



Chapter Nine

Our author has shared much about the legitimacy of Christ's priesthood, which was carefully explained as after the order of Melchizedek. Because this kind of priest cannot serve under the old covenant, Christ has also mediated a new covenant suitable to His work. Chapter nine contrast the sanctuaries and the rituals of the two covenants, and then, by a play on words, demonstrates another blessing Christ's death gives His people.

9:1 The purpose of this writing is to convince those tempted to leave Christianity and go back under the Law that the Law was faulty. There is a slight debate in this verse, where some versions read "covenant" others read "tabernacle." One can notice that the word "covenant" or "tabernacle" is in italics which means it is not there in the original text. There is no Greek word in the original following the word "first" so we must insert it in there to understand what it is being shared. The context implies it is speaking of the distinction between the two covenants. The regulations for the worship under the Old Covenant did not originate with man, but was instituted by God.

Hebrews 9:1 (1) Now even the first covenant had regulations of divine worship and the earthly

sanctuary.

The first covenant involved ordinances and arrangements for divine service, but the sanctuary in which these were carried out was worldly. It was, as verse nine will show, a figure of something more substantial in the eternal order. But take notice to what is said, “had regulations” as in the past tense. It is in the past tense since the New Covenant has been inaugurated. This is referring to the rules of worship and priestly work. The leaving of those “regulations” of divine worship was something designed by God not by man.

God instituted the construction of the Tabernacle of the Earthly sanctuary, which will be contrasted here between the Heavenly sanctuary. It is called “earthly” in contrast to the “heavenly.” It is earthly in that it was on Earth. It is earthly in that it was focused on the fleshly stuff. The earthly one was made by human hands, but designed by God. The verse is speaking of the entire Tabernacle structure. Outside stood two pieces of furniture, the altar of sacrifice and the laver.

9:2 It seems interesting that the writer goes back to the tabernacle and not the permanent structure known as the Temple, which the

Hebrews writer and readers would have been more familiar with. There were 3 different Temple complexes that the Jews worshipped in; Solomon's, Zerubbabel's, and Herod's temples. Maybe it was because the first instructions were for a tabernacle structure. The Temple was built to the same specifications, but no one would argue with the using the tabernacle as the example.

Hebrews 9:2 (2) For there was a tabernacle prepared, the outer one, in which were the lampstand and the table and the sacred bread; this is called the holy place.

The Mosaic Tabernacle consisted of two tent-compartments. It references the first room a priest would have entered into the first room which was known as the "Holy Place". The Holy Place was about 30 feet long, fifteen feet wide, and fifteen feet high. In the first or the outer one was the lampstand, made of pure gold and about 6 feet high, possibly weighing up to 65 pounds or 1 talent of gold. Three branches on each side, making a total of seven, giving the only light to the tabernacle since it had no windows. It is the Hebrew word Menorah. The middle stick could only be lit by the altar's fire; Exodus 25:31-40; Leviticus 24:1-4. The next piece of furniture was

the table of showbread. It was called the showbread because it always stood before the face of God. It was 3 feet high and 1 ½ feet wide. It lay on the north side of the tent opposite side of the lampstand. On the table were stacked 12 loaves in two piles. One loaf representing each of the tribes of Israel. The loaves changed out every Sabbath day. On the top was placed a cup of frankincense. They were not to be eaten by non-priests. Jesus referenced the instance when David and his men ate of the Table of showbread. Keep in mind why the author is explaining all this, to show the distinction between the covenants and to highlight that the first sanctuary was earthly; Exodus 25:23-30; Leviticus 24:6; Exodus 25:30; Leviticus 24:5-9. This first tent was called the sanctuary or holy place. When the writer says, the “outer one” it literally means the “first one.” Exodus seems to indicate that the altar of incense was in the Holy Place (first room) as well, **Exodus 30:6 You shall put this altar in front of the veil that is near the ark of the testimony, in front of the mercy seat that is over the ark of the testimony, where I will meet with you.** Please remember this for in the next couple of verses we will see something a bit different.

9:3-4 A veil or curtain separated the Holy Place

from the Holiest of all or the Most Holy Place, literally, “Holy of Holies.” It is called the second veil in contrast to the linen curtain separating the holy place from the outside court, Exodus 26:31-33, 36-37. This was the veil that tore from top to bottom when Jesus was on the cross. This second compartment had or involved the use of the golden censer or altar of incense, Exodus 30:1-9. Although this altar was in the outer holy place, Exodus 30:6 a verse we contemplated in verse 2. The smoke from it filled the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement so that the high priest never came into the clear presence of God, Exodus 30:10, Leviticus 16:12-13.

Hebrews 9:3-4 (3) Behind the second veil there was a tabernacle which is called the Holy of Holies, (4) having a golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden jar holding the manna, and Aaron's rod which budded, and the tables of the covenant;

This verse spurs a couple of questions for us to consider. The first question is which piece of furniture is being referred to? Some translations refer to this as the golden censer and others the golden altar of incense. The different translations use the same Greek word **thumiaterion** for both

of these words. There may have been a censer on the other side of the veil to which this verse was referencing. On the Day of Atonement the High Priest would take some of the coals off the altar of incense and wave the smoke over the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies. The second question has to do with the location of the altar of incense.

