

# OpenTheo

## Hebrews 9



### Hebrews - Steve Gregg

Steve Gregg discusses Hebrews chapter 9 and its references to Jewish customs and rituals, specifically the annual sacrifice for unintentional sins. The writer of Hebrews implies that a sacrifice must be made to rid oneself of guilt for breaking God's laws, and only through Jesus can one obtain eternal redemption. Gregg explains that Jesus became a real man in order to die for humanity's sins, as the blood of bulls and goats was not adequate. Ultimately, Christ put an end to the sacrificial system and through him, believers can boldly approach the throne of grace.

### Transcript

Okay, we're turning to Hebrews chapter 9, and the writer summarizes in the beginning what all the Jewish readers knew, and so he doesn't spend much time with it, and does not go into detail. He even says he's not going into detail, but he wants to just kind of call to their attention the general plan of the tabernacle, because he wants to point out that there's one part of the tabernacle that was very inaccessible, except on the day of atonement. And then he wants to, you know, talk about the relevance of the day of atonement, with reference to what Christ has done as our high priest.

And so, the first five verses really is just a summary of the layout of the tabernacle, which you would already know if you've read Exodus. It says, Then indeed the first covenant had ordinances of divine service and the earthly sanctuary, earthly holy place. For a tabernacle, a word that really means a tent, was prepared, the first part in which was the lampstand, the table, and the showbread, which is called the sanctuary, or the holy place.

This is distinct from the holy of holies. And behind the second veil, the part of the tabernacle, which is called the holiest of all. In the Greek, it literally is holy of holies.

You don't find the term holy of holies in lots of our translations, although no doubt if you've been a Christian for very long, you hear Christians talk about the holy of holies in the temple. It was actually, the term is used in the Greek, holy of holies, in this place. But for some reason, most translations use the term holiest of all, or most holy place, as

an English rendering of this term.

Perhaps because holy of holies is a strange construction of words, except to a Hebrew ear. So, English translators have just rendered it according to what it really means, the holiest of all places. The King James doesn't even have the expression holy of holies in it, nor do most of our translations.

The New King James doesn't either. I've only been able to find holy of holies in the Greek text, and also in the New American Standard, and in the Young's Literal Translation. I think the Revised Standard Version also renders it literally, but most translations do not.

I think most Christians have heard in preaching the expression the holy of holies, but that doesn't come from most of our translations, but it is a good translation of the Greek phrase. Behind the second veil was the holy of holies. That's what the Greek actually says, but our translation says holiest of all.

Of these things we cannot now speak in detail. I wish he had, but he had one particular detail he wanted to focus on, and he couldn't talk about these other things in detail. He had limited ink.

Now, there's only a few things that need to be mentioned here. He mentions there's this first holy place, which had the table and showbread and the lampstand. Then he says that beyond the second veil, there's this holy of holies.

Now, there's a problem here, because he says that the holy of holies had the golden altar of incense. That's how most translations render it. The King James renders it the golden censer, and I think the King James is more accurate in this case.

Even the New King James changes it, but I think they do so by mistake. Everybody who knows much about the tabernacle knows that the golden altar of incense was not in the holy of holies. The golden altar of incense was actually in the holy place, the same compartment that had the table of showbread and the lampstand.

There were three items in the holy place, and one of them was the golden incense altar. We know this because the priest offered incense on it every day of the year, and they couldn't do that if it was in the holy of holies. They couldn't go in there but once a year.

So, offering incense was a daily thing in the tabernacle. The golden incense altar was not in the holy of holies. The term that is used here, that's translated in our Bible, the golden incense altar, and in King James translated the censer, is a Greek word that occurs only once in the New Testament.

But it is found in the Old Testament, the Septuagint. Sometimes it does mean the altar. Sometimes it means the censer.

Now, what is a censer? A censer is usually a bowl, in this case made of gold, the golden incense censer. It's a bowl on a handle. You would put coals from the altar in it, and you'd put incense on top of it so that you'd carry it around.

It would bear incense smoke wherever you took it. Now, on the day of atonement, on Yom Kippur, the high priest would actually take that incense censer full of incense into the holy of holies as part of the ritual. Most of the time during the year it wouldn't go in there, but on the day of atonement that incense censer did go into the holy of holies.

Therefore, since the term can be translated either incense altar or incense censer, since the author says that it was in or associated with the holy of holies, along with the Ark of the Covenant and the mercy seat, it seems like he's dealing with the censer. The high priest would actually carry the censer in there and leave it in there, come out, do some more rituals, and go back in and later take it out. In a sense, the golden censer was associated with the furniture inside the holy of holies, at least on the day of atonement it was.

