

(T) Welcome to **Discipleship training On The Air**. In this series about sharing from our quiet times you may learn to become a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Today's topic is: A DISCIPLE SHARES WHAT HE LEARNS FROM HEBREWS 9-10.

Hebrews 9 to 10:18 teach three more changes: a change of sanctuary, a change of sacrifices and a change of law. Hebrews 9:1 says, "The first covenant had regulations for worship and also an earthly sanctuary". According to Hebrews 8:4, this sanctuary was a copy and shadow of the sanctuary in heaven. Therefore, the whole Old Testament ceremonial law with its tabernacle and later temple, and the sacrifices made in it by priests was *a copy and shadow* that pointed forward to *the real things* that would be revealed later and was recorded in the New Testament.

### **Sharing quiet times from Hebrews chapter 9 and 10.**

(S) Let us share about **the change of sanctuary.**

The sanctuary of the old order was inadequate and temporary and had to give way to the new order. The sanctuary in the Old Testament was called the tabernacle and later the temple. There are several reasons why the sanctuary in the Old Testament had to give way to the new order. Let us take turns to share these reasons.

#### **First. The Old Testament sanctuary was intended to be temporary.**

The mobile tabernacle in the wilderness proclaimed its own temporary character, because it had to be build up and broken down again and again. Also the temple would be temporary. Ezekiel prophesied that because of Israel's sins, God himself would desecrate the first Jerusalem temple (Ez 24:21)! Jesus prophesied that the second Jerusalem temple would be replaced by a temple made without hands (Mk 14:58; Jn 2:19-22). He taught that in the new order, Christians will never again worship God in any temple or on any mountain, but "in spirit and in truth" (Jn 4:21-24).

(T) **Second. The Old and New Testaments proclaim that God does not live in a temple.**

Isaiah proclaimed that "heaven is God's throne and earth is his footstool" and that people cannot build a temple in which God would dwell (Isa 66:1-2). He proclaimed that God lived in a high and holy place and preferred to dwell with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit (Isa 57:15).

Stephen and Paul proclaimed that God does not live in temples built by men (Act 7:48; 17:24). In Ephesians 2:22, Paul teaches that Jewish and Gentile Christians are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. That is why Hebrews 3:6 teaches that God's house consists of sincere Christians. Revelation 21:22 says that in the new heaven and new earth there will not be any temple, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple!

(S) **Third. The curtain of the sanctuary is an illustration of the fact that God lives in an unapproachable light.**

In the old order, as long as the tabernacle or temple stood, the high priest was allowed to enter the inner room of the sanctuary behind the curtain only once a year! It was forbidden for all other people at all times! Hebrews 9:8 says that the Holy Spirit was showing that as long as the tabernacle or temple stood, the way into God's presence was not yet revealed. The Holy Spirit teaches that throughout the whole Old Testament times, there was no direct access to the living God! The way into God's holy presence was barred by the curtain hanging between the outer and inner rooms of the tabernacle or temple.

Hebrews 9:9 says that this curtain barring the way into God's presence was an *illustration* (G: parable) for the present time that animal sacrifices were not able to clear the conscience of the worshipper. Not an outward reality like a curtain, hindered people to have access to God. But the inner reality of a guilty conscience hindered people to have access to God! Their sinful nature and many sinful deeds separated them from God (Isa 59:1-2) and caused the people of the Old Testament to have a guilty conscience. And a guilty conscience made it impossible to approach the holy God. This is still true today for all people in every culture in the world. In order to have direct and free access to God, a person must have a purified conscience! He gets a purified conscience only when he is regenerated! Thus, a person must first be regenerated before he is set free to approach God with confidence and before he is able to worship and serve God in an acceptable way. During the Old Testament period, all the animal sacrifices and other religious actions that accompanied them could not effect a purified conscience. They could not effect regeneration! At best, they could only effect ceremonial and symbolical removal of pollution. Hebrews 9:10 says that the animal sacrifices and the religious actions accompanying them were only "external regulations until the coming of the new order". The new order would be a time of reconstruction, when Jesus Christ reshaped the structure of Israel's religion. Then the old covenant would have to

give way to the new covenant; the shadow to the realities; and the outward and earthly copy to the inward and heavenly reality!

**(T)** Let us share about **the change of the law.**

The law of the old order was inadequate and temporary and had to give way to the new order. There are several reasons why the Old Testament law had to give way to the new order. Let us take turns to share these reasons.

**First. The Old Testament law was a temporary arrangement of God.**

Hebrews 7:12 teaches, “When there is a change of the priesthood, there must also be a change of the law”. Not only the Aaronic priesthood, but also the Mosaic law must be superseded. The Aaronic priesthood was so integral a part of the Mosaic Law, that a change in the priesthood carries with it inevitably a change in the law! If God instituted the Aaronic priesthood for a temporary purpose and brought it to an end when the age of fulfilment arrived, then the same must be true of the law under which that priesthood was introduced.

