



INTRODUCTION

Hebrews 9:15-28

Blood is meaningful. The precedent of blood shed to cover sin and death was established with Adam and Eve. After they sinned in the Garden, they attempted to cover themselves with fig leaves, but God sacrificed animals to cover their nakedness (Genesis 3:7, 21). Or consider the sacrificed Passover Lamb, whose blood was placed on the doorway so that the death angel would “pass over” the Israelite’s homes, sparing the eldest son (Exodus 12:21–27). The Law of Moses was replete with blood sacrifices for sin and, in the midst of that Law, God declares:

For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life. (Leviticus 17:11–12)

The shedding of blood brings atonement, the forgiveness of sin. Under the old covenant the ritual cleansing was real and effective as far as it went, even though it could not achieve perfection or cleanse the worshiper’s conscience. But now our Hebrews’ author exclaims, “How much more will the blood of Christ purify (9:14)!”

He goes on to describe the necessity of Christ’s death. There is some dispute among scholars about the language the writer used in Hebrews 9:16–17—the Greek word *diathēkē* can be translated either testament or covenant—but whichever translation one chooses, the point of the Scripture is to show that the testator/covenant-maker must die for the testament/covenant to be ratified.¹ Bottom line: the new testament/covenant is put in force because of Christ’s death.

His death fully consummates the old covenant that was never entirely satisfied by the blood of animals and His blood inaugurates the new covenant by thoroughly redeeming, delivering, liberating—forgiving—us!²

Watch It  Bible Principles

Watch Bible Principles #14; Heb. 9:6-28 www.villagebible.church/bibleprinciples

Open it

1. The saying, “There’s nothing like the real thing,” can be applied to many different products that we use and consume. Name one or two products (food, hardware, accessories, etc.) that you believe the generic version is not as good as the original, name brand version.

¹ Allen, David L. (2010), In The New American Commentary: Hebrews (p. 481). Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group.

²<http://www.prestonwood.org/docs/default-source/Bible-Fellowship-Leader-Resources/hebrews/week-14---hebrews-9-15-28.pdf>

Apply it

Jesus shatters any absolute dissociation of commandments and love.

He says, “If you *love* me, you will keep my *commandments*. . . . Whoever has my *commandments* and keeps them, he it is who *loves* me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father” (John 14:15, 21). “If you keep my *commandments*, you will abide in my *love*, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love” (John 15:10).

Thinking in terms of commandments and obedience did not stop Jesus from enjoying the love of his Father. And he expects that our thinking of him as one who *commands* will not jeopardize our love relationship with him either.

This is crucial to realize because the new covenant relationship that we have with God through Jesus Christ is not a covenant without commandments. The basic difference between the old covenant offered by God through the Mosaic law and the new covenant offered by God through Christ is not that one had commandments and the other doesn’t.³

The key differences are that (1) the Messiah, Jesus, has come and shed the blood of the new covenant (Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 10:29) so that henceforth he is the Mediator of a new covenant, so that all saving, covenant-keeping faith is conscious faith in him; (2) the old covenant has therefore become “obsolete” (Hebrews 8:13) and does not govern the new-covenant people of God (2 Corinthians 3:7–18; Romans 7:4, 6; Galatians 3:19); and (3) the promised new heart and the enabling power of the Holy Spirit have been given through faith.

8. Are you glad you live under the new covenant? Why or why not?

9. Why do you hold onto, that is believe and practice, some parts of the old covenant and discard others? (Take a moment to list parts of the law that you keep and parts that you do not keep.) What about the old covenant can never be discarded?

³ <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/whats-new-about-the-new-covenant>

In one sense, the Bible is a very “bloody” book. Think of all the sacrificial animals whose blood was shed under the Old Covenant. Think of the importance that is placed on the “blood” of our Lord Jesus that was shed at Calvary. The shedding of animal blood did not seem to trouble those who lived in Old Testament times, but we cannot assume the same response today. Can you imagine the outcry of the animal rights activists if they had lived in Israel in days gone by?

While there are a number of folks who would feel uneasy reading about the shedding of blood in the Bible, there is a great deal of inconsistency (some might even call it hypocrisy) regarding such matters. For example, think of all the television programs that now feature corpses in the process of an autopsy. They seem to delight in revealing all the inner organs of the human body. Many of those who strive to save the whales, dolphins, polar bears and spotted owls are silent about the bloody murder of innocent children by such methods as partial birth abortion. Why don't they show these bloody deaths on television, or react with horror knowing that they are performed many times a day?

