The New Covenant’s Sacrifice
Heb 9:11-22
SS Lesson for 06/16/2019

Devotional Scripture: Heb 10:1-12

OUTLINE

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Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary
Key Verse: Heb 9:22
Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

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Greater and perfect because of being a perfect High Priest serving in the true tabernacle (Heb 8:1-2)
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CONCLUSION AND OTHER THOUGHTS

COMMENTARY THOUGHTS FROM BOB DEFFINBAUGH

- The Necessity of Death (Hebrews 9:15-22)
- The World’s Greatest Bailout (Hebrews 9:15)
- The Necessity of Death for the Execution of a Will (Hebrews 9:16-7)
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CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE NIV STANDARD LESSON COMMENTARY

Lesson Background and Key Verse

Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

The simple melody line of Robert Lowry’s gospel song “Nothing but the Blood” uses only a five-note range and two chords. The song’s lyrics likewise are straightforward, punctuated by the simple declaration, “Nothing but the blood of Jesus.” In its simplicity, this song celebrates the majestic theme found within Hebrews 9:11–22: our high priest Jesus Christ has offered his blood to make perfect reconciliation for sinners. By that blood, we enter into God’s new covenant. This concept is unfamiliar to many.

Undergirding today’s study are three concepts that are vitally important in the book of Hebrews. Those three are high priest, covenant, and blood. Their importance is revealed in the fact that, in each case, the book of Hebrews features more uses of those words than any other New Testament book by proportion of size. A priest is a go-between; another word we could use is mediator. That position in Old Testament times involved interceding with God on behalf of unclean people (see Leviticus 14; 15). The founding of the Old Testament priesthood is recorded in Exodus 28; 29 and Leviticus 8. The high priest is the one “who has had the anointing oil poured on his head” (Leviticus 21:10). The death of the high priest resulted in relief from prosecution in specific instances (Numbers 35:25, 28; Joshua 20:6). The original word that is translated variously as “covenant” occurs 33 times in the New Testament. The book of Hebrews has 17 of those 33 instances, demonstrating its importance. The opening verses of Hebrews 8 pronounce that Jesus has obtained a more excellent ministry than the priestly ministry of the first covenant. In so doing, he has become the mediator of a superior covenant—a covenant that is based on better promises (Hebrews 8:1, 2, 6). When the writer quotes Jeremiah 31:31–34 regarding God’s offer of a new covenant (Hebrews 8:8–12), the implication is that there was a flaw in the old covenant. Any flaw, however, was not on God’s side. Humanity proved unable and/or unwilling to honor the provisions of that covenant (Hebrews 8:7, 8, 13). The early part of Hebrews 9 then describes the old covenant sanctuary, the tabernacle. This structure and its successor (the temple) provided Israel only limited access to God. Barriers still existed between the worshipper and God (compare Exodus 29:9; Hebrews 9:7, 8). The mention of blood in Hebrews 9:7 prepares the reader for the frequent use of that word throughout our lesson text for today. As with the word translated “covenant,” the word translated “blood” occurs more often proportionally in Hebrews than any other New Testament book. Scripture treats blood as the life force of a creature (Genesis 9:4; Leviticus 17:10–14; Deuteronomy 12:23). The use of blood of sacrificed animals to save Israel is seen explicitly in the blood of lambs smeared on doorposts in Egypt (Exodus 12:7). The mention of blood is connected with violent death (see Genesis 4:10; Matthew 27:4, 24, 25). Hebrews 9:1–10 describes the worship and sacrificial practices under the old covenant as temporary and inadequate for cleansing worshippers’ sins. In God’s redemptive plan, Israel merely anticipated “the time of the new order” that would come through the ministry of Christ (Hebrews 9:10). That ministry is tightly connected with the concepts of high priest, covenant, and blood.

