

"REASONS TO REJOICE"

"Your Words were found, and I ate them, and Your Word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." Jeremiah 15:16

HEBREWS

Lesson 9

Blood. Yes, you read that right. This chapter is about blood. The writer is now going to emphasize to his readers the importance of blood in the cleansing process. It's an interesting concept because we all know that a blood stain is almost impossible to remove. But it's blood that makes us clean. When Christ died in our place, purity became possible, because His blood washed away the stain of our sin. That's the central message or theme of this chapter: that Christ offered Himself as a sacrifice once and for all. The writer compares the two sanctuaries to show us what makes the new superior to the old and why blood was needed.

William Barclay provides us with a beautiful introduction to the chapter. He wrote, "The writer of Hebrews has been using the idea that in this world we have only pale copies of what is truly real. The worship that men can offer is only a ghost-like shadow of the real worship which Jesus, the real High Priest, alone can offer. But even as he thinks of that, his mind goes back to the Tabernacle (the Tabernacle, remember, not the Temple.). Lovingly he remembers its beauty; lovingly he lingers on its priceless possessions. And the thought in his mind is this - if earthly worship was as beautiful as this, what must the true worship be like? If all the loveliness of the Tabernacle was only a shadow of reality, how surpassingly lovely the reality must be. He does not tell us of the Tabernacle in detail; he only alludes to certain of its treasures. This was all he needed to do because his readers knew its glories and had them printed on their memories. But we do not know them; therefore, let us see what the beauty of the earthly Tabernacle was like, always remembering that it was only a pale copy of reality."

In Hebrews 8:5 the writer brings up the Tabernacle that Moses was told to build, and now he goes on to show us the connection between the covenant and the Tabernacle.

Again, the important thing to remember as you read this chapter is that everything about the building and its furniture was meant as a teaching tool. It was all symbolic, pointing, once again, to the True High Priest, who brought about the New Covenant, and ministers in a superior sanctuary!

We'll end here for now. We have an exciting week ahead ... are you ready?

Memory Verse of the Week: "So Christ was offered only 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." Hebrews 9:28

Second Day

Work on your memory verse.

1. Read Hebrews 9:1-28. Go back and read verses 1-5. What's the main topic of this section?
2. Whose idea was it to build the Tabernacle, as well as how to furnish it? Read Exodus 25:8-9.
3. Compare the adjective used in 9:2 to describe the sanctuary (or the Tabernacle) to the adjective used to describe it in 9:11.

The next few verses will give us an idea where the cleansing process would take place for the people of Israel. There were various washings, offerings, and sacrifices designed to keep their ceremonial purity in tact, keeping them in a right relationship with God. But on one day a year, the Day of Atonement, the High Priest entered an area that was restricted to everyone else, known as the Most Holy Place. That's where the High Priest would offer the sacrifice of animal blood to purify the people.

Hughes writes, "The Tabernacle was a portable, tent-like shrine that was always situated at the geographical heart of Israel, with all the tribes camped around it in designated, orderly formation. Approaching the Tabernacle, one first would see the white linen walls of the Court of the Tabernacle, which formed an enclosure 150 feet long and 75 feet wide. The uniform whiteness of the enclosure's walls broadcast the holiness of its function. When a worshipper entered the courtyard, he was immediately in front of the altar of Burnt Offering, a large bronze altar with a horn at each of its four corners to which offerings could be tied. This was as far as the layman could come, and it is the place where

he laid his hands on the head of the sin offering (Leviticus 1:4). Behind the altar and a little to the right stood the bronze laver, a washbasin for the exclusive use of the priests, which, if neglected, imperiled their lives (Exodus 30:20, 21).

"Directly behind the laver was the Tabernacle, a flat-roofed, oblong tent 15 feet in height and width and 45 feet long. It was covered with three layers. The first consisted of gorgeous woven tapestries of blue, purple, and scarlet yarns and linen, which was then overlaid with two layers of animal skins. Inside, the Tabernacle was divided into two rooms by an ornate veil woven of the same colors, along with gold, and embroidered with cherubim. The veil was supported by four golden columns set on silver bases. The first outer room was called the Holy Place and the second inner compartment of the Most Holy Place or Holy of Holies."

4. Hopefully, that description helps you picture the Tabernacle a little bit. (See page 12) What does the writer say is in the first room, according to verse 2?

5. Read Exodus 25:31-40 and 27:20-21 and describe the Lampstand.

6. All the furnishings were prophetic of Christ. What do you think the Lampstand signifies? Read John 1:4-5, 8:12, Matthew 5:14-16, and Philippians 2:14-15.

7. The table (vs 2) is also called the "table of showbread" or the "table of the Presence." Read Exodus 25:23-30 and Leviticus 24:5-9. Briefly give the description of the table, including who could eat there and what they ate. What was this to remind the Israelites of?

