

HEBREWS 9:1-10

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Hebrews chapter 9 as we continue our study through the Word of God.

Keep in mind that Paul is writing to Jewish Christians who were living in Jerusalem and they were struggling with their faith, they were being drawn back into the legalism of Judaism.

Because of that we see Paul, in a powerful way, show them that Jesus is better than the prophets, He is better than the angels, He is better than Moses, He is better than Joshua, He is better than the Levitical priesthood and all that went with it.

Now please understand that Paul is not putting down the prophets or angels or Moses and the others but he is showing that Jesus is superior, and when you think about it, as these were magnified it only makes Jesus more superior!

I truly believe that Hebrews chapters 5-10 are the pinnacle of Paul's letter. The reason being is that the Jews held the Levitical priesthood, the Tabernacle and later the Temple in high esteem, along with all the sacrifices that went with it.

Thus, to show them that Jesus is superior to all this, as great as they were, he is going to have to prove it to them step by step. And that is exactly what he does!

Look at what we have seen so far.

Paul started out this section on Jesus being superior over the Levitical priesthood in Hebrews chapters 5-7 as Paul showed us that Jesus came from a better priestly order – the order of Melchizedek and not Aaron. It was an eternal priesthood, it never ends!

Then in Hebrews chapter 8 we saw that Jesus has a better covenant for us, a New Covenant that does more than deal with the outward ceremonially cleansing, it cleans the heart, it deals with us inwardly and that covenant was made by the shedding of His blood, once for all sin!

And if you remember how Paul closed out Hebrews chapter 8 last time, he showed them and us, **“In that He says, [Jesus says], ‘A new covenant,’ He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.”** Hebrews 8:13.

In other words, the Old Covenant that dealt with the keeping of the Law and the sacrifices was only temporary, until the Messiah came.

Now that the Messiah has come, the Old Covenant is done away with and we have the New Covenant that is seen in the shed blood of Christ for our sins.

And he closes with, **“... Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away”** what is he speaking of?

He is speaking of the Temple and all that sacrifices that went along with it.

Keep in mind that as Paul wrote this letter to the Hebrews the destruction of the Temple was getting closer, maybe only some 4 to 6 years away at this point.

This took place in 70 A. D. as Titus and the Roman army came in and destroyed the city, burned the Temple to the ground, and to get the gold from the Temple they turned over the stones of the Temple just as Jesus said would take place in Matthew chapter 24.

Thus, when Paul wrote, **“... Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away”** he is speaking of the Temple and all that went with it, the Old Covenant, and it has been replaced with the New Covenant!

Now, for over 1900 years the Temple has been gone, there has been no grain or animal sacrifices.

Tonight, we are going to see Paul show us that Jesus is a better sanctuary, which again, to the Jews was very important.

In fact, what I hope you see is that what the Tabernacle and the Temple represented was fulfilled in Christ, it was a picture of Christ. We see the Person and the work of Jesus in His earthly ministry through all of this.

And that should just make sense to us.

We are told in Psalm 40:7, **“Then I said, ‘Behold, I come; In the scroll of the book it is written of me.’”**

In other words, Jesus is saying that from Genesis through Malachi, and in reality, for us, the New Testament as well, but specifically the point being made to the Jews is that it is all about Jesus. In fact, Paul will quote from Psalm 40:7 in Hebrews 10:7, to make his point!

Also, remember what Jesus said in John 5:39, **“You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.”**

Don’t miss the main point as you read the Scriptures, they are pointing to Jesus and Paul is going to drive home that point tonight, here in Hebrews chapter 9.

With that said, let’s begin reading in Hebrews chapter 9, starting in verse 1, and see what the Lord has for us this evening as we study through His Word.

HEBREWS 9

VERSES 1-5

Again, for the Jews, the Tabernacle and then later on the Temple were very important to them.

And even today we see that there are two extremes regarding the Tabernacle, specifically, but I think we can relate this to the Temple as well.

Some say that it was worthless while on the other end of the spectrum, they believe that it is everything.

I don't mean to offend anyone, but both of those are wrong.

