

## LIFE Bible Study: Hebrews 9:15-28

**For Discussion:** How do we determine the value of life (plant, animal, human)? What gives that life value?

### Read Hebrews 9:11-28

**For review:** In Hebrews 9:1-14, the author listed many of the elements of worship under the old covenant. One prominent aspect of this was that though He was always near to His people, God was unapproachable for the worshipper. Multiple barriers and restrictions prevented people from entering His presence because of their sin. Despite the intricate rituals and numerous sacrifices that had to be performed, none of them could bring people closer to God. The author then began a comparison of the sacrifices of the former priests with Christ's sacrifice of Himself. While the blood of animals was only able to superficially cleanse people's bodies, the blood of Christ has the power to fully cleanse and even perfect people's consciences. In the following section the author continues his discussion of the blood of Christ, the need for the shedding of blood, and what that accomplishes.

**The author likens the new covenant to a will in several areas (v.15-18). In what ways are these two things similar (Eph. 1:11-14; Rom. 9:9-13 & Eph. 1:3-6)?**

- 1) Death is a prerequisite for both a legal will and the new covenant to come into effect.
  - A will only becomes binding upon the death of the person who made it (v.16-17).
  - The new covenant was inaugurated by Christ's death (Luke 22:17-20).
  - Even the old covenant through Moses required the life of animals to be taken (v.18-21, Ex. 24:3-8).
  - The necessity of death to the covenant is made clear in verse 22b: forgiveness of sins is not possible without the shedding of blood => The forgiveness of sins is an essential part of the new covenant (Heb. 8:12).
- 2) An inheritance is promised with both a will and the covenant.
  - There is an eternal inheritance for those who have been redeemed from their transgressions (v.15).
  - The concept of an inheritance both draws a connection to a will and conveys that what is given is bestowed upon people who have not earned it, because of their relationship to the giver.
- 3) The testator (person who writes a will) and the One who offers the covenant have the right to determine the other parties that will be involved and to set the terms and conditions for the promises.
  - People are called to the covenant (v.15) => Just as people don't insert themselves into another person's will without their knowledge or against their wishes, no one becomes a member of the covenant without having first been chosen and invited to do so.

**Even though the new covenant has surpassed the old and made it obsolete, the author continues to reference the old covenant because it laid the groundwork for understanding important aspects of the new. What principles vital to the new covenant can be seen foreshadowed in the old (v.18 & 22; v.24 & Heb 2:9; v.7 & Heb. 7:25)?<sup>1</sup> What is the role of blood in the new covenant?<sup>2</sup>**

#### <sup>1</sup>The necessity of death

- Death was involved in the ratification of both covenants, neither became official until there was a sacrifice (v.18).
- Death was a required condition for the sacrifices that purified from transgression (v.14, 22).

#### <sup>1</sup>The representation of one by another

- One of the roles of the high priest was to stand before God on behalf of the people (v.24, Heb. 5:1).
- Another life was placed between God and the worshipper to receive His wrath in their place (Lev. 17:11, Heb. 2:9, 13:12).

#### <sup>1</sup>Drawing near to God

- In the old covenant a lot of attention was put on limiting/controlling who could approach God and when (v.7).
- In the new covenant all are welcomed to draw near to God through Christ (Heb. 4:16, 7:19, 25).

<sup>1</sup>Other common elements of the old and new covenants: a mediator (Moses vs. Jesus), a high priest (Aaron vs. Jesus), sacrifices (animals vs. Jesus), a holy place (earthly Tabernacle vs. heaven), a promised inheritance (earthly kingdom vs. heavenly kingdom), purification/cleansing from transgressions (external vs. internal).

**<sup>2</sup>A creature's life was regarded as being in its blood (Lev. 17:11), to speak of the blood is to speak of a life that has been taken. The sprinkling of that blood on a person or an object is to identify it with that life, applying the value of that life toward it. This claiming of the value of the blood is an act of faith.**

<sup>2</sup>In verses 1-14, the author showed that blood granted Jesus (as high priest) access into the holy places (v.11-12) and purges/purifies people's consciences of guilt (v.14).

<sup>2</sup>The blood of Christ both inaugurates the new covenant (v.18) and is the payment that is demanded to satisfy God's wrath so that believers are preserved from it and can have a restored relationship with Him (Heb 2:17).