That may be what the author is thinking of when he says that the holy of holies had the golden incense censer. Now, in favor of translating it as the altar, which many translations do, is the fact that he has not otherwise mentioned the golden incense altar. The golden incense altar is a significant piece of furniture in the tabernacle, but he's only mentioned, previous to this, the table of showbread and the lamp stand.

You would think he would mention the golden incense altar if he's listing the furniture, because that was in the holy place. If he doesn't mention it when he's talking about the holy of holies here, then he doesn't mention it at all. Either the author is omitting any reference to the golden altar altogether and only talking about the censer, or else if he's talking about the altar, he seems to be placing it in the holy of holies where it wasn't.

This is simply something that scholars are not quite sure how to understand him. The King James Version translates it as the golden censer, in which case there's no problem of associating it with the furniture inside the holy of holies. Since the day of atonement is what the author is concerned with, and the censer did go into the holy of holies of the high priest.

But the difficulty there is that it makes the author totally without making any reference at all to the golden incense altar, which is significant enough to mention, but it is not otherwise mentioned. So there's some mystery about this. If he is referring to the altar, it could be pointed out that he doesn't say the altar is in the holy of holies.

He says the holy of holies has the altar, which might mean not has it in the holy of holies, but has it associated with the holy of holies. The last thing the priest did before going into the holy of holies was pick up the incense to take in there. So he could say the altar is associated with the holy of holies, even though it's not in the holy of holies.

There's some very difficult things here to sort out. It can go either way. The point is, though, that it's very clear in the Old Testament, and it's not ambiguous there, that the golden altar is in the holy place.

It is not in the holy of holies. And for the author to suggest that it is would suggest he was ignorant, more ignorant than even we are of what Exodus says on it. But he certainly was not ignorant of that.

So his meaning is all we really have to wonder about. There's no question about the reality. The question is, what is he referring to? And since we may not be able to resolve that, then it may be best for us just to move along and say he knew as well as we do where the golden incense altar was.

And so what he was saying about it is maybe only he really knows. Now, since he says he's not going to go into all that stuff in detail, he does talk about one aspect of the tabernacle worship that he is going to go into detail about in verse six. Now, when these things had been thus prepared, the priests always, in other words, not annually, but all the time, went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing the services.

This was a daily thing. And this is exactly what Zacharias was doing in Luke chapter one, when the angel Gabriel appeared to him and told him that his wife was going to have the baby John the Baptist. Zacharias was a priest offering incense in the holy place.

This was not the same thing as the Holy of Holies, and it was accessible at all times to the priests to go in and do this ritual. And that's what he says. They always went there.

They always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing the services, but into the second part, he means beyond the veil into the Holy of Holies. The high priest went alone once a year, not without blood. So there's some conditions here.

He could only go in alone. No one else did. He did it only once a year, not just whenever he wanted to.

And he couldn't do it without proper ritual sacrifices and blood. He had to follow a very elaborate ritual. In fact, thank you.

Leviticus 16 goes into detail about this particular ritual. And all the times he had to wash himself and offer animals and send off the scapegoat and burn the incense. And there was an elaborate ritual, which was a way of saying, you can't just strut in here on your own terms.

If you want to come see God, you better observe his instructions about such things. And it says he offered this blood, the high priest every year for himself and for the people's sins committed in ignorance. The fact that this is, it mentions the sins committed in ignorance is interesting because the Old Testament doesn't very often place this

particular condition.

You get the impression reading the Old Testament, generally speaking, that just sins were covered by the sacrificial system. But he's saying the sacrificial system only covered the ignorant sins. And although there's not much in the Old Testament about this, he does seem to have the scripture on his side.

If you look at Numbers chapter 15, Numbers 15, beginning at verse 27, it says, And if a person sins unintentionally, then he shall bring a female goat in the first year as a sin offering. So the priest shall make atonement for the person who sins unintentionally. When he sins unintentionally before the Lord, to make atonement for him and it shall be forgiven him.

You shall have one law for him who sins unintentionally. But in verse 30, it says, But to the person who does anything presumptuously, that is not unintentionally, but deliberately sins, whether he's native born or a stranger, that one brings reproach on the Lord and he shall be cut off from among the people. Now, it's interesting that this seems to say that the sacrificial system was not intended to cover deliberate, rebellious sins, but only those that someone did when they were actually trying to be obedient.

The assumption is if you weren't trying to be obedient, there was no sacrifice for you. You might be trying to be obedient, but neglect something that you forgot to do. You unintentionally sinned.