It is a little interesting that while trying to describe the furniture in the Holy of Holies that the altar of incense is mentioned here as being on the same side of the veil as the ark of the covenant. Many believe and teach that the altar of incense is in the front room the Holy Place. The reason this is taught is because the Priest would burn incense on the altar every morning and evening. The High Priest would only enter the Holy of Holies once a year on the Day of Atonement. Exodus indicates that the altar of incense was is in the Holy Place, **Exodus 30:6** You shall put this altar in front of the veil that is near the ark of the testimony, in front of the mercy seat that is over the ark of the testimony, where I will meet with you.

The ark of the covenant was also in the inner tent, Exodus 25:10-15. When first built, this gold-plated wooden chest contained three articles

which reminded Israel of God's covenant-mercies.

The golden pot of manna reminded Israel of God's miraculous provision of food in the wilderness, Exodus 16:32-34. The English Bible follows the Hebrew in not mentioning the vessel being gold, but our author is quoting from the Greek version which included that detail.

Aaron's rod that budded was a perpetual sign of the exclusive right of Aaron and his descendants to the priesthood. This rod was involved in the miraculous incident which occurred after the rebellion of Korah in Numbers 16.

Tables of the covenant were the two tablets of stone cut by Moses after he had angrily shattered the first tablets because of Israel's idolatry, Exodus 32:19; 34:1-4, 28-29. On these were engraved the ten commandments.

Archeology has suggested an interesting possibility regarding the dual tablets of stone. In the absences of carbon paper or photocopy machines, covenant-treaties in the ancient world between protective lord and vassal people were often written twice – one copy for his records and one for theirs. These tablets would be kept in the respective temples as solemn reminders of the covenant. Because Israel's sanctuary was at the

same time God's only visible "dwelling," both copies of the "covenant" were kept in the Holy of Holies. Whether the two tablets reflected this practice or not, they gave the ark containing them its name.

When Solomon built the Temple, nothing was in the ark but the two tables of stone, 1 Kings 8:9; 2 Chronicles 5:10. The other articles may have been removed during the seven months the Philistines possessed the ark, 1 Samuel 4:11; 6:1.

Scripture does not tell of the final destiny of the tabernacle or its furniture. An ancient Jewish tradition had Jeremiah taking the tabernacle, the ark, and the altar of incense to a cave atop Mount Pisgah (Nebo, used interchangeably).

9:5 Over the ark (which simply means box) was a lid of solid gold called the mercy-seat, Exodus 25:17. The Greek word here is the same translated "propitiation" in **Romans 3:25** whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; This is where Christ is our mercy-seat. These are the only two times this word

appears in the New Testament.

Hebrews 9:5 (5) and above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat; but of these things we cannot now speak in detail.

Connected to the ends of the mercy-seat were the cherubim of glory, two golden angel types facing each other with up spread wings that covered the mercy-seat or the atonement seat, **Exodus 25:18-20** (18) "You shall make two cherubim of gold, make them of hammered work at the two ends of the mercy seat. (19) "Make one cherub at one end and one cherub at the other end; you shall make the cherubim of one piece with the mercy seat at its two ends. (20) "The cherubim shall have their wings spread upward, covering the mercy seat with their wings and facing one another; the faces of the cherubim are to be turned toward the mercy seat. The mercy seat was the lid that covered the Ark of the Covenant. From here God would give His commandments, **Exodus 25:22** There I will meet with you; and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, I will speak to you about all that I will give you in commandment for the sons of Israel. And here He would "meet" the High Priest on the Day of Atonement, Leviticus

16:2, 13-15.

Our author speaks only generally of these items which were in the tabernacle. That he cannot now speak in detail means at now he will not be getting specific on the individual pieces. Since he makes only a general typological point regarding these items, we will here do the same.

9:6-7 Having spoken of the equipment of the Aaronic priests he turns now to their ritual. These two verses emphasize one them in three ways: the inaccessibility of the Holy of Holies under the former covenant. The priests ministered in the Holy Place; the High Priest alone could enter the Holy of Holies. Service was performed always or daily in the first room. It was only performed in the second room one day once a year. The outer tabernacle was entered for many purposes; the inner room could not be entered without blood. This blood the High Priest offered that single day each year, first for himself and then for the errors of the people. **Leviticus 16:6, 11, 15 (6)** "Then Aaron shall offer the bull for the sin offering which is for himself, that he may make atonement for himself and for his household. (11) "Then Aaron shall offer the bull of the sin offering which is for himself and make atonement for himself and for his household, and he shall

slaughter the bull of the sin offering which is for himself. (15) "Then he shall slaughter the goat of the sin offering which is for the people, and bring its blood inside the veil and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat and in front of the mercy seat. When these things were thus ordained refers to the time of Moses. The phrase has no bearing on the date of this epistle.

Hebrews 9:6-7 (6) Now when these things have been so prepared, the priests are continually entering the outer tabernacle performing the divine worship, (7) but into the second, only the high priest enters once a year, not without taking blood, which he offers for himself and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance.

