It contained the golden pot of manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the two tables of stone containing the law (v. 4).

The golden pot of manna recalled the miraculous provisions of God for His people in the wilderness (Exod. 16:32-34). The rod of Aaron, which budded,

*Underline the correct words.*

*(Tabernacle worship, Temple worship) is described extensively in the Old Testament.*

*The Law of Moses was associated closely in Scripture with (the Tabernacle, the Temple).*

*(Tabernacle worship, the Tabernacle)*

*Into how many rooms was the Tabernacle divided? \_\_\_\_\_*

*These rooms were called the \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.*

*(2. Holy Place. Holy, Holies)*

*The Holy of Holies represented the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.*

*(Compare your answers with the text.)*

symbolized the pre-eminence of Aaron in representing the people before the Lord. After the Israelites murmured against Moses and Aaron (Num. 16:41), a plague spread among the people and 14,700 died. Aaron made atonement and stood between the living and the dead, causing the plague to stop (Num. 16:47-48). At the Lord's command, Moses made twelve rods which represented the heads of the tribes. The leaders of the tribes were to bring the rods to the Tabernacle, where God would indicate His chosen leader by causing his rod to blossom. Aaron's rod blossomed and was retained as a testimony and a sign for the rebels that God had chosen Aaron for a special place of leadership. The rod that blossomed continued as a special sign for the authority of the priesthood. The two tablets of stone contained the Ten Commandments, which were the essence of man's religious and moral obligations in the Covenant.

A covenant involves responsibilities on the part of both parties who enter into it. God's responsibility was to bless His people. The obligations of the people were to worship Yahweh faithfully and to live righteously according to the Commandments. The Ark of the Covenant was a box which contained items to symbolize man's covenant relationship with God. Before the Egyptian deliverance and the conquest of Canaan, man's motive for being faithful to Yahweh was his belief in Yahweh's promises. After the promises were fulfilled by God's deliverance from bondage and the conquest of the land of Canaan, the motive for loyalty to Yahweh was gratitude. God's great acts for His people were represented by the golden pot of manna.

Israel was to express her faithfulness to Yahweh by worshipping according to the ceremonial system. The priestly order was symbolized in the Ark of the Covenant by Aaron's rod which blossomed. The people were obligated to live righteously by following the Commandments given by Yahweh. This obligation was represented in the Ark by the tablets of stone.

The lid of the Ark was made of solid gold and was called the Mercy Seat. Hovering over the Mercy Seat were two golden cherubim. The Mercy Seat symbolized God's throne. The high priest approached God on behalf of the people by sprinkling the blood of the sacrificial lamb on the Mercy Seat. The Israelites were obligated to keep the Commandments, but when they failed they could appeal to God's mercy by sprinkling the blood of the atoning lamb on the Mercy Seat.

"The golden censor" may have been the altar of incense (v. 4). The author of Hebrews listed it with the furniture of the Holy of Holies. According to Exodus 30:6, it stood in the Holy Place before the veil in front of the Ark of Testimony. The language

*Read all of this page which is a continuation of the description of the items in the Tabernacle and their symbolical meanings.*

*After you have read this page, then match the items in the Tabernacle with their symbolical meanings.*

ITEMS

- \_\_\_ 1. The candlestick
- \_\_\_ 2. The shewbread
- \_\_\_ 3. The golden pot of manna
- \_\_\_ 4. Aaron's rod
- \_\_\_ 5. The tables of the Commandments
- \_\_\_ 6. The Mercy Seat

MEANINGS

- a. God's throne
- b. God's provision for His people in the wilderness
- c. The essence of man's religious obligations in the Covenant
- d. The Lord as Sustainer of life
- e. The pre-eminence of Aaron
- f. The presence of the Lord

*(f-1, d-2, b-3, e-4, c-5, a-6)*

is somewhat ambiguous. Since incense was to be burnt on it every morning and evening, and since the priest entered the Holy of Holies only once each year, it appears that the altar of incense was in the Holy Place. It was probably at the centre of the veil where the high priest would enter the Holy of Holies to approach the Mercy Seat.

The author mentioned the cherubim of glory which hovered over the Mercy Seat, but he did not elaborate on their symbolical meaning (v. 5). His purpose was to contrast the Holy Place, where the priest could enter, to the separated Holy of Holies, which represented God's presence. The veil between the two places continued to keep man from approaching God.