The writer of Hebrews reaches the same conclusion as the apostle Paul in Galatians 3:23-25. There Paul also teaches that the law was a temporary provision. During the Old Testament period, the Jews were held prisoner by the law. The law ruled over them and made them aware of their sins. But because no one could keep the requirements of the law, everyone felt like a prisoner locked up in a prison cell. God designed the law, not as an institution to justify people before God, but as an institution to make people aware of their sins against God. The law was like a tutor or guide of immature children, supervising them and leading them to the time Jesus Christ came. When Jesus Christ came, he fulfilled the requirements of the law. And everyone who believed in him was no longer under the supervision of the external law. Faith in Jesus Christ brings the believer directly under the rule of Christ in his heart.

However, there is also a difference between what Paul and the writer of Hebrews says. The apostle Paul had mainly the Ten Commandments of the moral law in mind, while the writer of Hebrews mainly had the sacrificial cult of the ceremonial (ritual) law in mind. Paul says that keeping the commandments of the moral law cannot save anyone. The writer of Hebrews says that making animal sacrifices can never effectively take away sin. While it is valid for Christians to distinguish between the ceremonial, the civil and the moral aspects of the Old Testament law, this distinction does not come to the fore in the Bible, where the whole law is regarded as the will or requirement of God. Thus, both the apostle Paul and the writer of Hebrews agree that the Old Testament law was a temporary arrangement of God, valid only until Jesus Christ came to inaugurate the age of perfection.

**(S)** **Second. The Old Testament law was only a shadow pointing forward to the realities.**

Hebrews 10:1 says, “The law is only a *shadow* of the good things that are coming - not the *realities* themselves”. The Old Testament law was only a shadow of the reality.

Both the apostle Paul and the writer of Hebrews teach that the Old Testament law is a shadow. In Colossians 2:16-17, Paul teaches, “Do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ”. And in Hebrews 10:1 the writer of the book of Hebrews teaches, “The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming - not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never ... make perfect those who draw near to worship”. In these verses, both the apostle Paul and the writer of Hebrews are thinking of the Old Testament ceremonial law (ritual law), which stipulated rules and regulations with respect to four areas of worship: holy persons, holy places, holy times and holy actions. The holy persons consisted of the priests and Levites. The holy places consisted of the tabernacle and the temple. The holy times consisted of the fasts and the feasts. The holy actions consisted of circumcision, eating clean foods, offering sacrifices and bringing tithes.

However, there is also a difference between what Paul and the writer of Hebrews refer to. Paul especially refers to the holy actions and holy times of the ceremonial law. He refers to the legal restrictions of the Old Testament food laws and regulations about special days. And the writer of Hebrews especially refers to the holy persons and holy places of the ceremonial law. He refers to the law prescribing matters of the priesthood, the tabernacle and the Jerusalem temple. In both Colossians 2:17 and Hebrews 10:1 the word *shadow* means *foreshadow*, a pointing forward to things that will come in the future. Both Paul and the writer of the book of Hebrews are thinking of Christ and his new order, which has been recorded in the New Testament, as the perfect reality to which the Old Testament ordinances pointed forward.

**(T)** **Third. The Old Testament law could never supply the realities which the New Testament gospel supplies.**

The New Testament gospel about Jesus Christ and faith in him is the new order of reality! The Old Testament pointed forward to the realities of the good things to come. What are these good things? Hebrews 9:11 teaches that Christ is the High Priest of the good things. And he teaches that these good things are already here! The good things consist of the unrepeatable sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross and his permanent high-priestly ministry in heaven. His high-priestly ministry brings eternal redemption for believers as well as uninhibited access to worship the living God! The Old Testament *order of shadows* could never supply these realities, but the New Testament *order of realities* can and does!

Hebrews 10:9 teaches that Jesus Christ “sets aside the first and establishes the second”. Jesus Christ set aside the Old Testament sacrificial system and established his own perfect self-dedication to accomplish the will of God.

(S) Let us share about **the change of the sacrifices.**

The sacrifices of the old order were inadequate and temporary and had to give way to the new order. There are several reasons why the Old Testament sacrifices had to give way to the new order. Let us take turns to share these reasons.

**First. The Old Testament animal sacrifices could not take away sin.**

In the Old Testament, God gave the ceremonial law of animal sacrifices to Israel through Moses. Especially Leviticus describes in detail the various offerings people were required to bring during the Old Testament period. However, all these animal sacrifices could not establish an uninhibited access to fellowship with God. The Bible teaches that it is *the presence of sin in the conscience* that hinders fellowship with God. Psalm 66:18 says, “If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened”. In Hebrews 10:2, the writer of Hebrews teaches that if the consciences of the worshippers during the Old Testament time had been cleansed (perfect tense) once for all from sin, then they would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. Then they would have enjoyed unrestricted fellowship with God. And then they would have stopped bringing sacrifices again and again. However, they never stopped bringing sacrifices again and again! Hebrews 10:11 says, “Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins”. Because the animal sacrifices could not take away sins, therefore they had to give way to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross.

