Hebrews 9:1-28

**Digging Deeper in the Word**

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***Hebrews 9*** (ESV)  
**1** Now even the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly place of holiness. **2** For a tent was prepared, the first section, in which were the lampstand and the table and the bread of the Presence. It is called the Holy Place. **3** Behind the second curtain was a second section called the Most Holy Place, **4** having the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron’s staff that budded, and the tablets of the covenant. **5** Above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail. **6** These preparations having thus been made, the priests go regularly into the first section, performing their ritual duties, **7** but into the second only the high priest goes, and he but once a year, and not without taking blood, which he offers for himself and for the unintentional sins of the people. **8** By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the holy places is not yet opened as long as the first section is still standing **9** (which is symbolic for the present age). According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper, **10** but deal only with food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until the time of reformation.

**11** But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) **12** he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. **13** 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, **14** 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. **15** 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. **16** For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established. **17** For a will takes effect only at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive. **18** Therefore not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood. **19** 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, **20** saying, “This is the blood of the covenant that God commanded for you.” **21** And in the same way he sprinkled with the blood both the tent and all the vessels used in worship. **22** Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.

**23** 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. **24** 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. **25** Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, **26** 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. **27** And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, **28** 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.

1. Give a brief review of the first 8 chapters.
2. In Heb 9:1, most English versions include the word “covenant” in the phrase “first covenant”, even though it does not exist in the Greek. Does this seem reasonable?
3. In Heb 9:1 what does the earthly place of holiness refer to?
4. In Heb 9:2, the word “section” does not appear in the Greek; the author simply says “the first”, as he does in the prior verse. Why do you think he is doing this?
5. According to Ex 40:1-8, what were the three main sections tabernacle, and what was located inside each section?
6. Where was the golden altar of incense located, according to Ex 30:1-8?
7. In Heb 9:3, the author refers to the “second curtain”, with no mention of a “first curtain”. What would the first curtain refer to? See again Ex 30:1-8 and also Ex 40:5.
8. What does Lev 16:11-13 teach us about the location of the altar of incense?
9. Heb 9:4 refers to the Holy of Holies as “having the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant”. How should we understand this? Does this conflict with the location of the altar of incense based on other Scriptures?
10. Why do you think Heb 9:5 says “we cannot now speak in detail” of these things? Of what things? What are cherubim (Gen 3:24 and Ezek 10:18-22)? And what is a mercy seat (Ex 25:1-8, Rom 3:21-25)?
11. Heb 9:8-9 makes a surprising comparison, although it was hinted at earlier. What is this comparison? How was it hinted at earlier?
12. The earthly tabernacle deals with sacrifices that cannot perfect (GK **teleioo**), and regulations for the body “until the time of reformation” (Heb 9:10). What might this mean? What is the Greek word translated as reformation? Have we already reached this time of reformation or not? Note: This is a much-disputed question, due to two variations in ancient manuscripts of the next verse, Heb 9:11. Look at various English translations of Heb 9:11 to see if you can find the significant variation.
13. Consider Heb 9:13. This is a typical Hebrew construction (even though written in Greek) called **kal v’chomer** “light and heavy” : If X is important, how much more so is Y important. What are the X and Y in this construction? How does this tie in with the phrases “perfect the conscience” in Heb 9:10 and “purify our conscience” in Heb 9:14?
14. What specifically does it mean to “purify our conscience from **dead works**” (Heb 9:14). What are “dead works”? Look at this same term in Hebrews in 6:1. See also Matt 7:22-23.
15. Heb 9:15 speaks explicitly about both the “new covenant” and the “first covenant”. What did the new covenant do that the prior one did not?
16. The Greek ***diatheke*** “covenant” is the same as the word usually translated here as “will”, however it would be better translated as “covenant” like all the other times the same Greek word is used throughout Hebrews. Recall Genesis 15 and the way covenants were ratified (or “cut”) in Biblical times. What is the author’s point about death and covenants? How is Yeshua’s death linked with the covenant made with Abraham, as well as that at Sinai? (For further study, read the article by Tim Hegg, “Did the Author of Hebrews Change “Covenant” to “Last Will and Testament”?
17. In Heb 9:16 says “Where a covenant is involved, the death of the one who made it must be **established**.” The Greek word translated as “established” is ***phero***, which literally means “to carry, to bear, to be born”. If the author is speaking of Biblical covenants rather than someone’s “last will and testament”, what does this verse really mean?
18. The translation of Heb 9:17 needs to be closely examined, especially in light of the traditional “covenant-cutting” practices of that time. What is a more literal translation of the first clause, which ESV translates as “For a will takes effect only at death”?
19. Given that the previous context is clearly referring the covenant ratification process, consider the second half of Hebrews 9:17 which is translated “since it is not valid when the one who made it lives.” How should the clause be understood in light of the covenant making context?
20. Heb 9:18-22 speaks about the Torah given at Sinai and the role of “blood” at that time and subsequently, specifically using the phrase “the blood of the covenant”. What was the “blood needed of the covenant”? What did it represent? What did it remind the people of?
21. Yeshua uses the phrase “blood of the covenant” in Matt 26:27-28. How does that fit with the passage in Hebrew 9:18-22 which is talking about the events at Sinai?
22. The ESV translated Heb 9:22 with the phrase “under the law”. What is that phrase literally, and how does that change our understanding of the meaning of this verse?
23. In Heb 9:23-24 the author speaks of “heaven” and “heavenly things” in contrast with “copies” that are on the earth. Recall Heb 8:5 (quoting Ex 25:40). List the things included in the copy, as well as their heavenly counterpart.
24. Consider Heb 9:27-28. How does the phrase in 9:28 “so Christ having been offered once… will appear a second time” relate to the first half of the sentence in 9:27. It seems like it says, “We all die once and then are judged; likewise, Yeshua died once and then is coming a second time.” At first glance, Yeshua’s coming a second time doesn’t seem to fit. Or does it?