Yes, the Tabernacle was important, but it was only a picture of what was to come and what the throne of God was like.

In Exodus 25:8-9 we are told, “**And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. According to all that I show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make it.**” (Also see: Exodus, 26:30, 39:32, 39:42-43, Acts 7:44).

You see, God instructed Moses how this Tabernacle was to be built; He gave Moses the blueprints to follow exactly.

In fact, we see only two chapters that are devoted to the creation story in the Bible and some 50 chapters focusing on the Tabernacle, the majority being found in Exodus chapters 25-40.

Why was God so detailed about the Tabernacle?

This is important and it fits in with the point that Paul is making in this chapter. The reason it is so detailed is because it was a type, or a picture of Jesus who was to come.

And it is an amazing picture that the Lord has painted for us and we will look at that some tonight in our study.

Now here's the thing. Don't miss the point, because it is so important. Once the substance has come, you don't need the picture anymore! I hope that makes sense.

If you have a picture of your wife and you are away for a long period of time, you will look at it and it is nice, but it is a picture.

But, when you get home, you don't continue to look at the picture, you grab a hold of your wife, the substance, and you give her a hug! That is the idea here, the picture is a picture, but the substance is Christ!

Now, let's take a few minutes and look at the Tabernacle and the picture of Christ it paints for us.

The Tabernacle was like a giant tent. The courtyard was 150 feet long and 75 feet wide. There was only one gate that you could enter through located on the east side some 30 feet wide and 7½ feet high.

First of all, how is Christ a picture of the Tabernacle?

I think John tells us in John 1:14, as he wrote, "**And the Word became flesh and dwelt [tabernacle] among us . . .**" In other words, God pitched His tent among us, just as the Tabernacle was a tent in which God dwelt!

Also, keep in mind that there was only one way into the Tabernacle enclosure and that was through an opening (always facing east) which measured 30 ft. wide with a woven linen tapestry covering the entrance made up of blue (divinity), purple (royalty), and scarlet (blood) embroidery.

Again, there was only one door into the Tabernacle and that should sound very familiar to us. And the reason it should sound so familiar to us is because there is only One door, one way to enter into heaven and that is through the Door, Jesus Christ.

Jesus said in John 10:9, **“I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.”**

Also, in John 10:1 we are told, **“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.”**

So if you don't enter through the Door, Jesus Christ, you are a thief and a robber, because you are trying to attain something that is not yours. And you will not enter in that way. You can only enter in through the Door, Jesus Christ!

Listen to what we are told in John 14:6, **“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’”**

I think that is very clear, only one Door and that Door is Jesus Christ! I know I keep saying that, but it is that important, there is no other way!

Well, let me clarify that because there is one other way!

Now don't get mad, you can get into heaven if you were perfect, without sin.

How many of you are perfect?

None of us are! All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God! Thus, we must enter through the Door, Jesus Christ. There, I said it again!

Now, as you keep moving forward, into the Tabernacle, you would then pass the bronze altar, and this is where the sacrifices were made.

And the idea here is that before you could have fellowship with God, their sin must be atoned for and that atonement was done through the shedding of blood.

We are told of this in Leviticus 17:11, **“For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.”**

And we see this once again in the New Testament, here in Hebrews 9:22, where Paul wrote, **“And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.”**

Keep in mind that the Old Testament sacrifices could never take away your sins, they only covered them until you sinned again.

But in the New Testament we are told that Jesus is the Lamb of God who has come to take away the sins of the world! (John 1:29)

From the brazen altar of sacrifice, just behind it and in front of the Tabernacle proper, was the bronze laver.

This is where the priests would wash themselves after the sacrifices were made.

So what is the picture here?

Some say it represents baptism, but I don't think so.

If the brazen altar is where the sacrifices were made and it is a picture of our salvation, then the laver represents the Word of God.

You see, we are to wash daily in the Word of God for sanctification and fellowship with the Lord.

We see this in Ephesians 5:26, where Paul tells us, **“that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word.”**

Also, in Psalm 119:9, 11 we are told, **“How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. . . . Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You!”**

As you continue to move forward you now come to the Tabernacle proper. This structure was 45 feet long, 15 feet wide and 15 feet high.

