

School of the Word
HEBREWS
Kieran J. O'Mahony
www.tarsus.ie

HEBREWS 9:15-28

Sequence

- Hebrews 9:15-28
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- Immediate context
- Commentary
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Hebrew 9:15-28

Heb 9:15 And so he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the eternal inheritance he has promised, since he died to set them free from the violations committed under the first covenant. **16** For where there is a will, the death of the one who made it must be proven. **17** For a will takes effect only at death, since it carries no force while the one who made it is alive. **18** So even the first covenant was inaugurated with blood. **19** For when Moses had spoken every command to all the people according to the law, 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** and said, "*This is the blood of the covenant that God has commanded you to keep.*" **21** And both the tabernacle and all the utensils of worship he likewise sprinkled with blood. **22** Indeed according to the law almost everything was purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. **23** So it was necessary for the sketches of the things in heaven to be purified with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves required better sacrifices than these. **24** For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made with hands—the representation of the true sanctuary—but into heaven itself, and he appears now in God's presence for us. **25** And he did not enter to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the sanctuary year after year with blood that is not his own, **26** for then he would have had to suffer again and again since the foundation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all at the consummation of the ages to put away sin by his sacrifice. **27** And just as people are appointed to die once, and then to face judgment, **28** so also, after Christ was offered once to *bear the sins of many*, to those who eagerly await him he will appear a second time, not to bear sin but to bring salvation.

Within the letter

- **III: B** 8:1-9:28 — Jesus the perfect high priest
 - 8:1-6: The Son is mediator of a new covenant
 - 8:7-13: The promise of a new covenant
 - 9:1-10: The worship of the old covenant
 - 9:11-28: Christ's worship in heaven
- **III: C** 10:1-18 — Jesus high priest cause of eternal salvation
- Why did Jesus die? (9:15–28)
 - Mediator of a new covenant (9:15)
 - Covenant and testament (9:16–17)
 - Blood of the covenant (9:18–22)
 - Better sacrifices (9:23–28)

Hebrew 9:15

Heb 9:15 And so he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the eternal inheritance he has promised, since he died (*lit. a death having occurred*) to set them free from the violations committed under the first covenant.

- And so = therefore; a conclusion is being drawn.

- Mediator = not the negotiator but the guarantor.
- New covenant: cf. Jer 8:7-13.
- Cf. accordingly Jesus has become the **guarantee** of a better covenant. (Heb 7:22)
- In the same way God wanted to demonstrate more clearly to the heirs of the promise that his purpose was unchangeable, and so he intervened (lit. *guaranteed*) with an oath. (Heb 6:17)

Rom 3:24 But they are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. **25** God publicly displayed him at his death as the mercy seat accessible through faith. This was to demonstrate his righteousness, because God in his forbearance had passed over the sins previously committed. **26** This was also to demonstrate his righteousness in the present time, so that he would be just and the justifier of the one who lives because of Jesus' faithfulness.

- New covenant = taking up the role of Moses.
- Called = cf. the covenant with Abraham, which is never repealed in Hebrews. Heb 6:14-18.
- Set free: buying back or setting free (redemption)
- and he entered once for all into the most holy place not by the blood of goats and calves but by his own blood, and so he himself secured eternal redemption. (Heb 9:12)
- Inheritance sets up the next set of images.

Hebrew 9:16-17

Heb 9:16 For where there is a **will**, the **death** of the one who made it must be proven. **17** For a **will** takes effect only at **death**, since it carries no force while the one who made it is **alive**.

- A general statement before the application in v. 18-22.
- Q: why did Jesus *have* to die?
- Two answers, the first in vv. 16-17.
- Diathēkē can be translated in several ways: covenant (treaty) or will (testament) or oath or promise (!!)
- A will doesn't come into effect until the person has died.

Covenant and Testament

In antiquity and the OT, covenants were a common basis for relationships not based on kinship ties. The OT describes God's covenants with Noah (Gen 9:8–17), Abraham (Gen 15; 17:1–4), the priestly line of Phinehas (Num 25:10–13), and David (2 Sam 7).

The Mosaic covenant (Hebrew *berith*) between God and the people is a relationship of mutual obligation in which God pledges faithfulness and protection, to which the people respond with obedience.

Covenants in the OT are modelled after treaties in the ancient Near East between the king and his subjects. In the preamble to the covenant, the king declares his beneficence to the people and then gives the stipulations required of the people, as in the Ten Commandments (Exod 20:1–17). Thus the covenantal relationship is not between equals but between the sovereign and his vassals.

With few exceptions, the LXX translators rendered the Hebrew *berith* with *diathēkē*, a word that in secular Greek meant "last will and testament." In both Old and New Testaments, *diathēkē* maintained the associations of the Hebrew *berith*. Only in Gal 3:15 and Heb 9:16 does the word contain the ordinary Greek meaning of will, or testament. Hebrews reflects on the meaning of *diathēkē* more than any other NT book. The word is used interchangeably with oath (7:20–22), law (7:19), and promise (8:6). The author's focus is not on human obligation but on God's faithfulness to the promise (cf. 10:23).