You did it ignorantly. And once you realize it was sin, you bring the sacrifice that covers it. But you can see that if this is so, then the sacrificial system wasn't really for rebels at all.

It was for well-intentioned Israelites who simply had imperfections that they could not easily avoid. Now, I had a conversation with a man some years ago. I actually had multiple conversations with him because he used to call my radio show frequently.

His position was that once you become a Christian, you can never again sin intentionally because sacrifices never were for unintentional sins. Even Christ's sacrifices were not for intentional sins. And so he said that if you're a true Christian, you never can sin intentionally again or else you're done.

Christ's sacrifice won't cover intentional sins any more than the Old Testament sacrifices did. Was he right? I believe he's missing something. And that is that the sacrifice Christ offered is a better sacrifice.

And it does more than Old Testament sacrifices could do. We see Paul implying this in one of his sermons, actually the first recorded sermon of Paul in Acts 13. He specifically mentions what sins are covered by Christ's sacrifice.

In Acts 13, 39, Paul said, And by him, everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses. So even the things that the law of Moses did not cover, Christ covers. If the law of Moses and its sacrifices didn't cover intentional sin, well, that doesn't reflect on what Christ's sacrifice covers.

He justifies us from all things from which you could not be justified under the law of Moses. In Hebrews 9, the chapter we're in, a little further down in verse 15, He says, 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. Now, the people who were under the old covenant were never really redeemed by the animal sacrifices anyway, from any of their sins.

It's impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin, the writer of Hebrews is going to tell us. Christ's sacrifice is what redeems people, even the Old Testament people. When people were saved in the Old Testament, it was because of Christ, not because of blood of bulls and goats.

What was the blood of bulls and goats for? It was a picture of Christ. It was there to teach lessons about atonement, to teach lessons about redemption. But the only real atonement that really redeems is Christ himself.

So the offering of these sacrifices didn't in itself take away anyone's sins. They simply were an enacted portrayal of the fact that God will take away sins through the shedding of the blood of sacrifices, or a sacrifice more properly. And therefore, the Old Covenant didn't really redeem anyone at all.

And it says here that Christ, by means of death, became the meteor of the New Covenant for the redemption of the transgressions under the First Covenant. A lot of transgressions under the First Covenant. How did people get redeemed from those? By Christ's death.

Even before he came, they could be forgiven. Abraham was, David was, on what basis? On the basis of Christ's death. But he hadn't died yet.

Doesn't matter. As far as God's concerned, he was slain from the foundation of the world. And therefore, God could forgive them as it were on credit.

Jesus was coming to pay the tab, and God could give them the forgiveness now and count on Jesus to come and pay the deficit, the bill. And that's what Paul, I think, is saying in Romans 3. In Romans 3, 25, speaking of Jesus, of course, Paul says, whom God set forth to be a propitiation by his blood through faith to demonstrate his righteousness because in his forbearance, God had passed over the sins that were previously committed. Previously to what? Previously to Jesus coming as a propitiation.

In other words, when God passed over people's sins in the Old Testament times, it was

because well, God was planning to rectify and settle that score with Jesus. When Jesus came, he demonstrated God's justification in having earlier forgiven people. So, people were saved in the Old Testament as well as in the New by Jesus by what he did at Calvary.

Even though some of those people lived before he did it, they didn't live before God knew he was going to do it. They didn't do it before the foundation of the world. They didn't commit their sins.

And Jesus was, as far as God is concerned, slain before the foundation of the world. So, even though the Old Covenant didn't offer sacrifices that had anything to do with intentional sins, even people who committed intentional sins could be forgiven through Christ. David's sin against Bathsheba was certainly intentional.

His murder of Uriah was very much premeditated. He plotted it for days. And when it didn't work out one way, he tried another way.

You know, that was intentional sin on David's part. There was no sacrifice in the Old Order for that. He couldn't go to the temple and offer a sacrifice to cover that intentional sin.

The Law of Moses didn't provide a sacrifice for intentional sin. But David's repentance allowed him to be forgiven because of Christ's sacrifice, which had not yet been made, but was as certain in the sight of God as if it had. And therefore, we don't have to worry about this limitation in the Old Testament Law.

Some people do. And there in verse 7 of chapter 9 of Hebrews, it says, these sacrifices the high priest offered in the Old Testament on the Day of Atonement were for the people's sins committed in ignorance. Now, having referred to and emphasized in verse 7, the fact that the Holy of Holies could not be entered except by one man, one day a year, only under very strict circumstances.

