**Hebrews 9 Sermon: A Better Sacrifice for Sins**

**Theme of Hebrews: The preeminence of Jesus Christ our perfect high priest and mediator**

**Purpose of Hebrews: So that we will make it faithful to the end.**

**The Greatness of Jesus:**

1. Greater than all the prophets. Hebrews 1:1-3

2. Greater than the angels. Hebrews 1:4-14

3. Greater than Moses. Hebrews 3:1-5

4. Greater than Joshua Hebrews 4:1-10

5. Jesus the Great High Priest. Greater than Aaron. Hebrews 4:14-5:10

6. The Priesthood of Melchizedek (and therefore of Jesus) is greater than the priesthood of Aaron Hebrews 7:1-28

7. Jesus is greater than Abraham 7:1-9

8. The Old Covenant foreshadows the much greater New Covenant Hebrews 8:1-13

9. The earthly Tabernacle foreshadows the much greater heavenly Tabernacle (the one where Jesus is now) Hebrews 9:1-11.

10. The sacrifice Jesus offers is greater than any of the Mosaic sacrifices. Hebrews 9:12-10:18.

**Hebrews 9:12-10:18 A better sacrifice.** (first: a better covenant, then a better tabernacle, now a better sacrifice)

A beautiful verse: Hebrews 9:12-14 The blood of bulls and goats and the red heifer were mere shadows. They only created ceremonial cleanness, not actual cleanness. (see also Heb 10:2-4)

bulls and goats refer to the Day of Atonement. The whole idea of the Day of Atonement was to provide for purification of sins. The Hebrew writer: it never worked. It only created ceremonial cleanness. It prevented God wiping them out.

“Bulls” = sacrifice for the sin of the high priest.

“goats” = sacrifice for the people.

Here is how it worked: The high priest took two stones. One was marked “for YHWH” the other was marked “*azazel*” Then he took two stones, and selected by lot. The one marked “for YHWH” was killed as a sacrifice and blood sprinkled in the inner sactuary.

The one marked “azazel” High priest confessed his sins and the sins of the people and laid his hands on the goat and sent it off into the desert as a symbol.

The Day of Atonement was only a foreshadow. The reality if the Real Day of Atonement. The Day Jesus died on the cross. (Remember Hebrews 10:1)

“the ashes of a heifer” refers to the Red Heifer sacrifice.

The Red Heifer sacrifice: a foreshadow of the sacrifice of Jesus:

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| --- | --- |
| Aspects of the Red Heifer Sacrifices | Antitype in the sacrifice of Jesus |
| A very rare red heifer | A unique son |
| Sacrificed outside the camp | Sacrificed outside Jerusalem |
| Purifies both Jew and Gentile | Atones for the sin of both Jew and Gentile |
| A sacrifice without blemish | A sacrifice without sin |
| Had never been yoked | Offered himself voluntarily |
| Scarlet wool and wood included | Blood was shed on a wooden cross |
| Hyssop included (for purification from the effects of death) | Purifies us from the effects of sin |
| Water included for purification | We are baptized into Christ for forgiveness |
|  |  |

The Red Heiffer Sacrifice may have been mentioned because it was a sacrifice for both Jews and Gentiles.

The point of the Hebrew writer: All this was pretty great, but it only created ceremonial (physical, outward) cleanness. The blood of Jesus is much greater. (Hebrews 9:14)

The sacrifice of Jesus is a much better sacrifice:

1. It gives us eternal redemption. v. 12. Which is better temporary or eternal redemption?

2. It gives us a clean conscience “from acts that lead to death”. v. 14 The Jews, ultimately, never felt a clean conscience (as they should not have!).

How awesome is that! Q: How do you feel about having a clean conscience? How much is that worth? Immeasurable!

3. v. 14 We can now serve (worship) God. Analogy: The Jews had to leave Egypt (slavery to sin) so that they could worship God.

9:15 An interesting point: the death of Jesus is a “ransom” for sins committed under the first covenant.

[aside: The church developed the idea by the fifth century that the blood of Jesus paid a ransom to buy us back from Satan. Their principle argument was from Hebrews 9:15. This idea is not well supported by scripture]

In other words, in order to be prepared to come into the new covenant—in order to even be qualified to sign onto the second covenant, we need to be cleansed of the sins committed under the first one (or for gentiles, for sins committed before you were baptized.

Analogy: It would be like providing complete amnesty for all wrongs as a pre-condition for some sort of negotiation for peace with an enemy. (actually, this is not a great analogy, because we do not negotiate with God),

Practical meaning: The blood of Jesus cleanses us of sins committed, both before and after you are baptized.

9:16-22 the analogy to a will. (Remember the word, here is *diatheke* (not *suntheke*) which means a one-way covenant.)

Hebrew writer: Why did Jesus have to die? So that the “will” (covenant) could come into effect!

v. 22 summary: and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness (because the will/covenant must be sealed)

Leviticus 17:11 The life of every creature is in its blood…. It is the blood makes atonement for one’s life.

No blood, no covenant, no blood no forgiveness

v. 23-24 The greater sacrifice acts in a greater sanctuary

the lesser sacrifice (bulls, goats, red heifer) only ceremonially, outwardly cleansed the lesser tabernacle (v. 23 the copies of the heavenly things).