(T) **Second. The Old Testament prophecies God’s displeasure with animal sacrifices.**

During the Old Testament time, the Greek translation of the Old Testament taught that God did not desire sacrifice and offering and he was not pleased with the burnt offerings and sin offerings that people brought. Instead God prepared a body for the coming Messiah and the Messiah said that he was willing to do God’s will. This prophecy in Psalm 40:6-8 is quoted in Hebrews 10:5-7 and was completely fulfilled at the first coming of Jesus Christ to earth and his dying on the cross.

Why was God not pleased with the Old Testament sacrifices and offerings? God was not pleased with the Old Testament sacrifices and offerings, because they *did not* take away sin and *could not* take away sin! Because they did not give people a clear conscience. They did not result in regenerating people and making them holy and perfect. Therefore these sacrifices had to be replaced by the once for all perfect sacrifice that Jesus Christ brought! Hebrews 10:8-10 teaches that God set aside the whole system of animal sacrifices in order to establish the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross as the only sacrifice that can save people and make them holy and perfect forever!

(S) **Third. The functions of the Old Testament animal sacrifices.**

The Old Testament sacrifices had two purposes: to make people ceremonially clean to worship God and to guide people to Jesus Christ. Hebrews 9:13 teaches that when the blood of animal sacrifices was sprinkled on people it sanctified them so that they were outwardly or ceremonially clean. The Old Testament sacrifices never cleansed people inwardly and permanently!

Why did God through the Old Testament Law require people to bring sacrifices if they were unable to cleanse people and failed to make them perfect? Hebrews 10:3-4 teaches that the blood of animal sacrifices could not take away sins, but these sacrifices were *a continual reminder of sins*! The animal sacrifices made people very much aware that they needed a perfect sacrifice, which would take their sins away once for all and make them perfect! Only the sacrifice of Jesus Christ could and would take away their sins! The writer of Hebrews is teaching exactly the same truth as Paul taught in Galatians 3:24, “The Law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith”. Now that Christ has come, the Old Testament ceremonial law has fulfilled its temporary function. The law has guided the people of Israel to the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

(T) **Fourth. Only the once for all sacrifice of Jesus Christ saves people and makes them perfect.**

Hebrews 7:19 teaches that the law made nothing perfect. Romans 8:3-4 teaches what the law was powerless to do ... God accomplished through Christ (Rom 8:3-4)! Jesus Christ does what the law could never do: he saves believers for eternity and makes them completely perfect.

What did the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross accomplish? Hebrews 9:12 says that by his blood, Christ obtained eternal redemption. In contrast to the Old Testament *temporary and continually repeated* animal sacrifices, he did this *“once for all”*. His sacrifice on the cross accomplished *perfect and eternal redemption* for believers! What he accomplished on the cross does not need any repetition and cannot be repeated by any human action on earth!

Hebrews 9:14 says that the blood of Christ cleanses our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God. What the Old Testament law could not effect, the sacrifice of Christ could and did! His sacrifice on the cross accomplished a *purified conscience, that is, a regenerated nature* for believers. This enables Christians to have unhindered access to the living God and to live a life of obedience and fruitful service for God.

Hebrews 9:24 says that Christ now is in the presence of God to represent all Christians and Hebrews 7:25 says that he always lives to intercede for them. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is perfect in nature and eternal in effect! Hebrews 10:14 teaches that by his sacrifice on the cross, Christ has made Christians *perfect forever*. Jesus Christ brought the perfect sacrifice once for all. He presented a valid sin-offering on behalf of his people when he died on the cross. It is an offering so perfect and efficacious that it needs no repetition! The word *perfect* proves that the era of perfection inaugurated under the new covenant is *permanent*!

Let me summarise. Hebrews 1:1-2 says, "In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son..." God has been active since the early days and spoke to people in various ways. However, Jesus Christ is not simply the last prophet in a long line of prophets! Jesus Christ is much more than a prophet. He is the Son of God. Hebrews 1:2-3 teach that Jesus Christ is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of God's being. He created and sustains the universe by his powerful word. He became man and provided purification for sins. He ascended into heaven and rules over the whole universe. Jesus Christ publicly introduced (inaugurated) a new age and a new order altogether! God has spoken in his Son, Jesus Christ, and he has no word to speak beyond him!

(S)     **ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK.**

First. Divide James 1-5 into seven passages. Every day have a quiet time from one passage. Record the meditations of all your quiet times in a notebook. Once a week meet with a friend or with a house fellowship or discipleship group and share from your quiet times.

Second. See the workbooks "Go and build Christ's Church" and Internet on [www.dota.net](http://www.dota.net).

Third. Listen every SATURDAY to WEDNESDAY on the radio to "Discipleship training on the air".