Key Verse: Heb 9:22

And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

8:8-12. The promise of a New Covenant was made, the writer pointed out, in a passage where God found fault with the people. The Old Covenant failed because of the sinfulness of the nation, for which it had no remedy. The New Covenant, however, has such a remedy. In the passage quoted, there is first the
prediction that a New Covenant will be made (v. 8) followed by a strong declaration that it will differ from the previous one (v. 9). Then follows (vv. 10-12) a description of the superior accomplishments, or enablers, of the promised covenant. These are: (1) an inner inclination to obey (God will put His laws in their minds and write them on their hearts), (2) a firm relationship with God (I will be their God, and they will be My people), (3) the knowledge of God (they will all know Me), and (4) the forgiveness of sins (I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more). These are the “better promises” alluded to in verse 6. It is clear that all these benefits belong, in fact, to all the regenerate of every age since the Cross. Though the New Covenant is specifically focused on Israel (cf. house of Israel and “house of Judah” in Jer. 31:31), it is clear that Christians of the present time also stand under its blessings (cf. Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25; 2 Cor. 3:6). This perception does not lead to an inappropriate confusion between Israel and the church. The New Covenant is God’s appointed vehicle for fulfilling the Abrahamic blessings to Israel. But the Abrahamic Covenant also promised universal blessing, so the New Covenant becomes as well God’s vehicle of salvation for believers since the Cross. To say this is not to say anything more than Jesus did when He declared that “salvation is from the Jews” (John 4:22). In no way should this impede the perception of the Christian church as a unique, interadvent body, closely united to Christ as His bride and significantly distinct from the nation of Israel. But inasmuch as all salvation is through the Cross of Christ, it is also through the blood of the New Covenant.

8:13. From the Old Testament prophecy he had just quoted, the writer then drew the justifiable conclusion that the Old Covenant was obsolete (palaioumenon) and aging and would soon disappear. The ceremonies still being conducted under it (cf. vv. 4-5) were spiritually anachronistic and the author’s words suggest that he recalled the prophecy of Jesus that the temple in Jerusalem would be destroyed (Matt. 24:1-2). Probably this prophecy was fulfilled soon after Hebrews was written. If so, it was a dramatic confirmation of the writer’s thesis about the Old Covenant.

9:1-5. With regard to the “aging” First Covenant, the writer wished to discuss that covenant’s regulations for worship and its earthly sanctuary. These he highlighted in order to contrast them with the superior features of the New-Covenant ministry. How “earthly” (kosmikon, v. 1), or mundane, that first sanctuary was, he emphasized by reviewing the material objects associated with it. All these had typological value, but the author could not discuss these things in detail at the time (v. 5). He confined himself to the chief features of the comparison he wished to make.

9:6-10. The “regulations for worship” mentioned in verse 1 were now dealt with so that they underlined the insufficiency of the Old-Covenant service. Whereas the outer room of the tabernacle could be entered regularly by the officiating priests, it was only on the Day of Atonement (cf. Lev. 16) that the high priest entered the inner room (i.e., the “holy of holies”) and then only with sacrificial blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance. This restricted access clearly demonstrated that a true entrance into God’s presence (symbolized by the most holy place) had not yet been disclosed. That at least was the message the Holy Spirit intended to communicate by this arrangement. The Levitical arrangements were designed to convey the idea that the true way to God did not lie in them. What this indicates for the present time is that the Old-Covenant sacrificial system did not meet human need at its deepest level. It could not clear the conscience of the worshiper. Hence the regulations which formed part of the observant worshiper’s adherence to this system were chiefly concerned with externals which were only meant to apply until the time of the new order. The words of Hebrews 9:10 probably refer to sectarians for whom food laws and ceremonial washings retained great importance. The readers must remember the transitory nature of these things under the “aging” covenant and should not return to them.

9:11-12. The author then brought the discussion which began in 8:7 to a fitting conclusion. He had shown that the Old Testament anticipated a better New Covenant (8:7-13) and that the ritual of the Old Covenant, carried on in an “earthly sanctuary,” pointed to its own inadequacy (9:1-10). Now he set forth the superior of Christ’s service as Mediator of the New Covenant (vv. 11-15). The NIV rendering of verse 11 is questionable. It is not likely the writer meant to say that Christ... went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, since this cannot be distinguished from “the most holy place” which He entered according to verse 12. It is probably better to take the original word translated “through” (dia) and connect it with came as High Priest of the good things that are already here (or, per most Gr. ms., “the good things which were to come”). In that case, instead of “through” the word can be translated “in connection with” and the total statement expresses the idea that Christ’s high-priesthood is linked with “the greater and more perfect tabernacle” rather than the “earthly” one previously described (vv. 1-5). When Christ entered the most holy place once for all by His own blood (v. 12; cf. Christ’s blood in v. 14; 10:19, 29; 13:20) rather than by animal blood, He likewise demonstrated the superiority of His service because His blood had
obtained eternal redemption. Thus the value of His sacrifice is immeasurably greater than the animal offerings of the Levitical arrangements. A perfect ransom price had been paid for human “redemption,” and because it need not be paid again (this sacrificial act was “once for all,” ephapax; cf. 7:27; 10:10) that redemption is an “eternal” one.