#### The symbolic nature of the old order (9:6-10)

The fact that the Tabernacle was divided into two parts, both of which were inaccessible to the common people, indicated the inferiority of the old order. Priests were permitted daily to enter the outer room of the Tabernacle, but the inner room was excluded to both them and the people (v. 6). As previously mentioned, the high priest was scheduled by the Law to enter the Holy of Holies once each year on the Day of Atonement. Even the high priest did not have free access to God. He was required to offer special sacrifices for himself before he entered with a sacrifice for the people (v. 7). The author attributed the laws regulating priestly service to the Holy Spirit. Apparently it was the purpose of the Spirit to signify, by the limitations of the old order, that it was inadequate and was only a shadow of a reality to be manifested in the future (vv. 8-9). The old order manifested the inaccessibility of God through the sacrificial system. As a figure of that which was to come, it prepared the way for Christ (v. 9). The inaccessibility to God through the old order was contrasted to the free access to God guaranteed through Christ. As long as the first Tabernacle stood with its system of meats and drinks, symbolizing communion with God, and its regulations for the body ("carnal ordinances"), man would be unable to enter God's presence (v. 10). The fleshly ordinances could not remove man's sins and thus qualify him to enter God's immediate presence (v. 9).

#### The Mediator of the New Covenant

##### Hebrews 9:11-28

#### His superior ministry (9:11-14)

The time for the reformation of man's relationship with God arrived in Christ. As the High Priest,

The veil between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies kept \_\_\_\_\_ from approaching \_\_\_\_\_.

(man, God)

*Underline the correct word.*

The high priest could enter the Holy of Holies (once, twice) a year after offering special sacrifices for himself.

(once)

The Holy Spirit signified, by the limitations of the old order, that it was \_\_\_\_\_ and only a \_\_\_\_\_ of future reality.

(inadequate, shadow)

He ministers in a greater and more perfect Tabernacle which enables Him to enter the very Presence of God (v. 11). It is not an earthly tabernacle made with hands. When He approaches God, He does not offer the blood of goats and calves by sprinkling it on the Mercy Seat as a gift for man's sins. He approaches God on the basis of His own shed blood (v. 12). Jesus was obedient to God's will even to death. His sinless life qualifies Him for direct fellowship with God. He did not have to offer sacrifices for His own sins, for He had none. The giving of His life (the shedding of His blood) was interpreted as His sacrifice on the Day of Atonement for the sins of the people (v. 12). After His death and resurrection, He ascended to heaven and is seated at the right hand of God: "He entered in once into the holy place [Holy of Holies—heaven], having obtained eternal redemption for us" (v. 12). After Christ entered into the Holy of Holies, He remained; He did not have to repeat His sacrifice.

*Contrast Christ's superior priestly service to the priestly service of the old order.*

1. *The priest ministered in an earthly tabernacle; WHEREAS Christ ministers the very \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.*
2. *The priest made an offering of the blood of goats and calves; WHEREAS Christ made an offering of His own \_\_\_\_\_.*
3. *The priest offered sacrifices for himself before entering the Holy of Holies; WHEREAS Christ did not have to atone for \_\_\_\_\_.*

*(presence, God, shed blood, personal sin)*

*Christ's sacrifice purges man's guilty \_\_\_\_\_.*

*Because Christ's perfect sacrifice relieves man from performing the dead works of ceremonies, he can focus his attention on serving the \_\_\_\_\_.*

*(conscience, living God)*

The author recognized the Jewish belief that the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of the red heifer (Num. 19) purified from external uncleanness (v. 13). In contrast to ceremonial purification, Christ offered a sacrifice which purges man's conscience (v. 14). Even after the Jews had offered sacrifices, they continued with guilty consciences. The person who is forgiven through the work of Christ no longer carries the inner guilt. Christ's offering for sin is superior to that of the old order because He who offered Himself as a sacrifice is eternal in nature ("through the eternal Spirit"). He is sinless in His human experience. Therefore, He offered a perfect sacrifice without blemish to God (v. 14). Man whose guilt has been removed through confession and faith in Christ is not required to perform the dead works of ceremonies, but he can focus attention on serving the living God (v. 14). Under the old order, men had to focus attention on themselves in attempting to secure righteousness. Under Christ, man's righteousness is secured by Christ; therefore, his time can be dedicated to the service of others.

#### The establishment of the New Covenant (9:15-22)

The Old Testament Covenant involved both God and man in responsibilities. Israel failed to uphold her part; therefore, the Covenant was annulled. The word used in the New Testament to refer to the relation of God and man means 'testament' or 'will'. The validity of the relationship does not depend upon man's performance—the fulfilling of his covenant obligations by keeping the ceremonial law. It is described more correctly as a will in which the benefits are provided totally by the testator (v. 15). The continued validity of the testament or will does not depend upon man's keeping certain laws and regulations.

The Old Testament looked upon man as capable of living a righteous life since he was created in the image of God. The New Testament looks upon man as a depraved sinner who is dominated by the power of evil and is unable to live righteously in his own strength. The New Testament does not require a legal standard which man must attain before he becomes the beneficiary of the New Covenant. It is based upon God's grace, mercy, and forgiveness. Salvation under the Old Covenant tended to require man to attain a right relationship with God through individual performance; therefore, salvation was to a large degree man's accomplishment. In the New Testament, it is recognized as impossible with man but possible with God. God provides for man's salvation and man receives it by submitting in faith to Him.

