

Preaching verse by verse through the books of Scripture guarantees that the themes of Scripture will be emphasized in the same proportion with which they are addressed in Scripture. Hebrews is emphasizing a few key points: the greatness of Jesus, the superiority of the new covenant, and the importance of faith. In emphasizing the importance of the new covenant, the author addresses the issue of a better blood sacrifice. It is important, in our culture that downplays sin, to explain why this was necessary and its significance. The idea of blood sacrifice is often belittled as archaic and crude. I agree that it was disgusting in a physical sense. It was meant to be ugly and disgusting, for the idea being communicated is that sin results in death (Romans 6:23). It is costlier than we imagine (John 3:36). The enemy of our soul downplays the devastating results of sin.

When we sing about the power of the blood of Jesus, or being washed in the blood of the Lamb of God, we proclaim that the great sacrifice that saved our souls was the shedding of Jesus' blood to death that paid our sin debt. This means we recognize our sins had indebted us to God. Those who refuse the conviction of the Holy Spirit and won't acknowledge their sins think this is unnecessary and even detrimental. What we see as liberating and joyful, they see as demeaning and limiting. Evil and sin are two of the most empirically verifiable realities of human life. When a culture mocks the idea of sin, it will either meet with revival or its own internal demise.

The author of Hebrews doesn't address this issue because the readers understand sin and its consequences. King David addressed it in one of his psalms of repentance. In Psalm 32:2 he wrote of the blessedness, or we could say happiness, of the one whose sins are no longer counted against him or her, and whose spirit is not deceitful. We can lie to ourselves about our own sins. One of our brothers pointed out one of the most common lies is, "It's not hurting anyone." Another is, "God doesn't really care." Even before we intentionally sin, the attitude of thinking, "God will forgive me; He understands my weakness," is sinful. Our sin nature doesn't want to admit the seriousness of it, and that is why the picture we needed was that of life blood poured out. It reminded the people again and again, sin results in death. That is one reason we have communion. That is the reason we ended last week's sermon picturing ourselves laying our hands on the head of Christ on the cross and confessing our sins (1 John 1:7). Our sins were laid on Him that we might have life. It's ugly and brutal because that is what sin deserves. Anything less would be to minimize evil and its results. We need a mediator between sinners and a holy God.

*<sup>15</sup> Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant.* Hebrews 9:15 (ESV) The author had just asked that if those saints of the Old Testament were purified by looking forward in faith through the animal sacrifices, how much more would the blood of Jesus be acceptable to God and purify us from dead works to serve the living God (Hebrews 9:13,14)? Therefore, the covenant, or we could say the will, that Jesus mediates

**Commented [PW1]: Romans 6:23 (ESV)**

<sup>23</sup> For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Commented [PW2]: John 3:36 (ESV)**

<sup>36</sup> Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

**Commented [PW3]: Psalm 32:2 (ESV)**

<sup>2</sup> Blessed is the man against whom the LORD counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

**Commented [PW4]: 1 John 1:7 (ESV)**

<sup>7</sup> But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

**Commented [PW5]: Hebrews 9:13-14 (ESV)**

<sup>13</sup> For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh,

<sup>14</sup> how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

enables us to receive the promised eternal inheritance. That's because His death has redeemed us from the sins committed under the first covenant. Notice that Jesus' death redeems those who lived in the past under that first covenant from their sins. The blood of the animals didn't do away with the sins. The act of faith merely covered sins and pointed forward to Jesus' blood that was acceptable justice to God. The promises we inherit are those mentioned earlier in Jeremiah's prophecy. We have the law written in our hearts and minds, and knowing the Lord (Hebrews 8:10-12).

But for a will, which is the same Hebrew word as "covenant," to be enacted, there had to be a death. <sup>16</sup> For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established. <sup>17</sup> For a will takes effect only at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive. Hebrews 9:16-17 The author is taking on the double meaning of covenant. This shows us that the multiple meanings of words in inspired Scripture are significant. I've always seen that to be the case. In verse 22, he goes back to the basic reason that blood is required, but here he uses the fact that a will isn't in effect until the one who wrote the will has died. Someone had to die for the new will begin functioning. Jesus' death inaugurated the application of the will, which is the new covenant and its promises. Some Bibles will give you cross-references back to the promises of Abraham, but remember, the author has already made it clear that the new covenant has better promises than the Sinai covenant (Hebrews 8:6). It is not referring to the promises to Abraham.

The better promises include the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. We who are in Christ can't really imagine all that we have inherited (1 Corinthians 2:9). It is incomparably greater than the largest inheritance any man has ever left his child. It's as superior to financial wealth as gold is to paper. It is eternal. You can't use it up. It doesn't wear out. It only gets better as you increasingly walk in the wealth of it. One reason to be ever joyful is recognizing the abundance that is ours in Christ Jesus.