9:13-14. This “eternal redemption” through which the blessings of the New Covenant (cf. 8:10-12) have reached all believers, should affect the way believers serve God. Old-Covenant rituals served for the ceremonially unclean and only made them outwardly clean. But the blood of Christ can do much more. His was a sacrifice of infinite value because through the eternal Spirit He offered Himself unblemished to God. With this lovely assertion, the writer of Hebrews involved all three Persons of the Godhead in the sacrifice of Christ, which magnifies the greatness of His redemptive offering. “Unblemished” (amōmen) fittingly describes Christ’s perfection (cf. 4:15; 7:26) for it is also used of spotless animals brought for sacrifice. Such a great accomplishment ought to cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, but the expression “acts that lead to death” is literally “dead works” which in this context seems to refer to the Levitical rituals that, in contrast with the work of Christ, can never impart spiritual life. As also in 6:1, where such “acts that lead to death” are referred to, the writer wished his readers would give up all thoughts of returning to Old-Covenant rituals. Their consciences ought to be perfectly free from any need to engage in such things and, retaining their confidence in the perfect efficacy of the Cross, they should hold fast their profession and serve the living God within the New-Covenant arrangements.

9:15. To do so is to retain the hope of an eternal inheritance (cf. “eternal redemption” in v. 12 and “the eternal Spirit” in v. 14) which has been promised to recipients of New-Covenant life. Christ is the Mediator (cf. 8:6; 12:24) of that covenant, and the “inheritance” is available to those who are called since the death of the Mediator has freed them from all guilt derived from the sins committed under the First Covenant. The author was here perhaps countering the appeal of the sectarians, or others, to the “guilt feelings” of those Jewish Christians who must often have been charged with deserting their ancestral faith. But the blood of Christ ought to quiet their consciences permanently and lead them to pursue the “eternal inheritance” which the New-Covenant relationship brought them. Of course the writer meant here as elsewhere that it is only “through faith and patience” that his readers could “inherit what has been promised” (6:12); but if they would rest their consciences at the Cross, they could pursue this heirship undistractedly. The author has made it clear that Christ’s death has instituted a better covenant (vv. 11-15) which is superior to animal offerings (vv. 12-14). But the need for such a sacrifice has yet to be explored. So a key word in this subunit is “necessary” (anankē, vv. 16, 23). In the process of exploring this point, the author clearly underscored the measureless superiority of the sacrificial death of Christ.

9:16-17. In opening the new unit of thought, the writer employed a swift semantic shift in which he treated the Greek word for “covenant” (diathēke[4]) in the sense of a will. While “covenants” and “wills” are not in all respects identical, the author meant that in the last analysis the New Covenant is really a testamentary disposition. Like human wills, all the arrangements are secured by the testator and its beneficiaries need only accept its terms. Treating the New Covenant in this way, the author argued that its force—like that of all human wills—depends on the death of the one who made it. That is when it takes effect.

9:18-21. The Old Covenant was also put into effect with blood. Drawing on material that may have partly been derived from traditions known to the writer but not specified in the Old Testament, he described the inauguration of the Old Covenant through ceremonies involving the sprinkling of sacrificial blood.

9:22. This verse applies to the Old-Covenant institutions, and the words nearly everything leave room for the flour offering which a poor Israelite might bring for his sin (Lev. 5:11-13). But the writer was thinking of the system as a whole and the ritual of the Day of Atonement that pertained to the totality of the nation’s sins, which showed that without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. These words also constitute a principle that is true in the New Covenant.

