

Exodus Chapter 24

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[0 : 00] Bibli suspect Revelation numéro 1 1 ba■lar Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. It's always good that we come with a sense of excitement about what God has to say to us so that we might worship him with a full heart.

So Hebrews in chapter 10, I'd like us to read from verse 15 through to 25. The writer of Hebrews has been particularly talking about the Lord Jesus, about his coming into the world, his fulfilling of the role of priest and prophet and king.

And talking about the covenant that he has fulfilled. And verse 15 of chapter 10, just listen to these words.

[3 : 03] Follow these words. The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First he says, this is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord.

I'll put my laws in their hearts. I will write them on their minds. Then he adds, their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more. And where these have been forgiven, sacrifice for sin is no longer necessary.

Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the most holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way open for us through the curtain that is his body.

And since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with a full assurance that faith brings.

Having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience. Having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess.

[4 : 05] For he who promised is faithful. Let us consider how we may spur one another towards love and good deeds. Not giving up meeting together as some are in the habit of doing.

But encouraging one another. And all the more as you see the day approaching. The promise of God through Jesus is that we can have confidence to draw near.

Through his death upon the cross. Through his blood shed for our sins. We draw near to God. With sincere hearts. Knowing our sins have been forgiven. Knowing that we are accepted and loved.

Knowing that the one in whom we put our faith and trust is faithful himself. So let's sing together our first hymn. It's number 38. Reminding us of those words of the covenant of God.

God of the covenant. Triune Jehovah. Sorry, 38. 48. Thank you. 48. 48. Thank you. Well, we've been encouraged already in God's word to draw near to the Lord.

[5 : 15] Let's do that now in prayer. Let us pray. Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Triune and eternal God.

We come to you with praise and thanksgiving. Because, O Lord, you have made that way of entrance into your presence. Once that way was barred to us.

Once, O Lord, there was no way that we could ever approach you. There is no way that we sinful men and women could know your pardon, forgiveness, your love and acceptance.

For you are holy. For you are holy. For you are holy. For you are righteous. You are perfect. You are upright and good. And, O Lord, your word declares that your eye is too pure even to look upon evil.

O Lord, if it was not for your grace. If it was not for your Son. If it wasn't for his sacrifice for sin. Then we would forever and eternally be shut out from you.

[6 : 23] Cast into that place of eternal darkness and judgment and sorrow. For, O Lord, we are sinners. Sinners who have broken your commandments.

Sinners who have gone our own way. Sinners who have forgotten you. The living God who made us. But, O Lord, we thank you. Oh, we thank you for the amazing grace.

That though we have forgotten you, you have not forgotten us. And though we are ignorant of you, you are not ignorant of us. And though, O Lord, we have acted unjustly and terribly towards you, you have acted in mercy and goodness and faithfulness to us.

For, O Lord, you have saved us. Rescued us. Lord, we could never come to you. And so, Lord, you came to us in the very person of Jesus Christ.

The Son of God. You came to us, Lord. You rolled up your sleeves, as it were. You got down and dirty with us in the midst of this broken and corrupt world.

[7 : 24] And you came, O Lord, down to our level. Not that you sinned. Not that you were ever tainted with sin. But, O Lord, that you came to us to lift us up.

To rescue us and to deliver us. To restore us to our God. Our Maker. Our Heavenly Father and our Friend. We thank you that to do that, you went to the cross.

To do that, to accomplish for us restoration with God. You were not willing to withhold or to hold back any part of yourself. You gave yourself body and soul and all.

When upon the cross you bore the punishment our sins deserve. When upon the cross you felt the very anger and judgment of God against our sin.

Lord, how can we ever comprehend? How can we ever take on board what it really meant for you to suffer and to die for us? Though, Lord, just what we know melts our hearts.

[8 : 24] Just what we know of that love and that grace. Just what we know when we read of your scriptures. Of what you endured. Lord, that is enough to stop us in our tracks.

To make us see and recognize again that here is love like no other. Here is a God like no other. Here is salvation full and free.

Here is one who we cannot help but adore. We cannot help but love. We cannot help but declare the praises of. One whose heart has captured our heart.

One who has made us his own children and brought us into his own family. Oh, Lord, how can we not but gather here this evening to worship and praise you? How can anything, even wild horses, keep us back from seeking your face and coming near to you?

