

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)?

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)? What is the role of blood in the new covenant?

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)? What will the salvation He brings be like (v.15, Heb. 1:13, 4:9-10, 8:11)?

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? What would it look like for you to value and eagerly wait for it in the life circumstances and decisions you face?

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.