9:23. In connection with the New Covenant, the writer then enunciated his basic principle: the death of Christ was necessary. Mere copies (hypodeigmata; cf. 8:5; 9:24) of the heavenly things might be adequately hallowed by animal sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves required more than that. The expression “heavenly things” referred quite generally to the new priestly arrangements, which have heaven as their focal point. These arrangements involve dealing with people’s sin and must thus be inaugurated with a sacrifice adequate to “do away” with that sin (cf. v. 26). The death of Christ meets this requirement.

9:24-26. Christ was appointed as High Priest of the New Covenant to represent sinful people in heaven itself, that is, in the presence of God. So His sacrifice had to be greater than that which allowed entrance
into a mere man-made sanctuary that was only a copy (antitypa) of the true one. Nor could Christ offer repeated sacrifices as in the Levitical institution, for that would have required Him to die many times since the Creation of the world. Instead, as is obvious, the heavenly ministry of Christ called for a thoroughly sufficient, one-time sacrifice. This is precisely why He appeared once for all (hapax, cf. v. 28; also cf. ephapax in 7:27; 9:12; 10:10) at the end of the ages to do away with sin, which the priests in the old arrangement could not do. By the phrase “end of the ages” the writer evidently meant the climax of the Old Testament eras as well as the imminency of the climax of all things. He will shortly refer to Christ’s second advent.

9:27-28. With this observation, eschatological realities come into focus. Humans are sinful creatures destined to die once, and after that to face judgment. But this danger is turned aside by the fact that Christ was sacrificed once (hapax, cf. v. 26) to take away the sins of many people. The recurrence of “once” (9:26, 28) and of “once for all” (7:27; 9:12; 10:10) stresses the finality and the singleness of Christ’s sacrificial work in contrast with the repeated Levite ministrations. In addition, the “once”-sacrifice of Christ (vv. 26, 28) compares with the “once”-death of each person (v. 27). Now those who are waiting (apekdechomenois; used seven times in the NT of the return of Christ: Rom. 8:19, 23, 25; 1 Cor. 1:7; Gal. 5:5; Phil. 3:20; Heb. 9:28) for Him can look forward to His coming, not with a fearful expectation of judgment, but with the anticipation of salvation. His first advent was to bear sins away—but His second will be not to bear sin (lit., “without [reference to] sins”). Deftly the author implied that “those who are waiting for Him” constitute a smaller circle than those whom His death has benefited. They are, as all his previous exhortations reveal, the ones who “hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first” (3:14). The “salvation” He will bring them at His second coming will be the “eternal inheritance” of which they are heirs (cf. 9:15; 1:14).

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

A Sacrifice for a Better Tabernacle (Heb 9:11-14)

11 But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation.
12 Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.
13 For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh,
14 how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Greater and perfect tabernacle (11)

Greater and perfect because Jesus is in Heaven (Acts 7:44-49)

44 "Our forefathers had the tabernacle of the Testimony with them in the desert. It had been made as God directed Moses, according to the pattern he had seen. 45 Having received the tabernacle, our fathers under Joshua brought it with them when they took the land from the nations God drove out before them. It remained in the land until the time of David, 46 who enjoyed God's favor and asked that he might provide a dwelling place for the God of Jacob. 47 But it was Solomon who built the house for him. 48 However, the Most High does not live in houses made by men. As the prophet says: 49 "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me? says the Lord. Or where will my resting place be?"

Greater and perfect because of being a perfect High Priest serving in the true tabernacle (Heb 8:1-2)

8:1 The point of what we are saying is this: We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, 2 and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by man.
Greater and perfect because Jesus will spread His tabernacle over His people (Rev 7:15)

15 "For this reason, they are before the throne of God; and they serve Him day and night in His temple; and He who sits on the throne will spread His tabernacle over them.

Greater and perfect because Jesus' tabernacle includes His people (Rev 13:1-6)

And the dragon stood on the sand of the seashore. Then I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names. 2 And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority. 3 I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast; 4 they worshiped the dragon because he gave his authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, " Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?" 5 There was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him. 6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven.