**Having overcome the death that He endured, Christ now ministers in God's presence on our behalf and will one day return to complete the salvation that He began at the cross. How will His second coming be different from His first (v.28; Heb. 10:12-13)?<sup>1</sup> What will the salvation He brings be like (v.15, Heb. 1:13, 4:9-10, 8:11)?<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Christ's first coming was to make propitiation (satisfy God's wrath) for people's sins by becoming a sacrifice and bearing that sin Himself (2:17, Rom. 3:23-25, 1 John 2:2, 4:10).

<sup>1</sup>His second coming will be to fulfill the other elements of salvation that have been reserved for that time so that salvation is expressed to its fullest – Some aspects are experienced by believers now but only in a limited way.

-He will come to rule and to have all things brought into subjection to Him (Heb. 2:5).

-This includes a final defeat of His enemies – To "do away with sin" (v.26, NIV84) God has to do away with sinners =>

Through full perfection or full punishment.

<sup>1</sup>Christ's first coming was a demonstration of humility, meekness, and submission. His second coming will be a demonstration of His glory, might, and authority.

<sup>2</sup>The **penalty** of sin had been fully paid by Christ at the cross, the **power** of sin is something that we are progressively being freed from as God sanctifies us now, the **presence** of sin will be fully and finally eliminated when Christ returns.

<sup>2</sup>Christ will take full rule and defeat His enemies (Heb. 1:13).

<sup>2</sup>All of creation will be renewed (Heb. 1:10-12) => Salvation from even the effects of sin on the rest of creation.

<sup>2</sup>There will be final rest in God (Heb. 4:1, 8-10).

<sup>2</sup>People will receive in full the eternal inheritance that God promised (v.15).

<sup>2</sup>There will be unhindered fellowship with God (Heb. 8:11, 10:19-22).

Both of the ordinances (God-ordained ceremonies) that Jesus instituted for believers prominently feature death.

Communion, which Jesus instructed His followers to regularly practice, is a remembrance and proclamation of His death (1 Cor. 11:23-26). Baptism, which is to accompany professions of faith (Matt. 28:19-20), both illustrates Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection and testifies to the believer's own death to sin and new life in Him (Col. 2:12). Just as there is a one-time progression from life to death and then judgment for people, Jesus, being fully man, died once when He offered Himself. He had no condemnation of His own to face but instead suffered the wrath that was due to all who would put their faith in Him when He bore their guilt on the cross (v.28). Given that communion and baptism commemorate Jesus' broken body and shed blood in our place and the importance of His sacrifice to God's saving covenant, how much more anticipation, thoughtfulness, and heart preparation do they deserve from us when we take part in them?

**What impact does Christ's pending return have on your life?<sup>1</sup> What would it look like for you to value and eagerly wait for it in the life circumstances and decisions you face?<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>**Do you live like your hope is a distant/disconnected reality or is the truth and inevitability of it relevant to your choices and priorities?**

-Things that lack value if Christ was to return today will not have any greater value if we invest in them for 20, 40, or 60 years. How do the things you treasure stand up to this "last day" evaluation?

<sup>2</sup>A recurring theme for the author is that Jesus' followers need to have patient endurance and hold on to their faith even when the world gives them reasons to turn back.

-This also applies to decisions we make in other areas that are informed by our faith.

<sup>2</sup>Hope for the Christian is a matter of certainty.

-Because of Christ's superiority over all and God's faithfulness to His promises, there will be vindication in the end for everyone who perseveres.

## **Reflection and application**

Where sin has been committed, death is a foregone conclusion. God is too just and the offense against Him too great for there to not be a proportionate response. In our bodies, death remains an inescapable consequence of the sin that has entered the world. However, because of the new covenant that has been inaugurated by Christ's blood and the infinite value of His life that has been given for us, eternal spiritual death has been exchanged for abundant eternal life. Instead of being paid the wrath that we have earned, a blessed inheritance awaits us where we will be under Christ's loving rule, free from sin's penalty, its power, and even its presence.

The redemption purchased by Christ's blood is more than mere deliverance from God's righteous wrath. We are reconciled to God and there will be an eventual restoration of who we were created to be when we are fully conformed to the image of Christ at His return (Rom. 8:29). Reflect on this truth and ask God to make it precious to you so that you can respond in proper praise and surrender, living out its reality as you await the day when Christ brings your salvation to completion.