Within this section was the Holy Place that was 30 feet long and 15 feet wide.

Keep in mind that only the priests could enter into the Holy Place and as they entered, they would see three things.

On their left side, before the curtain, stood a seven-branched oil-burning lamp.

Remember what John said in John 1:4-5 of Jesus, **“In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.”**

Not only did this speak of Jesus being the light of the world, but it also is a picture of our relationship with Him.

Think about it. Jesus said in John 15:5, **“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”**

Six is the number of man, and it speaks of incompleteness. And seven is the number of Christ, who is complete.

Thus, in Christ we are complete, and it is the six branches of this lamp that were tied into the main one or the seventh!

Then, the other piece of furniture in the Holy Place was the Table of Showbread which contained 12 loaves of bread that represented the 12 tribes of Israel.

Upon the table of showbread were placed 12 loaves of bread, which were replaced each week with fresh loaves, each loaf represented one the tribes of Israel.

Of course they pointed to Jesus who called Himself the *“Bread of Life.”*

We are told in John 6:35, **“And Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.’”**

And in John 6:48 Jesus said, **“I am the bread of life.”**

And the third and last piece of furniture in the Holy Place was in the center and it was the Altar of Incense.

It was where the priests would burn incense to the Lord, and that is a picture of the prayers of the saints.

We see that in Psalm 141:2, **“Let my prayer be set before You as incense, The lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.”**

Now I do realize that it says that the Altar of Incense was located in the Holy of Holies but it probably is speaking of the censer the High Priest carried into the Holy of Holies only once a year, on the Day of Atonement.

It would make no sense to have the Altar of Incense in the Holy of Holies because you would not be able to attend to it, only the High Priest could enter once a year like I said.

Now, as you entered through the veil from the Holy Place you entered a room that was 15 feet by 15 feet and was called the Holy of Holies, the place where the Shekinah glory dwelt, the presence of God.

And in this portion of the Tabernacle only the High Priest could enter and only once a year, on the Day of Atonement or Yom Kippur after he offered sacrifices for himself and then for the nation, the people.

Inside the Holy of Holies, the Ark of the Covenant stood, which was a box made of acacia wood and overlaid with gold measuring 3 feet 9 inches long, two feet 3 inches wide and 2 feet high.

In the Ark were the tablets of the Law, a jar of manna and Aaron's rod that budded.

Now let me add this so there is no confusion. Approximately 500 years later, King Solomon completed his Temple. It was then that the ark, which was previously in the Tabernacle, was brought to the Temple.

We are told in I Kings 8:9 states, "**There was nothing in the ark except the two stone tablets that Moses had placed in it at Horeb, where the LORD made a covenant with the Israelites after they came out of Egypt.**"

So what happened to Aaron's rod and the golden pot of manna?

It is not known when these items were removed.

What we do know is that these items were not placed in Solomon's Temple. The declaration that there was nothing in the ark except the tablets of stone on which was inscribed the Law seems at first to be in conflict with the Paul's statement in Hebrews 9:4 where he mentions also the golden pot of manna and Aaron's rod that budded.

But keep in mind that Paul is speaking of the Tabernacle and not to the Temple.

Now, on the top of the Ark was the Mercy Seat and two cherubim on either side.

And God dwelt above the Mercy Seat as Exodus 25:22 tells us, **“And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are on the ark of the Testimony, about everything which I will give you in commandment to the children of Israel.”**

You see, God does not meet with us upon the Law, which condemns us but upon His Mercy Seat where the High Priest would sprinkle the blood on the Day of Atonement and thus, the blood covers the Law and God can have mercy on us because our sins have been paid by the blood of the sacrifice of another, a picture of what Christ would do!

In I John 2:2 we are told, **“And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.”**

The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this, **“And He [that same Jesus Himself] is the propitiation (the atoning sacrifice) for our sins, and not for ours alone but also for [the sins of] the whole world.”**

And The Living Bible puts it this way, **“He is the one who took God’s wrath against our sins upon himself and brought us into fellowship with God; and he is the forgiveness for our sins, and not only ours but all the world’s.”**

John is saying that Jesus is our propitiation or Mercy Seat for the Septuagint or the Greek translation of the Old Testament Scriptures uses the same Greek word, HILASMOS, (hil-as-mos’) for Mercy Seat in Exodus 25:17 as John uses here in I John 2:2.