Tabernacle of eternal redemption (12)

A redemption that is part of Jesus' rescue (Rom 7:24-25)

24 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? 25 Thanks be to God — through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

A redemption that has the Holy Spirit as a guarantee (2 Cor 5:2-5)

2 Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, 3 because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. 4 For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. 5 Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

A redemption that has a promise of a transformation into glory (Phil 3:20-21)

20 But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

A redemption that has as a reward a crown of righteousness (2 Tim 4:8)

8 Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

A redemption because we are God's possession (Eph 1:14)

14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

A redemption by a God that has unfailing love (Ps 130:7)

O Israel, put your hope in the LORD, for with the LORD is unfailing love and with him is full redemption.

Tabernacle of perfect cleansing (13-14)

Cleansing that comes by the purging and washing done by God (Ps 51:6-10)

6 Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place. 7 Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. 8 Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice. 9 Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity. 10 Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.
Cleansing of the inside versus the outside only (Matt 23:25-28)

25 “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. 26 Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean. 27 “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean. 28 In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.

Cleansing of the heart by faith (Acts 15:8-9)

8 God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. 9 He made no distinction between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith.

Cleansing of everything that contaminates (2 Cor 7:1)

7 Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.

Cleansing by obedience to the truth of God's Word (1 Peter 1:22)

22 Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart.

A Sacrifice for a Better Covenant (Heb 9:15-18)

15 And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. 16 For where there is a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. 17 For a testament is in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives. 18 Therefore not even the first covenant was dedicated without blood.

A new covenant (15)

A New Covenant that was introduced through Jesus' blood (1 Cor 11:23-26)

23 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." 25 In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." 26 For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

A New Covenant that is mediated by Jesus (Heb 9:13-15)

13 The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. 14 How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! 15 For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.
A New Covenant that was illustrated by the two women of Hagar and Sarah (Gal 4:21-31)

22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. 23 His son by the slave woman was born in the ordinary way; but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a promise. 24 These things may be taken figuratively, for the women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar. 25 Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children. 26 But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother. 27 For it is written: "Be glad, O barren woman, who bears no children; break forth and cry aloud, you who have no labor pains; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband." 28 Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. 29 At that time the son born in the ordinary way persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit. It is the same now. 30 But what does the Scripture say? "Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman's son." 31 Therefore, brothers, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman.

A New Covenant that is made in the hearts and mind (Heb 10:15-18)

15 The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First he says: 16 "This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds." 17 Then he adds: "Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more." 18 And where these have been forgiven, there is no longer any sacrifice for sin.

Explanation of the New Covenant (from Barnes' Notes)

This New Covenant is referring to the "covenant or compact" that God was about to make with people through a Redeemer. The "old" covenant was that which was made with the Jews by the sprinkling of the blood of sacrifices. See Ex 24:8. In allusion to that, Jesus says, this cup is the NEW "covenant" in my blood; that is, which is "ratified, sealed, or sanctioned by my blood." In ancient times, covenants or contracts were ratified by slaying an animal; by the shedding of its blood, imprecating similar vengeance if either party failed in the compact. So Jesus says the covenant which God is about to form with people the new covenant, or the gospel economy is sealed or ratified with my blood. The general idea here is, that these were offences for which no expiation could be made by the sacrifices under that dispensation, or from which the blood then shed could not redeem. This general idea may include two particulars.

(1) That they who had committed transgressions under that covenant, and who could not be fully pardoned by the imperfect sacrifices then made, would receive a full forgiveness of all their sins in the great day of account through the blood of Christ. Though the blood of bulls and goats could not expiate, yet they offered that blood in faith; they relied on the promised mercy of God; they looked forward to a perfect sacrifice-and now the blood of the great atonement offered as a "full" expiation for all their sins, would be the ground of their acquittal in the last day.

(2) That the blood of Christ would now avail for the remission of all those sins which could not be expiated by the sacrifices offered under the Law. It not only contemplated the remission of all the offences committed by the truly pious under that Law, but would now avail to put away sin entirely. No sacrifice which people could offer would avail, but the blood of Christ would remove all that guilt.

A covenant appropriated by death (16-17)

Appropriated through Jesus' death to bring us to God (1 Peter 3:18)

18 For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit,

Appropriated through Jesus' death to prove true love (1 John 3:16)

16 This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.

Appropriated through Jesus' death so that Jesus lives in and through us (Gal 2:20)

20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.
15 For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.