Lord, your love is magnetic. It is powerful. It draws us. And, Lord, we thank you that we can now come in. Without fear, without trembling.

[9 : 27] Without the curse of sin against us. Without judgment. We can come, oh Lord. And be welcomed and received into that holy of holies. And be received into the very presence of the living God.

And, Lord, that's our desire. We're here this evening to meet with you. It's lovely to meet with one another. It's super to sing your praises and to hear your word. And even to think and meditate upon your word.

But unless you are here, oh Lord. Unless you speak to our hearts by your Holy Spirit. Unless you minister to us. And everything we do this evening is superficial. It's temporal.

It's just passing. But, Lord, we don't want that. We don't want a superficial service. We want one in which, oh Lord, we truly are engaged in that fellowship and communion with you.

And when, oh Lord, you work in us and change us. Thank you that you've promised that you are doing that. Changing us from one degree of glory to another. And we want, oh Lord, more of the glory of Jesus to be seen and manifest in our lives.

[10 : 30] And so we pray, oh Lord, come down afresh upon your word and upon our minds and hearts. Come and meet with us. Come and bless us. Come and do us good.

We ask these things now. In and through your Son. Who is the way, the truth and the life. Jesus Christ the Lord. Amen. Amen. And chapter 24.

Now, those of you who are with us normally on a Sunday evening will know that we have been journeying through Exodus. We went to the very, to the Ten Commandments and then finished the Ten Commandments around about six or seven months ago.

And we've taken a break over the spring and the summer because of various activities in the life of the church. And we're back into Exodus. Last week we looked at chapter 23. And we saw how God promised to lead his people with an angel to take them through the desert, to take them to the promised land.

And that this angel, as we see, shows us and points us to the Lord Jesus. He is the one. He is the angel of the Lord. He's the one who leads his people even still. And then we come to chapter 4.

[11 : 37] And we're going to read chapter 4 and then consider this episode in the life of God's people for ourselves once more in a little while. So Exodus in chapter 24, if you've got one of the church Bibles, that's page 82.

Then the Lord said to Moses, come up to the Lord, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and 70 of the elders of Israel.

You are to worship at a distance. But Moses alone is to approach the Lord. Others may not come near. And the people may not come up with him.

When Moses went and told the people all the Lord's words and laws, they responded with one voice. Everything the Lord has said, we will do.

Moses then wrote down everything the Lord had said. He got up early the next morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain. Set up 12 stone pillars representing the 12 tribes of Israel.

[12 : 39] Then he sent young Israelite men. They offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as fellowship offerings to the Lord. Moses took half of the blood, put it in balls.

The other half he splashed against the altar. Then he took the book of the covenant and read it to the people. They responded, we will do everything the Lord has said.

We will obey. Moses then took the blood, sprinkled 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.

Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu and the 70 elders of Israel went up and saw the God of Israel. Under his feet was something like a pavement made of lapis lazuli, as bright blue as the sky.

But God did not raise his hand against these leaders of the Israelites. They saw God and they ate and drank. The Lord said to Moses, come up to me on the mountain and stay here, and I will give you the tablets of stone with the law and the commandments I have written for your instruction.

[13 : 52] Then Moses set out with Joshua his assistant, and Moses went up on the mountain of God. He said to the elders, wait here for us until we come back to you.

Aaron and Hur are with you, and anyone involved in a dispute can go to them. When Moses went up on the mountain, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the Lord settled on Mount Sinai.

For six days the cloud covered the mountain, and on the seventh day the Lord called to Moses from within the cloud. To the Israelites the glory of the Lord looked like a consuming fire on top of the mountain.

Then Moses entered the cloud as he went on up the mountain. He stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights. If you'd like to have your Bibles open at Exodus 24, we'll be looking at that passage.

But also, if you'd like to have your Bible open at Hebrews in chapter 9, and we'll be in there as well. Hebrews is one of the very best places to help us understand and apply God's word in the Old Testament.

[15 : 04] Now, the English language is a very strange language, isn't it? It's sort of made up of all sorts of other languages.

There's a bit of Latin thrown in, and a bit of Saxon and Angle, and French, and German, and all sorts of things like that. And of course, several French sort of phrases have come in.

