

**LESSON EIGHTEEN  
HEBREWS 9:23-28**

**DAY ONE**

**Read Hebrews 9:23-24 and Leviticus 16:16-19.**

1. In the life of Israel, where did God's presence dwell? Was His presence permanent or temporary?
2. Why was it necessary for the articles contained within the tabernacle (the copies of the things in the heavens) to be cleansed?
3. What effect did the cleansing have for the people of Israel?

**Read 1 Corinthians 6:19-20.**

4. Where does God's presence now dwell?
5. What enables God's presence to permanently indwell believers?
6. How does the knowledge that you are God's temple impact the way you feel about yourself?

**DAY TWO**

7. Heb. 9:24 speaks of Christ's appearance before the Father. What was the purpose of this?

**Read Heb. 9:25-26.**

8. How many times did the high priest offer sacrifices on behalf of himself and the people of Israel?

9. How many times did Christ offer a sacrifice?

10. According to Heb. 9:26, what did Christ's sacrifice accomplish?

**DAY THREE**

11. What do you think is the importance of the phrase "at the consummation of the ages" (other translations read "at the end of the ages") in Heb. 9:26?

**Read Luke 4:21 and Luke 24:44.**

12. In what way have the Scriptures been fulfilled in Christ?

13. How might the fulfillment of the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms be related to the "consummation of the ages"?

14. Does knowing that there was a specific appointed time for Christ to appear a first time, bolster your confidence that He will appear a second time?

## **DAY FOUR**

15. Heb. 9:26 says that Christ has been manifested, which can also be translated “appeared.” When does this “appearance” occur? What is accomplished?

16. Knowing that Christ has put away sin, do you live confidently that God looks at you through His Son and not your sins? Why or why not?

### **Read Romans 8:1-4.**

17. According to this passage, what does Christ’s sacrifice do to sin?

18. In light of this, how are we now to live our lives?

19. How easy is this for you to do?

## **DAY FIVE**

### **Read Heb. 9:27-28.**

20. What is your initial response to the term “judgment”?

### **Read 2 Corinthians 5:10, Titus 3:4-7, 2 Timothy 4:7-8, and 1 John 4:17.**

21. According to these verses, what is the judgment about?

22. How do you think God desires for us to respond to the idea of judgment?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
23. Heb. 9:28 says that Christ will appear a second time. How is this “second appearance” different from what is mentioned in Heb. 9:24?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
24. What is His purpose in Heb. 9:28? What is not His purpose? Does this bring you comfort?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
25. How do you think the idea of salvation is related to Christ’s second appearance?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
26. Who are those who eagerly await Christ? Would you describe yourself in this way?

**LESSON EIGHTEEN SCRIPTURE****Hebrews 9:23-28**

<sup>23</sup> Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. <sup>24</sup> For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a *mere* copy of the one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; <sup>25</sup> nor was it that He would offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood that is not his own. <sup>26</sup> Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. <sup>27</sup> And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this *comes* judgment, <sup>28</sup> so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without *reference to* sin, to those who eagerly await Him.

## DAY ONE

**Hebrews 9:23-24** <sup>23</sup> Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. <sup>24</sup> For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a *mere* copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;

**Leviticus 16:16-19** <sup>16</sup> "He shall make atonement for the holy place, because of the impurities of the sons of Israel and because of their transgressions in regard to all their sins; and thus he shall do for the tent of meeting which abides with them in the midst of their impurities. <sup>17</sup> "When he goes in to make atonement in the holy place, no one shall be in the tent of meeting until he comes out, that he may make atonement for himself and for his household and for all the assembly of Israel. <sup>18</sup> "Then he shall go out to the altar that is before the LORD and make atonement for it, and shall take some of the blood of the bull and of the blood of the goat and put it on the horns of the altar on all sides. <sup>19</sup> "With his finger he shall sprinkle some of the blood on it seven times and cleanse it, and from the impurities of the sons of Israel consecrate it.

**1 Corinthians 6:19-20** <sup>19</sup> Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? <sup>20</sup> For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

## DAY TWO

**Hebrews 9:25-26** <sup>25</sup> nor was it that He would offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood that is not his own. <sup>26</sup> Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

## DAY THREE

**Luke 4:21** <sup>21</sup> And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

**Luke 24:44** <sup>44</sup> Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."

## DAY FOUR

**Romans 8:1-4** <sup>1</sup> Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. <sup>2</sup> For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. <sup>3</sup> For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God *did*: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and *as an offering* for sin,

He condemned sin in the flesh, <sup>4</sup> so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

## DAY FIVE

**Hebrews 9:27-28** <sup>27</sup> And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this *comes* judgment, <sup>28</sup> so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without *reference to sin*, to those who eagerly await Him.