He says in verse 8, the Holy Spirit was indicating this, that is by setting up that ritual in that way. What the Holy Spirit was getting at was this, that the way into the holiest of all, or the Holy of Holies, and by this he means into the real presence of God in heaven, was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing. That is, while that ritual was going on, one thing that was obvious is the Holy of Holies is not a place you go strutting into casually.

It's just not available. It's not accessible. It's barely accessible even to one man on very rare occasions.

And the very rarity of those occasions and the very limitation upon who could do it and the very imposition of those great rituals that were associated with it was the Holy Spirit's way of communicating the general principle that you don't go into the Holy of

Holies. You don't go in there. You can't go in there.

The way into the Holy of Holies has not been made manifest. Now by this we will find as he continues his discussion in this chapter, he means the Holy of Holies in heaven. He means the actual presence of God, not the ritual presence of God.

And we will find by the time he gets to near the end of chapter 10, actually about the middle of chapter 10, in verse 19 he says, therefore brethren, 10, 19, therefore brethren having boldness to enter the holiest, he means the Holy of Holies in heaven, by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he consecrated for us through the veil, that is his flesh. He's going to go on and say let's draw near. Now he says we can have confidence now to go into the Holy of Holies because we're not under that order.

Under that old order, the whole day of atonement, Yom Kippur ritual, was set up to communicate you don't come in here to see God. You don't have that access. But the writer of Hebrews says, but that order's gone and what has been replaced with is in fact access.

The opposite of that exclusiveness. Now it's still somewhat exclusive. Excuse me.

Only people who know the Lord and who know Jesus can actually come in. But those who do can all come in. Not just one man.

Not just one priest of our church can go in and talk to God for us. Jesus does that, but he brings us with him in his train into the Holy of Holies. He's the forerunner.

That means we're following behind. It says in verse nine, it, meaning the tabernacle, was symbolic and the whole ritual was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices were offered to perform the service perfect in regard to the conscience. Now this perfection in regard to the conscience is what's going to be mentioned in the next couple chapters a few times.

The conscience is your awareness of right and wrong and particularly your awareness of your guilt. If you realize you've broken God's laws and you're guilty, that's a very uncomfortable state of mind to be in. A person without a clear conscience often shows signs of ill health, even physical health.

If your conscience is not clear before God, it mainly affects you spiritually, but it can even have an impact on you physically. David talks about that in Psalm 32. He's talking about when he sinned with Bathsheba and when he had not yet repented.

He later did, and he wrote this after he repented, but he's reflecting on how it was like before he repented. Psalm 32 says, Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity and in whose spirit there is no guile.



When I kept silent, that's before I confessed my sin, my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me. My vitality was torn.

It was turned into the drought of summer. Then he says, I acknowledge my sin to you and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said I will confess my transgression to the Lord and you forgave my iniquity.

So he rejoices. How happy is the man whose sin is forgiven because that's what God has done. He's forgiven me for this iniquity, but before I was confessing my sin when I was being silent about it, I was living with this burden of guilt and it just dried up my energy.

My bones felt like they're rotting inside. I mean, physically I was a wreck. Emotionally I was a wreck.

I think a lot of psychological problems people have probably stemmed from unresolved guilt. In fact, I think even some secular psychologists have figured that out. Not all.

Some of them try to ignore guilt, but there are branches in psychology that focus on the fact that you've got guilt and you've got to get rid of this. Although a lot of times they think it's only guilt feelings, not guilt, because sometimes they don't believe there is any such thing as real guilt. There's no real sin, but you can psychologically convince yourself you're guilty of something.

You've got to get over that is what they would suggest. But the point is a guilt feeling is your conscience. It's one of the functions of your conscience and it's the function that he's talking about here.

When he says that the blood of bulls and goats couldn't really perfect your conscience, couldn't eliminate that sense of guilt completely. Why? Well, he goes into that in the remainder of this chapter and in chapter 10 because it wasn't final. You can't just say, well, we offered sacrifice today was the day of atonement.

Yay, I'm clean. Praise God, I'm free, I'm clean. God never has anything against me.

But you realize that, of course, next year we're going to do this again. That means I'm going to be unclean again by then. It means that God doesn't see me as the matter is not fully and finally resolved.

I've always got this nagging awareness that not all is right between me and God. My conscience is not 100% clear. There's going to be more said about this in verse 14, for example.

Verse 14, he says that the blood of Christ will purge your conscience from dead works. This is what the blood of bulls and goats could not do near the end of verse 14. That

Christ's blood will purge your conscience from dead works.

