

A Study in Hebrews

Study Six

Hebrews 8:11-9:24

Day One

11 No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest.

12 For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

13 By calling this covenant "new," he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear.

v. 11-13 – The writer continued the quote from Jeremiah 31:31-34. It is interesting that the promise of the New Covenant was that each person would know the Lord and that there would be no need for teachers. I am reminded of what John wrote in his epistle:

I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray. As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit—just as it has taught you, remain in him (1 John 2:26-27).

John stated that we have no need of anyone to teach us. Yet we know that a teacher is listed among the five-fold ministry of the apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher. So John could not have been eliminating the critical role of the teacher. What was he saying?

John was saying and Jeremiah was predicting that the presence of the Spirit in each believer's life would give him or her access to the inner witness of God's truth. We have been taught, for the most part, not to trust what God is doing inside of us because it may be off or wrong. But I think that has robbed the believer of his or her ability to have confidence in God. ***I do not put my faith in my ability to hear God; I put my faith in God's ability to communicate with me.*** Part of that communication is the inner anointing, the Spirit, who has come to lead and guide me into all truth.

I like how Proverbs 16:3 reads in the Amplified Version:

“Roll your works upon the Lord—commit and trust them wholly to him—and he will cause your thoughts to be agreeable to his will, and so shall your plans be established and succeed.”

Why do you so mistrust what is in you? Why are you surprised that you can have the mind of Christ today? What inner truth do you have, along with the confirmation of the Spirit, which you are not acting on? Stop putting your trust in your ability to **hear**, but rather place your faith in God's ability to **lead**. Then go do what you sense He is saying to you. The old age of legalism is dead; the new age of the Spirit is here, and that Spirit

lives in you. Your sins are forgiven; God is guiding you from within. Isn't it time you put your trust in Him and acted accordingly?

Day Two

9:1 Now the first covenant had regulations for worship and also an earthly sanctuary.

2 A tabernacle was set up. In its first room were the lampstand, the table and the consecrated bread; this was called the Holy Place.

3 Behind the second curtain was a room called the Most Holy Place,

4 which had the golden altar of incense and the gold-covered ark of the covenant. This ark contained the gold jar of manna, Aaron's staff that had budded, and the stone tablets of the covenant.

v. 1 - God was very specific in how the tabernacle was to be set up by the Levites. What was the lesson here? That there was a specific way to come close to God. The Levites had to come to God on His terms and in a way that pleased Him. As we mentioned before, this was a type or shadow of things to come in Jesus. But for then, the tabernacle was training Israel on worshipping God in a way that was pleasing to Him, not to them.

Worship isn't about us, it's about Him. You don't choose when and how to worship God; that is His choice. I am always amused by someone who says that they have given their life to Jesus, then doesn't want to lift his hands. Worship isn't for your comfort or convenience; it's to glorify God and declare His attributes.

v. 2 - The first room in the tabernacle had the bread and the lampstand. Can you see how these two things represented Jesus? Wasn't Jesus the bread that came down from heaven (See John 6:33)? Isn't Jesus the light of the world (see John 14:6)?

vs. 3&4 – The Most Holy Place was separated from the first room by a curtain; only the High Priest could go behind that curtain, and that only once a year. Can you see the symbolism here? There was an altar of incense; prayer is almost always symbolized by incense in the Bible. What does Jesus do in the Most Holy Place of heaven today? He is interceding for us.

The Most Holy Place also had the ark, which contained the manna (which came down from heaven daily to feed the Israelites in the desert—symbolic of God's word that comes daily to feed His people), Aaron's staff (symbolic of God's anointing on His servants), and the tablets of the Law (symbolic of God's truth and righteous requirements). Can you see how all these things represented Jesus in His earthly ministry?

Day Three

5 Above the ark were the cherubim of the Glory, overshadowing the atonement cover. But we cannot discuss these things in detail now.

6 When everything had been arranged like this, the priests entered regularly into the outer room to carry on their ministry.

7 But only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance.

8 The Holy Spirit was showing by this that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still standing.

v. 5 – The typology and symbolism of the Old Testament is rich and worthy of study. But we must never forget that they all lead us to Jesus, who is worthy of greater honor and meditation. Let us never get so enamored with the symbols that we forget why they were given: to magnify Jesus! The writer quickly outlined the tabernacle layout, but then moved on. We need to do the same in our studies.

vs. 6-8 – What is the theme of Hebrews? It is that the benefits of the new covenant greatly outweigh the benefits of the old one; the new covenant is a better covenant. The writer makes it clear that the Holy Spirit was directing and inspiring the things of the old covenant in order to lead the people to an appreciation and understanding of the new covenant. The writer of Hebrews obviously felt that the Old Testament was the inspired word of God, even though there were now Spirit-led changes in the new covenant.