The work of Priest was a regular and daily service. Their main work would take place in the Holy Place. In verse seven the focus is turned to the work of the High Priest. His work is referencing the work in the Holy of Holies. The one day that the High Priest would do his work was called the Day of Atonement. The Jews call this day Yom Kippur. We already referenced a few verses in Leviticus chapter 16, but this is where we would find some of the details of the working on the Day of Atonement. The High

Priest would first bring a young bull as a sin offering for himself. He would also bring two goats as a sin offering for the people as well as two rams (one for himself and one for the people.) He would then wash himself in the laver and dress himself in white garments. He would cast lots for the goats. One would become the sacrifice for the Lord and the other would become the scapegoat. He would then kill the young bull for himself and enter the Holy Place. He would fill the altar of incense (censer) with coals from the altar of incense and then pass through the veil. He would sprinkle blood on the mercy seat seven times. Then he would go back outside and kill the goat and return to the Holy of Holies with the blood. He would then go out and place his hands firmly on the scapegoat, confessing the sins of the people and then releasing the goat into the wilderness.

We still only have access to God the Father through the shedding of blood. God was showing that a barrier of unforgiven sin kept men from drawing near to God, and only the High Priest could enter after his sins were symbolically taken care of. Only sins done in ignorance would be forgiven by the sacrifice brought into the Holy of Holies during the second trip in. **Numbers 15:27-31** (27) 'Also if one person sins

unintentionally, then he shall offer a one year old female goat for a sin offering. (28) 'The priest shall make atonement before the LORD for the person who goes astray when he sins unintentionally, making atonement for him that he may be forgiven. (29) 'You shall have one law for him who does anything unintentionally, for him who is native among the sons of Israel and for the alien who sojourns among them. (30) 'But the person who does anything defiantly, whether he is native or an alien, that one is blaspheming the LORD; and that person shall be cut off from among his people. (31) 'Because he has despised the word of the LORD and has broken His commandment, that person shall be completely cut off; his guilt will be on him.'" This gives us some very serious understanding about sin. Intentional sin caused one to be cut off. As we will later move into chapter 10 of this book the writer makes our sin and attendance just as important in our living for the Lord.

9:8 In the very limited access to the Holy of Holies, the Holy Spirit was signifying that the way to God was not yet made manifest to sinful man. So long as the first tabernacle was standing, so long as there were two tents, just as long man could not could not approach God directly or with a clear conscience.

Hebrews 9:8 (8) The Holy Spirit is signifying this, that the way into the holy place has not yet been disclosed while the outer tabernacle is still standing,

Did you catch the idea of the Holy Spirit signifying this? The word “signifying” is the word **deloo** which means to show, make clear, make plain, or reveal. This helps to make clear a few things, first the Holy Spirit's role in inspiration. Second, the Holy Spirit is the interpreter of things and plays a role here in revealing this intention. Third, all that was done was orchestrated and planned in order to teach greater truths. We will see here what the purpose of all this information is and even of the rituals and ministry of the Old Testament priests.

The way to Heaven had not been made known. It is clear that in the Old Testament there was no such thing as direct access to God. The way to the throne room was denied to man. The way to God was not shown as long as the Levitical priesthood was in place. The way to God did not become obvious until Jesus revealed it after His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension. **John 14:6** Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

The next chapter will show that the work of Jesus has opened the road to God for the people of the new covenant. The following are some New Testament passages that explain how the new covenant did that. At His death the veil was torn from top to bottom. **Matthew 27:51** And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth shook and the rocks were split. As long as the tabernacle was needed and relied upon the way to God cannot be shown. **John 10:9** I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. When Jesus passed through the real tabernacle the old one lost its value and the way to God was made known. **Romans 5:2** through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. **Ephesians 2:18** for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father.

9:9 All this was a figure or parable for the period of time in which the Aaronic priesthood was ministering. The word is **parabole**, which means to be a symbol or thrown alongside to illustrate something. The same word and idea of the parables that Jesus spoke.

Hebrews 9:9 (9) which is a symbol for the present time. Accordingly both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make the worshiper perfect in conscience,

It should have indicated to them that their gifts and sacrifices were not for the perfecting of the conscience, but that they actually represented something that would come that would be much greater. The problem is that to the Jew they had a hard time understanding something to be greater than the tabernacle or the temple. Not only was the tabernacle symbolic but so was the gifts and sacrifices. The writer then describes something of the effectiveness of the Old Testament sacrifices. He says that those sacrifices cannot make a worshiper perfect their consciences. Conscience is meant as “awareness.” These Old Testament sacrifices resulted in a ceremonial purification not actual forgiveness and certainly not the removal of sin. Only if the sin was actually forgiven could the worshiper have any concept of being perfect or actually right with God.

Some translations might say “clear the consciences” but this misses the word “perfect” in the text. This concept of being made perfect is a common theme in Hebrews. **Hebrews 7:11**

Now if perfection was through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the people received the Law), what further need was there for another priest to arise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be designated according to the order of Aaron? **Hebrews 7:19** (for the Law made nothing perfect), and on the other hand there is a bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God. **Hebrews 7:28** For the Law appoints men as high priests who are weak, but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, appoints a Son, made perfect forever.