**A covenant dedicated with blood (18)**

*Dedicated with blood as the atonement vehicle for sins (Lev 17:11)*

11 For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life.

*Dedicated with blood that cleanses everything (Heb 9:22)*

22 In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

*Dedicated with blood that reconciled man to God (Col 1:19-20)*

19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

*Dedicated with blood that washes our conscience clean (Heb 10:22)*

22 let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

**A Sacrifice of Better Blood (Heb 9:19-22)**

19 For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water, scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, 20 saying, "This is the blood of the covenant which God has commanded you.” 21 Then likewise he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry. 22 And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.

**A better blood than the Old Covenant (19-20)**

*Because Jesus' blood justifies and saves us (Rom 5:9)*

9 Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!

*Because Jesus' blood provides confidence to enter the Most Holy Place (Heb 10:19-22)*

19 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

*Because Jesus' blood brings reconciliation (Col 1:18-20)*

18 And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. 19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

*Because Jesus' blood starts the New Covenant (Matt 26:28)*

28 This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Because Jesus' blood brings redemption (Eph 1:7)

7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace.

A better blood for purification (21-22)

Because Jesus' blood redeems (1 Peter 1:18-19)

18 For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

Because Jesus' blood brings us near to God (Eph 2:13)

13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.

Because Jesus' blood make us holy (Heb 13:12)

12 And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood.

Because Jesus' blood proves access to God (Heb 10:19)

19 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus,

Because Jesus' blood introduced the New Covenant (1 Cor 11:23-26)

23 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." 25 In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." 26 For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Commentary Thoughts from Bob Deffinbaugh

The Necessity of Death (Hebrews 9:15-22)

There is good reason for our author to establish the need for our Lord’s death. Beforehand, no devout Jew was eager to hear about the death of Messiah. This was true of the Old Testament prophets, who spoke of our Lord’s suffering and His glory. They struggled with their own prophecies in which they wrote of Messiah’s suffering and death (texts like Isaiah 52:13—53:12). They could not see how these prophecies could be compatible with those that promised triumph over His enemies and the forces of evil:

10 Concerning this salvation, the prophets who predicted the grace that would come to you searched and investigated carefully. 11 They probed into what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating when he testified beforehand about the sufferings appointed for Christ and his subsequent glory. 12 They were shown that they were serving not themselves but you, in regard to the things now announced to you through those who proclaimed the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven – things angels long to catch a glimpse of (1 Peter 1:10-12).

I suspect that this same tension (between Messiah’s suffering and His glory) was at least part of the reason for John the Baptist’s question for Jesus:

1 When Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and preach in their towns. 2 Now when John heard in prison about the deeds Christ had done, he sent his disciples to ask a question: 3 “Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?” (Matthew 11:1-3)

John was in jail at the moment. The time of his death was drawing near, and it did not look as though Jesus was about to render judgment on Rome or on disobedient Jews (as John had warned). Had John been wrong to identify Jesus as the Messiah? Why was Jesus not fulfilling John’s prophetic words regarding the judgment?
Jesus would bring upon the wicked? We now know that the answer is to be found in the two appearances of Jesus – the second of which our author speaks in Hebrews 9:27-28.

John was not alone in his confusion about Jesus. The Lord’s disciples were not eager to hear their Master speak of His suffering and death at Calvary. Just after Peter’s great confession in Matthew 16, our Lord disclosed to His disciples that He was soon going to die. Peter’s reaction reveals his failure to grasp this aspect of our Lord’s messianic mission:

/21 From that time on Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests, and experts in the law, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. 22 So Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him: “God forbid, Lord! This must not happen to you!” 23 But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me, because you are not setting your mind on God’s interests, but on man’s.” 24 Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If anyone wants to become my follower, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. 25 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it (Matthew 16:21-25).

Unbelieving Jews also had great difficulty with Jesus’ talk of death. It seems to be one of the reasons why they would not embrace Him as the Messiah:

30 Jesus said, “This voice has not come for my benefit but for yours. 31 Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. 32 And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” 33 (Now he said this to indicate clearly what kind of death he was going to die.) 34 Then the crowd responded, “We have heard from the law that the Christ will remain forever. How can you say, ‘The Son of Man must be lifted up’? Who is this Son of Man?” (John 12:30-34, emphasis mine)

Nobody wanted to hear of Jesus’ death as Israel’s Messiah, which may help to explain why the author of Hebrews felt it was so important to deal extensively with the necessity of Messiah’s death.