The author found another point of difference between a testament and the Covenant. A testament or a will is drawn up by the benefactor in order to make proper distribution of his possessions at his death. A covenant is an agreement between two parties during their lifetime, and in the Old Testament it was usually sealed by the sacrifice of an animal. In the sealing of the Covenant between God and Abraham, a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtle dove, and a young pigeon were the animals used as sacrifices in the covenant ritual. The bodies of the larger animals were divided and the two contracting parties would pass between the rows, symbolizing their unity as well as invoking upon themselves a similar fate to that of the slain animals if they failed to observe their part of the agreement (cf. Gen. 15:9-21). With regard to the testament, Jesus is the sinner's benefactor. His will or testament, by which He bestowed upon man the great heritage of salvation, was made effective only by His death (v. 16).

According to verse 15, the bequest bestowed by Jesus through His death is redemption from transgressions. The beneficiaries are "they which are called." A person cannot become a part of God's people without an invitation through the calling of His Spirit. Man's inheritance is eternal life. In Christ, there was hope for those who failed to fulfil their responsibilities under the first Covenant. Christ's atoning death covers the transgression of the laws upon which the first Covenant was established (v. 15).

A will becomes effective at the death of the testator (v. 17). Even the first Covenant was sealed by the death of animals (v. 18). After the people had agreed to obey God's voice and to keep His Covenant at Mount Sinai, Moses went up into the mountain and received the Law which set forth the precepts of obedience. Moses then recounted all the words of the Lord and His requirements to the people, who vowed that "all the words which the Lord has spoken we will do!" (Exod. 24:3—NASB) Moses wrote all the words of the Lord, built an altar at the foot of the mountain, offered

*Continue reading through the second paragraph before doing the exercise below.*

*Identify the following statements as pertaining to the Old Covenant or the New Covenant by placing OC or NC by each.*

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Man was responsible for keeping the law of worshipping and serving God in order to receive benefits from Him.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. It is based on God's grace, mercy, and forgiveness.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. An agreement between two parties during their lifetime.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. It required the death of the benefactor.

*(OC-1, NC-2, OC-3, NC-4)*

*Christ's atoning death covers the transgressions of the \_\_\_\_\_ upon which the first \_\_\_\_\_ was established.*

*(Laws, Covenant)*

burnt offerings, and sacrificed young bulls as peace offerings to the Lord. Half of the blood of the sacrifices was sprinkled on the altar, but the other half was retained in basins until Moses had read the book of the Covenant to the people. After they vowed again to be obedient to the Law, he took the blood in the basins and sprinkled it on the people and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words" (Exod. 24:8—compare Heb. 9:19-20).

Leviticus 14 sets forth various ceremonial cleansings by the sprinkling of the blood of sacrificial animals. Perhaps with this chapter and other Scriptures in mind, the author concluded that "almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission" (v. 22). The requirements of the Law for the remission of sins were not inconsistent with the provisions made by Christ who shed His own blood for man's redemption. The New Covenant likewise was established by the shedding of blood.

The perfect sacrifice of Christ (9:23-28)

The heavenly sanctuary required a better purification than the Levitical system could provide (v. 23). The earthly system was only a dim shadow of the reality of things in heaven. Although sinful priests were permitted to enter the earthly Holy of Holies after animal sacrifices had been offered for their sins, they were not qualified by that cleansing to enter heaven for fellowship with a God of perfect righteousness. Animal sacrifices sufficed for the earthly pattern of the heavenly reality, but they were not able to secure the hope of heaven for sinners (v. 23).

As previously noted, Christ did not qualify as a high priest in the earthly order. By ascending to the right hand of God, He has entered into heaven itself to appear in the very presence of God for us (v. 24). In Hebrews 7:25, the writer noted that the priestly activity of Christ in heaven continues as He makes intercession for man. His ministry does not include a continuing of sacrificial offerings as was necessary of the earthly high priests who entered the Holy of Holies year after year with the blood of animals (v. 25). If it had been necessary for Christ to offer an annual sacrifice, it would have been necessary for Him to suffer each year from the beginning of the world (v. 26). Christ's sacrifice did not come at the beginning of the age but rather at the end of the Old Age when "he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (v. 26).