**2 Corinthians 5:10** <sup>10</sup> For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

**Titus 3:4-7** <sup>4</sup> But when the kindness of God our Savior and *His* love for mankind appeared, <sup>5</sup> He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, <sup>6</sup> whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, <sup>7</sup> so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to *the* hope of eternal life.

**2 Timothy 4:7-8** <sup>7</sup> I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; <sup>8</sup> in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

**1 John 4:17** <sup>17</sup> By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world.

## LESSON EIGHTEEN COMMENTARY HEBREWS 9:23-28

### Hebrews 9:23-24

In Heb. 9:23-28, several contrasts are made. In Heb. 9:23-24, Christ does not enter the earthly sanctuary to provide temporary cleansing as the high priest would, rather He enters the heavenly sanctuary to provide permanent cleansing of the internal environment of humankind. He is able to do this because of His unique sacrifice and His unique relationship with God the Father. In Leviticus 16 we read that on the Day of Atonement the high priest not only made offerings for his sins and the sins of the people, but he also had to atone for the altar and for the Holy Place. The tabernacle was defiled by the sins of the Israelites, and in order for God's presence to dwell there, it had to be cleansed. Heb. 9:23 tells us that it was necessary for those things in the tabernacle to be cleansed, but that the heavenly things also had to be cleansed with a better sacrifice. There are two different ways to understand the cleansing in the heavenly realm. The first is that in order for the earthly tabernacle to be an accurate reflection of the heavenly tabernacle, the sins of humanity that defiled the earthly tabernacle, also defiled the heavenly tabernacle. Christ's decisive act of atonement provided cleansing in both realms. William Lane writes that because defilement was an impediment to genuine access to God, it was necessary that a decisive purgation that was comprehensive in scope, reach to the heavenly things themselves.<sup>1</sup>

Another view is offered by F. F. Bruce.<sup>2</sup> He suggests that the idea of cleansing reaches back to Heb. 9:14 where that which needed to be cleansed was the human conscience. The cleansing that actually takes place in the heavenly realm is the spiritual cleansing of humanity. His argument is that because a Holy God cannot dwell with unholiness, a necessary cleansing had to take place. In the Old Testament, the cleansing of the tabernacle made it possible for God's presence to indwell the Holy of Holies. In the New Testament, the cleansing of the human conscience enables God to indwell the human heart. Just as the high priest provided atonement for the earthly sanctuary, Jesus provides atonement for the human sanctuary which is indwelt by God, and this act of cleansing must of necessity take place in the spiritual, heavenly realm. Regardless of which view is taken, the point that stands is that Jesus did enter directly into heaven itself, to appear in the presence of God and His specific purpose was to offer His blood which would be the means through which humanity is reconciled to God. The priest enters a tabernacle made with hands, which represents the earthly, impermanent system. Jesus enters heaven itself and stands directly in the presence of God as the culmination of His work. His appearance in heaven is the final word regarding the old covenant, the sacrificial system, and our sinfulness. His appearance before God in heaven means that the ability exists for man and God to once again have uninterrupted fellowship. And God the Father is satisfied with what Jesus offers.

<sup>1</sup> William L. Lane, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 47b, *Hebrews: 9-13*, 247.

<sup>2</sup> F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 228-9.

**9:25-26**

In Heb. 9:25-26, a second contrast is made. Once again, the permanent nature of Christ's sacrifice and the temporal nature of the sacrifices of the high priest are juxtaposed. Christ does not offer himself year by year as the high priest does, and with the blood of another. By inference, he offers Himself only once. He brings His own blood as the sacrificial offering that is to cleanse all those who trust in what He has done. If Christ needed to make numerous offerings for sin, He would have to do so from the beginning of time in order to atone for each individual sin of humanity. In Heb. 9:26, the author uses three expressions of time to make the clarification that Christ's one sacrifice was all that was necessary: "now," "once," and "the consummation of the ages." All three of these terms make the point that the particular moment in time that Christ died on the cross was the fulfillment of everything that was predicted, promised, and foreshadowed in the Old Testament. It was the defining moment in history wherein Christ has appeared, has manifested Himself to humanity, in order to put away, nullify, or remove sin through His own sacrifice. The consummation of the ages simply means that point in time in which God's promised Messiah accomplished the plan of God through His offering on the cross.

