

July 26

Scriptures: Read Hebrews 9

Key Verse: “How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance — now that He has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant” (Hebrews 9:14,15) (NIV).

Overview

God, for His own reasons (most of which are unknown to us), chose to link forgiveness of sin with the shedding of blood (v.22). In the Old Testament days, no one was allowed into the Holy of Holies, with the exception of the high priest, who entered only once a year “and never without blood” (v.7). The shed blood “of goats and calves” (v.12) was critical for the covering of the high priest’s sins in order for him to enter “the Most Holy Place” without dying himself. God is altogether Holy and will not tolerate sin in His presence. But when He sees the sacrificial blood, He withholds the “wages of sin” and sees holiness in the supplicant.

But, says the writer of Hebrews, there’s a problem — the sacrificial blood of animals is “not able to clear the conscience of the worshipper” (v.9). “The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean” (v.13). So the outside is covered, but what about the inside?

That’s where Jesus comes in. His blood cleanses much more than the outer man. His blood cleanses the conscience (v.14). He creates a new person on the inside, whose actions on the outside are forever changed. This new creature is able to turn away from “acts that lead to death” and embrace service to “the living God!” (v.14b).

The first covenant showed us what miserable sinners we are, but it gave no long-term relief. The new covenant, on the other hand, sets us free from the penalty and dominance of sin and gives us the glorious hope of an “eternal inheritance” (v.15).

This is all possible because of Jesus, who “has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of Himself” (v.26).

Prayer

Lord Jesus, You have called all of us. Here we are, at Your feet worshipping You. We ask that millions more people would recognize the fact of Your love and ministry, entering into the eternal inheritance which You have promised. Help us to share Your good news as never before, with a new and deeper commitment.