8. What was this prophetic of? Read John 6:35, 48-51. What sustains us?

9. According to verses 3-5, what is in the "second" room, or the Holy of Holies?

The exact location of the "golden altar of incense" is debatable. It was made to burn incense, and God had instructed Moses to "put the altar in front of the curtain that is before the Ark of the Testimony" (Exodus 30:6), and this is exactly what Moses did (Exodus 40:26). But here the writer says that the altar was with the ark in the Most Holy Place. Every morning and every evening Aaron or one of his male descendants had to burn incense on the altar (Exodus 30:7-8), so it had to be outside of the Holy of Holies. There are various explanations given which seem to contradict each other. While the location is puzzling, the prophetic significance is not. Hughes writes, "The incense prophesies of the ultimate prayers offered by Christ, our High Priest, in the presence of God." (Psalm 141:2, Romans 8:33-34).

10. What is the "Ark of the Covenant"? Read Exodus 25:10-22.

The Ark of the Covenant was a wooden chest three feet high; nine inches long; two feet, three inches wide; and two feet, three inches high. The "mercy seat" was on top, which was made of gold, and had a cherub at each end. This was the throne of God in the Tabernacle. It represented the dwelling place of God, visible in the Shekinah (glowing light) which rested between the cherubim atop the mercy seat. On the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), the High Priest took a basin of blood from the goat which had been sacrificed on that day and sprinkled it on the mercy seat for his own sins and the sins of the people (Lev. 16). The blood was sprinkled on the mercy seat to cover the tables of Law within the Ark. God did not look at the broken Law; He looked at the blood. Christ is our "mercy seat" (1 John 2:2, Romans 3:25). But His blood does not just cover sin; it takes away sin." (Wiersbe)

The Ark contained the golden pot of manna (Exodus 16:32-34), Aarons' rod (Numbers 17:8-10), and the tablets of the Law (Exodus 32:15, Deuteronomy 10:4,5).

The manna would remind Israel of God's loving care for them in the wilderness, the rod of Aaron would remind them of the Levitical priesthood that God had ordained (more important than any human provision), and the tablets would speak of the holy character which God's people must continually measure themselves against. These speak of God's love, His redemption, and His holiness.

11. Stedman says that the above three "find their counterpart in Christian experience." What does that mean?

I hope you have a little better picture of what's inside the Tabernacle and what it's symbolic of. Hopefully, you can do some more research on your own. Even though the writer of Hebrews didn't need to spend too much time on it because they all understood it (vs 5), we certainly do. We need to understand the deeper significance of what he's saying so we can connect all the dots! See you tomorrow, ladies!

Third Day

What's your memory verse?

In our lesson last week, we read about the mercy seat, which was the gold plate that covered the Ark of the Covenant. It was on this plate that the blood of the atonement was sprinkled and the sins of the people were "propitiated. Hughes writes, "Romans 3:25 tells us that Christ was 'displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood.' Likewise, 1 John 2:2 proclaims, 'and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins.' The mercy seat symbolized Christ's work. Moreover, Jesus fleshed out the contents of the Ark. He perfectly fulfilled the stone tablets of the Law (Deut. 10:5; Matthew 5:17). Aaron's staff that budded when it confirmed him as High Priest (Numbers 17:1-11) is fully flowered in Christ's priesthood. And the manna again speaks of Him who is the ultimate Bread of Life (Exodus 16:33-34; John 6:35). The 'Cherubim of Glory' perpetually looked down in wonder as they knelt at the mercy seat with their wings arched and touching overhead." What a glorious sight!

1. Read Hebrews 9:1-28. Go back and read verses 6-10. Every day the priests performed their duties in the Tabernacle, which included tending to the lamps, stoking coal on the altar of incense, and exchanging the loaves of bread. But how often could the High Priest enter the second room, or the Holy of Holies?
2. We see how there was "limited access" to God under the Old Covenant. There was also "limited efficacy," which means "effectiveness" or "ability." What verse reflects that and why?

3. What happened to sins that were committed purposefully? What does Numbers 15:22-31 say about that?

We know that David premeditated his sin with Bathsheba, so what, then, could he do with his sin? Was he forever guilty? Again, in his eloquent way, Hughes writes, "The system simply did not provide a remedy. This is what Psalm 51 is all about. David knew he was a sinner and confessed it. He also knew there was no sacrifice he could bring (Psalm 51:16). So what could he do? Only one thing - come to God with a contrite heart and throw himself on God's mercy: 'The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, You will not despise (vs 17).' This is how David was forgiven and saved. Thus, we see that the spiritually informed in the Old Testament came to understand that their only hope was a repentant heart and God's grace and mercy. Ultimately, salvation rested on the blood of Christ. The spiritual limitations of the old system went even deeper. Because the sins of ignorance could only be forgiven, no one could have a completely clear conscience."

