

Hebrews The Earthly and the Heavenly Sacrifices

△ Hebrews 9:(1-10)11-28

Introducing the theme

Today we are continuing with
Hebrews - now Chapter 9

It contrasts the Israeli sacrificial
practices in the desert around the
tabernacle (or tent) with Jesus sacrifice

But we do not quite understand what
does practices were

But to give an idea this video explains
a bit what was going on

Video: The Tabernacle and What
It Reveals to Us

<https://youtu.be/7K8faUuCD2Y>

Introducing the sermon

We have seen the video of the
Tabernacle

With this in mind it may help us to
understand this reading

It is a dense reading, as everything in Hebrews is

A sermon will never be able to go into the detail that individual or corporate bible study will

But in order to give us more understanding, I will go through various topics

Sin

We have to start with Sin

What is sin?

Going against the will of God

God revealed his will to the people of Israel, in the form of the ten commandments

Jesus summarised these in the two main ones for us

1 Love God with all your heart, mind, soul

2. Love your neighbour as yourself

Easy?

No very hard

As we almost always love ourselves first

Not God, not others

The people of Israel could not, and at times did not even try

So God provided another way

So God provided another way

In Jer 31:31-33 he told the
Israelites about a New Covenant

“The days are coming,” declares the
Lord,

“when I will make a new covenant
with the people of Israel
and with the people of Judah.

³² It will not be like the covenant
I made with their ancestors
when I took them by the hand
to lead them out of Egypt,
because they broke my covenant,
though I was a husband to them,”
declares the Lord.

³³ “This is the covenant I will make with
the people of Israel
after that time,” declares the Lord.

“I will put my law in their minds
and write it on their hearts.
I will be their God,
and they will be my people.

This is the covenant that the
author of Hebrews is still referring
to: Heb 8:8-12

And this part of Hebrews is really a
sermon, on how through Jesus Christ
this scripture is fulfilled

The Atonement for Sin

Because God knew that we

BECAUSE GOD KNEW that we cannot live our lives fully in abeyance to the 10 Commandments

He gave the people methods for atoning for their sins

In what way?

By the methods of Sacrifice

Hence the elaborate system of sacrifices

The meaning of blood

We are quite squeamish about blood these days

As we have distance ourselves from the preparation of meat

But if you have to butcher your own goat or sheep, blood is an everyday substance

But the Israelites realised that blood is essential for life

Without blood there is no life

So to them Life was carried by blood

And even though this is not quite true scientifically, practically it is

I still give blood every 3-4 months, so someone else can live, when, for ever reason they lack good blood

The importance of blood is highlighted in these readings:

²³ But be sure you do not eat the blood, because the blood is the life, and you must not eat the life with the meat.

[^] Deuteronomy 12:13

¹¹ For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life.

[^] Lev 17:11

It is the blood that makes atonement for one's live

...under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins

[^] Heb 9:12

As Paul says, the wages of sin is Death

This is how seriously God takes our sin!

Sacrifices

So weekly the Israelites were to shed the blood of animals to atone for their sins

To be again in right relation with God

And then once a year, on the Day of Atonement

The High Priest went into the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle

He was the only one allowed there, one a year, to sprinkle the blood on the mercy seat atop of the ark below the two cherubim, to atone for the effects of the whole sin of Israel

You may say: We're glad we do not have to do this anymore

We live in an enlightened society, and this hocus pocus we do not need anymore

However, do we realise that as Christians we stopped this practice, as Jesus was the final and most excellent sacrifice?

That he replaced with his life, and his blood once and for all the requirement for these sacrifices?

As we are not so enlightened that we do not sin anymore

Sin is still the rife in our 'enlightened' society

And in our own lives

We still need to atone, but Jesus as already atoned on behalf of us

The shadow tabernacle

Hebrews makes the point that the earthy tabernacle is a shadow of the Heavenly tabernacle

That although God gave the instructions to the Israelites in the desert to make the tabernacle

It was based on a heavenly blueprint

And it was made by human hands

Hebrews details this in vs 23-26

Jesus's sacrifice

So four statements can now be made about the significance of the Jesus's sacrifice

1. Christ entered the heavenly sanctuary, the true and perfect tabernacle, into the presence of God

2. Christ entered once and for all.

This in sharp contrast with the daily repetition of sacrifices in the earthly tabernacle

3. Christ offered his own blood, not that of goats and calves

Christ offered his own life to God on our behalf

to relate us fully and finally to God

To enact the New Covenant of Jer 31

I will put a new heart in you

I will be their God and they will be my people

I will remember their sins no more

4. Christ secures redemption that is eternal

It does not need to be repeated

²⁶ Otherwise Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But he has appeared once for all at the culmination of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.

[^] Heb 9:26

It possesses eschatological finality

It is redemption from slavery, prison, death and sin

So that is why Hebrews contrasts the lesser rituals of the day of Atonement with the greater sacrifice that Christ has made for us once and for all

It is greater because

He sacrificed his own blood

He sacrificed through the eternal Spirit (v14)

His sacrifice is without blemish

As he lived his life in complete abeyance to God's Word

And his sacrifice purifies the inner self, the conscience, our souls

So that we may worship and serve

God in the right way - God's way

Old and New Covenant

vss 15-22 Hebrews compares in detail the differences between the Old and New Covenant

How the Old Covenant was sealed in the blood of sacrifices

And how the New Covenant is sealed in the blood of Christ.

This section in Hebrews finishes with this look to the future

Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

^ v28

Which is introducing and linking into Chapter 10, which is for next week

Conclusion

We have seen how the Sacrifice of Jesus can be seen in the light of the Tabernacle practices of the Israelites

That it is not because now we know better that God does not

know better, that God does not require that from us

But because Jesus' sacrifice was done once and for all

1. Christ entered the heavenly sanctuary, the true and perfect tabernacle, into the presence of God
2. Christ entered once and for all.
3. Christ offered his own blood, not that of goats and calves
4. Christ secures redemption that is eternal

Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

Response

I want to finish with this story

Count Ludwig from von Zinzendorf (one of the founders of the Herrnhut Missionary Community, gave his life to Jesus in an art gallery in Düsseldorf.

He looked at a painting by Dominico Feti - Ecco Homo - Behold the man, which pictures the brutal condemnation of Jesus, bowed and bloody, dressed in a

rough robe, with a crown of thorns on his head and an expression of peace and pain, compassion and exhaustion on his face.

<https://www.wga.hu/art/f/feti/eccehomo.jpg>

Underneath the painting of this scene the painter wrote: "This is what I suffered for you, now what will you do for me?"

How do we respond, knowing more of the detail from Hebrews about the significance of Jesus Sacrifice

How do **we** respond?

Amen.