

9:1 - "Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary."

Continuing to contrast the old and new system, the author will now address the priestly work of Jesus Christ. (Heb. 8:3) He begins with a more detailed description of the priestly work under the old covenant. The first covenant was ordained by God. Within that covenant God outlined in great detail how he was to be worshipped. Within the old covenant a place of worship was also designated by God.

It must be kept in mind that the Jews believed that because the Levitical system was ordained by God it was irrevocable. The author's goal is to prove that the Levitical system merely pointed to or represented a perfect system which had come in Jesus Christ. The old system was important and significant, but only in what it pointed to. God provided a tremendous amount of detail in setting up the old system. Over 50 chapters of the old testament are dedicated to how things were to be constructed, where they were to be located, and how worship was to be performed. The reason was that it only had meaning in what it represented. The worship in a human priesthood could only be accepted in that it mirrored heavenly worship. If the high priest did not pay attention to every detail he would be struck dead.

9:2 - "For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary."

The author briefly describes the sanctuary or place of worship provided under the old system. The tabernacle consisted of two rooms. The first room was called the holy place and contained a candlestick, a table, and showbread. (Ex. 26:33) The candlestick was made of gold. It branched off into seven lamps, was fueled by olive oil, and provided light for the priests. (Ex. 25:31-37) The table was made of wood overlaid with gold. It was located on the north side of the holy place. (Ex. 25:23-30) The showbread was 12 loaves which were placed on the table. They represented the 12 tribes of Israel, were unleavened, and were replaced every sabbath. (Lev. 24:5-9)

The things of the old testament pointed to Christ and were an image of heavenly things. (Heb. 8:5, Ex. 25:8-9, Heb. 3:5) The author is silent however as to what these specific articles were representative of. Many commentators have attempted to define the types and shadows, but have little biblical basis.

Scripture alludes to some of the articles mentioned, but no specific explanation is given. The author's purpose seems to be to emphasize the 'worldly' nature of this system by describing its physical characteristics.

9:3-5 - "And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; and over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly."

The second room, which was separated from the first by a curtain, was called the holy of holies. In this room was a golden censor used to burn incense, and the ark of the covenant. Within the ark was contained a pot of manna, Aaron's rod, and the tables of stone upon which were written the ten commandments. (Ex. 16:32-34, Num. 17:10, I Kings 8:9) The manna was a reminder of God's presence and faithfulness. The rod was God's ordaining of the Levitical priesthood and the tables of stone were the law.

The cover of the ark was called the mercy seat. This is where the presence of God rested, or where men met God under the Levitical system. Two golden cherubim faced each other with their wings covering the mercy seat. (Lev. 16:2, Ex. 25:18-20)

This was all the detail the author cared to go into at this point. He probably assumed his readers were well acquainted with the things of the old system.

The biggest obstacle faced by the readers in presenting the gospel to their Jewish counterparts was to get them to see that the old system was fulfilled and that the priesthood, after 2,000 years, was to vanish. If a new testament priesthood existed wouldn't the author here explain about the new priesthood? Wouldn't he tell them about apostolic succession and the sacrifice of the mass? This new doctrine would have been much easier for the Jew to accept and understand. As seen in chapter 7, a formal human priesthood could never again be ordained by God, for the very work of Christ would be denied in so doing.

9:6-7 - "Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But

into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people:"

Having given a brief description of the tabernacle, the author now goes on to explain the duties performed there by the priests. The priests regularly entered into the first room to burn incense, to tend the lamps, and also to replace the showbread every sabbath. (Ex. 30:7-8, Ex. 27:21, Lev. 24:8-9) Only the high priest could enter the second room or the holy of holies. Even the high priest could only enter once a year and only with blood. On the day of atonement the high priest would enter the holy of holies with the blood of a bull. This was for his sins and the sins of his household. He later entered with the blood of a goat which he offered for the sins of then people. (Lev. 16:14-16).

9:8 - "The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing."

The author after briefly describing the Levitical system, shows that the place as well as the worship of this system, was directed by the Holy Ghost to show men that access to God had not yet been obtained. After 2,000 years the people had come to focus upon the system instead of what it represented.