Christ's death and resurrection closed the Old Age and initiated the New. A feature of the New Age is man's free access to God. This same concept was taught by Jesus in terms of the Kingdom of God. Christ has put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself;

*Is this statement true or false?*

*Christ fulfilled the requirements of the Law for the remission of sins by shedding His blood. \_\_\_\_\_*

*(Compare your answer with the text.)*

*Levitical priests were permitted to enter the Holy of Holies, but Christ entered \_\_\_\_\_ itself to appear in the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_. Christ's priestly work continues as He makes \_\_\_\_\_ for man. The priests made annual offerings but Christ suffered only \_\_\_\_\_.*

*(heaven, presence, God, intercession, once)*

therefore, those who enter the New Age must be cleansed of their sins and be enabled to resist sin as a result of the new birth. Other New Testament Scriptures teach that regenerate man is a citizen of two ages: the Old Age of this world where sin prevails and the New Age which is breaking into the old order and which is free of sin. The Christian as related to this world has not experienced the full destruction of sin, but the Christian as related to the Kingdom of God has been cleansed and made new by the Spirit of Christ. When this world order ends with the coming of Christ, those who believe in the Messiah and His atoning work will be redeemed fully from the power of sin. The solution to man's dual existence is not withdrawal from the world (society) but the renunciation of the world (the sinful ways of the world). The latter is accomplished when man focuses his life on his Kingdom citizenship. The success of the Christian in righteousness depends on his turning from an emphasis on the things of this world to the things which are above (cf. Col. 3:1ff.).

Sinful man must give account of his wrong actions in the Day of Judgement. The grave is not the end of man's existence, for he will one day stand before the Judgement Seat of God (v. 27). Christ's death was the bearing of the penalty of judgement for the sins of many in order that their sins would not separate them from God for ever. The first coming of the Messiah was to "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (v. 26). Those who have trusted Him for the removal of sins continue in faith to look for Him to appear a second time "without sin unto salvation" (v. 28). Salvation means full deliverance from sin.

Because of her sin, Israel could not claim to be God's Kingdom. The Ideal King would lead His people to be the righteous Kingdom of God. At His first coming, it was essential for the Messiah to establish righteousness by His sacrificial death in order that "they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance" (9:15). As the heavenly Son of Man, He will need to come a second time—to atone for sin—to bring to fullness the glory of God's Kingdom and man's deliverance from sin: "And unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (v. 28). At Christ's coming, man will be completely delivered from the enemy of evil and transferred into the glorious Kingdom of God's Son.

The Relation of the Old Order to the New

Hebrews 10:1-10

This section is a summary restatement of the matters discussed in chapter 8. The emphasis continues on the legal system as a shadow instead of the

Unscramble the letters below to make words to fit in the blanks.

In light of the believer's dual citizenship, he should not \_\_\_\_\_ from the world  
(diwrtawh)  
but should \_\_\_\_\_ the world and  
(enreuonc)  
\_\_\_\_\_ his life on his \_\_\_\_\_  
(cosuf) citizenship. (modingk)

(withdraw, renounce, focus, kingdom)

Write first and second in the appropriate blanks.

Christ's \_\_\_\_\_ coming is to bring full salvation.

Christ's \_\_\_\_\_ coming was to put away sin by His sacrifice.

(second, first)

very image or ideal pattern of the benefits in store for the godly (v. 1). The Law gave only a dim outline of things to come, not the full brightness of their glorious reality. The imperfect Law could not make people perfect through its repeated sacrifices. The fact that the sacrifices had to be repeated indicated their imperfection (v. 1). The consciences of those who brought sacrifices testified that they were not freed from their guilt; therefore, it was necessary for them to return again with another offering. If the sacrifice had been adequate, it would not have been necessary for another to be offered, for the worshipper would have been cleansed of his sin and would have experienced no additional guilt for it (v. 2). Rather than putting away sins once for all, each sacrifice was another reminder of sins which had not been removed (v. 3).

*Sacrifices were repeated because the consciences of those who made the sacrifices testified that they were not freed from their \_\_\_\_\_.*

*(guilt)*

According to Psalm 40:6-9, God did not desire sacrifices and offerings, but he did require obedience to His will. The statement of the psalmist agreed with the prophets. Isaiah declared that the Lord did not delight in the blood of animal sacrifices which were vain oblations and an abomination to Him, but that He desired a clean life purified by doing good instead of evil (Isa. 1:10ff.). The theme of these Scriptures is that deliverance from sin is not obtained by animal sacrifices but by fulfilling God's will.

