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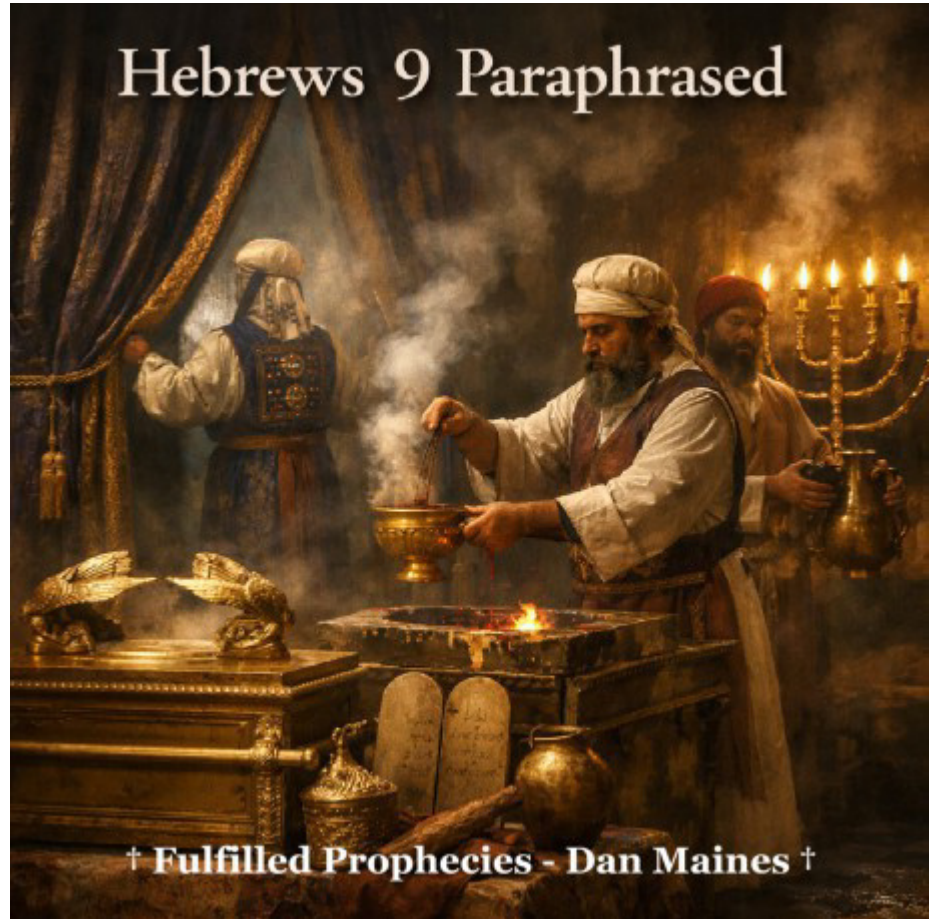
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Hebrews 9 Paraphrased



By Dan Maines

Hebrews 9 Paraphrased

Introduction

† The writer of Hebrews explains how the old covenant system worked and why it was temporary. The tabernacle, priests, and sacrifices all pointed forward to Christ. They were shadows that prepared Israel for the greater reality that came through Him.

† Hebrews 9 shows that the old system couldn't truly remove sin. It could only remind people of their guilt and point ahead to

the better sacrifice that was coming.

† The fulfilled perspective recognizes that the old covenant order was passing away in the first century and was completely removed in AD 70, exactly as Jesus foretold (Matthew 24:1-2).

The earthly sanctuary under the first covenant

† The first covenant included regulations for worship and a sacred tent built on earth where priests carried out their duties (Exodus 25:8-9).

† These arrangements weren't random. They were designed by God to illustrate deeper spiritual realities that would later be fulfilled in Christ (Colossians 2:16-17).

† Early Christians understood the tabernacle as symbolic. Barnabas wrote that these earthly patterns pointed to the greater work of Christ that was about to be revealed.

Hebrews 9:1

The first covenant had rules for worship and a sacred place set up on earth where the priests served.

† The tabernacle system was the center of Israel's worship life (Exodus 25:8).

† But it was always temporary and symbolic, not the final solution for sin (Hebrews 8:5).

† The physical sanctuary pointed forward to something greater that Christ would accomplish.

Hebrews 9:2

A tent was prepared with two sections. In the first room were the lampstand, the table, and the bread set before God, and this room was called the Holy Place.

† These items symbolized God's presence and provision for His people (Exodus 26:35).

† The bread represented fellowship with God, while the lampstand symbolized divine light.

† These objects were teaching tools that prepared Israel to understand the work of the Messiah.

Hebrews 9:3

Behind the second curtain was another room called the Most Holy Place.

† This inner chamber represented the immediate presence of God.

† Only the high priest could enter it, and only once each year on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:2).