And cul-de-sac, and the one I wanted to think of this evening, déjà vu. Déjà vu. We've all had déjà vu.

In the French, it means already seen. It's that experience where we're in a situation, and somehow we're reminded of something that's happened to us in the past. We're not exactly sure.

It's a situation we've not... We don't remember exactly what had happened, necessarily, though sometimes that new situation brings it back to our mind. But there's a similarity between the two events, between what we're going through and what has happened to us previously.

[16 : 04] In one sense, we could say déjà vu is seeing the past in the present. The memory is triggered. There's something there from an earlier event that the brain picks up on.

The brain is an amazing organ, isn't it? It's far and beyond superior to any piece of computing technology we have today. It is clearly designed by a glorious designer.

Now, I don't know when, if you felt a little bit of déjà vu when you were reading through Exodus 24, particularly, I think, when we read the words of Moses in verse 8.

Does this bring anything to mind? This is the blood of the covenant. What does that make you think of? Where we heard that phrase before.

Well, we've not heard it before Exodus, of course, chronologically, but we've heard it all before. In the New Testament, in the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, 1,500 years or more after this event, we're at what we call the Last Supper.

[17 : 11] Jesus says to his disciples, this is the blood of the new covenant in my blood. And there's a further link, isn't there, between these two events, the Last Supper and the event here.

Not only do we have this as the blood of the covenant, but later on we see verse 11, they saw God and they ate and drank. There's a fellowship meal takes place between the Lord and between some of the church leaders, the Old Testament leaders, Moses and others as well.

It seems to me it's very clear that when the Lord Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, his mind was very much filled with what was happening here between God's people and between Moses and so on.

And that shouldn't surprise us. We believe in a complete Bible. We believe in a Bible which is not bitty, but one which is strung together by the very breath and the very word of God.

We believe that the Bible is one story. It is one revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ. The great early church father, Augustine, coined the phrase, the new is in the old concealed and the old is in the new revealed.

[18 : 32] And that, I believe, surely is the case here. That's why we study the Old Testament. That's why as Christians we don't say, oh well, we're New Testament Christians. We only study the New Testament. The Old Testament has nothing to do with us.

Well, that would be foolishness because, as you know, whenever you read the New Testament, you keep reading about the writers referring to the Old Testament. Keep telling us and pointing us back to the Old Testament because the Old Testament is part of God's revealed and glorious word.

And that's why particularly I want us to be, and we're going to be, in Hebrews this evening as well as Exodus 24 because we have something of that connection.

Hebrews in chapter 9 and verses 19 and 20. And this event in Exodus 24 is highlighted and picked out by the writer to the Hebrews, particularly to point us to the Lord Jesus and all that he accomplished by his life and death.

Resurrection, verse 19 of Hebrews 9, when Moses had proclaimed every command of the law to all the people. That's the book of the people.

[20 : 08] God has commanded you to keep. And so we see there is that clear connection. This event is something important, important for us as New Testament believers.

And I want us just to take the time then this evening to go through what happened a little bit in Exodus 24 and see the connection between the great salvation that God has provided us in Jesus.

Now remember we said that, or I said rather, there was a sense of *deja vu*. Not so much *deja vu* in looking, something in the past reminding us of something that happened to us now, but something in the present in one sense in Jesus' life that reminds us of something that happened in the past to God's people.

Remember he said this is the blood of the covenant. There is one difference, isn't there, between the words of Moses and the words of Jesus, the addition of one word, the word new. Jesus' words, this is the blood of the new covenant or the cup of the new covenant in my blood.

And it's that word that makes all the difference between these two covenants. And throughout the New Testament, Paul and particularly the writer in the Hebrews makes mention of the new covenant.

[21 : 21] Paul talks about it in Galatians 4 particularly, about the two covenants. And here in Hebrews, this time in chapter 8, the very end of chapter 8.

By calling this covenant new, he has made the first one obsolete. And what is obsolete and outdated will soon disappear. Chapter 9, verse 1, now the first covenant had regulations for worship and also an earthly sanctuary, the tabernacle, later the temple.

So it's important for us to just think for a moment about this matter of covenant. God makes several covenants in the Old Testament. And the question really is this, which covenant does Jesus' new covenant make obsolete?

