Hebrews 9:1-14 Inductive Bible Study Notes and Discussion Questions

Outline:

I. Description of the earthly tabernacle (1-5)

II. Weaknesses of the earthly tabernacle/system (6-10)

III. Our eternal redemption through Christ who entered the holy of holies on our behalf (11-14)

I. Verses 1-5

Discussion Questions

In what ways did the tabernacle aid worship?

How do we worship God today?

Without looking, what was in the outer tabernacle?

Without looking, what is behind the veil?

Can you remember from our study of Exodus the significance of each of these (Go around the table and each person can take one object.)

Cross-references

Exodus 25-27, 35-40 – More on the tabernacle

John 6:35 – Jesus said, “I am the bread of life.”

John 8:12 – Jesus said, “I am the light of the world.”

Revelation 5:8, 8:4, Psalm 141:2 – Prayer compared to incense.

Verses on Worship:

Psalm 95:6

John 4:24

Isaiah 12:5

Romans 12:1

Hebrews 12:28, 13:15

Teaching Points
1. One of the key purposes of the tabernacle was to be a reminder to people about the need to worship God. Many of the objects inside were related to worship. God created us to worship Him from the beginning. In Revelation 7:9-12 we can see that God’s “endvision” for the world is to make worshipers of Himself of every tribe and tongue. As His creation, this is one of our top duties. Many times we stress the eternal importance of sharing the gospel or building the church. Yet sometimes we forget the even more basic daily duty we have of worshiping and praising God. This is not a “once-a-week” activity we do during church. The Psalms are full of instances of David and the other writers worshiping God privately. Worship can be public. But our worship in public will likely not be real or heartfelt unless we also worship God in our homes during our own personal time with the Lord. Do you incorporate worship into your daily quiet times? Should we? How can we? Read and discuss cross-references.

2. We are going to spend a few minutes having a little fun (and also an exam!) Get a pencil and paper. Spend the next few minutes drawing a sketch of the tabernacle. Write down as many objects as you can and their locations in the tabernacle. At the bottom of the page, write down the daily function of each and also the spiritual significance. This passage gives a summary description of the earthly tabernacle the Israelites set up in the wilderness. Exodus 25-27 gives a more complete view with exact dimensions. In chapter 8 we saw that the earthly tabernacle was a shadow of the heavenly one. Certainly many of the objects inside have a deep spiritual significance. Discuss them one by one.

II. Verses 6-10

Discussion Questions

What did the priests have to do before entering the outer tabernacle?

What did the priests do in the holy place? Where were sacrifices offered?

When could they go in to the holy place? Who could go in? What did he do there?

What sins was he making atonement for? (ones committed in ignorance since willful sins should have been dealt with already)

Do we commit sins in ignorance? Any examples? What should do about this?

What does verse 8 mean?

Why can the sacrifices offered not fully restore the guilty party’s conscience?

What does the “time of reformation” in verse 10 refer to?

Verses on conscience

Isaiah 30:21

Romans 2:15

Hebrews 10:22
Teaching Points

The priests serve continually in the holy place. Part of their tasks include replacing the bread daily, lighting the lamps, and keeping the incense going. It is a continuous service before the Lord.

Yet they could only enter into the holy of holies once per year. Then only the high priest could enter. This was the day of atonement. The priest would take blood to sprinkle onto the ark of the covenant. This was offered to cover all of the sins which had been committed unknowingly by the Israelite congregation in the past year.

A contrast is made in verse 8. On verse 8 MacArthur says, “The Levitical system did not provide any direct access into God’s presence for His people. Rather, it kept them away. Nearness had to be provided by another way. This is the primary lesson which the Holy Spirit taught concerning the tabernacle. It teaches how inaccessible God is apart from the death of Jesus Christ. By the Spirit-inspired instruction given for the Holiest of All, He was indicating that there was no way to God in the ceremonial system. Only Christ could open the way (John 14:6).” The priests were limited in their access to God. Only one could go once per year. Now through Christ we can all come to God directly at any time. You have every opportunity and resource you need to have a close walk with the Lord. Don’t waste the privileges that you have.

The gifts and sacrifices offered in the tabernacle could not truly make people perfect in conscience. Their sins were covered, but not really taken away or replaced. These sacrifices could not take away a guilty conscience. They merely foreshadowed what would one day, Christ.

Why can’t they not take away a guilty conscience? They couldn’t because they were external, not internal (see chapter 8). People’s hearts needed to be changed. No amount of sacrifices, washings, food, or rules for our cleanliness could change a person’s heart. This is clearly seen in the case of the Pharisees, who did all of these rituals, but whose hearts were like a tomb. (Matthew 23:13-27)

Time of reformation – When and what does this refer to?

III. Verses 11-14

Discussion Questions

What two thoughts does the “but” serve to highlight the contrast between? (verse 11)

What are the good things that are to come?

What is this tabernacle that is not made with hands?

What place did He enter?

What did He do? What was His mission? What did He accomplish?
Explain the logical flow of thought in verse 13-14 about the goat’s blood and the blood of Christ.

What is conscience? What does a conscience do? Is conscience always right or can it be shaped by our environment? If it can be shaped, how can we shape our conscience so that it is “tuned” correctly?

Should parents shape their children's consciences? Why or why not? If so, how?

What is the purpose of having a clean conscience? Do you ever ignore your conscience? What do you think will happen if you keep ignoring it?

Verses on Atonement

Leviticus 17:11

1 Peter 2:24

Revelation 5:9

1 John 2:2

But. Here is that all-important word again. Just when things looked the bleakest, Christ appeared. He did almost appear out of nowhere. He didn’t come with a lot of fanfare. He just came and what He did changed the world.

He is the high priest of good things to come. In James 1:17 we learn that every good gift is from above. Jesus is the priest who mediates between us and God and bestows upon us the good gifts of God. Going around the table, each person name one good thing to come.

Verses 11-12 talk some about where Jesus entered. It is described as a “greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say not of this creation.” In this case, I’m not sure the author is talking about a real place. The main point is that He is comparing what Jesus did (offer atonement for us with His own blood) to what the Levites did. The focus is on the comparison and on Jesus sacrifice for us as our high priest. So it may not be a real place (and IMO isn’t). But the imagery can help us to understand what Jesus did. The imagery shows Jesus going into the holy place just like the Levite priests did. But instead of offering the blood of animals He offered His own. Imagine a risen Christ entering this place and offering up His own blood that He shed for us. The image is very poignant.

Through His own blood – He sacrificed Himself in the most excruciatingly painful way imaginable.

Once for all – Here is this key phrase once again. Jesus doesn’t need to go into the holy place on a yearly basis. Once was enough. There is a song called “there is power in the blood.” Jesus’ blood sacrifice was so intensely effective that His blood is enough for all time.

Jesus offered Himself – It wasn’t His responsibility. He didn’t have to. He chose to because of His love for us. Do you offer of yourself to others? Do you put others first or yourself? Do you offer yourself to God?
Without blemish – Jesus was the perfect Lamb of God, innocent and unstained by the world.

Cleanse your conscience – Read cross-references above about conscience and discuss the importance of having a clear and clean conscience before God and man. Acts 24:16.

To serve the living God – What do you want to do based on what we have learned today to serve the living God in the coming week?