*Psalm 40 indicates that*

*God did not desire \_\_\_\_\_  
and \_\_\_\_\_;  
He did require \_\_\_\_\_ to  
His \_\_\_\_\_.*

*(sacrifices, offerings, obedience, will)*

Psalm 40 was interpreted as applying to the coming Messiah. When He appeared, He would establish righteousness by obedience to the will of God rather than through burnt offerings and sacrifices (v. 5). In following the Septuagint translation rather than the Hebrew text, the author used 'body' instead of 'ear'. This rendering could be interpreted to mean that God had prepared the body of the Messiah as a single sacrifice to replace the sacrifice of beasts in which He had no pleasure (vv. 5-6). The Psalm predicted that the Messiah would submit to the will of God in offering His body as the sacrifice (v. 7). The implication of Psalm 40:6 that God did not desire burnt offerings and sacrifices indicated that the time would come when they would cease: "He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second" (v. 9; see also v. 8). According to the interpretation of the author of Hebrews, Psalm 40 predicted that the Messiah would do God's will by sacrificing Himself. Since it was God's will for the body of the Messiah to be offered, God was pleased with His death on the cross, which was an offence to the Jews. Atonement through the death of Christ was God's plan by which those who turn to Christ in faith are sanctified (set apart to God) "once for all" (v. 10).

*Is this statement true or false?*

*The body of the Messiah was to be offered in sacrifice to replace the sacrifice of beasts. \_\_\_\_\_*

*(Compare your answer with the text.)*

<sup>1</sup>The A. V. based on the Hebrew text reads, "mine ears hast thou opened" (Ps. 40:6b). The Septuagint parallel text reads, "But a body you have prepared yourself for me" (Ps. 40:7b).

The Adequacy of the New Covenant

Hebrews 10:11-25

The futility of the Old Covenant was demonstrated by the necessity of priests to repeat the same sacrifices daily (v. 11). Even so, the sacrifices did not remove sins. In contrast to the old order, Christ offered one sacrifice which sufficed for ever (v. 12). The fact that His work was completed in the one sacrifice was indicated by His sitting down at the right hand of God. The 'seated' Christ had completed His work, but the 'standing' priests were required to offer sacrifices continually. Christ awaits the eternal results of His work: "till his enemies be made his footstool" (v. 13; cf. Ps. 110:1). Although the author of Hebrews used the Psalm to describe the expectant attitude of Christ with regard to His work as an atonement for sin, it carries additional implications concerning the victory of the Kingdom. Sin and death are Kingdom enemies which Christ's death and resurrection defeated. The victorious resurrected and ascended Lord has accomplished His work of redeeming man from the enemy and translating him into the glorious Kingdom of God. Christ is waiting now for the effects of His work to bring about complete victory.

The Jewish Christians in the Church at Corinth did not need to make additional sacrificial offerings because the one offering of Christ had "perfected" them for ever (v. 14). By submitting to Christ, their sins had been forgiven, and they had been set apart into God's service as Kingdom citizens.

The author of Hebrews again attributed the writings of the Old Testament to the Holy Spirit in his reference to the New Covenant in Jeremiah 31:31ff. (vv. 15-16). He emphasized the remission of sins and iniquities which the Lord will remember no more (v. 17). The passage in Jeremiah did not mention sacrifices in connexion with the New Covenant. Psalm 40:6-9 mentioned only one body which would be offered. From these Scriptures the author concluded that the remission of sins under the New Covenant does not require additional sacrificial offerings (v. 18).

The fact that sins have been remitted leaves Christians without fear in the presence of God. They have boldness to enter the Holy of Holies (heaven) and to approach God because they have been cleansed by the blood of Jesus (v. 19). The old system was based on fear. The common, sinful people were not permitted to enter even the Holy Place of the Temple. When God revealed Himself on Mount Sinai, the people drew back out of fear and requested that Moses alone approach God. That fear has been taken away because sins have been removed through faith in Christ. The emphasis of the New Covenant is not fear but grace. By God's grace, man has been cleansed of His sin.

*Christ's sitting down at the right hand of God indicates that His work was \_\_\_\_\_.*

*Christ is waiting for his enemies to be made his \_\_\_\_\_, which indicates complete \_\_\_\_\_.*

*(completed, footstool, victory)*

*Because of fear, the common, sinful people were not permitted to enter even the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_.*

*The people were afraid to approach God at \_\_\_\_\_.*

*(Holy Place, Temple, Mount Sinai)*

"A new and living way," which Christ provided through His body, has been opened (v. 20).

The veil had separated the Holy Place, where the priests were permitted to enter, from the Holy of Holies, the presence of God. The veil is compared to Christ's flesh (v. 20). Man in the flesh cannot see God. His body has prepared him for life in the material world but not in heaven. Sin came to reign in man's body and made him unfit for fellowship with God. Sin brought death to man—eternal separation from God. Christ came in a human body which was offered as a sacrifice on the cross for sins. Through His resurrection, He gained victory over death and received a new body which would not come under the dominion of sin but was fitted for eternal fellowship with God. In a spiritual sense, the physical body was a veil which separated man from God. Through His own flesh, Christ removed that veil and opened a new and living way of access to God (v. 20). The earthly priestly order could not claim a comparable accomplishment through its ministry.