What has been conveyed is that the Law and Levitical priesthood could not perfect. This is the idea here as well. The Old Testament worshipper left knowing though he had been obedient to the Law the sacrifice he offered was not sufficient to meet the needs. The problem with access to God has never been external but always internal. What the blood of the animals could not do, the blood of Jesus can.

9:10 Such offerings involved ceremonial cleansing from meats, foods, and drinks through various washings and carnal ordinances. These were imposed only until the time or period of sacred history in which God would affect

reformation. This is not the reformation celebrated by our Lutheran friends some 500 years ago, but God's reformation.

Hebrews 9:10 (10) since they relate only to food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until a time of reformation.

The ceremonial laws and the rituals pertaining to them were all temporary. The priests washed on the day of his consecration, **Exodus 29:4** Then you shall bring Aaron and his sons to the doorway of the tent of meeting and wash them with water. The High Priest was washed on the Day of Atonement. **Leviticus 16:4, 24** (4) "He shall put on the holy linen tunic, and the linen undergarments shall be next to his body, and he shall be girded with the linen sash and attired with the linen turban (these are holy garments). Then he shall bathe his body in water and put them on. (24) "He shall bathe his body with water in a holy place and put on his clothes, and come forth and offer his burnt offering and the burnt offering of the people and make atonement for himself and for the people. A priest who has been defiled was washed. **Leviticus 22:6** a person who touches any such shall be unclean until evening, and shall not eat of the holy gifts unless he has bathed his body in water. The

priest who offered the prescribed red heifer was told to wash. **Numbers 19:7** The priest shall then wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterward come into the camp, but the priest shall be unclean until evening. The healed leper. **Leviticus 14:8-9** (8) "The one to be cleansed shall then wash his clothes and shave off all his hair and bathe in water and be clean. Now afterward, he may enter the camp, but he shall stay outside his tent for seven days. (9) "It will be on the seventh day that he shall shave off all his hair: he shall shave his head and his beard and his eyebrows, even all his hair. He shall then wash his clothes and bathe his body in water and be clean. The one who ate an animal that did not die of natural causes. **Leviticus 17:15** When any person eats an animal which dies or is torn by beasts, whether he is a native or an alien, he shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and remain unclean until evening; then he will become clean. The one who released the scapegoat. **Leviticus 16:26** The one who released the goat as the scapegoat shall wash his clothes and bathe his body with water; then afterward he shall come into the camp. The one who burned the sin offering outside the camp. **Leviticus 16:28** Then the one who burns them shall wash his clothes and bathe his body with water, then afterward he shall come into the

camp. The man who had some type of discharge. **Leviticus 15:13** Now when the man with the discharge becomes cleansed from his discharge, then he shall count off for himself seven days for his cleansing; he shall then wash his clothes and bathe his body in running water and will become clean. Various garments and vessels were prescribed to be washed as well.

These are all regulations for the body. The ceremonial matters and the tabernacle were always intended to be temporary or until a time of “reformation.”

Reformation translates as a word which means a straightening, an amendment, or improvement and was used in the Greek literature of setting a fracture, repairing roads or houses, or even paying debts. The general meaning is “putting right” or “bringing to a satisfactory state.” In this verse, the present period of the priestly work of Messiah Jesus is the time when God is putting right sinful man and bringing to a satisfactory state the ordinances foreshadowed by the incomplete shadows and symbols of the old covenant system. Now that Jesus has come there is no need to rely on a mere ceremony, when we can rely on the sacrifice of Jesus.

9:11 Christ having arrived, so had the time of restoration that we had just mentioned. He is high priest of all the good things which belong to the order to come, that is, the Messianic order of fulfillment. The phrase “to come” is used several times in Hebrews of the still unrealized future (2:5; 13:14), but the entire epistle agrees that this perfect order had now begun in part, and that its power may already be enjoyed (6:5).

Hebrews 9:11 (11) But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation;

Christ's service involves a greater and more perfect tabernacle or sanctuary. It is not made with hands, in fact, it is not a part of this physical creation or building. This tabernacle is better in two ways. First, it is greater. The Levitical priests passed through the Holy Place into the Holy of Holies to get to God's symbolic presence. Jesus goes straight into the actual presence of God. Second, it is more perfect. It is more perfect because it is not made by the hands of men. The tabernacle Jesus passed through as priest was not a man-made one. **Hebrews 8:2** a minister in the sanctuary and in the true tabernacle, which

the Lord pitched, not man.

9:12 Nor is His service dependent on the blood of goats for Himself or of calves for the people. Christ's blood is more valuable than bulls and goats. Jesus passed through and went into the Heavenly places at His ascension. Through the merits of the sinless life represented in His own blood He has entered into the most holy place one for all time, and there He has found or obtained redemption that is eternal. Unlike the temporary elements of the first covenant, all that pertains to the new covenant belongs to the eternal order. This eternal covenant brings an eternal redemption, inheritance, and salvation, because it rests on the offering of Christ by His eternal Spirit.

Hebrews 9:12 (12) and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.