While all God's word is inspired, it is important to interpret His word correctly and accurately. Wherever possible, we should allow God's word to interpret God's word. Here we have the Word explaining the significance of the tabernacle and role of the high priest. The goal was never for the people to come into God's presence through the tabernacle. The goal was for us to come to God through Jesus, the heavenly "Holy Place." Our goal is not a place, but a relationship.

I have noticed how some try to make a church building a "holy place." I have never understood this philosophy. I favor an informal church setting. The building doesn't make me holy, nor is there anything special about a certain place. Our destination is Jesus and where He is, that is holy ground. I do think that the modern church has lost our sense of reverence for the holy, but I don't think that a building can restore that. I think only focusing on Jesus in our worship, teaching and programs can restore that. If we choose to make a building holy, we have developed a convenient substitute for what can only come by holy living and reverent personal worship from the heart.

Do you agree with this? Why or why not? How do you feel about informal church? For example, should people be allowed to bring coffee and something to eat into the auditorium where church is conducted? Why or why not?

Day Four

9 This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper.

10 They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings-external regulations applying until the time of the new order.

11 When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation.

12 He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption.

vs. 9-12 – The rituals of the Old Testament were instituted to teach Israel about holiness and to accustom them to the fact that God set the standards for how to approach Him. These rituals were actually given to in some sense frustrate man and His desire to approach God. God would then answer this frustration with Jesus, doing away with the Temple rituals. But a professional class of priests and clergy appeared who made a more elaborate system and became emotionally and economically attached to this ritualistic system.

I have said previously that this old system, instituted to bring people to God by God, was used to kill God when He came to modify the system that He had instituted! The Jews preferred God's system to God. That is how religious man can become—so enamored with the things of God that he forgets God or thinks the system can be his god. And now the writer of Hebrews was trying to convince the reader not to return to this useless, insipid ritualistic system, but to remain true to Christ.

I found this quote from Clark Pinnock in his book, *The Scripture Principle*. I think it is applicable to what the writer of Hebrews was trying to say:

It is also clear that God engaged Israel in a process of education that was meant to take them from a lower to a higher plane of religion and morality. It is very important in interpreting the Bible to recognize the principle of progressive revelation. God's truth is not given all at once. The light begins dimly and grows brighter. Seeds are planted early that grow into mature trees. Revelation takes human beings where it finds them and does with them what it can. The old covenant was replaced by a new covenant. The promise was met with fulfillment. Values relating to power and wealth expressed in the Old Testament were sharpened and deepened in the New Testament. Jesus introduced changes in Old Testament Sabbath law, whereas Paul declared circumcision not to be binding upon Christians. In the soil of the Old Testament texts God laid down principles that would flower into a more perfect disclosure of his will.

Well said and applicable to what we are currently reading, don't you think.

Day Five

13 The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean.

14 How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

15 For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.

16 In the case of a will, it is necessary to prove the death of the one who made it,

vs. 13&14 – The writer stated that first the blood of animals and then the blood of Jesus cleansed our conscience from acts that lead to death to serve God. Here are some thoughts on our conscience:

1. It is a real component of every person and is proof to many of the existence of God; how else could someone have their conscience accuse them of wrongdoing when they haven't even been taught that what they did was wrong? (see Romans 2:15).
2. The conscience isn't infallible; it may accuse or defend certain actions falsely;
3. Some have a stronger conscience than others, but the stronger needs to act according to the level of the weaker conscience (see 1 Corinthians 8:10-12);
4. The conscience needs to be educated concerning what is morally right and wrong;
5. The conscience may be correct in its disposition, but should not have the final word as to what action is required (see 1 Corinthians 4:4-5).

I have taught that guilt is very often a bad motivator; it often can lead you to do the incorrect or inappropriate thing. Don't respond out of guilt; respond to the Spirit's leading in your life and you will always do the proper thing.

vs. 15&16 – The Old Testament instituted a system of endless sacrifice. The New Testament focuses on the one sacrifice, namely Christ, and the endless access that those who put their trust in Him have to the benefits of that one sacrifice. I heard someone say once that when you sin, you should run to God and not from Him. That is the power of what Christ did for you and me. Thank you, Jesus.

A guilty conscience can cause you to run from the very source that will cleanse your conscience! Don't be guilty, no matter how badly you've messed up. Run to Jesus and access the forgiveness that is yours.