4. How do verses 9-10 show us that the old system was external and superficial? (Also, compare the two uses of the word "time.")

5. According to verse 11, how is the New Covenant's sanctuary superior to the old? (Compare Hebrews 9:24.)

Now we get to the issue of blood. It's thought that during the thousand-plus years of the Old Covenant, there were more than a million animal sacrifices. That's a lot of blood! During the Passover, an actual trough was constructed from the Temple down into the Kidron Valley for the disposal of blood, a sacrificial plumbing system. Ugh!! Why so much blood? There was one main reason: to teach that sin demands the shedding of blood. Although it's not the blood itself that atones for the sins, it shows us that sin both brings and demands death. All the Israelites knew that sin brings death.

As consistent with his style, the writer throws out a term and then comes back to repeat it and reveal it's full significance. Here in chapter 9, he introduces the theme of the High Priest's entering the Most Holy Place in 9:7; he expands on it in 9:11-12; and he summarizes it in 9:25.

6. From the verses in the above paragraph, list all that is said about the blood of Christ. How is the sacrifice under the New Covenant superior?

7. The writer uses the phrase "the good things to come." He doesn't explain exactly what he means. What are some things he could be referring to?

8. According to verse 12, what was the purpose for Christ's sacrificial death?

9. According to verse 13, what did the blood of the sacrificed animals do for them?

10. In contrast to that, what does verse 14 say the blood of Christ does? (Compare 9:23)

The Israelites only had animals to offer in sacrifices, which they had to repeat over and over. Christ offered only one sacrifice -- not an animal, but Himself -- and He did it once and for all. This type of cleansing is not only an outward, temporary cleansing, but eternal redemption! We no longer have to follow rituals, but enjoy access to the presence of the Living God!

11. Are there any types of rules or rituals you follow that you feel make you "better" or more acceptable to God? Is there something that you think is needed other than "repentance" to be forgiven of your sins? (How does that downplay Christ's death on the cross?)

Let's end here for today. Spend time in prayer, thanking Him for being our "once-and-for-all" sacrifice. You, O Lord, are worthy of all honor, glory, and praise!

Fourth and Fifth Day

Write out your memory verse.

Today's lesson will include both day 4 and 5. The last page of the study will include a diagram of the Tabernacle and the utensils used. Take some time to look it over to get a better understanding of the function of the High Priest

1. Read Hebrews 9:1-28 again, concentrating on verses 15-22. In verse 15, what point that he introduced in 8:6 is he now expounding? (What does it mean? How was it established?)

Because the blood of animals sacrificed to atone for man's transgressions sanctified him outwardly, inwardly man still struggled with a guilty conscience. The first covenant, therefore, needed to be replaced.

2. In verses 16-17, the writer moves from using "religious" words to legal terms. Can you explain what he means, and how it relates to our context?

I hope you don't read this before you answer the question above! 😊 Anyway, the writer points out that the death of the writer of the will validates or activates the will. The implication he is making is that the maker of the covenant is God, who also has made a will. Christ is not the maker of a covenant or a will, but functions as a mediator and a guarantor. Christ sees that the conditions of the covenant, or will, are met and the promises are honored. Jesus died to fulfill these conditions, validating the will and testament so that we may "receive the promised eternal

inheritance." (9:15). And to top it off, in this case, we "heirs" receive an eternal inheritance and live with Him forever!

3. In verses 18-22, how many times is the word "blood" used? Why is blood so important? Note specifically verse 22, along with Leviticus 17:11.

4. Compare Exodus 24:1-8, which our writer quotes in Hebrews 9:20, with the words of Christ in Matthew 26:28. Describe and compare the connection between the two.

5. Read Hebrews 9:23-28. We know the New Covenant is far superior to the Old. According to verse 24, how does the blood of Jesus grant us better "representation" before the Father?

6. How do these verses show us that the New Covenant offers a "better hope"? (Which verses specifically?)

7. How many times is the word "appear" found in verses 24-28? Notice the three different tenses of the word, which summarize the Lord's work. Fill in the blanks from the text.
 - A. Christ *has appeared* to _____. (vs 26)
 - B. Christ *is appearing* _____. (vs 24)
 - C. One day, Christ *will appear* to _____. (vs 28)

8. How many times is the word "once" used in this chapter? Why is this significance?

9. Read verse 24 again. As usual, the writer throws out a topic and will further expound on it in the next chapter. Why do you think the writer makes this statement here? How does it tie in?