<sup>18</sup> Therefore not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood. <sup>19</sup> For when every commandment of the law had been declared by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, <sup>20</sup> saying, "This is the blood of the covenant that God commanded for you." Hebrews 9:18-20 Covenants in the old testament were sealed with blood. It implied that the one who broke the covenant would face death. Remember how God appeared to Abraham and had several animals cut in half with one half on one side in a row, and half on the other side (Genesis 15:9-10, 17). This was a traditional way of making a covenant of unity between heads of tribes. Each leader would walk around each side in a figure eight fashion. The blood of the animals would be on their sandals and splash up on their robes. They were promising with their lives to be for each other. If they broke the covenant, their blood should be spilled like these animals.

However, in the case of Abraham, God put Abraham in a trance and God alone went around the animals (Genesis 15:12). God was saying that Abraham and his clan

**Commented [PW6]: Hebrews 8:10-12 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

<sup>11</sup> And they shall not teach, each one his neighbor and each one his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest.

<sup>12</sup> For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more."

**Commented [PW7]: Hebrews 8:10-12 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

<sup>11</sup> And they shall not teach, each one his neighbor and each one his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest.

<sup>12</sup> For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more."

**Commented [PW8]: Hebrews 8:6 (ESV)**

<sup>6</sup> But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises.

**Commented [PW9]: 1 Corinthians 2:9 (ESV)**

<sup>9</sup> But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him"—

**Commented [PW10]: Genesis 15:9-10 (ESV)**

<sup>9</sup> He said to him, "Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon."

<sup>10</sup> And he brought him all these, cut them in half, and laid each half over against the other. But he did not cut the birds in half.

**Commented [PW11]: Genesis 15:17 (ESV)**

<sup>17</sup> When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces.

**Commented [PW12]: Genesis 15:12 (ESV)**

<sup>12</sup> As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. And behold, dreadful and great darkness fell upon him.

couldn't keep the covenant being made. God would keep it and give Himself for Abraham's family's failure to keep it. That is just what He did on the cross.

These verses show that the covenant on Sinai was also sealed with blood, the blood of bulls and goats. The people agreed to keep God's laws. Moses was commanded to sprinkle the altar, the book of the law, and the people with the blood of the animals and water, using scarlet yarn and hyssop. This is found in Exodus 24 (Exodus 24:3-8) and Numbers 19 (Numbers 19:6,17). Again, this is not a pretty picture. It points to the need for there to be some mediation between God and sinful man. Sin cannot be ignored by a holy God. We find the blood, water, and hyssop in the description of the cross (John 19:29, 34). I shared a few weeks ago about the scarlet yarn and how it was a sign to the priests of the end of that sacrificial system for atonement.

*<sup>21</sup>And in the same way he sprinkled with the blood both the tent and all the vessels used in worship. <sup>22</sup>Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.* Hebrews 9:21-22 The whole system of worship and all the tools and structures were blood sprinkled. The beautiful white linen exterior and priestly robes were blood splattered. Everywhere they looked in their tabernacle you would see blood stains. They couldn't get away from the sight of blood and the message it conveyed. **Sin results in death!** There needs to be payment for sin. Justice must be served on us for our sins or on a sinless Savior on our behalf. Either is costlier than we want to think about. The only exception to blood was for the poor who could not afford an animal sacrifice (Leviticus 5:11). The saying quoted here, "Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins," was familiar to Jews of Jesus' day (TB Yoma A and TB Zebahim 6a; Leviticus 17:11).

*<sup>23</sup> Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.* Hebrews 9:23 If blood was so essential for the copy, what then of the heavenly reality? What are the heavenly things that need to be purified? The earthly things were parts of the tabernacle and the instruments. Now, you are the tabernacle of God, and you are its instruments. You are purified by the blood of Jesus presented to God on your behalf. That blood made you right with God and began a process of experientially sanctifying your heart and mind (1 Peter 1:2, 19). You are the temple of living stones (1 Peter 2:5). You are the dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit (Ephesians 2:22). Remain in Him and He will remain in you (John 15:4).

*<sup>24</sup> For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.*

*<sup>25</sup> Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, <sup>26</sup> for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.* Hebrews 9:24-26 Jesus, our Messiah, ascended to the heavenly reality of which the temple on earth was just a shadow. He appeared in the presence of the Maker of heaven and earth, God the Father, on our behalf. He sprinkled His own blood on the mercy seat, which is God's throne, between

**Commented [PW13]: Exodus 24:3-8 (ESV)**

<sup>3</sup> Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the rules. And all the people answered with one voice and said, "All the words that the LORD has spoken we will do."