Now keep in mind that it wasn’t Paul’s point to give every detail of the Tabernacle here and it wasn’t really necessary, they should have known these details because they were Jews!

And Paul’s point is that the Old Covenant and the sanctuary were only divine pictures, you couldn’t have access to God because sin separated man from God.

And Paul is going to show them the limitations of the earthly service of the priests and what their service pointed to.

VERSES 6-7

Once the Tabernacle was set-up, the priest's work was never done.

Every day the priests went into the Holy Place to perform their duties, tending to the oil-burning lamp by trimming the wicks, adding oil to the lamp.

With the Altar of Incense, they would have to add the coals and add incense to it.

Every week, on the Sabbath, they had to change the loaves of bread on the Table of Showbread.

That was just in the holy place, their work never ended!

But that was not the end of it. You see that was what took place in the Holy Place. But behind the veil, in the Holy of Holies only the High Priest could enter and only once a year, on the Day of Atonement or Yom Kippur.

Thus, fellowship with God was severely restricted, in fact, even for the High Priest. It wasn't real fellowship with God; they couldn't sit down with Him because sin still separated man from God.

In fact, the ancient Jewish Rabbis wrote of how the High Priest did not prolong his prayer in the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement. The reason being is that it might make the people think he had been killed.

Then, when he came out, he threw a party for all his friends, because he had emerged safely from the presence of God.

Also, keep in mind that these sacrifices never cleansed a person inwardly, but only outwardly, a ceremonially cleansing!

Now here was the problem for the Jewish people.

They knew when they sinned that they needed to offer a sacrifice for their sin.

But what about sins of ignorance, how can you atone for them?

What about those sins you committed and were not aware of?

And over time you can imagine how they could accumulate!

What could be done for that?

The Day of Atonement was intended to do just that, to cover those sins of ignorance for the nation. And yes, it was also for all sin, but as I have said, you had the opportunity to offer sacrifices for the sins you knew you did.

One writer put it like this regarding the Day of Atonement. He wrote,

The Day of Atonement is a holy day established by God for the people of Israel (Lev. 16). Biblically, Yom Kippur was to provide an atonement (lit., a covering) for sin, for the holies in the Tabernacle, for the Tabernacle itself, for the altar of incense in the holy place, for the priests (including the high priest), and for the sins committed in ignorance by the people of Israel. Yom Kippur was divinely ordained “because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins” (Lev. 16:16). An everlasting statute, it was the once-a-year, awe-inspiring zero hour for an impure nation, a nation that was required to stand clean before its holy God.

- <https://bit.ly/3gA1zR8>

Listen to what we are told of the Day of Atonement in Leviticus 16:29-34,, **“This shall be a statute forever for you: In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether a native of your own country or a stranger who dwells among you. For on that day the priest shall make atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the LORD. It is a sabbath of solemn rest for you, and you shall afflict your souls. It is a statute forever. And the priest, who is anointed and consecrated to minister as priest in his father’s place, shall make atonement, and put on the linen clothes, the holy garments; then he shall make atonement for the Holy Sanctuary, and he shall make atonement for the tabernacle of meeting and for the altar, and he shall make atonement for the priests and for all the people of the assembly. This shall be an everlasting statute for you, to make atonement for the children of Israel, for all their sins, once a year.’ And he did as the LORD commanded Moses.”**

What is this Day of Atonement all about, what happens on this day?

I think it is important for us to see what takes place for out of it is a picture of Christ that will be painted.

Thus, let’s take a few minutes and look at Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, which you can read about in Leviticus chapter 16, as we have seen as we read through those verses.

During the time of Jesus, the High Priest would spend the week before Yom Kippur on the Temple grounds, going over what he was going to do, preparing himself for this day.