Which covenant in the Old Testament does Jesus' new covenant make obsolete? Now a covenant was a binding agreement, usually between two people.

But always in the Bible, we find that the covenant is made between God and his people. It may be just one person or several people or, of course, as we see here, a whole nation of people.

[22 : 34] Promises are made by God. And each covenant of the Bible is in one sense, if I can put it this way, a single ray, which shines from that one altogether covenant, the covenant of grace.

We need to imagine a bit like a rainbow. We saw one actually this afternoon. You have that rainbow and you have, don't you, through the prism of the light, you have different bands of the rainbow.

If you can imagine that the covenant of God's grace, the covenant of his salvation, which spreads throughout the whole Bible, made up of these different rays, these different bands of color, these separate covenants that I just want us to look at very briefly this evening before turning especially to the new covenant.

That covenant, that covenant I've called and other Christians call the covenant of grace, is God's eternal promise, his commitment to save those sinful people in the world who he chose from before the world was made through faith in Christ.

In Hebrews and in other places, it's called the eternal covenant. The eternal covenant, Hebrews 13. So, what covenants do we find?

[23 : 57] Well, just very briefly, as I said, we have first of all a covenant that's made with Noah. The covenant with Noah and his family in Genesis after the ark has been grounded, as it were, and brought through that terrible flood, which was God's judgment on the world.

A permanent covenant was made between God and Noah and, we're told, Noah's family and his descendants. It was a covenant which is still in force today.

God's promise was that he would never flood the earth again. And, of course, as we know, he gave a symbol, a sign, a token of that covenant, the rainbow, which even already I've mentioned.

The rainbow is a sign, isn't it, that fills the believer with a sense of awe. Even unbelievers, when they see the covenant, people who don't know God still see it as a marvelous thing.

And God said this, Whenever the rainbow appears, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures on the earth. That's why, even though, as we know, in places like Asia recently, there's been terrible flooding, God isn't saying, I'm never going to have any flooding, but that flood of Noah was a universal flood that covered the whole earth.

[25 : 12] And God's promise is that never again will the earth be flooded in that way. Then, of course, one of the most important, if not the most important covenant that God made was one with Abraham in Genesis chapter 17.

And again, that's called an everlasting covenant by God's words. It's an active covenant, a covenant which still has effect today.

It has effect today, in fact, upon you and I, because by that covenant, we are brought into God's blessings through faith in Jesus. Here's what Paul writes in Galatians 3, verse 29.

If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed or Abraham's descendants and heirs according to the promise. So the promise that God made to Abraham included the sending of the Savior.

And when we come to faith in Christ, we are inheritors of that covenant. We are, in one sense, part of that Abraham's family. That's why we sang that hymn, The God of Abraham Prays.

[26 : 18] And elsewhere we know Abraham is spoken of as our father in the faith. Even we Gentiles, in other words, those who are not direct physical descendants, have entered into the covenant promises that God gave Abraham.

And there was a sign there, wasn't there as well? A sign of God's promise to keep his covenant. The sign of circumcision, which was to be given to the infants of those believers.

Now, then we come to this covenant. This covenant between Moses, or with Moses, and the Israelites. Now, this covenant did not supersede Abraham's covenant.

It didn't replace Abraham's covenant. This later covenant was a temporary covenant. It was a covenant to be in place until the promise given to Abraham had come.

The Messiah, the Savior, who would bring about this final, this best covenant of all. And we read that there, didn't we? In chapter 8, verse 13.

[27 : 21] By calling this covenant new, he's made the first one obsolete. What is that covenant that God has made obsolete? It's that covenant there that we read about. That covenant which contained the law.

That covenant which had the symbol of the tabernacle. The sacrifices. The ceremonies. All of these were a shadow of the reality which is in Christ and the new covenant.

Chapter 10, and verse 1. The law is only a shadow. And by that, he means all the law. The ceremonial law. The sacrificial law. The tabernacle law.

The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming. Not the realities themselves. For this reason, it can never by the same sacrifices repeatedly, endlessly, year after year, make perfect those who draw near to God.

Now, I don't wish to be in any way controversial. I don't wish to cause unnecessary complication or upset. But we need to understand this, dear friends, even if we may not fully agree with it.