The World’s Greatest Bailout (Hebrews 9:15)

And so [Therefore] 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 (Hebrews 9:15).

The “therefore” links this statement with what has just been stated. That is, because Christ appeared and made atonement for our sins by shedding His precious blood, He has become the mediator of a New Covenant, in place of the old. Some of the particulars of this “New Covenant” have already been cited in chapter 8. It was death – Messiah’s death – that accomplished redemption for those transgressions committed under the Old (“first”) Covenant. This is truly an amazing statement because it clearly indicates that the animal sacrifices offered under the Old Covenant didn’t accomplish redemption for sins. Paul put it this way:

21 But now apart from the law the righteousness of God (which is attested by the law and the prophets) has been disclosed – 22 namely, the righteousness of God through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction, 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. 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 (Romans 3:21-26, emphasis mine).

Listen carefully to what Paul (and the author of Hebrews) is saying about the Old Covenant. The Old Covenant and its Aaronic priestly sacrificial system did not put away the guilt and punishment for the sins of the ancient Israelites; it only put off the day of reckoning. Let me seek to illustrate this in monetary terms. Let’s suppose that the penalty for Israel’s sins was assessed in financial terms. Every sin put the sinner and the nation deeper into debt, and neither the individual nor the nation had any means of repaying their debt. On the annual Day of Atonement, a sacrifice was made for the “national sin debt” of the Israelites. That debt was not paid off; it was merely put off for another year. Israel’s “spiritual loan” was extended another year. And so each year the nation’s sin debt grew larger and larger. It was not until the coming of Messiah and His death on the cross of Calvary that the debt was finally paid off. This was truly the world’s greatest bailout. A debt that men could not pay was paid by God in the person of Messiah. The payment was not monetary; it was a spiritual debt, and it was paid off by our Lord’s death – by the sacrificial shedding of His blood on the cross.
Just who are the recipients of this massive bailout? The saving work of Jesus on the cross of Calvary applies to the sins of those who lived under the Old Covenant as well as to those living since the first coming of our Lord. In other words, anyone whose sins are forgiven and who inherits eternal life does so because of Christ’s saving death and resurrection. But this is not to say that everyone, past, present, or future will benefit from Christ’s saving work. Our author is very clear on this point: those who receive the promised inheritance are only those who are called. Paul put it this way in Romans 9:

6 It is not as though the word of God had failed. For not all those who are descended from Israel are truly Israel, 7 nor are all the children Abraham’s true descendants; rather “through Isaac will your descendants be counted.” 8 This means it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God; rather, the children of promise are counted as descendants. 9 For this is what the promise declared: “About a year from now I will return and Sarah will have a son.” 10 Not only that, but when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our ancestor Isaac – 11 even before they were born or had done anything good or bad (so that God’s purpose in election would stand, not by works but by his calling) – 12 it was said to her, “The older will serve the younger,” 13 just as it is written: “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated” (Romans 9:6-13).

While we see that the doctrine of election (God’s sovereign calling) is clearly taught in Scripture, men are still commanded to believe in Jesus for salvation. Paul will underscore this in the next chapter (10) of Romans:

8 But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we preach), 9 because if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes and thus has righteousness and with the mouth one confesses and thus has salvation. 11 For the scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.” 12 For there is no distinction between the Jew and the Greek, for the same Lord is Lord of all, who richly blesses all who call on him. 13 For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved (Romans 10:8-13).

So, those who inherit God’s promised blessings are those whom God has sovereignty chosen and called, and also those who have believed in God’s promise. (We should remember from Hebrews 3 and 4 that the ancient Israelites failed to enter into rest because of their unbelief.) I would understand the promised blessings to be the sworn (and thus irrevocable) promises that God made to Abraham in the Abrahamic Covenant and to Israel and all men in the New Covenant.