The writer ends this chapter with the promise of Christ's return! He is not coming to remove sin as a High Priest, but to bring salvation and glory to those who eagerly await Him! He is coming again as King and priest! The early church never forgot the promise of the Second Coming, and we shouldn't either! We look forward to His return, and the hope of His coming should have a purifying effect on us! We are His bride, readying ourselves for His arrival! (Matthew 25:1-13).

10. As we think of His return, we must ask ourselves the question: How should we live as we wait? What do the following verses say about this?

A. 2 Peter 3:11-14

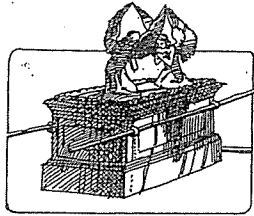
B. 1 Thessalonians 5:1-22.

11. What specifically spoke to your heart in this chapter? Has the Lord shown you any changes He'd like you to make as a result?

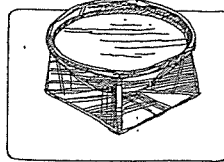
There is a fountain filled with blood
 Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
 And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,
 Lose all their guilty stains.

The dying thief rejoiced to see
 That fountain in his day;
 And there may I, though vile as he,
 Wash all my sins away.

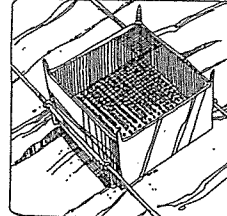
The Furniture of the Tabernacle



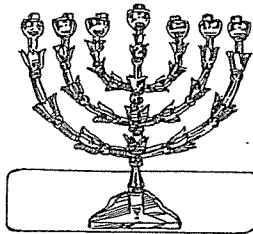
Ark of the Covenant
(Ex. 25:10-22)
The ark was most sacred of all the furniture in the tabernacle. Here the Hebrews kept a copy of the Ten Commandments, which summarized the whole covenant.



Bronze Laver
(Ex. 30:17-21)
It was to the laver of bronze that the priests would come for cleansing. They must be pure to enter the presence of God.



Altar of Burnt Offering
(Ex. 27:1-8)
Animal sacrifices were offered on this altar, located in the court in front of the tabernacle. The blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled on the four horns of the altar.



Golden Lampstand
(Ex. 25:31-40)
The gold lampstand stood in the holy place, opposite the table of showbread. It held seven lamps, flat bowls in which a wick lay with one end in the oil of the bowl and the lighted end hanging out.

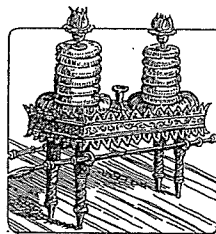
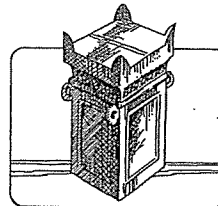
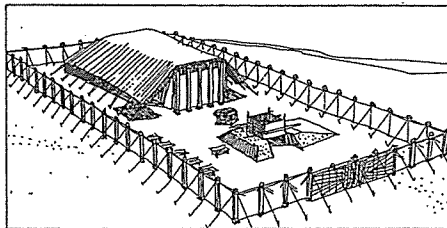


Table of Showbread
(Ex. 25:23-30)
The table of showbread was a stand on which the offerings were placed. Always in God's presence on the table were the 12 loaves of bread representing the 12 tribes.

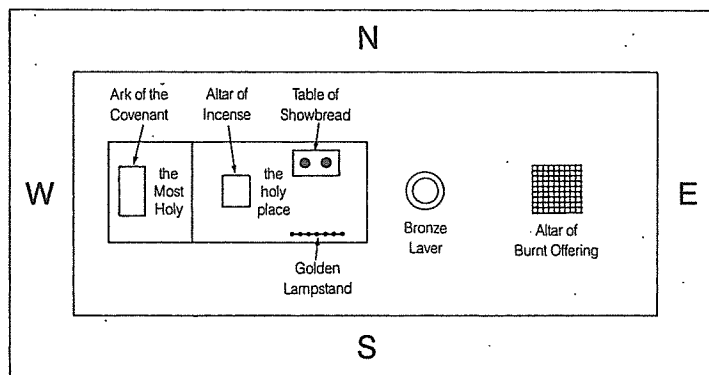


Altar of Incense
(Ex. 30:1-10)
The altar of incense inside the tabernacle was much smaller than the altar of burnt offering outside. The incense burned on the altar was a perfume of a sweet-smelling aroma.

The Plan of the Tabernacle



The tabernacle was to provide a place where God might dwell among His people. The term *tabernacle* sometimes refers to the tent, including the holy place and the Most Holy, which was covered with embroidered curtains. But in other places it refers to the entire complex, including the curtained court in which the tent stood.



This illustration shows the relative positions of the tabernacle furniture used in Israelite worship. The tabernacle is enlarged for clarity.