In chapter 10, he says the reason that the old Yom Kippur ritual didn't really solve anything is because there was a remembrance every year of your sins because it was a ritual that reminded you of it. Your conscience was never able to just forget about it. Yet, of course, in chapter 8, he has quoted Jeremiah 31.

One of the better promises associated with this better covenant is that God said in verse 12, chapter 8, their sins and their lawless deeds, I will remember no more. If he's not remembering them, then for you to remember them would be to be out of sync with God. You shouldn't remember them either.

At least your conscience shouldn't still be retaining the sense I'm guilty before God. If God's forgotten it, why should you remember it? The idea is that Jesus has done something that permanently cleanses the conscience and makes us feel absolved and be absolved. That barrier that would make us want to shrink from God has now been removed by Christ so that we can come boldly before the throne of grace.

This is what he's trying to get across. The old order, even though it foreshadowed what Christ would do, he made the conscience once and for all clean. He said that order, verse 10, 9, 10, says concerned was only concerned with foods, drink, various washings, fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation.

The time of reformation meaning the time when God would reform the law, would bring about the fulfillment of the law in Christ, bring in the spiritual reality that these fleshly ordinances depicted. But Christ came in contrast to the ritual of the earthly high priest. Now Christ came as a high priest of the good things to come with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands that is not of this creation, not with the blood of goats and calves, but with his own blood.

He entered the most holy place and by that he means heaven. When he ascended, he went up there and you know, some people actually picture Jesus going to heaven and actually carrying his blood up with him, you know, like the high priest took the blood from the animals that he sacrificed. He took them into the holy place and sprinkled them on the mercy seat.

That was part of the ritual. Some picture, some people picture Jesus actually carrying his literal blood up into heaven and sprinkling on some literal mercy seat up there because it is described that way. But I'm certainly open to the possibility that this is somewhat figurative that Christ has gone into the presence of God as a high priest goes into the holy of holies in the presence of God.

Christ has gone bringing with him the merits of his sacrifice. His blood needn't necessarily be referring to ounces or quarts of, you know, serum that came out of him

when he bled. But rather when the Bible talks about the blood of Jesus and what it accomplishes, it usually is referring to simply the fact that he shed his blood, his death.

The shedding of his blood is a euphemism for death. And so to say that he goes with his blood, it may simply mean with the effects of his having died. I mean, he's going up to heaven with this, this fact that he has shed his blood.

And that is the appeal that he can make on our behalf before God, whether he's actually carrying his blood and sprinkling it in a literal fashion on a mercy seat. I think that's an optional way of seeing it. Not an absolutely necessary to see it as literal.

But it says he came not with the blood of goats and calves, but with his own blood. He entered the most holy place once and for all. So this is not to be repeated annually like Yom Kippur.

Once, one time, for all time. 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 purge 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 eternal inheritance. This no doubt is what he also alludes to as the better promises of the new covenant.

The promise of an eternal inheritance. Not just the land of Israel for a season, a segment of history. He refers to the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean.

The ashes of the heifer is a reference to the ritual of the red heifer. They had to find a cow, a heifer. That was entirely red.

All over. They are relatively rare. I mean cows usually they have any variety of coloration patterns but to find a cow that's entirely red from head to toe is an unusual thing.

But it was necessary because the redness was part of the symbolism of the ritual. Obviously red is an important color in the ritual of sacrifice. And so this red heifer had to be burned to ashes.

Just the whole thing had to be burned up all the way down to there's nothing left but ashes. Those ashes would be collected and stored. And they would be used in the rituals of sprinkling of holy water.

There were a number of rituals that required that. But they would like when they

sanctified the tabernacle in the first place it was sprinkled with blood and also with this holy water. It had the ashes of a heifer in it.

If a leper was cleansed they went to the temple or the tabernacle for the ritual of being declared clean. There was this part of the ritual had to do with the sprinkling of the water and so forth. There's just a certain holiness in this water in the rituals associated with sprinkling.

The water had to have the ashes of a red heifer in them. And by the way just as an aside there are people today who are anticipating a restoration of the temple rituals in Jerusalem. The people who anticipate this often are not entirely clear on what they think about it.

Like is this something good or bad? I mean is this going to happen in the tribulation and it's a good thing? Is this going to happen in the millennium? There's a lot of different ways that people have taken a few scriptures and applied them to different scenarios. But lots of people believe in what they call a third temple. You see Solomon's temple is the first temple.

Zerubbabel's temple is the second temple. That was standing when Jesus was around. Scholars talk about the time of Jesus as the time of second temple Judaism.