Better sacrifice (v. 23) Why?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| The lesser sacrifice (goats, bulls, red heifer) | The greater sacrifice (Jesus) |
| Outward (appearance) | Inward (spiritual) |
| Temporary (repeated again and again) | Eternal (only done once) |
| Ceremonial | Real |
| Not voluntary | Voluntary |
| Mechanical | Spontaneous (by choice) |
| Unaware | Rational, aware |
| Did not remove guilt | Removes guilt eternally |

Heb 9:25-27

v. 25-26 Proof the former sacrifices were powerless: They had to be performed again and again. Jesus sacrifice is “once for all”

v. 27 He is simply stating an analogy. How many times do we die?

How many times did Jesus have to die? Our death is a final thing. It happens only once. Similarly, Jesus death is “once for all”

**Hebrews 10:1-18** A recapitulation of Ch 8,9.

Heb 10:1-4

10:1 The law is only a shadow (dim copy) Shadows have no power. They do not talk or breathe.

The reality (*eikon* accurate picture, perfect representation) has great power.

v. 1 For this reason (the fact that it is only a shadow, not a reality) it can never do for us what we desperately need—make us perfect (complete, whole)

Illustration: Imagine you apply for a job and they say you must complete the training program first. Great. How long does the training program take? Forever. No thanks!

v. 2 Proof: They still felt guilty and came for forgiveness again and again.

Q: Do you still feel guilty? Hopefully not!

v. 3 But, the OT sacrifices did accomplish something: They reminded us how deeply sinful we are. [Romans 5:20 “the law was brought in so that trespass (our recognition of it) might increase”] Romans 7:13 “through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful.”

v. 4 blood of bulls and goats has no power.

v. 11 sacrifices, which can never take away sins.

Hebrews 10:5-10 So, then, what DOES God want from us?

He wants an obedient heart—one that sincerely desires to do his will.

Quoting Psalm 40:6-8

v. 7. But Jesus came voluntarily to offer his life. “Here I am… I have come

 to do your will, O God.” Awesome statement!

v.7,9 Jesus’ sacrifice was efficacious because of his **perfect, obedient will**.

(**1 Sam 15:22** Psalm 51:16-17 Hosea 6:6 Micah 6:6-8) God wants obedience. A bull or ram could not be willfully obedient. [Also, Matt 26:39 Not my will but yours.]

Application; If you want to sacrifice for and serve God, you had better do it in an obedient way, and it is best if truly voluntary (2 Cor 9:7 …. not reluctantly or under compulsion…)

It is not **wrong** to do something because you “have to” but this is not the kind of sacrifice God wants or the kind which will bring blessings on you or the church.

Gal 5:6 The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.

Heb 10:11-18 Summary/Transition before moving on to the fourth exhortation:

v. 11 Day after day. He is no longer talking about *yom kippur*, but about the daily sacrifices and offerings. But the point is the same.

v. 12 But we have a once-for-all-time perfect sacrifice in Christ.

Quotes Jer 31:33-34 again. A better covenant.

**Hebrews 10:19-38 Exhortation and Warning #4 Draw near to God and the peril of rebellion.**

Hebrews 10:19-22 Therefore…. If we have such great things, brothers, let us draw near to God in full assurance of faith.

10:19-22 My favorite verse in Hebrews. We have access!!! With boldness!!

v. 20 a new (just a few years in the 60s AD) and living (life-giving) way

v. 20 a… way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body.

[Two interpretations:]

1. [The sacrifice of] his body gave us a way to pass through the veil which, in Judaism, literally separated us from God.

[2. His body was the veil. In other words, as long as he was in his physical body, the way to access God was not open. “His physical death, like the veil, stood between Jesus and his fully realized relationship with God.”

Maybe both are true.]

Jesus is pioneer and perfecter. He is the first one to pass through the veil. He has made it safe for us and now he is calling us to come in and join him with God in the true sanctuary.

**Q: How do you feel about this? How do you feel about your access to the true, heavenly sanctuary. Your prayers are no longer behind a veil. You can come in and sit down on the Mercy Seat.**

Exhortation #4 Persevere, stay faithful, follow the example of the faithful. Do not give up what you have, etc… The theology is done. Now, let us get to the practical. Salad time. Let us….

1. 10:22 Let us draw near [to God] Let us enjoy intimate worship with God. (faith)

2. 10:23 Let us hold to our confession of hope without wavering. (hope)

Remember God is faithful. He will take care of his end of the bargain. Remember Heb 6:18 by two unchangeable things about which God cannot lie. You are in. Jesus is mediating for you right now!

3. a. 10:24 Let us be concerned about one another and encourage one another toward love and good deeds. (love)

 b. 10:25 Let us not stop meeting together. Part of staying faithful is just showing up. How many of you have come to church and regretted doing so?

 c. 10:25 Let us encourage one another. (who have you encouraged in their faith this week?)

… as you see the Day approaching (when Jesus comes back) approaching. Keep that lamp full of oil. Matthew 25.

Quote from Barclay: No man ever saved his soul who devoted his whole time and energy to saving it; but many a man has saved his soul by being so concerned for others that he forgot that he himself had a soul to save.

A selfish Christianity is a contradiction in terms.