Well aware that the subject matter of our text may not be popular, it is nonetheless important. Indeed, it is a matter of life and death, eternal life or death. As our author says, “without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness” (Hebrews 9:22). So let us pursue the subject of shedding blood (death) carefully, realizing how important this is to God, and to men.⁴

10. Blood - the fountain of life, is central in both the old and the new covenants. What is the blood doing in these passages?

Exodus 24:1-8

Leviticus 17:10-12

Matthew 26:26-29

Ephesians 1:3-10

Revelation 12:7-12

⁴ <https://bible.org/seriespage/21-dealing-death-or-worlds-greatest-bailout-hebrews-915-28>

11. How do you feel when you see blood? What can blood teach us about the seriousness of sin?

12. Imagine an unbeliever asks you the following questions: “Why do Christians obsess over blood? How can the blood of a man who lived 2,000 years ago help you?” How would you answer them?

Because of His work of atonement, our Lord has become the mediator of the New Covenant. The remaining verses of chapter 9 focus on the “better sacrifice,” the shedding of our Lord’s precious blood at Calvary. It is by this better sacrifice that our sins are dealt with once for all. These verses show us that our Lord’s death was necessary and that it offers salvation to sinners who are destined for judgment and eternal torment after death. These verses spell out the gospel and God’s only means for forgiveness and eternal life. There are no more wonderful words for the sinner who wishes (by God’s doing) to draw near to God.⁵

13. How often do you think about your own death? How does the thought of being judged by God for the entirety of your life make you feel?

⁵ <https://bible.org/seriespage/21-dealing-death-or-worlds-greatest-bailout-hebrews-915-28>

I had an interesting and rather intense conversation with a man who believed in Jesus and confessed Him as Lord and Savior, but also believed in reincarnation. The verse that I kept coming back to was Hebrews 9:27. I could not understand how this man claimed to find comfort in the idea of coming back again and again and again after death in order to be better and grow closer to God. There was no comfort for me to be found in the idea of forgetting your life and starting a new one without any clue of where you were before.

But as we discussed the after life, I begin to realize that in some ways verse 27 could be sobering and uncomfortable as well. Reincarnation offers another chance to get things right, whereas we are told by God that we have one life and one life only. There are no do overs! And after this life ends we have to give an account of what we did with our days! This can be terrifying as Hebrews 10:31 declares - "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

14. Christ was sacrificed "once for all" for your sin, and He did indeed suffer. (Mark 8:31; 1 Peter 2:21, 3:18) How does the knowledge that Christ suffered for your sin aid you in fighting against sin in your life.

15. Have you ever sat down and meditated on your sin? I am not talking about dwelling on past sin that has been forgiven, but honestly asking the Holy Spirit to reveal current sin in your heart and life. Do it right now - take some time to pray and jot down any sin the Holy Spirit brings to your mind:

Listen carefully to what Paul (and the author of Hebrews) is saying about the Old Covenant. The Old Covenant and its Aaronic priestly sacrificial system did not put away the guilt and punishment for the sins of the ancient Israelites; it only put off the day of reckoning. Let me seek to illustrate this in monetary terms. Let's suppose that the penalty for Israel's sins was assessed in financial terms. Every sin put the sinner and the nation deeper into debt, and neither the individual nor the nation had any means of repaying their debt. On the annual Day of Atonement, a sacrifice was made for the "national sin debt" of the Israelites. That debt was not paid off; it was merely put off for another year. Israel's "spiritual loan" was extended another year. And so each year the nation's sin debt grew larger and larger. It was not until the coming of Messiah and His death on the cross of Calvary that the debt was finally paid off. This was truly the world's greatest bailout. A debt that men could not pay was paid by God in the person of Messiah. The payment was not monetary; it was a spiritual debt, and it was paid off by our Lord's death – by the sacrificial shedding of His blood on the cross.

Just who are the recipients of this massive bailout? The saving work of Jesus on the cross of Calvary applies to the sins of those who lived under the Old Covenant as well as to those living since the first coming of our Lord. In other words, anyone whose sins are forgiven and who inherits eternal life does so because of Christ's saving death and resurrection.⁶

16. Are you waiting for Christ to return? How should you wait for Him and what will you do while you wait for Him?

⁶ <https://bible.org/seriespage/21-dealing-death-or-worlds-greatest-bailout-hebrews-915-28>

This study was compiled and questions were written by Pastor Steve Lombardo (Plano Campus)—www.villagebible.church/smallgroup