

Studies in Hebrews



Lesson XIV

Text: Chapter 9, verses 15-28

¹⁵ For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant. ¹⁶ In the case of a will,^[a] it is necessary to prove the death of the one who made it, ¹⁷ because a will is in force only when somebody has died; it never takes effect while the one who made it is living. ¹⁸ This is why even the first covenant was not put into effect without blood. ¹⁹ When Moses had proclaimed every commandment of the law to all the people, he took the blood of calves, together with water, scarlet wool and branches of hyssop, and sprinkled the scroll and all the people. ²⁰ He said, "This is the blood of the covenant, which God has commanded you to keep."^[b] ²¹ In the same way, he sprinkled with the blood both the tabernacle and everything used in its ceremonies. ²² In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

²³ It was necessary, then, for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. ²⁴ For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. ²⁵ Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. ²⁶ Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. ²⁷ Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, ²⁸ so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

Footnotes: a. Same Greek word as covenant; also in verse 17 b. Exodus 24:8

Questions for Group Discussion

1. The Greek word for “mediator” (vs. 15a) is *mesites* (μεσῖτης), from *mesos* (μεσος) –“middle.”
 - What is the role of a mediator?
 - What does it mean that Jesus is the mediator of the New Covenant? (vs. 15b ; cf. 1 Timothy 2:5-6)
2. Why was it necessary for Christ to free the Old Testament believers from their transgressions (15c)?
3. The Greek word for “will” (vs. 16) is *diatheke* (διαθήκη)—“covenant,” “contract,” “testament,” “agreement,” “compact.”
 - A will is ratified by the d_____ of the testator (vv.16-17). The New Testament was put in force when C_____ d_____ on the c_____ (Colossians 1:20)
 - Why does God require blood to validate his covenant with us? (vv. 18-22; cf. Matthew 26:28)

“The blood of animals cannot cleanse from sin because it is non-moral. The blood of sinning man cannot cleanse because it is immoral. The blood of Christ itself alone can cleanse because it is moral.” (W. H. Griffith Thomas, Hebrews: A Devotional Commentary [Eerdmans] pp. 117-118)

4. The Greek word for “copies” (vs. 23a) is *hypodeigma* (ὑπόδειγμα)—an “example,” “outline,” “sketch plan,” “type,” “pattern.”
 - In context, the “copies of the heavenly things” probably refers to the t_____ and its f_____ (vs. 24; cf. Hebrews 8:5)
5. How many times does Jesus need to be sacrificed to forgive us of our sins? (vv. 25-28)
6. When Christ returns, what will he be bringing us? (vs. 28)

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