<sup>4</sup> And Moses wrote down all the words of the LORD. He rose early in the morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel.

<sup>5</sup> And he sent young men of the people of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the LORD.

<sup>6</sup> And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he threw against the altar.

<sup>7</sup> Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it in the hearing of the people. And they said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient."

<sup>8</sup> And Moses took the blood and threw it on the people and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant that t... [1]

**Commented [PW14]: Numbers 19:6 (ESV)**

<sup>6</sup> And the priest shall take cedarwood and hyssop and scarlet yarn, and throw them into the fire burning the heifer.

**Commented [PW15]: Numbers 19:17 (ESV)**

<sup>17</sup> For the unclean they shall take some ashes of the burnt sin offering, and fresh water shall be added in a vessel.

**Commented [PW16]: John 19:29 (ESV)**

<sup>29</sup> A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth.

**Commented [PW17]: John 19:34 (ESV)**

<sup>34</sup> But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water.

**Commented [PW18]: Leviticus 5:11 (ESV)**

<sup>11</sup> "But if he cannot afford two turtledoves or two pigeons, then he shall bring as his offering for the sin that he has committed a tenth of an ephah of fine... [2]

**Commented [PW19]: Leviticus 17:11 (ESV)**

<sup>11</sup> For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement fo... [3]

**Commented [PW20]: 1 Peter 1:2 (ESV)**

<sup>2</sup> according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jef... [4]

**Commented [PW21]: 1 Peter 1:19 (ESV)**

<sup>19</sup> but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

**Commented [PW22]: 1 Peter 2:5 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer... [5]

**Commented [PW23]: Ephesians 2:22 (ESV)**

<sup>22</sup> In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

**Commented [PW24]: John 15:4 (ESV)**

<sup>4</sup> Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me.

God and the law within the ark of the covenant so that the law would no longer condemn us. The price for our sins was paid with His own life. The innocent One paid the debt of all the guilty ones who receive His gift of forgiveness by faith (John 1:29). That includes those under the old covenant who looked forward in faith and us today who look back in faith to that merciful act of Jesus for us. All the sins of mankind, past, present, and future were laid on Jesus.

**His act was a once and for all act.** It is important for us to understand this, for it nullifies many false concepts. Unlike the priests under the old covenant who sacrificed twice daily, multiple times at the yearly feasts of Israel, and many times a day for the people who brought sin offerings, and for themselves as well, Jesus' act was once for all. That is because it was more than a picture. It was the one act all the pictures predicted. It was for all who ever lived, as well as those who are to come.

Verse 25 and 26 are referring to the Day of Atonement that I described last week. The priest had to offer a bull for himself first before the goat was offered for the nation. It was for the sins of the past year, but it would have to be repeated again next year. Why the repetition? Because it was only a picture pointing to the perfect sacrifice that would one day do away with sins once for all. Jesus offered Himself as the Lamb of God (Ephesians 5:2).

The author says it took place at the end of the ages, even though he wrote some thirty years after the sacrifice of Jesus. The end of the ages or the last days had begun at Pentecost. Peter said that was the case when he quoted the prophet Joel regarding the pouring out of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:17-18).

Now at the right hand of God, Jesus, who took on flesh, who understands our condition and who paid for our sins, is perfectly representing us to the Father. When our Accuser tells of our sin, Jesus tells of our acceptance through the forgiveness His payment for those sins provides. The Apostle wrote, <sup>34</sup> *Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.* Romans 8:34 Paul was telling us that the only one who can condemn us is Jesus (John 5:22). He could condemn us for rejecting His gift of salvation. But we have received that gift and so He is forever at God's right hand interceding for us (1 John 2:1). He takes our prayers and makes them acceptable to God. He is our righteousness.

Some criminals can afford the best attorneys who are able to get them off with a light sentence or even no penalty at all. We have an attorney who has acknowledged our guilt, but who loves us enough to pay our penalty Himself, so that we can go free. He has volunteered to represent us forever without a retainer. Now, that is one wonderful defense attorney! We'd better appreciate Him!

*<sup>27</sup> And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, <sup>28</sup> so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.* Hebrews 9:27-28 Many of you are familiar with verse 27 and the way it is used completely apart from

**Commented [PW25]: John 1:29 (ESV)**

<sup>29</sup> The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

**Commented [PW26]: Ephesians 5:2 (ESV)**

<sup>2</sup> And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

**Commented [PW27]: Acts 2:17-18 (ESV)**

<sup>17</sup> "And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; <sup>18</sup> even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.