Then, on this day he would ceremonially cleanse himself and put on his High Priestly robes, the breastplate with the 12 stones representing the 12 tribes of Israel and it was showing that he held the nation close to his heart before the Lord.

The ephod also had 12 stones on the shoulders representing the 12 tribes of Israel and it was showing that he carried the nation before God on his shoulders.

Then he had to offer a sacrifice for his sins.

Before he did this, he took the coals from the bronze altar where the sacrifices were made and put them into a gold censer with incense and brought it into the Holy of Holies before the Lord.

Then he came out and sacrificed a bullock and another priest collected the blood from the sacrifice and some of it was placed in a small bowl and it was carried into the Holy of Holies and sprinkled upon the Mercy Seat seven times.

Again, in the presence of God he did not linger long as the people listened for the bells on his robe to keep ringing and as he came out they breathed a sigh of relief as God accepted his offering.

And I bet he did too!

If the bells on his robe stopped ringing, they would know that he was struck dead and they would pull him out by the robe tied around his ankle.

This offering was for the High Priest, not the people yet.

As he came out of the Holy of Holies two goats were waiting for him at the bronze altar.

On one of them would be written "***For Yahweh***" and the other "***For Azazel***" or the scapegoat.

To determine which one was which, the High Priest would cast lots and from these lots that were cast they would determine which would be used for the scapegoat and which was for the Lord.

Thus, in a small urn the two lots were placed and as each one was drawn it was tied to the horn of one of the goats.

The goat that was “*For Yahweh*” was slaughtered on the altar and its blood was caught the same way as the bullock and swished into a bowl and carried into the Holy of Holies.

The blood of the goat was sprinkled on the Mercy Seat once again but not for the High Priest this time, but for the people. Once again, he did not spend much time in the Holy of Holies. He did his work and he got out!

Now the other goat, “*For Azazel*” or the scapegoat, we see that the hands of the High Priest were placed upon his head and the sins of the people were confessed over him. After that the goat was taken out into the wilderness and turned loose, to be lost and never to return.

One interesting note regarding this is given to us in Fausset’s Bible Dictionary. It says,

The lots were first of boxwood, latterly of gold, put into an urn, into which he put both his hands and took out a lot in each, while the two goats stood before him, one on the right, the other on the left; the lot in each hand belonged to the corresponding position: when the lot “for Azazel” was in the right, it was a good omen. He then tied a tongue shaped piece of scarlet cloth on the scapegoat.

The Gemara says the red cloth ought to turn white as a token of God’s acceptance or the atonement; which illustrates Isa 1:18, “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.”

No such change took place for 40 years before the destruction of Jerusalem; a singular testimony from Jewish authority to Messiah, as His ministry was precisely 40 years before the destruction of the holy city; the type ceased when the Antitype came.

- Fausset’s Bible Dictionary, Day of Atonement

And let me clarify what the Gemara is all about.

The Gemara is the second part of the Talmud that consists primarily of a commentary on the Mishna.

The Mishna is a collection of early oral interpretations of the Scriptures that was compiled about 200 A. D.

So what do these two goats mean to us?

The first goat, "*For Yahweh*" represents the justice of God being satisfied, the shedding of the blood of this animal had paid for sin.

The second goat, "*For Azazel*" represented the satisfaction of our conscience as they saw symbolically the goat disappearing into the wilderness never to be seen again and it points to God forgiving us of our sins, casting them as far as the east is from the west, to be remembered no more!

They didn't have to dwell on those past sins is the thought.

It is as Paul said in Hebrews 9:14 of Jesus, "**how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?**"

Thus, the work of Jesus is far greater than the work that was done on the Day of Atonement by the High Priest for the work that Christ did on the cross of Calvary is completely sufficient to atone for the sins we do in ignorance and those we do knowingly!

There is no further sacrifice that is needed, the work is completed!

VERSES 8-10

We see many today trying to apply the Old Covenant together with the New Covenant, but they do not mix, not at all. In fact, the Old Covenant had to pass away before God's New Covenant could be revealed.

Paul put it like this, “**. . . that the way into the holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing.**” Hebrews 9:8.