And what a marvelous plan that was accomplished. All of the sacrifices of the Old Testament could only put off God's judgment until the next sin, which required another sacrifice. What Christ accomplished was the "putting away of sin" through His sacrifice. Christ's sacrifice strikes at a deeper level. It does not simply address the outward manifestation of sin, but the sin nature itself. Christ addresses the wicked and deceitful heart that moves humanity to sinful expression, whereas the sacrifices of the priesthood can only address the external expressions. One of Jesus' main complaints with the religious leaders of the day was that all of their regulations and observances were only able to cleanse the outside of the cup. Jesus said that inside they were full of lawlessness, self-indulgence, and hypocrisy. An internal cleansing is necessary in order for the external behavior to change, but external behavior can cause confusion concerning a person's internal state of being (Matt. 23:25-28). We can fool ourselves into thinking that we do not need a sacrifice for our sins because they really are not that bad. We do good things, we are kind to people, and we have the outside of our lives cleaned up. What happens internally however, is under the scrutiny of God. It is God who rescues us from our own deceitful heart and forever buries the issue of sin. That is not to say that we do not continue to struggle through this life with selfish desires, improper behavior, or wicked thoughts, but it is to say that all of our transgressions are covered under the blood of Christ once we accept His sacrifice that was made on our behalf. Unless we are blatantly rejecting Christ's sacrifice, we are as close to God as we can ever be. This assurance is what leads our author to the next subject.

**Hebrews 9:27-28**

Heb. 9:27-28 provides a third comparison between the earthly and the heavenly. This comparison is framed by what happens after "men" die and what happens after Christ died. The similarity is that for every human being, there will be one death. Christ

experienced death and in this, He identifies with humanity. What happens on the other side of that death however, is radically different. Humankind awaits the judgment of God, whereas Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father waiting for the appropriate time to mete out God's justice. The author of Hebrews brings up the subject of judgment, but he does little to explain it. Later in Heb. 10:27, the subject of judgment comes up again, but it is in relation to those who have rejected the sacrifice of Christ. Our author has spent a significant amount of time clarifying the implications of Christ's sacrificial work as the fulcrum of the Christian faith. To reject the sacrifice of Christ is to stand under a terrifying judgment. This is not however the state of those to whom he is writing. The author of Hebrews describes his audience as those who eagerly await their Savior. They can eagerly await the appearance of their Savior because of the knowledge that Christ has paid the price for their sins.

In Heb. 9:28, the author of Hebrews relates Christ's appearance on the earth to His role at His return as ruler and judge. Christ's death on the cross has resulted in the putting away of sin for mankind. The person who trusts in Christ is assured that there is no more condemnation for sin, because Christ already bore the penalty. Christ's first appearance was in reference to sin. His sole purpose was to explain the Father's heart for humanity by providing the final atonement for sin through His death. Christ will appear once again however, and this appearance will be to accomplish a completely different purpose. There is no need for another sacrifice, but for there is a judgment for the believer that involves providing an account for what we have done with our lives (Rom. 14:10-12). Numerous Scriptures speak to the separation of believers and non-believers and the various judgments appropriate to both (Matt. 25:32-46). It is not the concern of the author to dwell upon this, but rather he focuses upon the expectant attitude of those who have trusted in Christ. There is a coming judgment. Believers and non-believers alike will stand before Christ to give an account of their lives. The difference between the two is that believers are covered by the blood of Christ and they will experience eternal enjoyment of God's presence. Those who choose not to trust in Christ's sacrificial offering will experience eternal separation from God. The focus though is on the inheritance granted to the believer. There is an eagerness, and enjoyment, a celebration of the realized "rest" of God.

The question to ask ourselves is how we respond to the idea of Christ's judgment. If we respond in fear because we have not trusted that Christ dealt with the issue of sin on the cross, the answer is simple: trust Him and accept the eternal forgiveness that He offers. If we have already done this and we still respond in fear, then we are operating in our Christian lives under a huge misconception. When we come to Christ, we receive forgiveness and God proclaims us as valuable to Him as His own Son Jesus. Often though, we live out our lives expecting God to punish us, to be disappointed in us, feeling like we do not live up to His expectations of us, and fearful of approaching Him because we are laboring under guilt, worthlessness, and shame. If this is the case, then the book of Hebrews is written to us. God wants us to thoroughly understand how delighted He is in us. This is made evident by the extent to which God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit have gone to declare the truth of our worth. Young children, if they are raised in a relatively healthy home, implicitly understand this

concept. When they are left in another's care for a time and their parent returns to get them, they eagerly run to greet mom or dad, safe in the awareness that they will be met with love, acceptance, and warmth. If a heavenly parent can instill this sense of belonging in a child, how much more does God desire to instill this sense of love, acceptance, and delight in His own children? The judgment for believers is nothing to fear because we trust in the quality of relationship we have with our perfect, intended Father, which was made available to us through the obedience of the Son, and woven into our hearts through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Our eager expectation is met with perfect love.