Jesus did not enter the same way that the Old Testament priests did. Jesus' sacrifice was sufficient and because of that it did not need to be repeated year after year. Jesus entered the Holy of Holies which is heaven "once and for all." This is where Jesus obtained, the Greek word is

“eurisko” and in English is our word “eureka” which means “to find.” The thing Jesus found or obtained was eternal redemption. Redemption is eternal, which means God has no plan to replace this covenant and makes it valid until the end of time. Redemption is the word used when a slave was set free. This gives us the idea that Jesus’ death on the cross sets us free from the guilt and slavery to sin. The blood of Jesus produces eternal redemption, not just external ceremonial purification.

9:13-14 Verses 13 through 22 will explain further the necessity of Jesus’ death and will go into more detail about what was mentioned in verses 11 and 12. Then in verses 23 through 28 will further explain the necessity of his presence in Heaven. And chapter 10:1-18 will explain the necessity of the once for all sacrifice.

This is another one of those “how much more” contrasts with which we have become familiar in Hebrews. This time it clinches the point made so far in chapter nine; Christ as a priest service excels that of the Aaronic priests, and, in keeping with that, He gives far better benefits. The blood of bulls and goats was used in sin-offerings on the Day of Atonement or at other times, and the ashes of an unblemished red heifer were used in rites of purification, Numbers 19:1-22. These

things could sanctify so far as purifying the flesh from ceremonial uncleanness, or even holding God's wrath against sin momentarily.

Hebrews 9:13-14 (13) For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, (14) how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

How much more, we are asked, will the blood of Christ cleanse the conscience, not from uncleanness incurred through touching a dead body, Numbers 19:11-16. But, rather from “practices and attitudes which belong to the way of death, which pollute the soul and make a barrier between it and God”, that is, from dead works?

Freed from such practices by the blood of Christ, His people are free to serve the living God. The blood and ashes used in ceremonial washing had nothing to do with the internal spiritual defilement, they could not change the heart. Please recognize the contrast between dead works and the living God. The flesh or carnal

ceremonies were those dead works. These cleansed the flesh but not the heart or mind. The conscience being cleansed of dead works frees us to do something positive. The stained conscience hindered the type of service we can now have because of the blood of Christ. Not only is our conscience cleansed but now we are placed into a position of acceptable service to God. We are allowed access to serve the living God because of Jesus. **Romans 12:1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.**

The basis of this superior benefit of Christ's offering is that He through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God. Christ's sinless life has already been attested to, and will appear again in chapter ten. His life was "offered" to God, not to Satan as some Medieval theorists surmised. Remember the issue of sin lies in the mind of God, not in Satan. What matters is if we are saved or lost in the mind of God. This was a sacrifice of love, but also of "bearing sins." A sinless life could justly meet all God's requirements for man and at the same time pay the ransom for sin. One ought not press these figures beyond scriptural bounds, but

simply glory in what God has done and be content to understand that by such terms as He has chosen to use in revealing it.

Through the eternal Spirit. I believe this here to be the Holy Spirit and not the spirit of Jesus Himself, although He did offer His spirit in complete obedience and then in death. It is also remembered in the prophecy of **Isaiah 42:1** Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations. This is clearly the Holy Spirit.

There are four things mentioned about the sacrifice of Jesus here. First, Jesus offered Himself. Second, He offered Himself through the eternal Spirit. Third, He was unblemished. Fourth, His sacrifice was TO God.

9:15 Through the meritorious blood of Christ, He became the mediator of the new covenant. **Hebrews 8:6** But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises. A mediator brings two parties together. Jesus is our go between to get to God.

By means of death those who were called of either covenant receive the promise of eternal inheritance. His death was for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, as well as for sins of those who would live afterward. Since Christ's blood cleanses from dead works, the inheritance contained in God's promise is assured to His people.

Hebrews 9:15 (15) For this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that, since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

The writer has pointed out two reasons Jesus had to die. First, He was to be a sacrifice for sin. Secondly, in order to institute a New Covenant with Himself as Mediator. The Old Covenant provided no real atonement of sin. God merely passed over the sins previously committed. **Romans 3:25** whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; The passing over was a temporary of the punishment that one deserved. The promise to be received in an eternal

inheritance. The Old Testament (Canaan) was temporary. The New Testament inheritance (access to God) is eternal. The point is that Jesus' death makes it possible for the people of God, both Old and New Covenant believers to receive this inheritance.

Ordinarily in scripture this word covenant is a great theological expression of the Old Testament, where it stand for the Hebrew term signifying the divine disposition or arrangement imposed by God on Israel, through Himself. That covenant was one sided in that God planned and expressed it and Israel could not bargain the terms. But it was two sided in that Israel accepted certain stated conditions involving both blessing and punishment.

In the New Testament, however, this same Greek word was used commonly for a last will and testament. Not only so, the word for the man who offered a covenant to another was the same word for the man who made a will. There are similarities and differences between the two concepts.

A covenant and a will have in common that both involve a death. They are distinct inasmuch as such a covenant provides for both benefits and

punishments, but a will provides only for benefits which are assured by the death of the man who makes the will.

In verses 15-20, the word is used in both ways. Verses 15, 18-20 use this word in the usual biblical sense of a covenant. However, in verses 16-17 use the same word of a will. By this subtle shift in emphasis from one to the other and back again, the author points out a special benefit of the new covenant which the old could not give.