Well many people believe there's going to be a third temple. That in the last days the Jews are going to rebuild the temple and there'll be third temple Judaism. Of course if that's true then they're going to need the ashes of a red heifer among other things.

I mean it's not too hard to find sheep and goats that qualify for sacrifice and actually farmers or ranchers that are specifically working on breeding red heifers. A lot of times people who are really into these last days scenarios and excited about the current events pointing in the direction of where in the last days and so forth they often bring up this red heifer thing. The fact that oh there's a farmer in Iowa who has gotten a perfect red heifer.

It's all the news for these people. Who could care less. First of all the temple ritual is over.

If they do build a third temple it'll be of no value. Jesus put an end to that system. And yet the funny thing is when people get all wrapped up in this restoration of Judaism something as uninteresting as the birth of a red cow becomes something they pass it through the Internet.

Wow there's a red heifer in Wyoming now. I don't really care how many red heifers there are. The ashes of red heifer along with the blood of bulls and goats was used in rituals of sprinkling for cleansing.

And the author says well if those mundane things could cleanse externally so to speak, ritually, how much more could the blood of Christ cleanse your conscience. The implication is Christ is so much infinitely more valuable than a goat or a bull or a red heifer that if those things ritually had some kind of benefit or some value how much more is the value of the blood of Christ who through the eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God. The fact that Jesus offered himself through the eternal spirit is one of those passages of which there are relatively few that indicate Christ's operating in his life through the Holy Spirit.

I say there's relatively few there's certainly enough to establish the point. But it's not like there's scores of passages that say this. But the Bible teaches that Jesus lived his life on earth through the power of the Holy Spirit.

He gives a hint of that when he says in Matthew 12, 28 if I cast out demons by the spirit of God then the kingdom of God has come upon you. The book of Acts mentions this in the opening verses of chapter one where it says that Christ after his resurrection through his spirit gave instructions to the disciples through the Holy Spirit. Here it says that even Christ offering himself up as a sacrifice on the cross he did through the eternal spirit what Christ accomplished in his life was done through the Holy Spirit because we believe that Jesus though he was God emptied himself and took on the form of a servant.

And this meant he divested himself of his divine privileges. He was not omnipresent when he was on earth. He was not omniscient.

He was not omnipotent. He was not invisible. He was not immortal.

He was not invulnerable to temptation. All those things are said of God to be true but not true of Jesus. He wasn't everywhere at once.

He didn't know everything when he was on earth. He wasn't invisible. He didn't have limitless energy.

He could fall asleep because he got tired but the Lord never slumbers or sleeps according to Isaiah. The point here is that Jesus in becoming a man took on human handicaps human weaknesses to become a real man. But how did he do all those supernatural things? Well the Bible says through the Holy Spirit.

That's how he did it. Same as the apostles did. The apostles did miracles, raised the dead, cast out demons, stayed faithful until death.

How did they do that? Same way Jesus did through the Holy Spirit. He gave them his spirit so they could do that too. And that same spirit is given to us so that actually if we say well how can I live like Jesus when he was God and I'm not? I mean it's okay to say Jesus was tempted at all points like I am without sin but that's him.

I'm me. He's God. It's no fair to hold that up as the standard for me to live up to.

I'm not God. But in a sense, I mean Jesus was God in the flesh but the in the flesh part was very defining of his limitations that he had deliberately taken on himself in becoming a man so that he was susceptible to death. He was susceptible to temptation.

He was susceptible to pain. He did get tired and therefore the fact that he operated in obedience to God and in supernatural power and so forth through the Holy Spirit and the fact that he's given us his spirit means that the way he lived is not so such a high bar that we can't do it. But it's the Holy Spirit who lived that way in him and in the apostles and in us potentially.

So that he operated through the Holy Spirit is again affirmed here though not in a whole lot of places in the Bible. This place is one of the obvious cases. He offered himself through the spirit without spot to God and his blood will purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

And for this reason he is the mediator of a new covenant by means of death for the redemption of the transgressions so that those who are called may receive the promise of an eternal inheritance. Now verse 16 for where there is a testament and here he's going to make this play on words it could only work in Greek which is one reason we know that the author wrote originally in Greek here because this argument would never be made in another language. For where there's a testament in the Greek it's diateke.