After presenting the superior qualifications of Christ as High Priest over the heavenly house of God, the author assured his readers that they could draw near to God with a right and genuine inner attitude ("a true heart"—v. 22). They no longer had to draw back with a guilty conscience, fearing they would be accused by a righteous God. Their faith, based on the work of Christ, gave them assurance; for they had been cleansed of their sins and no longer bore a guilty conscience (v. 22). The washing of their bodies with pure water referred to baptism as a symbolical ritual. Baptismal waters do not cleanse the inner man and remove his guilt of sin. For the Jew, the ceremonial washing of the body was symbolical of moral cleansing.

The readers were admonished to hold firmly to their profession of faith, for they could depend on the One who promised complete deliverance from the enemy and unhindered access to God (v. 23). God is faithful and has given promises upon which the ministry of Jesus rests. These promises are superior to the Old Covenant. The readers were to keep on encouraging and stimulating one another to love and to do good deeds (v. 24). If they were to be of encouragement to one another, they must not forsake the assembling of themselves together (v. 25). The author was aware that some had ceased to participate in congregational worship.

At the time Hebrews was written, churches met in homes. Since accommodations of house-churches were limited, a church in a particular city would assemble in various places. Perhaps the Jewish Christians were tempted to forsake the assembling of themselves with the larger body which included Gentiles. Such a neglect would have been a denial of

In Hebrews 10:20, the physical body is compared to the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Temple which separated \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_ presence.

Christ removed the veil through the sacrifice of His h \_\_\_\_\_ b \_\_\_\_\_.

(veil, man, God's, human body)

The writer of Hebrews admonished his readers in verse 25 to forsake not the \_\_\_\_\_ of themselves \_\_\_\_\_.

(Compare your answer with the text.)

Perhaps the Jewish Christians were not meeting with the larger group which included \_\_\_\_\_.

(Compare your answer with the text.)

love and a hindrance to their faith. Christian fellowship is essential for the encouragement of one another. Without the influence and encouragement of other Christians, zeal in living for Christ is lost. Since the writer saw the day of Christ approaching (judgement as well as His return), it would have been tragic for his readers to become lukewarm.

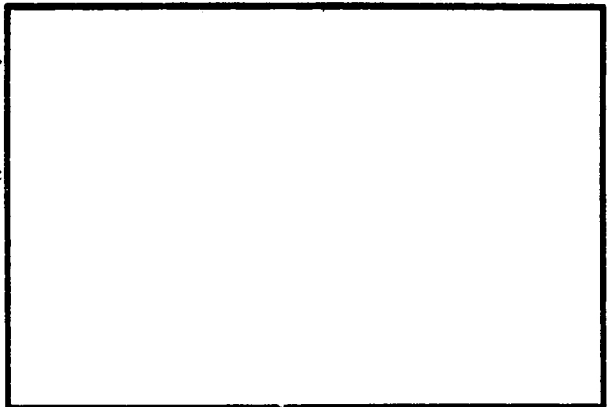
A Warning Against Apostasy

Hebrews 10:26-39

The apostate faces God's wrath (10:26-31)

For the Jewish Christians to return to Judaism would have meant deliberately denouncing God's Son after having experienced the knowledge of truth (v. 26). The writer warned that those who renounced the sacrifice of Christ as their basis of acceptance by God had no other sacrifice to help them.

The Old Testament made a distinction between wilful and unintentional sins. The right of asylum for protection was afforded the man who accidentally slew someone (cf. Exod. 21:12-17). He who wilfully took the life of another man would be put to death, possibly by a relative of the victim. The Law permitted the priest to "make an atonement for the soul that sinneth ignorantly ... and it shall be forgiven him" (Num. 15:28). But the person who deliberately showed disrespect for God's Word and transgressed His commandment, "that person shall be completely cut off; his guilt shall be on him" (Num. 15:31). No sacrifice offered in the ceremonial system of Judaism would propitiate for the sin of deliberately rejecting God's gift of love in His Son. A father is more likely to control anger when disrespect is shown towards himself than when it is shown towards his son. For God's Son to be counted unworthy of man's devotion and loyalty brings the fearful prospect of God's judgement—His fiery wrath as a fury of fire (v. 27). God is love, but God is also wrath against unrighteousness. He is a redeeming Saviour to those who repent but a consuming fire to adamant sinners (v. 27). A person who transgressed a precept of Moses' Law died without mercy if two or three witnesses verified his transgression (v. 28—cf. Num. 35:30). If God ordained that the Law pass the death sentence without mercy upon a man who takes the life of another, how much greater will be God's punishment of those who treat His Son contemptuously by rejecting Him! (v. 29) Renouncing faith in Christ and returning to Judaism would be to show public contempt for God's Son—to trample underfoot the Son of God. To walk over something was to show disrespect for it. To reject God's Son was to renounce the Covenant which was sealed by blood (v. 29). To spurn the death of Christ wherewith man's sins are forgiven ("he was sanctified")