9:16 Where a testament or will is, there must be publicly established and proved the death of the man who made the will. This is a general statement concerning normal human affairs.

Hebrews 9:16 (16) For where a covenant is, there must of necessity be the death of the one who made it.

We have seen that Jesus' death was necessary to make it possible for us to receive the promised inheritance. Now we will see why it was necessary for Him to die to make it possible. Not the dying of natural causes as in a will and testament, but rather a violent, sacrifice followed by the sprinkling of blood. The overriding context here is still going back to the quotation of the

promise of the New Covenant in Jeremiah 31.

There is also question about the phrase “the one who made it.” This is one word in Greek. It actually means “testator” and would be referring to the death of the writer of the will or institutor of the will. A sacrifice always has to be offered to ratify a covenant. For example in the Abrahamic covenant, **Genesis 15:9-11** (9) So He said to him, "Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, and a three-year-old female goat, and a three-year-old ram, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon." (10) Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, and laid each half opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds. (11) The birds of prey came down upon the carcasses, and Abram drove them away. The Mosaic Covenant, **Exodus 24:5-8** (5) He sent young men of the sons of Israel, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as peace offerings to the LORD. (6) Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and the other half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. (7) Then he took the book of the covenant and read it in the hearing of the people; and they said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient!" (8) So Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD has made with you in

accordance with all these words." The Christian Covenant, **1 Corinthians 11:25** In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." A covenant was never in effect until the covenant sacrifice died. Jesus' blood is the thing that establishes the New Covenant.

9:17 Such a will is in force only after the man who made it is dead. It has no legal power while he is living. The point here is not particularly that Jesus was free during His lifetime to dispense blessings in a manner other than that provided for in His "will," though it is true that "the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins." Rather the author's concern is that a death must take place in the establishment of either a divine covenant or a human will, and that, in the case of a last will and testament, once the death has occurred the benefits provided by the will are guaranteed to the beneficiaries.

Hebrews 9:17 (17) For a covenant is valid only when men are dead, for it is never in force while the one who made it lives.

There are legal terms in this verse that highlight the effect of the New Covenant. First is the word

“valid.” This word means firm, enduring, to where it is solid, unshakeable. Second is the word “force.” It means strong, or powerful, in force. The point is that the Old Covenant ended, and the New Covenant began when Jesus died. It is important see that we live under the New Covenant.

Since the death of Jesus can purge the conscience from dead works, His beneficiaries will receive the eternal inheritance. His new testament is on the nature of a will, as well as that of a covenant, but as a will it provides only benefits. All who remain among the covenant people will obtain the blessings which Christ’s offering secured for them, for His death was that of a testator as well as that of a covenant-mediator.

9:18 Leaving now the idea of a last will and testament , and returning to the ordinary meaning of covenant, the writer notes that the first covenant or testament was also dedicated with blood.

Hebrews 9:18 (18) Therefore even the first covenant was not inaugurated without blood.

Once again, “first covenant” has reference to the

Mosaic Covenant. He makes clear that when the first covenant was inaugurated that it was not immune from the need of shedding of the blood of a sacrificial animal. This cements even further the previous argument for covenant over testament. His point is that the Mosaic covenant was inaugurated by the same principle of shedding of blood. There was no creator of the will that died in that case. It was a sacrificial death.

9:19-21 When Moses had spoken the terms of the covenant to all the people, he sealed with blood their acceptance of it and God's acceptance of them on that basis. In the reading of this text from Exodus 24:1-8 we see some information left out of this recording and yet we also read of many things that we not mentioned in the Exodus account. The point the writer is getting at is that blood was directly involved in the dedication of the first covenant. The Hebrews writer slightly changes the words of Moses to match a little more to the words our Savior used in the institution of the Lord's Supper in Matthew 26:28. Again we know Moses sprinkled all these with oil as found in Exodus 40:9-11; Leviticus 8:10-11; Number 7:1. Our writer adds with blood the tabernacle and all its vessels we sprinkled. We do know the altar was sprinkled with blood,

Leviticus 8:15. The Antiquities writer Josephus, says the entire tabernacle and furnishings were purified with oil first and then with the blood of bulls and rams.

Hebrews 9:19-21 (19) For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses to all the people according to the Law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, (20) saying, "THIS IS THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT WHICH GOD COMMANDED YOU." (21) And in the same way he sprinkled both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry with the blood.

The word "for" at the start of this verse shows that verses 19-21 are an explanation of what was said in verse 18. Here we have a recapping of the institution of the first covenant as was recorded in Exodus 24. **Exodus 24:3-8** (3) Then Moses came and recounted to the people all the words of the LORD and all the ordinances; and all the people answered with one voice and said, "All the words which the LORD has spoken we will do!" (4) Moses wrote down all the words of the LORD. Then he arose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain with twelve pillars for the twelve tribes of Israel.

(5) He sent young men of the sons of Israel, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as peace offerings to the LORD. (6) Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and the other half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. (7) Then he took the book of the covenant and read it in the hearing of the people; and they said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient!" (8) So Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words." It is not just the blood associated with the covenant, but it is the blood which seals the covenant.