The people fell into the same trap concerning the law. It was designed to point out sin, to be a convicting force, driving men to God. Instead, the law came to be looked upon as a means to God in itself, and was made of no effect through man's rationalizations.

"Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin."
Rom. 3:19-20

The design of the Levitical system should have reminded the people that it was temporary, imperfect, and could not fully restore man's relationship with God. The Levitical system was very restrictive. The restrictive design of this system showed that the promises of God would not be fulfilled through it. The system was restricted to include only Jews, and yet the promise was that all nations of the earth would be blessed through Abraham. (Gen 12:3) Only the priests could enter the tabernacle to offer gifts and sacrifices. There was not

full or free access to God even for the Jew. Even greater restrictions applied on entering the holy of holies. Only the high priest could enter, but only once a year and only with blood. No one, not even the high priest, had full and free access to God under this system.

9:9 - "Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;"

The author again states that the old system was only a figure or shadow of a greater reality. Within the old system gifts and sacrifices were offered, but were ineffective in regard to the inner man. Those who partook in the old system could not have a lasting peace with God. They did not have any security or assurance of their salvation. They met God indirectly through the actions of a priest hidden by a veil. The personal relationship spoken of by Jeremiah and Ezekiel was hidden within the old system.

"Behold, the day come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:"

Jer. 31:31

"And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: that they will walk in my statutes, and mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God."

Ezek. 11:19-20

9:10 - "Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation."

The author stresses the temporary nature of the old system. It was a system of fleshly or physical regulations. They were of value in distinguishing Israel as a people, in keeping them separate from the world. These physical regulations, most importantly, were ordained by God and prepared the way for the new system according to God's plan.

The laws governing eating and cleanliness are called judicial laws. These laws, as well as the ceremonial laws which governed worship, are here shown to have been temporary. They were in effect, fulfilling God's purpose according to design, until the time of change. The purpose of the old system was not to deal with the inner or the spiritual man.

9:11 - "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building:"

The time of reformation mentioned in verse 10 is defined as the coming of Christ. The author will go on to fit Christ into the framework of the old system which he described in the previous ten verses of this chapter.

Christ came as a high priest of a superior order, to minister within a superior covenant. 'Christ' is actually a title used here by the author to identify Jesus as the Messiah, the one Israel was waiting for. They believed the Messiah would rule and that it would be a time of great blessing.

The 'good things to come' refers to the new relationship Christ would mediate between God and man. The relationship which was prophesied long ago and which the author had reminded the readers of in chapter 8. (Heb. 8:10-12)

"Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ."

Col. 2:17

The blessings would not be bestowed through the Levitical system. Man could not be reconciled with God by Christ entering the earthly tabernacle. The 'good things' would come through Christ entering the heavenly tabernacle of which the one on earth was merely a shadow. (Heb. 8:12)

9:12 - "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us."

The author continues to contrast the types and shadows with the reality which had come in Jesus Christ. The phrase 'blood of goats and calves' shows that the author is referring to the sacrifice of the high priest on the day of atonement.

"And he shall take the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle the blood with his finger seven times. Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring this blood within the vail, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat."

Lev. 16:14-15

Christ as the high priest of the new covenant offered his own blood. He was both priest and sacrifice. The high priest within the old system entered the

holy of holies twice, once for his sins and then for the sins of the people. Christ being without sin entered once on behalf of the people.

It was not necessary that this sacrifice be repeated as it was in the old system, for the sacrifice of Christ gained eternal redemption for those whom he represents. This is the priestly work of Christ. He offered a sacrifice in our behalf. Through the sacrifice of himself he obtained eternal redemption for all believers. (Heb. 2:9-11) It is a once for all sacrifice for he is eternal, possessing within himself eternal life. (Heb. 7:16, 7:24-25)

9:13 - "For if the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh:"

The ceremonial cleansing of the old covenant symbolized the true cleansing which would come about by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The old covenant symbolized externally what God would accomplish internally. The law showed man he was sinful. The priesthood provided a way to make the sinner ceremonially clean. These methods were God ordained and again only had meaning in what they symbolized. The people lost sight of the symbolic nature of the various ordinances and saw these external remedies as an end in themselves.