† This restriction showed that full access to God hadn't yet been opened.

Hebrews 9:4

In that room were the golden altar for incense and the ark of the covenant covered with gold. Inside the ark were the jar holding manna, Aaron's staff that once budded, and the stone tablets of the covenant.

† Each item reminded Israel of God's covenant history.

† The manna recalled God's provision in the wilderness (Exodus 16:33).

† Aaron's staff reminded them of God's chosen priesthood (Numbers 17:10).

Hebrews 9:5

Above the ark were the cherubim representing God's glory, overshadowing the place where atonement was made. But we won't go into every detail about these things right now.

† The mercy seat symbolized God's throne of mercy where blood was sprinkled for forgiveness (Leviticus 16:14).

† This ritual showed that sin required a covering.

† But it also pointed forward to Christ's final atonement.

Hebrews 9:6

When everything was arranged this way, the priests regularly entered the outer room to perform their daily duties.

† Daily priestly service was constant under the old covenant.

† This constant activity showed that the work of dealing with sin was never finished.

† The repetition itself proved that the system was incomplete.

Hebrews 9:7

But only the high priest entered the inner room, and he did it once a year, bringing blood for himself and for the sins the people had committed without realizing it.

† The Day of Atonement was the most sacred day in Israel's calendar (Leviticus 16:29-30).

† Even the high priest needed sacrifice for his own sins.

† This showed that the old priesthood itself was flawed.

Hebrews 9:8

By this arrangement the Holy Spirit was showing that the way into God's presence hadn't yet been opened while the first tent was still standing.

† The barrier inside the temple symbolized limited access to God.

† As long as that system remained active, the fuller reality hadn't yet arrived.

† Christ's work would soon open that access completely.

Hebrews 9:9

This arrangement was a picture for that time, showing that gifts and sacrifices couldn't actually clear a person's conscience.

† The old sacrifices dealt with outward ritual purity.

† But they couldn't remove inner guilt.

† Only Christ's sacrifice could cleanse the conscience.

Hebrews 9:10

These rules dealt with food, drink, and ceremonial washings. They were external regulations that applied only until the time

when everything would be set right.

† These regulations were temporary.

† They prepared the way for the new covenant.

† Their purpose ended when Christ fulfilled them.

Hebrews 9:11

But when Christ came as the high priest of the good things that were coming, He entered the greater and more perfect sanctuary that wasn't made by human hands.

† Christ's priesthood is superior to the Levitical system.

† His work isn't limited to an earthly structure.

† His ministry fulfills everything the tabernacle symbolized.

Hebrews 9:12

He didn't enter with the blood of goats and calves. He entered once for all with His own blood and secured eternal redemption.

† Animal sacrifices had to be repeated constantly.

† Christ's sacrifice happened once and accomplished what the others couldn't.

† His work provided true and lasting redemption.

Hebrews 9:13

If the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a young cow sprinkled on people could make them ceremonially clean,

† These rituals restored people to participation in temple life.

† They addressed ceremonial impurity, not the root of sin.

† They pointed forward to a better cleansing.

Hebrews 9:14

how much more will the blood of Christ cleanse our conscience from dead works so we can serve the living God.

† Christ's sacrifice cleanses the inner person.

† It removes guilt and restores true fellowship with God.

† This cleansing allows believers to serve God freely.

Hebrews 9:15

For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, so those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance.

† The new covenant fulfills the promises given through the prophets (Jeremiah 31:31-34).

† Christ's mediation brings lasting forgiveness.

† This inheritance belongs to those who trust Him.

Hebrews 9:16

Where a covenant is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established.

† Covenants often required sacrificial confirmation.

† Christ's death established the new covenant.

† His sacrifice secured its promises.

Hebrews 9:17

A covenant becomes effective after death, because it isn't in force while the one who made it is still alive.

† The writer uses legal imagery to explain the necessity of Christ's death.

† Without His sacrifice, the covenant promises wouldn't be enacted.

† His death marked the turning point between the covenants.

Hebrews 9:18

That's why even the first covenant wasn't put into effect without blood.

† Blood sacrifices marked covenant commitments throughout Israel's history.

† The shedding of blood symbolized the seriousness of sin.

† Christ's sacrifice fulfilled this pattern perfectly.

Hebrews 9:19

After Moses had declared every commandment to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats with water, scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the scroll and the people.

† This event took place when the law was first given (Exodus 24:6-8).

† The people were symbolically set apart by blood.

† This foreshadowed the greater cleansing that would come through Christ.

Hebrews 9:20

He said, This is the blood of the covenant that God commanded you to keep.

† Moses' words pointed forward to Christ's statement at the Last Supper (Matthew 26:28).

† The old covenant required obedience under law.

† The new covenant would be sealed by Christ's sacrifice.