In other words, we could not enter the presence of God until a complete atonement for our sin was made, and that was done by Jesus.

Let me share a few points here and you will see what I mean.

First of all, the Holy Spirit is teaching us that an intimate relationship with God was limited in the Old Covenant.

Remember what we have seen so far. Only the High Priest could enter through the veil into the Holy of Holies, into the presence of God and then only once a year on the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur. And then only for a short time after he had made atonement for his sins and the sins of the people, the nation, by the blood of a sacrifice!

The second point that the Holy Spirit is teaching us is that their sins were never forgiven. Yes, the scapegoat was let go, he traveled into the wilderness, but he could come back, there was no guarantee!

And these sacrifices were not only made once a year on the Day of Atonement, but every day sacrifices were being made because, as we will see next time, that our salvation is, **“Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.”** Hebrews 9:12-15.

And the third point that the Holy Spirit is teaching us is that the Old Covenant with the sacrificial system was only temporary. The sacrifices needed to be repeated over and over again, as I have said. Daily there were the sacrifices, thus, the Old Covenant was limited, it was not complete.

So we see that there was no access into the presence of God because sin had separated them and us from God.

Isaiah 59:1-2 tells us that, **“Behold, the LORD’s hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.”**

Thus, even with the sacrifices, sin remained because these sacrifices could not take away a person’s sin, but only covered them for a time. They could not cleanse you inwardly, but it was more of a ceremonially cleansing.

Thus, this covenant was only temporary, until the New Covenant was established.

That is what Paul was saying back in Hebrews chapter 8, starting in verse 6, **“But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. Because finding fault with them, He says: ‘Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah - not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the LORD. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, “Know the LORD,” for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.’ He says, ‘A new covenant,’ He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.”** Hebrews 8:6-13.

The Old Covenant, with the Temple and the priests and the sacrificial system was **“ready to vanish away.”**

In fact, in just 4 to 6 years, depending on the writing of this letter to the Hebrews, the Temple was going to be destroyed, the sacrificial system will come to an end and thus, why go back to that which is passing away when you have a better covenant established on better promises, those based upon the faithfulness of God!

If you still don't believe that this was all symbolic, pointing to Christ, then re-read Hebrews 9:9 because Paul tells us that this is symbolic.

In fact, he uses the Greek word, PARABOLE, which speaks of setting something side-by-side to make a comparison.

Here's the thing. The Old Covenant with the Tabernacle and the priests and the sacrifices are being set alongside of the New Covenant with Jesus being our Great High Priest who offered Himself as a sacrifice for our sins.

Now, as the two are compared you can clearly see that the Old Covenant comes up short, it was never intended to cleanse us of our sins, but it was symbolic of the cleansing that was to come, and the Old Covenant pales in comparison to the New Covenant!

Today, for the Orthodox Jew who has been without a Temple, without sacrifices for sins for almost 2,000 years, you would think that was a huge problem, but they have come up with a solution.

Now the Day of Atonement has become a day of reflection where you reflect on the good and bad things that you have done throughout the year and if your good deeds outweigh your bad deeds, God accepts you, you are forgiven for another year.

Thus, hopefully your good deeds outweigh your bad deeds, but just in case, a week or so before this day, they make sure they are doing many good deeds so they can be sure of God accepting them, forgiving them.

What is the problem with that kind of teaching, with that kind of doctrine?

It is false!

And this should be a huge problem for them because the Bible does not teach that our good works save us, but Jesus does or the shedding of blood is needed for the remission of sins.

That is what the Bible teaches, that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins!

Yes, good works are evidence of our salvation, but they can't take away our sins. Think about it, if you get pulled over for speeding and the officer writes you a ticket and you decided to go to court to fight it, which is crazy, but that is what you do.

You tell the judge, *“Your honor, yes I was going 100 mph in an area that had a speed limit of 20 mph, but this is the first ticket I have received. I have been good all my life and thus, all the good I have done must account for something, right?”*

The judge would answer, *“Son, the law has no forgiveness, no mercy, all it can do is show you that you broke the law. It doesn't matter how good you are, you broke the law, pay the fine. Next!”*

Paul, in Romans 4:2-8 tells us this very thing, **“For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? ‘Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.’ Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works: ‘Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered; Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin.’”**

You see, it is not our good works that save us, but our faith in the Savior.