[28 : 30] When God gave the covenant to Abraham as an everlasting covenant of which we are a part, that covenant has not ceased as we've seen. And the sign of that covenant was, as we saw, circumcision for the infants of those believers.

Now, for many Christians, they believe that the sign of this new covenant, and we all believe that in one sense, we all believe that the sign of the new covenant that Jesus has brought in is baptism with water.

We know that because we see in Acts 2, when Peter is preaching, he talks about the promise, which is to you and to your children. He talks about the Holy Spirit and baptism.

But it's only this third covenant. It's only this covenant of the law, of the sacrifices. That's why, as Christians, we don't sacrifice animals during our services.

That's why we don't look to priests or call ministers priests. That's something we should never do, or wear the garments of them. But many Christians understand that the sign of the covenant is still to be applied to the children of believers.

[29 : 42] The baptism of those who have children. The baptism of those children whose parents love and know the Lord. The symbol of saints from circumcision to baptism.

It still has the same purpose. Not to save, but a visual sign of God's promises. A visual sign that God is the God of his people.

As I say, I don't wish that to be in any way controversial. I just think it's important for us to understand why some Christians do baptize the infants of believers and why some don't.

Well, let's get back to Exodus 24. We've given a little bit of an overview of covenants. And we've seen that the covenant which is being established here in chapter 24 is a covenant which is temporary.

A passing covenant. Not a complete one. Not one which continues to us today who are in Christ. But Jesus says there is, or rather Hebrews says there is a new covenant.

[30 : 42] In fact, we're told it's a better covenant. Back in Hebrews in chapter 8 in verse 6. In fact, the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs.

That's the priests of the old covenant. As the covenant to which he is mediator is superior to the old one. Since the new covenant is established on better promises.

The new covenant has a better mediator. Now Moses was the mediator of that covenant about which we read. He was the one who acted on behalf of God and behalf of the people.

That's what a mediator was. He acted on behalf of both parties of the agreement. He was the one who received from God the words and promises of the covenant.

He's the one who passed them on to the people. And he acted on their behalf when he went up the mountain and received the law from God. But Christ is the mediator of the new and the better covenant.

[31 : 43] What does that mean when we're told that here and elsewhere? We need to be very careful that we don't misunderstand mediator in the way that we may understand it in today's context.

Nowadays, of course, a mediator is someone who may work for ACAS, the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service. They are the ones who are called in to handle a dispute between perhaps a union or between workers, an employer, a business, an airline or whatever.

They come in and they sort of smooth over the waters. They sort of say, well, you know, you make a bit of a compromise and they'll make a bit of a compromise and somehow we'll reach an agreement together. But God's covenants are non-negotiable.

God's covenants are not open to discussion or to change. The mediator of God's covenant is not someone who can say, oh, well, God, can't you just sort of be a bit more realistic on your terms?

And to the people, well, can't you sort of, you know, be a bit more giving towards God? No. That's why when we read here, we read how Moses simply reads to the people the book of the covenant, the law that God has given containing the Ten Commandments and their application, as we thought in chapters 20 to 23.

[32 : 58] This was what God has said. And there was no negotiation about it. The people had no option. Either they accepted the covenant that God had laid down and the terms of it, or they didn't.

But we find that they do. Verse 3 of chapter 24, Moses went and told the people all the Lord's words and laws. They responded with one voice, voice, everything the Lord has said we will do.

But unfortunately, that was the great problem with this covenant. That's why this covenant could not last, because it was dependent upon the people keeping the covenant. And they were sinful people.

When you read for the rest of the Old Testament, what do you find again and again, God, as it were, speaking to the people and accusing them rightly and judging them, saying, you've broken the covenant with me.

You haven't kept my laws or my commands. And we have that wonderful, in one sense, or very sad roller coaster through the book of Judges and through the books of Kings, where we have God's people sometimes seeking to serve God and walking with him, and then that great descent, where they fall into terrible sin of idolatry, breaking God's commandment.

[34 : 11] Then another judge, a godly judge, or a godly king will come, and there'll be a rise in the spirituality. They could never keep the covenant, and therefore the covenant was always temporary.

This is what we read in Hebrews 8, and verses 7 and 8. For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another.