Hebrews 9:21

In the same way he sprinkled blood on the tabernacle and on everything used in the service.

† This ritual symbolized purification.

† The entire system was marked by sacrificial blood.

† Yet it still couldn't remove sin completely.

Hebrews 9:22

According to the law almost everything was cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

† Blood represented life given in place of another.

† This principle prepared the world for the ultimate sacrifice of Christ.

† His death fulfilled what the sacrificial system pointed toward.

Hebrews 9:23

The earthly copies of heavenly realities had to be purified this way, but the greater realities required better sacrifices.

† The tabernacle was only a shadow of something greater.

† Christ's sacrifice belongs to the greater reality.

† His work surpasses everything that came before.

Hebrews 9:24

Christ didn't enter a sanctuary made by human hands. He entered heaven itself and now appears in God's presence on our behalf.

† Christ's priestly work isn't confined to earthly structures.

† His intercession secures our standing before God.

† The earthly temple was never the ultimate destination.

Hebrews 9:25

He didn't enter to offer Himself again and again like the high priest who enters the sanctuary every year with blood that isn't his own.

† Repeated sacrifices marked the weakness of the old system.

† Christ's sacrifice required no repetition.

† His work was complete and final.

Hebrews 9:26

Otherwise He would have needed to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But now He has appeared once at the end of the ages to remove sin through His sacrifice.

† The phrase end of the ages refers to the closing period of the old covenant age.

† Christ's sacrifice marked the turning point in redemptive history.

† The destruction of Jerusalem confirmed that the old age had ended.

Hebrews 9:27

Just as people are appointed to die once and after that comes judgment,

† This reflects the universal reality of human mortality.

† Judgment follows death as part of God's justice.

† Christ's sacrifice addresses that ultimate reality.

Hebrews 9:28

so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many, and He will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to bring salvation to those who eagerly wait for Him.

† His sacrifice dealt with sin fully.

† His coming in judgment upon Jerusalem marked the completion of the covenant transition.

† Those who trusted Him received the salvation He promised.

Historical References

† Josephus described the destruction of the temple in AD 70, confirming the end of the old sacrificial system.

† Eusebius recorded that early Christians fled Jerusalem before its destruction, understanding Jesus' warnings.

† Clement of Alexandria taught that the old sacrificial system was symbolic and fulfilled in Christ.

How it applies to us today

† Hebrews 9 reminds us that Christ's sacrifice is complete and sufficient.

† We don't need a temple, priests, or repeated sacrifices because Jesus finished that work.

† Our relationship with God now rests on the finished work of Christ.

Q And A Appendix

Q Why were animal sacrifices repeated so often?

A Because they couldn't fully remove sin, they only pointed forward to the final sacrifice Christ would provide (Hebrews 10:1-4).

Q What does it mean that Christ entered a greater sanctuary?

A It means His priestly work isn't tied to the earthly temple but to the greater reality His sacrifice accomplished (Hebrews 9:24).

Q Why does Hebrews say Christ appeared at the end of the ages?

A Because His ministry took place at the close of the old covenant age that ended with the destruction of Jerusalem (Hebrews 9:26; Matthew 24:2).

Q Why did God establish the tabernacle system if it couldn't remove sin?

A God gave the tabernacle and sacrifices as teaching tools that pointed forward to Christ. They showed that sin required death and that forgiveness required a substitute. They prepared Israel to understand the greater sacrifice that was coming through the Messiah (Hebrews 9:9-10; Galatians 3:24).

Q What did the curtain in the temple represent?

A The curtain showed that access to God's presence was restricted under the old covenant. Only the high priest could enter the Most Holy Place once each year. When Jesus died the curtain was torn, showing that the barrier was removed through His sacrifice (Hebrews 9:7-8; Matthew 27:51).

Q Why does Hebrews emphasize that Christ offered Himself once?

A Because the old sacrifices had to be repeated constantly, proving they weren't sufficient. Christ's sacrifice happened once and fully dealt with sin. There was no need for repetition because His offering accomplished complete redemption (Hebrews 9:12; Hebrews 9:25-26).

Q What does it mean that Christ is the mediator of a new covenant?

A A mediator establishes the covenant relationship between God and His people. Through His death Jesus secured the

promises of the new covenant, including forgiveness of sins and the inheritance of eternal life (Hebrews 9:15; Jeremiah 31:31-34).

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† Hebrews 9:1-28

† Exodus 24:6-8; Exodus 25:8-9; Exodus 26:35; Leviticus 16:2, 14, 29-30; Numbers 17:10; Matthew 24:1-2; Matthew 26:28; Colossians 2:16-17; Hebrews 8:5; Hebrews 10:1-4

† Josephus, Wars of the Jews; Clement of Alexandria, Stromata; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History.

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