

## Hebrews

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Hebrews 9:15-22

Vss. 15-17

- The preacher begins this section by introducing a new title for Christ: mediator. A mediator is one who brings together two opposing parties or points. Here we have on one side the old covenant given to Moses and on the other side the new covenant through the blood of Jesus. Under the first covenant people were required to keep the Law, but as soon as the Law was violated, that covenant was unsustainable.
- To repeat, for the preacher, religion was defined as opening a way to God. Under the old covenant people were still in their sins. Time and again the old prophets preached that the blood of 1000 bulls could not change a sinful heart and it was that sinful heart that prevented people from access to The Way to God. Enter Jesus Christ, whose death on the cross was also for “the redemptions of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant”, thereby making Him the mediator between the two. The death of Christ was for the forgiveness of all sin: our present sin, our sins in the future, and even all the sins of the past of those under the old covenant.
- Next, the preacher explains the necessity of the death of Christ. Recall that the word he uses for “covenant” is more commonly used when referring to a will. A will only takes on real meaning *after* someone has died. In both Greek and English there is a play on words here, because what he is saying is that it was Christ’s will that people be forgiven and saved.

Vss. 18-21

- The second point he makes about the death of Christ has to do with the requirement that blood be shed. He goes back to Leviticus 17:11, “For the life of the flesh is in the blood and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement”. As we have seen, the priests have very specific instructions as to which animal’s blood, how much, and for where it was to be poured and sprinkled. Thus from the beginning, the connection between blood and forgiveness, between blood and covenant was a present reality.

- As it says in the Leviticus passage, it is blood that gives life and it is sin that takes life. Only blood can counter the deadly effects of sin. Only blood can wash away the stain of sin. If life is the most precious thing in Creation, then blood must be the second.

Vs. 22

- "...without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness". Part of our problem as sophisticated, modern, scientifically minded people is that we no longer see the truth about sin. We don't even want to call sin a sin anymore. It's a condition. It's a sickness. It's a mental health issue. It's the way someone was born. So as we eliminate sin from our vocabulary, we in effect devalue sin. People don't see the destructive high costs of sin, so people don't see the high price of forgiveness.
- That there is no forgiveness without the shedding of blood was an old and well known Jewish proverb. A parent with a teenager who is an alcoholic understands the cost. A wife and mother with a wayward husband understands the cost. Real forgiveness is costly. Divine forgiveness is even more costly. A parent may mortgage the house to pay for a child's rehab, but God's forgiveness of my sin cost Him the life of His only begotten Son.
- Without the shedding of blood there can be no forgiveness of sin and MY sin was so costly that only the death of God's Son would cover it; only because Christ shed His blood is my sin forgiven. For me to live, He must be crucified.