"And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness." Like 11:39

9:14 - "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"

With the coming of Christ, symbols give way to reality. If the blood of animals had purpose and value according to the old system, then the reality of the blood of Christ, of which they were a symbol, is of far greater value. Christ was a man having set aside his Godhead. As a man, Christ retained a perfect relationship with the Holy Spirit.

"Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." Phil. 2:6-7

"And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the

heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:"

Matt. 3:16

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised."

Luke 4:18

Through the Holy Spirit he remained sinless. (Heb. 5:7) He offered himself as the perfect sacrifice through the Holy Spirit by whom he possessed eternal life. The perfect sacrifice has been ordained by God to be the final and eternal remedy for sin. It has accomplished the cleansing of the inner man according to the promises and the shadow of the old covenant. The blood of Christ can cleanse the inner man, turning him from a life which leads to death, to a life of service leading to everlasting life.

9:15 - "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."

Jesus Christ is the mediator of the new covenant by his sacrificial death. (Heb. 9:14) He is the mediator of the new covenant by virtue of his everlasting life. (Heb 7:16) He is the mediator of the new covenant in fulfillment of prophecy. (Heb. 7:17) He is the mediator of the new covenant by the oath of God. (Heb. 7:20-21)

Jesus Christ is the mediator of the new testament so the promise of eternal inheritance can be fulfilled, so men can be inwardly cleansed, and serve God with a pure heart (for this cause). By the shedding of his blood and by means of his death, the issue of sin was effectively dealt with.

Only the blood of Christ could forgive sin. (Heb. 10:4) Those who participated in the old system and with true faith, in a way, received their salvation on credit. The sins of the called of both covenants are redeemed by the blood of Christ. (Heb 4:3)

"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath sent forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus."

Rom 3: 24-26

9:16-17 - "For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator lives."

The author uses the idea of a will to show the necessity of Christ's death. Much like the stipulations of a will can only be applicable after the writer's death, so the promise of access to God and of everlasting life could only come to pass by the death of Christ, the author of our salvation. The means of salvation was his death. This was according to the plan of God and prophesied. The old system of sacrifices was instituted to point to the death of Christ.

"And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined."

Dan. 9:26

(See also Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53)

His death confirmed what had been written and put the promises into effect. Again using a will as an example, a will is only binding after the writer's death. Up until the time the writer dies the will can be annulled or changed. In the same way Christ's death fulfilled what had been written, sealing it for all time.

Despite the scriptures, the Jews could not accept the thought of a dying Messiah. They believed the Messiah would come, set them free from bondage and establish his kingdom on earth.

"But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;"

I Cor. 1:23

This is why the author goes into detail on the subject of the necessity of the Messiah's death.

9:18-21 - "Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people. Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath

enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry."

The old system symbolized the new and therefore was dedicated or established with blood. The first system showed death was necessary, the shedding of blood being the symbol of death. The blood of the old testament sacrifices symbolized the death of Christ or in the example of verse 17, the testator. The promises were not fulfilled under the old covenant nor could they be. Within the realm of time Christ had not yet died. The blood of the old covenant was of value only in what it symbolized. It was the blood of Christ which paid for the sins committed under the first covenant (v 15). The blood sprinkled by Moses to initiate the covenant pointed to Christ.

"And Moses took the blood, and put it in basons; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words."
Ex. 24:6-8

We cannot imagine how bloody the old covenant was. Animals were being slaughtered and burned. Their blood was collected in bowls and sprinkled on everything, including the people. It was meant to be a continuous reminder of sin. Death was the penalty that had to be enacted by a just and holy God. It all pointed to the slaughter of Jesus Christ whose death would seal the promises of the covenant.

Those of the new testament must not forget about the blood. It is not ever before us as in the old testament, but must be remembered and reflected upon. The death of Christ was uglier than any animal sacrifice ever could be. He commanded us to remember the blood at the last supper when the new covenant was established.

"And when he had given thanks, he break it, and said, Take, eat, this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me."
I Cor. 11:24-25

9:22 - "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without the shedding of blood is no remission."

A principle ordained by God from the very beginning is that sin must be dealt

with by the shedding of blood. Within the various purifying rites and ordinances of Judaism there were few exceptions. For some things fire and water were used and one exception is given when flour was used to symbolize a blood offering.