**Commented [PW28]: John 5:22 (ESV)**

<sup>22</sup> The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son,

**Commented [PW29]: 1 John 2:1 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

the context. The author is telling us that there is a natural pattern, an order established by God. Man dies and goes to his or her judgment. We will be judged by what we have done with Jesus. We have accepted Him and welcomed His forgiveness and life in us, or we have rejected Him (1 John 5:12). He dealt with sin in His first coming. He will deal with sinners who have rejected His forgiveness in the Second Coming. If we have accepted His forgiveness, He will save those of us who are eagerly waiting His return. He saves us from this present evil world. He saves us from the constant battle of flesh and spirit (Galatians 5:17). We will be like Him, for we will see Him as He is (1 John 3:2). What a day of rejoicing that will be! **We'll understand the reason for every battle and every circumstance and see how it all shaped us for eternity in His presence.**

Are you eagerly awaiting His return (Titus 2:13)? I remember when I was working with young people how one teenager said, "I want to see Jesus' return, but I want to get married first." I've heard a few of those, "But first I'd like to..." That tells me the person doesn't quite understand the wonder of Jesus' return or doesn't detest this struggle with the flesh as much as they should. Sure, we should want to stay to see our loved ones come to Christ, but that is a work of the Spirit. I've said I want Him to return, but I want to lay up a few more treasures in heaven first to lay at His feet (Matthew 6:20). That's one reason to eagerly wait; He brings His rewards with Him (Revelation 22:12).

I think part of aging is to help us let go of this life and more eagerly wait for His return. The apostle Paul said it best, *<sup>21</sup> For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. <sup>22</sup> If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. <sup>23</sup> I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. <sup>24</sup> But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account.* Philippians 1:21-24 We eagerly wait in hope because of what the blood of Christ has done for us. Without that, we would live in dread of the justice of God, instead of eagerly awaiting the marriage feast of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7).

The world may make fun of our so called "antiquated ideas," but I'm so grateful the Spirit of God helped me see how much I need God's forgiveness. I'm so thankful for the blood of Jesus that paid the debt I owed. If you know Him, you know exactly what I mean. It is more precious to us each day. Thank God continually for the precious blood of Jesus that washes white as snow (Isaiah 1:18).

## Questions

- 1 How do we see sin and blood differently from the world's view?
- 2 How do we deceive ourselves regarding sin?
- 3 What are the promises of the new covenant?
- 4 What do we inherit? How is it possible?
- 5 Why was there blood in the covenants?
- 6 What does the inauguration of the old covenant have in common with the cross?
- 7 What are the heavenly things to be purified?
- 8 How often and for whom did Jesus offer His blood?
- 9 What is Jesus doing at God's right hand?
- 10 Are you eagerly waiting for His return?

### Commented [PW30]: 1 John 5:12 (ESV)

<sup>12</sup> Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

### Commented [PW31]: Galatians 5:17 (ESV)

<sup>17</sup> For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.

### Commented [PW32]: 1 John 3:2 (ESV)

<sup>2</sup> Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.

### Commented [PW33]: Titus 2:13 (ESV)

<sup>13</sup> waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,

### Commented [PW34]: Matthew 6:20 (ESV)

<sup>20</sup> but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

### Commented [PW35]: Revelation 22:12 (ESV)

<sup>12</sup> "Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done.

### Commented [PW36]: Revelation 19:7 (ESV)

<sup>7</sup> Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready;

### Commented [PW37]: Isaiah 1:18 (ESV)

<sup>18</sup> "Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.

Page 3: [1] Commented [PW13] Paul 8/5/2016 11:53:00 AM

**Exodus 24:3-8 (ESV)**

<sup>3</sup> Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the rules. And all the people answered with one voice and said, "All the words that the LORD has spoken we will do."

<sup>4</sup> And Moses wrote down all the words of the LORD. He rose early in the morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel.

<sup>5</sup> And he sent young men of the people of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the LORD.

<sup>6</sup> And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he threw against the altar.

<sup>7</sup> Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it in the hearing of the people. And they said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient."

<sup>8</sup> And Moses took the blood and threw it on the people and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words."

Page 3: [2] Commented [PW18] Paul 8/5/2016 12:07:00 PM

**Leviticus 5:11 (ESV)**

<sup>11</sup> "But if he cannot afford two turtledoves or two pigeons, then he shall bring as his offering for the sin that he has committed a tenth of an ephah of fine flour for a sin offering. He shall put no oil on it and shall put no frankincense on it, for it is a sin offering.

Page 3: [3] Commented [PW19] Paul 8/5/2016 12:06:00 PM

**Leviticus 17:11 (ESV)**

<sup>11</sup> 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.

Page 3: [4] Commented [PW20] Paul 8/5/2016 12:09:00 PM

**1 Peter 1:2 (ESV)**

<sup>2</sup> according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

Page 3: [5] Commented [PW22] Paul 8/5/2016 12:09:00 PM

**1 Peter 2:5 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.