

HE IS BETTER.

A Series in the Book of Hebrews



Hebrews

A Note to the Parents/Teachers

The book of Hebrews is often summed up in one simple phrase: Jesus is better. The audience of this letter appears to be primarily Jewish Christians who grew up in Judaism but have believed in Jesus. Yet, they seem to be facing persecution for believing that Jesus was/is the Messiah that Israel had been waiting for. The author responds to these believers turning from faith in Jesus by showing that Jesus is superior to every possible thing that you could put in his place.

Call to Worship

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come. You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will, they were created and have their being.” - Revelation 4:8,11

Starter

Evidence of Grace

Ask kids to share ways they've seen God at work lately. Anything, big or small, which is good is from God. Take time to thank God together.

Discussion Question(s):

- ▶ Have you ever seen pictures of the beach or the mountains? Have you ever gone to the beach and stood on the sand and played in the waves? Have you ever been to the mountains and hiked through the trees? What is the difference between seeing a picture and being in the actual place? (Sights, sounds, tastes, experience being present in the actual place.)

Text

Hebrews 9

Big Idea: Jesus is the better TABERNACLE

Summary

The author of Hebrews is continuing this theme of Jesus being the Great High Priest who has made the ultimate sacrifice for all of humanity's sins and now sits at the right hand of God the Father, interceding on our behalf. The author continues this theme as all of these things (High Priest, Covenant, Tabernacle, Temple, etc.) would have been things the Hebrew people would have been familiar with, comfortable with and things the people might have placed their hope in. So, the author has already addressed that Jesus is the better High Priest and that Jesus is the better covenant. Now, the author will continue with Jesus is the better Tabernacle.

What was the Tabernacle, and what was its purpose? The Tabernacle was an “earthly place of holiness” where people under the old covenant tried to approach God. The Tabernacle was a tent that had two rooms inside and an outer court with a fence around the outside. The outer court was where sacrifices were made. As you went into the tent, the first section was called the “Holy Place.” This Holy Place had a big lampstand, or a menorah, a table, and the bread of presence. These were all symbols that reminded Israel of who God was and what He had done. These symbols also pointed to Jesus, and Jesus referenced these things to himself.

A big curtain separated the first section, or the Holy Place, from an inner room or second section. This second section was called “The Most Holy Place.” In this second room was the Ark of the Covenant and an Altar of Incense. In the Ark was Aaron's staff that God caused to blossom, Manna that God provided for the people when He rescued them from slavery in Egypt, and the tablets with the Ten Commandments that God gave to Moses for the people. Again, these were all symbols that reminded Israel of what God had done for them. On top of the Ark was the Mercy Seat of God. This was a picture of God's throne. It was where his presence dwelt.

Nobody was allowed to go into this room except for the high priest, and even he was only allowed to go in once a year on the Day of Atonement. He had to go through rituals and make sacrifices for his own sin before he could step foot in the Most Holy Place, and if he didn't, he would die.

So the Tabernacle was a place where the people could make sacrifices on the outside, the priests could only enter the first section or the Holy Place, and ONLY the High Priest was allowed in the second section, or the Most Holy Place, and only once a year to make a sacrifice for the sins of all of the people on the Day of Atonement. In the tabernacle were signs and items that were meant to remind the priests and the people of who God was and what He had done. All of these signs pointed to Jesus.

Jesus

In 9:11 it says, “BUT when Christ appeared as a High Priest...” This means that when Jesus came to earth everything changed. It goes on to say, “In the greater more perfect tabernacle not made with hands (that is, not of this creation), he entered the most holy place once for all

time, not by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption” (9:11-12).

Jesus came from the perfect tabernacle, which was the very throne room of God, where God's full presence dwelt. The earthly tabernacle was a copy or an image of what the real Most Holy Place was in Heaven, where God's full presence and Mercy seat dwell. The earthly tabernacle was like the picture of the ocean or mountains. They are still beautiful pictures and amazing to look at. But when Jesus came to earth, it was like standing on the sand of the ocean and listening to the waves. It was like being in the mountains and feeling the cool breeze while you hiked through the trees. The full presence of God was among His people again.

Jesus was the perfect high priest for two reasons. First, he is the everlasting great high priest. Jesus has always been with the Father, and when he died and rose from the dead, He continues to be the perfect high priest because he continues forever in the presence of his Father.

Second, Jesus' sacrifice was himself, not a goat or calf. Animal sacrifices had to be perfect, without blemishes or spots. Yet, even a perfect animal could never fully deal with the power and enormity of all of sin. Jesus' sacrifice of himself, being eternal, perfect, and sinless, was the only sacrifice that could fully deal with all of sin forever!

Dialogue Questions - you may use some or all.

- What are some ways you can be an image of God's glory to the world around you?
- What are some ways that you can point others toward Jesus?
- Where have you seen God at work in the world around you?
- Why was Jesus the perfect sacrifice for sins?
- If you have trusted Jesus with your heart, life, and loyalties, how should you live in relationship with God, with others, and with God's created world?

Breakout Time

Pray:

God, I know that you are the one true living God who created all things. You created the earth and everything on the earth. You created me. Thank you for sending your Son Jesus so that I can be forgiven of worshiping other things. Forgive me for sometimes worshiping other things than you. I repent. Holy Spirit, please work in my heart to love God and love others in a way that points them to Jesus and your Kingdom. May our hearts be filled with love for you and for others in response to what you have done in and through your Son Jesus and the story you have invited us to now participate in. Help me to think of my community this week and how I can love them well so that they might know you more.

Craft

You can have the kids color the tabernacle picture below or you can have them build a “tabernacle tent” with some sticks, felt or other fabric that the kids can fashion into a tent.

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