"And Eleazar the priest said unto the men of war which went to the battle, This is the ordinance of the law which the Lord commanded Moses; only the gold, and the silver, the brass, the iron, the tin, and the lead, everything that may abide the fire, ye shall make it go through the fire, and it shall be clean: nevertheless it shall be purified with the water of separation: and all that abideth not the fire ye shall make go through the water. And ye shall wash your clothes on the seventh day, and ye shall be clean, and afterward ye shall come into the camp."
 Num. 31:21-24

"But if he be not able to bring two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, then he that sinned shall bring for his offering the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour for a sin offering; he shall put no oil upon it, neither shall he put any frankincense thereon: for it is a sin offering."
 Lev. 5:11

However there was no exception to the once a year offering of the high priest which the author has contrasted with the sacrifice of Christ. Blood was required.

"For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul."
 Lev. 17:11

The blood of the old testament did not forgive sin in itself, but pointed to the sacrifice of Christ and was therefore accepted by God. Even before the Levitical system was put into effect this truth of the shedding of blood was made known.

"Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them."
 Gen. 3:21

"And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering."
 Gen 4:3-4

The only way any man ever was saved or ever will be saved is by the blood of Christ. It is the only acceptable atonement for sin as declared and ordained by God.

9:23-24 - "It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:"

The Levitical system in all of its detail was a copy, or a shadow, or a type of heavenly reality. The things of this system had to be purified with blood, which itself was a symbol for what would take place in the heavenlies with the sacrifice of Christ. The realities in heaven, of which the Levitical system was the model, had to be purified by the blood of Christ.

Why did the heavenly realities need to be purified? Did the heavenly tabernacle serve a purpose for the faithful who had since died, whose sins were being 'overlooked'? Is the tabernacle with its three parts a picture of heaven itself?

"I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven."

II Cor. 12:2

All we know is that the true atonement by Christ took place in the heavenlies. It was in the tabernacle not made with hands that the blood of Jesus was eternally applied to the believers account.

Just as the high priest entered the holy of holies on behalf of the people, so Jesus Christ entered the presence of God in heaven on the behalf of the believer.

9:25-26 -"Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

Because of the uniqueness of the sacrifice of Christ, whereby he was both priest and victim, it was necessary to offer the sacrifice only once. This is in contrast to the Levitical system in which the blood of animals was used, and therefore the priest had to repeat the sacrifice again and again within the ordained time period. Remember that the Levitical system only had meaning in

what it pointed to, which was the sacrifice of Christ. If the sacrifice of Christ needed to be repeated then the blood of Christ would not be all sufficient, his blood would only cover past sins, and so the sacrifice would not be superior in any way to the sacrifices of the Levitical system. If not pointing to something superior the Levitical system would have been worthless and Christ would have had to be sacrificed continuously as men continued to sin. Because the sacrifice of Christ was superior and his blood all sufficient, the Levitical system was valid. It pointed to a sacrifice which would forgive sins past, present, and future.

By the 'end of the world' is meant that this is the final phase in God's plan of salvation. It has been accomplished and the next intervention by God into the history of man will be the end of time.

Could the all sufficient sacrifice of Christ have taken place in the beginning, after Adam's sin and then the old covenant would not have been necessary? No, it obviously was not his plan. He came exactly as and exactly when the Father had established.

"But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law," Gal. 4:4

"That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:" Eph. 1:10

9:27 - "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:"

All men are appointed by God to die once, and Christ as man was not an exception. By stating this basic law of God concerning man, the author shows that Christ had to die and that he could only die once, strengthening his argument of the all sufficiency of the sacrifice of Christ. That men should die and then be judged is an unalterable decree of God. Death itself is a judgment, and the soul cannot fare any better than the body before the judgment seat of God.

"In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return to the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Gen. 3:19

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. 6:23

9:28 - "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

Christ was once offered to bear the judgment that was upon man. All those who come to him await the promise of his return.

"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;"

Titus 2:13

"Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?"

I Pet. 3:12

"And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come."

I Thes. 1:10

When he comes again it will not be in reference to sin. He will not come as a sin offering, That issue already has been taken care of, but to fulfill the salvation of those who believe. We look for the same promises as those of the old system, but with a sure hope, having seen the means of our salvation which is Jesus Christ. (Heb. 11:13-14)