The Greek word can mean a covenant but it can also mean a testament or will and he's going to use it as will though he's of course introduced the idea that there's a new covenant but he's now using the double meaning of the word diateke. This covenant also means a will so I'm going to make an illustration from wills but in most languages covenant and will are not the same word not in Hebrew not in Aramaic which shows that he didn't write this in those languages and frankly not even in not in English but in Greek this works he says where there is a testament meaning a covenant meaning a will in this particular illustration there must also of necessity be the death of the testator the one whose will it is for a testament or a will is in force after men are dead since it has no power at all while the testator is alive no legal power you can't say well I'm in my parents will they're living but I'm going to go claim my inheritance right now you can't do that you don't have any rights under your parents will until they're gone therefore not even the first covenant was dedicated without blood for when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law he took the blood of the calves and goats with the water of the temple and hyssop and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people saying this is the blood of the covenant which God has commanded you now he's quoting Exodus 24 verses 3 through 8 when the old covenant was inaugurated there were these sacrifices and this holy water and stuff and part of the ritual was that the book of the law and the people were sprinkled with the blood and with the water and

Moses said this is the blood of the covenant or this blood is the covenant now the language is the same as what Jesus used in the upper room according to some of the gospels when he said take and drink this cup is the new covenant or is the blood of the new covenant in one of the gospels it says the same kind of wording Moses used so Jesus established the new covenant also with blood but it was wine that he used because wine is a symbol of blood then likewise he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry and according to the law almost all things are purged with blood and without the shedding of blood there's no remission now the purpose of this whole section verses 16 through 22 is to point out why Jesus had to die there had to be blood the blood of bulls and goats was not adequate and human sacrifice isn't really okay either but a man can sacrifice himself God becoming a man can sacrifice himself you can't sacrifice your kid, your child but the child can lay his own life down if he wants to sometimes people like Richard Dawkins and the atheists they try to criticize Christianity as God killed his son what kind of a God is that? God sacrificed his son God is a child abuser God murdered his kid what kind of a God kills his kid? if a man killed his kid you'd think he was a monster and therefore God must be a monster because he killed his son they're not taking into consideration that God didn't just unilaterally kill Jesus Jesus was willing Jesus was an adult making an adult decision to offer himself to God offer himself it's like if your son goes to war and he falls on the live hand grenade so that his buddies are spared and he gives his life did you sacrifice him by approving him going to war? maybe you encouraged him to join the army did you kill your son? well what he did he did as an adult making a decision of his own you might have perhaps been proud of him or approved of it or might have encouraged it even but this isn't child abuse if you encourage your child to go do something and he ends up laying down his life for other people even if you know that's what he's going to do even if that's even the intention even if you and your son confer in advance and say you know someone's got to do this I'm thinking you should do it son and the son says I'm thinking I should too so he goes out and does the thing and saves the world or whatever at the cost of his own life this is not the father abusing his son this is the father making a sacrifice to himself he's making the sacrifice he's the one whose son is taken from him and killed but the son is doing it on purpose too this is not analogous to someone beating up their kid to death or something like that this is only the way that atheists and cynics like to try to misrepresent it the idea here is that Jesus nothing but the blood of Jesus would be enough to do the deed that had to be done and that meant he had to die just like a covenant or a will doesn't come into force without someone dying so likening a will to a covenant the covenant's instituted by the shedding of blood too by someone dying in the case of Moses it was the blood of bulls and goats sprinkled on the people and on the book and the tabernacle because in the law virtually everything is sprinkled with blood or else it's considered unclean in terms of instituting the rituals so he says without the shedding of blood there's no remission, without death the conditions for forgiveness of sins cannot be met therefore, verse 23 it was necessary that the copies of these things in the heavens should be purified with these that is, the tabernacle was the copy of the