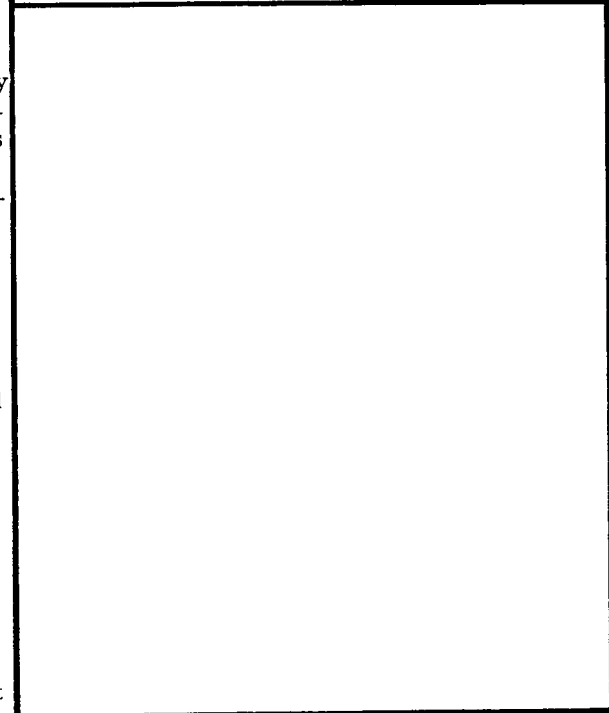


*The result of returning to Judaism by Jewish Christians meant wilful denunciation of \_\_\_\_\_ . This sin had no atoning \_\_\_\_\_ .*

*(Compare your answers with the text.)*

*To "trample underfoot the Son of God" means to show public \_\_\_\_\_ for God's Son.*

*(contempt)*



is to count as worthless God's act in Christ. Blasphemy was a serious sin according to the Law of Moses. To spurn God's work in Christ is to blaspheme the Father, the Son, and the Spirit of grace. Such action will bring man under the severity of God's wrath. Vengeance belongs to God, who will pay the unbelieving exactly what they deserve (v. 30). Jesus told His disciples not to fear the power of evil, which could destroy only the body. They were to fear God, who has power over man's soul to punish it for eternity: "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (v. 31).

The tempted are encouraged (10:32-39)

The writer was well acquainted with the readers and knew about a time of persecution shortly after their conversion (v. 32). The historical reference is uncertain, but it could have been the expelling of Jews from Rome because of tumults arising over one 'Chrestus'. Both Jews and proselytes from Rome were present in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost in about A.D. 30. Perhaps they took the Gospel back to Rome and bore a strong witness among the Jews and Gentiles. Some nineteen years later, Claudius issued an edict expelling the Jews. The Gospel of Christ, which recognized Gentiles as equal with Jews, may have caused opposition from nationalistic Jews. If the Gospel was making rapid progress among the Gentiles, it is possible that the advocates of the mystery religions opposed 'Chrestus'. Since the Jews were expelled from Rome, it is likely that a large number journeyed with Aquila and Priscilla to Corinth in A.D. 50. Several of the Christian families may have stayed together. Acts does not attempt to describe the extensiveness of early Christianity but the activities related to Gentiles becoming believers—the Kingdom composed of people from all nations. The Gentiles may have taken advantage of the edict against the Jews and confiscated much of their property ("ye ... took joyfully the spoiling of your goods"—v. 34). After the Jews settled in Corinth, Paul joined Aquila and Priscilla. He testified with an urgent spirit to the Jews that Jesus was Christ (Acts 18:5). Although there is evidence that some were converted (Acts 18:8), a number strongly resisted and blasphemed (Acts 18:6). Opposition became so great that Paul needed a vision to encourage him to go on speaking in the Name of Christ. Eventually, the Jews "made insurrection with one accord against Paul" (Acts 18:12) and brought him before the Roman ruler to be judged.

The writer of Hebrews mentioned that his readers formerly had endured a great conflict of suffering and had been made a public spectacle, both by insults and by violent suffering (vv. 32-33). Part of their persecution resulted from their association with others who were ridiculed and persecuted (v. 33). The reference could have been to Paul and his companions

The readers of Hebrews had endured a time of \_\_\_\_\_ shortly after their conversion.

(persecution)

Part of the persecution resulted from association with others, possibly \_\_\_\_\_ and his \_\_\_\_\_.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

during the uprising in Corinth as recorded in Acts 18.

