



Open it

1. Think of a time when someone did something bad to you. How did it make you feel? What consequences did you want that person to face because of what they did? Did they have to face any consequences?

Daily Devotions

Day 1

Today's Theme: Explore It

Read Hebrews 9:15–28

2. What is offered to us because of Jesus' sacrifice?
3. What things under the first covenant were covered by blood?
4. What is required for the forgiveness of sins?
5. The things required in the law were copies of what?
6. What did Jesus' once for all sacrifice do?
7. What will Jesus do when He appears a second time?

Day 2

Today's Theme: Sin = Death

Read Hebrews 9:15–22

These verses talk a whole lot about death and blood and sacrifices. They kind of paints a gross, gory picture of the consequence of sin. We can be thankful today that when we show up to church we aren't greeted with an altar where your pastors are regularly having to make sacrifices for your sins. But that would have been a normal thing for the people of Israel. To us it seems gross and it seems so violent and it leaves us sometimes wondering why. Why would God require innocent animals to be sacrificed because His people sinned?

The simple, yet not easy, answer to that question is summed up in Hebrews 9:22 which says, "without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins." To understand this, we have to go all the way back to the beginning of the Bible when Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden. When they sinned what happened? They suffered great consequences, like being separated from God. Jesus said in His high priestly prayer, "And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent."¹ That means that to have eternal life is to know God, which means that to be separated from God is death.

So why all the sacrifices then? Well God had a plan for how we could be restored to a right relationship with Him, and that plan involved someone else being a substitute for us — to take our punishment of death in our place. All the sacrifices were meant to remind the people of these two things:

- **Sin brings death.** Each time an innocent animal lost its life in their place, it was a reminder for the people that the consequence for their sin brought about death.
- **God provides a substitute.** The plan was never for the animal sacrifices to be the final substitute. Instead they acted as a reminder that God would one day send the ultimate substitute, the Lamb of God Jesus to make a final sacrifice that would remove sin completely and offer salvation from sin and eternal life — to know God.

So all the blood and all the sacrifices were ultimately there to point forward to when Jesus would come and offer Himself up as the true and ultimate sacrifice.

8. Spend a minute reflecting on your own sin. Do you feel your sin is deserving of such a great consequence?

9. How would you feel if you had to watch an innocent animal be sacrificed because of your sin? How does it make you feel to know that Jesus sacrificed His own life in your place?

¹ John 17:3

Day 3

Today's Theme: Originals and Copies

Read Hebrews 9:23–24

Think of one place anywhere in the world that you would absolutely love to visit and see with your own eyes. Would seeing a picture of that place be good enough to fill that desire to visit it yourself? Probably not! I remember a time that I got to go visit the Rocky Mountains out west and I was so blown away by the majesty of the mountains. I took some pictures of some of my favorite views while we were out hiking but when I came home and showed those pictures to people who weren't there I remember saying, "The pictures don't even do it justice." The real thing is far greater than a picture could ever portray.

God had set up all these regulations and requirements for His people to worship Him in the Law. They were to build the tabernacle in such a particular way, they were to perform specific sacrifices and specific times for specific purposes. There was so much detail given to how God's people were supposed to worship Him. But no matter how holy and reverent each of these things were, our passage tells us that they were meant to be copies, or pictures, of the heavenly counterparts.

Jesus didn't just go into the earthly holy places, Jesus entered into heaven itself — into the very presence of God! Jesus didn't offer sacrifices of animals that needed to be repeated over and over, but instead Jesus offered one better sacrifice — Himself — that would take away sins forever! In Jesus, we see the fullness of everything the copies pointed to!

10. Why do you think God had His people worship Him through all these "copies" of the heavenly things?

11. Why is it important that Jesus didn't just do things like all the other priests did? Why is it important that Jesus entered into heaven itself? Why is it important that Jesus' sacrifice was different and better than those of animals?

Day 4

Today's Theme: Jesus Saves

Read Hebrews 9:25–28

Not only did Jesus go to a better place to mediate on our behalf, but He went offering a better sacrifice as well! The Jewish priests in the Old Testament would offer sacrifices over and over again to cover their own sins and the sins of the people. Some of these sacrifices would happen on a daily basis while some happened repeatedly each year. The fact that these sacrifices had to be repeated at all demonstrated their own inadequacy to fully deal with sin. As a matter of fact, these sacrifices under the Law acted more as a covering for sin. So the pattern would repeat itself — the people sinned, the priests sacrificed, the people sinned, the priests sacrificed, the people sinned, the priests sacrificed. Over and over and over.

But Jesus didn't have to offer repeated sacrifices or else these verses say that He would have needed to be sacrificing Himself repeatedly ever since people sinned in the first place! Instead, Jesus offered one sacrifice that didn't just cover sins, it removed sins for those who would believe. What does that mean that Jesus removed sin?

Well, it doesn't mean that we don't struggle with sin anymore. We struggle with sin every day! What it does mean is that Jesus forever removed the guilt or consequence of sin from us as well as its power over us. That means that nothing can force you to sin anymore if you are a believer! In Jesus, you have all the power and authority to say no to temptation and refuse to sin.

To sum it up, Jesus' sacrifice that brought about the removal of your sins changes your life completely and gives you the FREEDOM to follow Him in obedience every day!

12. How is Jesus' sacrifice better and different from the sacrifices made according to the Law?

13. What does Jesus' sacrifice mean practically for you today?

14. Are there any particular sins that you find yourself struggling with regularly? What is making them so difficult to fight? How does Jesus' sacrifice help you find strength and victory over this sin?