Exodus tells us that Moses read all the commandments that God gave them. Moses was laying out the terms and conditions of the covenant for the people. The people could never have questioned anything about what God demanded of them in a covenant relationship. The people responded to the commands that God laid out by promising that, "all the words which the Lord has spoke we will do." It wasn't just following the reading of the Law, it was following the people's agreement to keep those conditions.

9:22 Almost all things, according to the Old Testament law, were purged with blood. This statement leaves room for exceptions, as in the case of a poor Israelite, Leviticus 5:11-13. The next statement, however, has no exceptions. Without shedding of blood there is no remission or forgiveness.

Hebrews 9:22 (22) And according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

The three words shedding of blood stand here for a single Greek word, which is found only here in all biblical literature. This word emphasizes the actual taking of blood, and calls attention to the fact that blood offerings represented the presentation of life, Leviticus 17:11. Shedding of blood is also linked to the remission of sins in the Lord's words at the Last Supper.

If sin has to be atoned for, then how must it be done? By works? By religious deeds? No, by the blood of Jesus. There really is power in the blood of Jesus that was not there in the blood of bulls and goats. We cannot be saved apart from the blood of Jesus. That is why there had to be a blood sacrifice, which he offered and presented

before God.

9:23 Because of the general practice of cleansing with blood, and because forgiveness of sins may be obtained only through blood shedding, it was necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens be purified with the blood ceremonies already described. But the same principles require that the heavenly things themselves be purified with better sacrifices than these. The heavenly realities are purified with the blood of Christ, and purification is necessary because of the general curse of sin on creation and because Christ has opened the way for redeemed sinners to enter the Holy Place not made with hands.

Hebrews 9:23 (23) Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

The copies speak of the earthly tabernacle and all the things involved with it. The word “copy” can also mean “example.” It literally means “little model.” If the prescribed that those little models have type of cleansing, it only makes sense that the heavenly one did as well. Without a cleansing the things would have been unclean. Any cleansing required the shedding of blood.

He made it clear to the Hebrew readers that if they went back into the Law, they would be leaving the reality for the shadow or the copy of what is to come. Once again, we see our book of Hebrews word “better.” We see it in the phrase “better sacrifice.”

The sacrifice that purifies the heavenly tabernacle is great that the multiple sacrifices that cleansed the earthly tabernacle. The better sacrifice is Christ’s sacrifice. He is saying that Jesus’ sacrifice is better than the Old Testament cleansing sacrifices. We have a better hope that comes by way of a better covenant and look forward to receiving better promises because the better covenant was founded by a better sacrifice.

It does seem interesting that anything in “Heaven” would need to be cleansed. How can something in Heaven be defiled and in need of being purified? On the Day of Atonement, the earthly things were cleansed because of the tabernacle’s association with sinful people, Leviticus 16:16. The heavenly one needed cleansed to maintain a place where sinful people can associate with God. Some have even pointed to the rebellion of Satan and his angels in Heaven and that is part of why it needs

cleansed.

9:24 Christ has entered into a Holy Place not made with hands, not the mere figures of the true, but into heaven itself. He has gone to appear in the presence of God, to be examined as a sacrificial offering, as a Lamb without spot or blemish, to be carefully scrutinized by God Himself and that with no cloud of incense to obscure the view! Not only so, He had presented Himself in the manner for us, and it is for His own people alone, not for Himself, that Christ became the Lamb of God or that He made this appearance.

Hebrews 9:24 (24) For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;

The writer goes back to an idea he had touched on earlier. Jesus entered, as High Priest into a Holy Place that was not made by man. The tabernacle was just a copy of the true one. Jesus after His death entered into Heaven. Jesus ministry is performed not in a smoke-filled chamber which only contains the Ark, but is in the presence of God Himself. He says that the place Jesus appeared was in the very presence

of God. The Old Testament High Priests did not come into the presence of God in the same way. They came into the presence of God symbolically or representatively. They came into the presence of God symbolically on behalf of the people of Israel. Jesus is appearing before God FOR us. The picture is of God the Father as the judge. The Devil as the prosecuting attorney and Jesus as the defense attorney. **Hebrews 7:25** Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. When the High Priest entered the Holy of Holies, it was on behalf of the people.

It is in the book of Revelation that frequently Jesus is referred to as a sacrificial lamb. He is the Lamb whose sacrifice has been received. He is the Lamb worthy of praise. He is the Lamb who has redeemed His people. He is the Lamb at the right hand of God. He is the Lamb who will come in judgment. He is the Lamb who will be forever the light of His people.

9:25 Because of the quality of His offering, Christ made but one for time, though as eternal priest He perpetually mediates on the basis of that single sacrifice. Here the contrast is with the Aaronic priesthood. The regular priests under

that covenant entered the Holy Place often; the high priest entered the Holy of Holies once a year. But Christ, the Priest of the new covenant, entered the heavenly Holy Place only one time forever. He does not need to offer Himself often, not even every year, for He did not carry the blood of others but His own.

Hebrews 9:25 (25) nor was it that He would offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood that is not his own.