thing in the heavens and the tabernacle was purified with these kinds of sacrifices animal sacrifices but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these you can use animal blood to purify something that's as mundane as an earthly building that symbolically represents spiritual things but if you're going to sanctify the actual spiritual things you need something far superior to that animal blood won't do the blood of God's Son qualifies and that's what he's saying if you're going to sanctify the heavenly things themselves not just that tabernacle that's a depiction of them but the real thing you're going to need a better sacrifice than the ones used in the Old Covenant for Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands which are the copies of the true but into heaven itself which is the true now to appear in the presence of God for us so what he's clearly saying is that Christ going into heaven is the antitype of the high priest going into the holy places made with hands going into the holy of holies on earth so Christ has gone into heaven just like the high priest did that means this is the day of atonement this is the Christ going into heaven inaugurates the day of atonement the fulfillment of the day of atonement it corresponds to the priest going into the tabernacle now in the tabernacle ritual the priest would do some things and then come out again and when he came out you know you know the thing was accomplished and so we see that Jesus has gone in but he hasn't come out yet and that means the period between the ascension of Christ and his second coming is the time which we're living in which is depicted ritually by John Kipper the priest has gone in but he's not out yet we're outside anticipating when the priest went into the holy of holies the people outside wondered if he's going to come out alive are we going to see this guy again you know if he if something was done wrong he could drop dead in there and you've no doubt heard the account of you know them putting a rope around his leg and leaving one end of it out outside the veil so if he dropped in they could pull him out they couldn't go in after him the Bible doesn't tell about that but that no doubt was a development in the Hebrew traditional ritual that they eventually someone thought of let's put a rope around his leg in case he drops dead I think the story is true I don't know where it comes from but it probably comes from rabbinic ritual traditions it doesn't come from the Bible but the idea is that going into the holy of holies unprepared is a dangerous thing you don't go before God if you're not if you haven't dotted every I and crossed every T properly and therefore since no one knew until the priest came out alive whether he had done everything right or not him coming out alive was a great relief to everybody while he was in there they were waiting with bated breath is God killing him has God rejected his sacrifice are we not going to be atoned but when he comes out safely it testifies okay it worked the atonement has been accepted God hasn't judged the man he's accepted this whole ritual this time again and that's where we're seeing here in this picture as being like the people waiting for our high priest to come back out of course we have assurance already that he didn't he's not gonna drop dead in heaven he died once for all so we don't have to wonder whether his sacrifice is adequate but we're still looking forward to him coming back out where we can see him again and as it's being said here it says in verse 25 and following not that he should offer himself often as the high priest enters the most holy place every year



with the blood of another then he would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world but now once at the end of the ages he has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself and as it is appointed for men once to die but after this the judgment so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many to those who eagerly wait for him he will appear a second time apart from sin for salvation now there's a sense in which we do have salvation now but there's another salvation we're anticipating when he comes back that is the ultimate fulfillment of our salvation when we're delivered completely from the fallen world completely from the presence of sin altogether we are saved in the sense that we're justified we are saved in the sense that we're becoming more like Christ which some people call being sanctified but there is yet the salvation of being glorified and we wait for that and that will happen when he comes back and not before so we eagerly wait for that that's something that we're really looking forward to and the emphasis here where it says it is appointed to men once to die obviously all Christians know that and they've quoted that verse and they've quoted a lot but they usually quote it out of context which isn't to say that the quotation doesn't work out of context I mean it's a true observation it's given as if we know this I mean it's axiomatic people die once since this salvation required that Jesus a man die and a man really only dies once we all know that well then he doesn't have to die again because it says men only die once now the problem is when people take that that statement it's appointed to men once to die and they absolutize it as if no one can die more than once and no one can die less than once they have to die once the reason this becomes an issue with some people is because there are a few people in the Old Testament who didn't die two to be precise Enoch and Elijah did not die and some people think they're going to die they missed their appointment and many people feel they've got to come back to earth these two men Moses and Elijah and they've got to die and so it's this very expectation that leads many people to associate Enoch and Elijah with the two witnesses in Revelation 11 they say well they've got to come back and die they're the two witnesses they say I don't see this as the case the Bible does say it's appointed unto men to die it's just making a general observation it's generally observed people die you don't expect to see them again they're not going to come back and die again but some did Lazarus did Jairus' daughter did the son of the widow of Nain did the lady's son that Elijah raised from the dead he came back again and he must have died again later in other words some did and some not at all because Paul said I show you a mystery we shall not all sleep but we shall all be changed Paul said in 1 Thessalonians 4 the dead in Christ shall rise first then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the air to meet the Lord in the air there will be people who don't die physically on earth to say it's appointed unto men and wants to die does not necessarily have to include people who are alive but based on a general observation people generally die only once and this is the case with Jesus as well he's no exception he's only going to die once he did it not going to die again but some people don't die at all rare cases and some people die more than once but that's not being denied by this statement it's a different point that he's trying to make and so I would suggest that in closing this session although the subject is not

finished because it continues in chapter 10 but in closing this session I just point out that the emphasis here has been to point out especially what the readers already knew about the ritual of Yom Kippur as it was practiced in the tabernacle and to try to draw parallels and contrasts to what Christ has done he is a high priest this is Yom Kippur for us this is the day of atonement or as it says in 2 Corinthians now is the appointed time today is the day of salvation day of atonement day of salvation we are living during the time that the high priest is in heaven making intercession for us in the Holy of Holies but he will come back again and so that is affirmed at the end of the chapter there's a few more points to make about his function as high priest in chapter 10 but these will await our next session