The Old Testament saints were not saved by their works, that is Paul's point. But they were saved as they had faith in the coming Messiah and because of that they lived lives that were pleasing to God.

Again, imagine the same court case and this time you have a lawyer with you and as the charges are read, as the prosecutor is ready to prove his point, your lawyer says to the judge, ***“Hi Dad, I have paid the price of his fee for breaking the law, it is taken care, it is paid in full!”***

What would the judge say?

He would say, ***“Case dismissed!”***

And that is what Jesus has done for us, He paid in full the penalty for our sins and because of that the Father accepts us, case dismissed!

Paul, in Galatians 2:16 tells us, **“knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.”**

You see, they looked forward to the coming Messiah and we look back at His finished work and we both are saved by grace through faith and not by the Law through works. We are saved by His finished work!

And let me say this. I don’t think many people realize what sin has done in their lives, the desperate condition that they are in.

Paul expounds on it in Ephesians 2:1-3 as he wrote, **“And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.”**

That is the condition we were in with no hope of working our way out of it. And then, in Ephesians 2:4, those two precious words, **“But God . . .”**

Listen to what Paul wrote, **“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”** Ephesians 2:4-9.

Let me share these words with you and you will see what an awesome God we have. We are told,

Against the hopeless backdrop of man’s sin and failure (v.1-3) Paul writes these words which are like the rays of the sun piercing the blackness of a terrible storm, ***“But God!”***

After lowering us deeper and deeper into the pit of hopelessness and despair by reminding us of our predicament - how that we were separated from God by Adam’s sin, we were the slaves of the devil and doomed to spend eternity apart from God in hell.

Paul suddenly takes us from the pit of despair and skyrockets us to the heights of absolute joy by proclaiming - ***“But God!”*** God intervened! God came to our rescue!!

“But God . . .” is the answer to the greatest dilemma the human race has ever faced.

How can a holy and righteous God, who cannot bear to look upon sin, ever have fellowship with sinners and allow them into heaven?

“But God . . .” is where life - real life, eternal life begins.

“I have made a mess out of my life, I have hit the bottom, I have tried to change, to live a good life but I keep falling back into the same old habits - I can't change - but God has promised that through His Son He can change me and give me a new life.”

“**But God . . .**” is the solution to any problem we face in life.

“My marriage is so bad that it seems hopeless - but God can fix it, for with God nothing shall be impossible.”

“I've just been told that my company has to lay me off and with the economy as bad as it is I don't know who's going to hire me or how I'm going to provide for my family - but God has promised to take care of me and my family because I am His child.”

“I have been diagnosed with terminal cancer, the doctors say there is nothing left they can do, it's hopeless - but God can heal me and if He chooses not to He can take me to heaven to be with Him forever.”

The atheist doesn't say “But God” he defiantly rails, “**No God.**”

“There is no God, but man . . .” or “There is no God, but science . . .” or “There is no God, but human government, or modern medicine, or “. . .”

The moralist and religionist doesn't say “But God” he confidently cries, “**And God.**”

“It is me, my goodness and my religious works and God . . .”

But like Paul all true Christians shout, “**But God!**”

“I was helpless and without hope in this world - But God came to my rescue!”

- Source Unknown

And that truly is the theme of the entire Bible. God created the heavens and the earth; a few pages are put forth.

Then the sin of Adam and from there on it is God dealing with the problem of sin so that He could redeem us and adopt us into His family where we could worship Him and enjoy Him for all eternity!

Obviously we are not going to finish up tonight, so next week we will conclude this chapter as we look at Jesus Christ who is a better sanctuary!

We have looked at the Tabernacle and seen it is a picture of Christ, next time we will look at the substance, Jesus Christ and how He is a better covenant with better promises to us.

Thus, because of all that Jesus has done for us, **“Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.”** Hebrews 7:25.

May we not forget that or lose sight of that or go back to the type, the symbols instead of the substance, which is Jesus Christ!