He does not have to repeatedly of Himself. One of the greatest distinctions between the Old and New Covenants is the necessity of a repeated sacrifice year after year. This is removed in Jesus, for He did it once and for all. The comparison is not in Jesus' sacrifice, but of Him entering the Holy of Holies in Heaven. Jesus does not off an un-knowing, and non-comprehending animal, He offers Himself knowingly and voluntarily. He was not killed He laid down His life freely and willingly. He does not have to repeatedly offer Himself, because His sacrifice is enough. The difference is in the blood.

9:26 If Christ's single sacrifice were not sufficient for all time, He must have suffered a bloody

death since the foundation of the world, for just as long as men have been sinners and in need of a sacrifice. But instead we see Him now in the end of the world, at the consummation of the ages, when the eternal order is breaking in on man's history, at the time of perfection, appearing once on the scene of history to make His single offering and put away or disannul the power of sin for all time.

Hebrews 9:26 (26) Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

This is the pinnacle of the chapter. He says, "otherwise" which points to the idea that Jesus' sacrifice was different. His point is that if Jesus' sacrifice was not different than the animal sacrifices it would need to be continually offered.

Notice the contrasts in this verse. Christ has not suffered death often, but once; not from the foundation of the world, but only now in the end of the ages or in the consummation of the ages; not with the blood of others, but by the sacrifices of Himself.

The singularity of Christ's offering is expressed here in three ways. It is once for all; it is in the completion of the ages; it is to abolish sin. If sin is abolished, there is no need for another sacrifice. If the consummation of the ages has come then there is no time for another. If Christ's offering is once for all, there can be no other. Remember Christ's sacrifice not only takes care of the sin of those after the cross, but also of those before it as well. **Hebrews 9:15** For this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that, since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

We see that Jesus became flesh to put away sin. **1 John 3:5** You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin. The statement to put away means to annul or cancel. We know we see sin and we still sin so it is not sin that has been put away but our debt to sin is canceled. In Christ, we do not have to fear punishment for our sins because we can have full confidence that Jesus sacrifice put away our guilt and debt to sin. **Romans 8:1** Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

9:27 The general rule is stated that it is appointed by God for men to die once and only once, inasmuch as they live once in a mortal body, and after this comes the judgment. The author does not deal with the time lapse between death and judgment; that is not his concern. He simply calls attention to the fact that men live one time, die one time, and are judged by God for the life they lived before they died.

Hebrews 9:27 (27) And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment,

This here refers to physical death. Physical death comes to all because of a result of Adam's sin. **Romans 5:12** Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned— Essentially the Gospel calls us to believe that one act by one man saves all the world for all eternity and reverse the curse. Even if no one else ever sinned again after Adam, death would still come. The reason we all die is because Adam sinned. That is why there can be those that die, even before they sin.

The second death is that of eternal separation from God in Hell. The first death is because of

Adam, the second death is because of our choice. The Bible teaches a principle that if you are born once you will die twice. If you are born twice you will only die once. **John 3:5** Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Not only is death appointed for every man, but so is judgment. There is no time to change things, death and then comes judgment. This verse validates that our physical death does not end our existence.

9:28 In keeping with this general rule, Christ also lived one time in the flesh, died one time in the flesh and appeared before God one time to be judged on the basis of the single life lived before He died. Christ, however, lived a representative life on behalf of others; He died to bear the sins of many, so was offered; and has been judged for others as well. Yet the point remains the same as with all men: He can only live once, die once and be judged once for that life. But Christ has already lived, died, and been judged, therefore He cannot repeat His fleshly life, or death, or offering.

Hebrews 9:28 (28) so Christ also, having been

offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him.

Not only was Christ's life unique, and His death one of a kind, but His judgment was the first among men, signifying the beginning of the end of the world and guaranteeing the outcome of the judgment of all His people. **Isaiah 53:11-12** (11) As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, As He will bear their iniquities. (12) Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, And He will divide the booty with the strong; Because He poured out Himself to death, And was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors.

The second point in the verse uses imagery of the Day of Atonement. Christ our high priest has entered the presence of God bearing the offering. His people, meanwhile, are waiting outside the sanctuary for Him to return and certify that the sacrifice has been received and that they are forgiven. The Day of Atonement, according to an ancient Jewish source, came to a happy end with the high priest going to his own

house. What an exciting time. This source also says he hosted a party to celebrate his having come successfully out of the sanctuary.

The writer seems to be saying that our High Priest of the new covenant has entered into the presence of God with a suitable offering, and that He will certainly appear the second time to His people who look for Him. Unlike those priests who foreshadowed and symbolized Him. Christ does not repeat the performance. Having once been offered to bear sins, He will reappear only to bring salvation to those for whom He once suffered. One should not stretch the analogy beyond measure, but we might observe in the light of the rest of the New Testament Scriptures that the Holy Spirit's descent, which authorized the beginning of the preaching of the Gospel, was a case of the high priest sending a messenger out in advance of Himself to tell the waiting people that His sacrifice had been received and that remission of sins was effected.

We can eagerly wait for His coming. We can pray for His return. We can prepare for His return. We can long for His return. We do not have to fear the day of judgment if we are in Christ.