Listen, but God found fault with the people. It wasn't the covenant, in one sense, that was the problem. It wasn't God's laws. They weren't bad. It wasn't God's covenant that it was wrong or unrealistic.

The problem was the people, their hearts. Their hearts were sinful, and they were inclined towards sinful behavior, and so no matter how much they may have wanted to, or tried to, ultimately, they kept on sinning.

Now, we have a better mediator, as we read there, that his ministry is superior, of which he is the keeper of the covenant. Chapter 7 and verse 22.

[35 : 19] Because of this oath, Jesus has become the guarantor of a better covenant. What do we mean? Well, not only do we find that in Jesus we have the presentation of the covenant terms, the promises of God.

In fact, Paul writes in 1 Corinthians, all the promises of God in Jesus are yes and amen. He is the promise maker. He's the one who receives and passes on the promises.

We see them in his gospels as he teaches and speaks about the promises of God. But more than that, Jesus is our representative, who on our behalf, as it were, says to God, I will do everything that you command.

And that's exactly what he did. But as both God and man, he was the perfect mediator, the perfect representative between God and men. Paul tells us in 1 Timothy, that there is only one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.

And so Jesus, in his earthly life, fulfilled all the covenant demands of God. He was perfectly holy. He kept God's word.

[36 : 29] He fulfilled in his life and body, perfect holiness and obedience on our behalf. So just as he went to the cross and died on our behalf to pay the penalty for our sin, so he lived that perfect life on our behalf to fulfill the covenant demands of God so that we might be righteous in God's sight as well as forgiven in God's sight.

That's why he is the best of all mediators. So when we put our faith in Jesus and are made one with him, God looks at you and I and he sees the perfect obedience of Jesus and the perfect sacrifice of Jesus and he accepts us.

And in God's eyes, you and I, dear friends, are perfect law keepers. In God's eyes, there is no sin to be held against us. And that means that the covenant, the relationship we have with God, this promise can never be broken even by our sin if we are Christ's because the guarantee of it is in Jesus.

The certainty of it is through him. He's a better mediator. The next thing that we recognize when we see here is that Jesus makes a better sacrifice.

This new covenant, this better covenant, includes a better sacrifice. Here in Hebrews again, in chapter 9, verse 23. It was necessary then for the copies of the heavenly things, that's the tabernacle and the altar and so on, it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these sacrifices, the sacrifices of animals.

[38 : 16] But the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made with human hands.

That was only a copy of the true one. He entered heaven itself now to appear for us in God's presence. We find that Jesus is the one who has made this once for all sacrifice.

Verse 26. Otherwise, Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world, but he has appeared once for all at the culmination of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.

When Moses made that, made the covenant with the people, do you remember what happened there in Exodus 24? We're told he built an altar. Then he sent young men to get bulls and young bulls, calves, sacrificed them upon the altar for God.

Then he took the blood of the sacrifices, he splashed it upon the altar, he splashed it upon the book, and he sprinkled it upon the people as well.

[39 : 27] Why did he do all that? Because for any covenant to be made with God who is holy, we people who are sinful must be first cleansed from our sin.

It's impossible for God to make a covenant to enter into a relationship with us while we are still sinful and in rebellion against God.

We have to be cleansed. We have to be washed. We have to be made clean. And that can only happen through a sacrifice. We read in Hebrews 9, verse 22.

In fact, the law requires that everything be cleansed with blood and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. God's holiness, his perfect righteousness, demands that all sin must be punished and it must be punished with death because sin is so serious.

Either it's the death of the one who commits the sin or it's the death of a substitute in the place of the sinner. And in this case, it was the substitute of an animal.

[40 : 38] We may not, we may think it's ghastly. We may think it's rather, rather awful when we read in Acts 24 about people being sprinkled with blood. It's all a bit like, something the goths might do.

I don't know when they come to, I don't think they do necessarily do that, but something macabre. When we understand sin for what it is and how serious it is and the gravitas of it, then we cannot help but see that sin must demand death.

So in sprinkling the altar, which symbolizes God and the people, God is showing that only through blood could these two parties be reconciled and brought together.

The trouble was, of course, and this is again why the covenant made here was a temporary covenant, is that, of course, the animal sacrifices were not equal to the life of the person who had committed the sin.