One inference from verse 15 is hard to miss: The Old Covenant system led to spiritual bankruptcy; it is the work of Christ in fulfilling the New Covenant that has provided the bailout for sinners. If the New Covenant sacrifice of Jesus “paid it all” – which it surely did – then why would anyone place their trust in a failed system, so far as its ability to save is concerned?

**The Necessity of Death for the Execution of a Will (Hebrews 9:16-7)**

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 (Hebrews 9:16-17).

We have just seen that the redemption of lost sinners required the sacrificial death of the Messiah. Now the author is going to buttress this declaration by showing that the death is required in everyday life as well. The case in point is the execution of a will. With rare exceptions, a will does not go into effect until after the death of the one who made it (the testator). Just as our author has stated, a death certificate is required before any will is executed. Death is a prerequisite for the execution of a will.

**The Necessity of a Sacrificial Death to Execute the Mosaic Covenant (Hebrews 9:18-22)**

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 sprinkle 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 (Hebrews 9:18-22).

Just as death is required to implement a will, death was also required to implement the Mosaic Covenant. When God made His covenant with the nation Israel, it was inaugurated with blood. I believe that verses 18-22 refer primarily to the events of Exodus 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” (Exodus 24:3-8).

The point that our author is making is that the Mosaic Covenant was set in motion (inaugurated) by the sacrifice of animals and the sprinkling of their blood. To be more direct, the death of innocent animals was required to inaugurate the Old Covenant. 

Hebrews 9:19-21 does include a few additional details that are not found in Exodus 24, but these are consistent with Moses’ account and are probably just further clarification. What we are to glean from this reference to the inauguration of the Old Covenant is that even this covenant was commenced by the shedding and application of sacrificial blood. No wonder the New Covenant was inaugurated by the blood which our Lord Jesus shed for the redemption of lost sinners.

From these specific examples, the author reaches a general conclusion: “without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness” (Hebrews 9:22b). Under the Old Covenant, sins were reckoned with (temporarily) by the shedding of the blood of sacrificial animals. Our Lord’s death is entirely consistent with God’s way of dealing with sin. The shedding of sacrificial blood may offend the sensibilities of some, but this was the way God had appointed to reckon with man’s sin. If we are appalled by the severity of God’s solution for sin, then surely we must begin to understand how appalled God is by our sin. We dare not take sin—or its consequences—lightly.

(Adapted from URL:https://bible.org/seriespage/21-dealing-death-or-worlds-greatest-bailout-hebrews-915-28)

**Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary**

Under the old covenant, almost all things were purged by use of blood. But the new covenant features a deeper, further reaching, once-for-all cleansing through the blood of Christ. The blood of bulls and goats could never fully atone for past, present, and future sin. Ultimate salvation required the lifeblood of the Son of God. An incident centuries ago caused someone to notice that certain people were sinning against the Lord, in that they were eating meat with the blood still in it (1 Samuel 14:33). But in a figurative sense, Jesus invites us to do just that! The invitation came when he said, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me” (1 Corinthians 11:25). We do just that when we gather around the Lord’s table. Through Christ’s sacrifice, we have entered into a new covenant relationship with God. We have been given full access to the Father through Christ. Hallelujah, what a Savior!

**Concluding Thoughts from the Echoes Commentary**

The Old Testament Way - Moses met with God on Mt. Sinai, received the Ten Commandments, then delivered them to the Hebrew children—God’s laws to live by. By obeying these laws completely, they would truly be His holy people and His representative states on earth.

The New Testament Way - However, Jesus declared Himself as the way to enter into God's presence. The Book of Hebrews repeatedly refers to Him as a High Priest. Why? Because Jesus didn't just offer sacrifices—He became the perfect sacrifice, once and for all, with His death. He suffered and died willingly, motivated by love. Now, He intercedes for man with the Father in heaven. Jesus offered the perfect purification. Once you are washed in His blood, your sins are eternally pardoned, and you can boldly approach God. God now looks at only one sacrifice, the death of His Son.

Forgiveness to Reach God - Today, all these biblical references about bloody sacrifices may appear distasteful and gruesome. But the Jews understood these rituals as God's way to graciously forgive their sins. God’s Word tells us there is no forgiveness without the shedding of blood. Perfect forgiveness from God requires a perfect sacrifice, which was Jesus and His blood shed on Calvary.