The first part of verse 34 should be translated, "For you showed sympathy to the prisoners." The reference may have been to Acts 18:12. The seizing of their property could have been in Corinth, instead of Rome, after the Jews who opposed Paul turned against the believing Jews who supported him. The Jewish Christians Priscilla and Aquila departed with Paul for Ephesus, but the other believing Jews apparently remained in Corinth, and they may have continued to be afflicted by non-believing Jews as well as Gentiles. The point of the author was to remind his readers that they had already suffered much for their faith in Christ. After having suffered so much, it would be foolish for them to renounce that faith. If they had renounced their faith previously during the time of persecution, they would not have had to suffer.

Apparently the Jewish Christians continued to face public ridicule and persecution. Instead of renouncing their faith in Christ, they needed additional endurance to do the will of God in order that they would receive what God had promised (v. 36). The author counselled them that the suffering before them would be short in duration because their Lord would soon come (v. 37). He warned that when Christ did return, only those who had lived by faith would be rewarded. Renouncing their faith in Christ would mean to rebel against the will of God and to make them unrighteous. Such actions would not prepare for a happy reunion with their Lord who has no pleasure in those who shrink under persecution (v. 38). Although the author warned the readers of the danger of their turning back, he again expressed confidence that they would not renounce their faith in Christ and thus receive condemnation by God. He was confident that their faith would persevere and bring security of salvation (v. 39).

The author of Hebrews reminded his readers that they had already suffered much for \_\_\_\_\_ and that it would be foolish to renounce their \_\_\_\_\_ after suffering.

(Christ, faith)

The writer assured them that their suffering would be short because their \_\_\_\_\_ would come soon.

(Lord)

Home Study Exercise

Basic activity (Levels 1, 2, and 3). After reading the study guide text, answer the following questions.

1. Briefly state the role of the Law in Judaism. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Give the purpose and the responsibilities of each party in the Covenant. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Why did the writer of Hebrews discuss Tabernacle worship instead of Temple worship? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What did each of the following items in the Tabernacle symbolize? (1) The candlestick \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_. (2) The shewbread \_\_\_\_\_.

(3) The golden pot of manna \_\_\_\_\_.

(4) Aaron's rod \_\_\_\_\_.

(5) The tables of the Commandments \_\_\_\_\_.

(6) The Mercy Seat \_\_\_\_\_.

5. Interpret Hebrews 9:8. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. List three ways Christ's priestly service is superior to the old order. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Explain Hebrews 9:14. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. How does the New Covenant differ from the Old? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. How did Christ's perfect sacrificial works supersede those of the Levitical system? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. What should be the emphases of the believer in the light of his dual citizenship? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. State the purposes of the first and second comings of Christ. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. Why do people repeat sacrifices? \_\_\_\_\_
13. How was Psalm 40:6-9 interpreted by the writer of Hebrews? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
14. What does Christ's sitting at the right hand of God indicate? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
15. Give two illustrations that the Old Covenant was based on fear. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
16. Interpret Hebrews 10:20. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
17. Interpret Hebrews 10:25. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

18. Interpret Hebrews 10:26. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
19. Interpret the meaning of trampling underfoot the Son of God. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
20. What indication is there that the readers of Hebrews suffered afflictions? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
21. What evidence is there that the readers may have suffered with Paul in Corinth? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
22. On what basis did the writer assure his readers that their suffering would be short? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Supplementary activity (Level 2):

Read pages 55-72 in The Letter to the Hebrews by Bowman and answer the following questions.

1. Explain the author's argument in using the Tabernacle to show the superiority of Christ to the Levitical priesthood.
2. Why is the sacrifice offered under the New Covenant superior to those under the Old Covenant?
3. What did the author of Hebrews believe to be the purpose of the Law?
4. Why did the author describe the method of salvation as "the new and living way which He opened for us through the curtain, that is through his flesh"?
5. Why should the day of judgement be an incentive to right living for Christians?
6. Describe the type of apostasy the Hebrew Christians would have been committing by renouncing Christ.

Advanced activity (Level 3):

Read pages 138-170 in Hewitt and answer the following questions.

1. Give three reasons the blood of Christ has unique significance.
2. What is the meaning of redemption?
3. Compare the earthly sanctuary and sacrifices of the Old Covenant to the heavenly sanctuary and sacrifice of the New Covenant.
4. Explain why the author of Hebrews used the Septuagint's rendering of Psalm 40:6-8 (cf. Heb. 10:5-7).

5. List four exhortations given in Hebrews 10:19-27.

Seminar Discussion

1. Why did the author use the Tabernacle rather than the Temple in his argument?
2. Why is the ministry of Christ in the heavenly Tabernacle superior to that of the Levites in the earthly Tabernacle?
3. Why is the New Covenant superior to the Old?
4. What was accomplished by the New Covenant and was only symbolized by the Old?
5. Why would turning from Christ back to the Law be a serious move?