Day Six

17 because a will is in force only when somebody has died; it never takes effect while the one who made it is living.

18 This is why even the first covenant was not put into effect without blood.

19 When Moses had proclaimed every commandment of the law to all the people, he took the blood of calves, together with water, scarlet wool and branches of hyssop, and sprinkled the scroll and all the people.

20 He said, "This is the blood of the covenant, which God has commanded you to keep."

v. 17 – The concept of a suffering Messiah was foreign and offensive to Jews, and still is. The writer is trying to help believing Jews overcome the stigma attached to faith in a Savior that was nailed to a tree in humiliating death. Christ had to die or the new covenant would not have been put into effect.

v. 18 – The “death” concept of the first covenant was there to condition the people to the fact that without death and the shedding of blood, there was no remission of sin. Now Christ has endured the ultimate death so that a new system and way to God could be introduced. Don’t let anything take the place of the work of Christ in your life.

vs. 19&20 – Jesus came and declared the new covenant, just like Moses declared the old one. And just like Moses, Jesus shed blood—His own—so that the new covenant would take effect. The key to understanding the Old Testament is Jesus in the New. Jesus Himself explained this at the Last Supper:

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins (Matthew 26:26-29).

We can see in part why Jesus commanded that this covenant meal be done over and over to commemorate what He had done. Here in Hebrews we see that some were ready to abandon His sacrifice and pursue the memory of an inferior, outdated Temple ritual.

Maybe today you should celebrate the Lord’s Supper with family or friends? It’s always good to remember what Jesus did for us, lest we forget.

Day Seven

21 In the same way, he sprinkled with the blood both the tabernacle and everything used in its ceremonies.

22 In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

23 It was necessary, then, for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

24 For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence.

vs. 21-24 – It is said that forgiveness of sins has always been messy business. First, there was the bleating of animals being sacrificed, with blood and guts flying everywhere. Then there was the “messy” business of Jesus’ crucifixion, the most hideous death that one many has ever devised against another man. The price for our forgiveness has been and still is the shedding of blood. But Jesus shed His once and for all, and now anyone and everyone who wants to access the power in that blood can do so.

Allow me to share a Bible story about the blood that Moses used to cleanse Aaron and his sons, because I think it has lessons for us today:

He then presented the other ram, the ram for the ordination, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on its head. Moses slaughtered the ram and took some of its blood and put it on the lobe of Aaron's right ear, on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot. Moses also brought Aaron's sons forward and put some of the blood on the lobes of their right ears, on the thumbs of their right hands and on the big toes of their right feet. Then he sprinkled blood against the altar on all sides. He took the fat, the fat tail, all the fat around the inner parts, the covering of the liver, both kidneys and their fat and the right thigh. Then from the basket of bread made without yeast, which was before the LORD, he took a cake of bread, and one made with oil, and a wafer; he put these on the fat portions and on the right thigh. He put all these in the hands of Aaron and his sons and waved them before the LORD as a wave offering. Then Moses took them from their hands and burned them on the altar on top of the burnt offering as an ordination offering, a pleasing aroma, an offering made to the LORD by fire. He also took the breast — Moses' share of the ordination ram — and waved it before the LORD as a wave offering, as the LORD commanded Moses. Then Moses took some of the anointing oil and some of the blood from the altar and sprinkled them on Aaron and his garments and on his sons and their garments. So he consecrated Aaron and his garments and his sons and their garments (Leviticus 8:22-30).

Aaron and his sons had their ear, thumb and big toe anointed with blood. Wherever we go, whatever we do and whatever we hear, we must go in the power of the blood. Without death, I cannot hear, act or go in a way that will please God. I need the mark of Jesus in everything I do—Jesus just isn't some insurance policy against death and for eternal life. He is to go with me everywhere I go and everything I do should have His mark, the sign of His shed blood, on it.

Then Aaron's beautiful priestly garments were sprinkled with blood. That would be like a sprinkling of blood on a bride's beautiful white wedding dress. That blood would be the first thing anyone would see and some would consider it a terrible waste and stain. But my righteous garments, my outer works and actions, are to have that same blood mark—the mark of my Lord, who gave His life for me.

Brothers and sisters, it's all about Jesus. Jesus isn't to be a side interest in our lives. He is everything! His mark should be on all that we do. Jesus paid a high price for us to wear and do the righteous deeds of God. May we never tire of wearing the blood stains

www.purposequest.com

on our being. Jesus died for you and me, and that truth should be evident in all that we do. We are sons and daughters of blood and it is a privilege indeed to be so named. Amen.