They, we're told, could only be cleansed outwardly. Hebrews 9, 13. The blood of goats and bulls, the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean, sanctify them so they are outwardly clean.

[41 : 50] Outwardly clean isn't good enough, is it, with God? We need to be inwardly cleansed of our sin, not just outwardly cleansed of our sin. All of those sacrifices we're looking forward to and pointing to Jesus' sacrifices, once for all sacrifice on the cross, the way he provided the perfect sacrifice, offering himself for the cleansing and forgiveness of all of his people.

Chapter 9, verse 14. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself unblemished to God, in other words, perfect in God's sight, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death so we may serve the living God.

He's a better mediator of a better covenant and has provided a better sacrifice than any sacrifice brought by men. One last thing, dear friends, as we close.

Because this new covenant is so good, it has provided for us better access to God. Better access to God. You notice here in chapter 24 that Moses and just a few people could come near to God.

In fact, it was only Moses who was allowed to come right close to God. The others were able to come at a distance and all the rest of the people had to stand at a very great distance away from God.

[43 : 14] When the covenant had been made, yes, Moses could draw near and he's 73 and we talked about how they saw God and ate with him.

They had a nearness and an access but it wasn't for everybody. It was a one-off. And so when we find we get to the temple and the tabernacle and the sacrifices, the only person who could enter into the Holy of Holies, the place where God dwelt, was the high priest once a year on the Day of Atonement.

And so everybody else was kept out and even that one high priest could only come on a very fleeting basis. There was no permanent fellowship between God and his people. There was no permanent sense of them being able to enter and draw near to God and commune with God.

That's why this covenant that Jesus has brought in is so much better. It's so much better because by him we can draw near to God and have close and permanent fellowship with God.

That's why I read as I did at the very start of our service this morning, sorry, this evening from Hebrews 10. Verse 19, Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the most holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, let us draw near to God.

[44 : 33] This is what we're doing here, isn't it? When we come to church on a Sunday. We're not just here. When we're in our homes, when we're in prayer, when we open up the scriptures, when we're together, one with another, discussing the things of Christ.

Two or three to gather together, Jesus said, I am there. This is the wonderful access that we have to God. No longer kept at arm's distance from God.

No longer at the base of the mountain while he was at the top, but drawing near. Jesus drew near on our behalf. He went into the holy of holies, made the sacrifice for our sins, and by that, he has made this new and living way by which we can come to God.

That's incredible. Sinners like me and you, people who have broken God's commandments, people who still get it wrong and muck it up, God has determined will always have an entrance into his presence.

There'll never be a time when we come to God in prayer and in one sense we have a sign on the door, do not enter. Always, God wants us to draw near.

[45 : 48] I wonder how many times, are we doing that, dear friends? Are we coming into the presence of God daily? Are we enjoying fellowship with him which Jesus has purchased and made possible through the new covenant?

We have been sprinkled with the blood of Jesus, the better sacrifice. We have peace with God, the forgiveness of all our sins. We have intimate relationship with the Lord daily, speaking with him and knowing his presence.

Are we doing that in prayer daily? Are we listening to the words of Jesus and reading the words of Jesus and is our response, I will do all that is written.

Lord, by your grace and by your spirit in my heart, my commitment is to keep your covenant. My commitment is to do your will. My commitment is to live for you who gave your life for me.

And let me ask you this, dear friends, perhaps there are times when you worry about your salvation. You worry, am I actually going, will God ever, will God really accept me?

[46 : 54] And perhaps like me, you sin and you fall. Maybe even you backslide and you are anxious. Have I lost that salvation?

Is that covenant relationship between me and God now broken? Let me say to you, it can never be. It is an everlasting covenant, certain and sure. An everlasting covenant, a bond of love that not even my sin or your sin can break because it rests upon the very promise and the very person of Jesus Christ both now and forever more.

And so we find the Apostle Paul writing these words. I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any power, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Let's sing together our final hymn this evening, dear friends. 467, Hail to the Lord's anointed, great David's greater son.

467. 467. Now may the God of peace who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus that great shepherd of the sheep may he equip you with everything good for doing his will and may he work in us what is pleasing to him through Jesus Christ to whom be glory for ever and ever.

[48 : 49] Amen. Amen..