Hebrew 9:18-22

Heb 9:18 So even the first covenant was inaugurated with blood. **19** For when Moses had spoken every command to all the people according to the law, 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** and said, “*This is the blood of the covenant that God has commanded you to keep.*” **21** And both the tabernacle and all the utensils of worship he likewise sprinkled with blood. **22** Indeed according to the law almost everything was purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

- V.18 starts the comparison or typology (see next slide).
- The first covenant required book and so does the new one.
- The type is given in Exod 24:3–8 (see next slide); not all the details are taken up.
- The addition of “scarlet wool and hyssop” suggests that he has combined the ceremony of the red heifer (Num 19:6, 18) with the covenant ceremony, just as he had earlier (9:13) combined it with the Day of Atonement ritual (on the use of hyssop, see also Exod 12:22; Lev 14:4–6; Ps 51:7).
- Key: purification by blood.

Typology

Typology was the method of interpretation in Jewish literature and the NT in which events and people become the foreshadowing (types) of the events and people of the new era. Typology is rooted in the OT expectation of a prophet like Moses (Deut 18:15–18), a new creation (Isa 66:22), a new exodus (Isa 43:16–19), and a new covenant (Jer 31:31–34).

In the NT, Paul describes Adam as a type of Christ (Rom 5:14) and the events in the wilderness as types for the church (1 Cor 10:6, 11). Typology is to be distinguished from allegory, in which the details of a text are not foreshadowings of future events but symbols for a moral or philosophical truth.

Exodus 24:3-8

Exod 24:3 Moses came and told the people all the Lord’s words and all the decisions. All the people answered together, “We are willing to do all the words that the Lord has said,” **4** and Moses wrote down all the words of the Lord. Early in the morning he built an altar at the foot of the mountain and arranged twelve standing stones—according to the twelve tribes of Israel. **5** He sent young Israelite men, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls for peace offerings to the Lord. **6** Moses took half of the blood and put it in bowls, and half of the blood he splashed on the altar. **7** He took the Book of the Covenant and read it aloud to the people, and they said, “We are willing to do and obey all that the Lord has spoken.” **8** So Moses took the blood and splashed it on the people and said, “This is the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words.”

Hebrew 9:23-24

Heb 9:23 So it was necessary for the sketches (*hupdeigmata*) of the things in heaven to be purified with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves required better sacrifices than these. **24** For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made with hands—the representation (*antitypos*) of the true sanctuary—but into heaven itself, and he appears now in God’s presence for us.

- The general principles established are now applied.
- Sketch v. heavenly things.
- *The place where they serve is a sketch and shadow of the heavenly sanctuary, just as Moses was warned by God as he was about to complete the tabernacle.* (Heb 8:5)
- *Better* sacrifices, i.e. of a quite different order.
- Earthly temple v. heavenly sanctuary, in heaven, that is, in God’s very presence.

- The author has already indicated that the community has a high priest who has entered behind the curtain (6:19–20) into the heavenly world (cf. 9:11–12) and intercedes (7:25) for his people. Now he reiterates that claim with the statement that Christ entered ... to appear before the face of God for us (9:24b).
- Christ entered: (cf. 6:19; 9:11–12; 10:19) through the *curtain*. Cf. By the fresh and living way that he inaugurated for us through the *curtain*, that is, through his flesh, (Heb 10:20)

Hebrew 9:25-26

Heb 9:25 And he did not enter to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the sanctuary year after year with blood that is not his own, **26** for then he would have had to suffer again and again since the foundation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all (*hapax*) at the consummation of the ages to put away sin by his sacrifice.

- These verses elaborate the details of the comparison.
- Language changes to Jewish apocalypticism.
- Year after year v. Once
- Not his blood v. His blood
- Consummation of the age i.e. the end of time, triggered by the resurrection.
- NB sin in the singular.

Hebrew 9:27-29

Heb 9:27 And just as people are appointed to die once (*hapax*), and then to face judgment, **28** so also, after Christ was offered once (*hapax*) to *bear the sins of many*, to those who eagerly await him he will appear a second time, not to bear sin but to bring salvation.

- A final comparison and contrast: death followed by judgment || Jesus's death followed by salvation.
- Therefore he shall inherit many, and he shall divide the spoils of the strong, because his soul was given over to death, and he was reckoned among the lawless, and *he bore the sins of many, and because of their sins he was given over.* (LXX Isa 53:12)

true tent (8:2; 9:23)	antitype of true tent (9:24)
which the Lord made (8:2)	made by man, handmade (8:2; 9:11)
archetype (8:5)	copy and shadow (8:5; 9:23)
greater and more perfect tent (9:11)	earthly sanctuary (9:1)
most holy place (9:3)	holy place (9:2)
second covenant (8:7)	first covenant (8:7)
new covenant (8:13; 9:15)	old covenant (8:13)
better ministry (8:6)	serve in a copy (8:5)
once for all (9:27)	constantly/each year (10:1)
once (9:26; 10:10, 14)	many times (9:25–26; 10:11)
conscience (9:9, 14)	flesh (9:10, 13)
time of reformation (9:15)	present time (9:9)
his blood (9:12)	blood of bulls and goats (9:12; 10:4)

Conversation