

JESUS AND HIS FORMER SHADOW Hebrews 8:1-10:18

Have you ever had the desire to 'go back'? Putting it another way, have you ever wanted to 'go back' so that you can enjoy something and experience something that you had before? Was it a previous job? Was it a previous holiday destination? Was it a previous restaurant where you enjoyed a delicious meal? Or was it something else? Spend a moment talking about a recent or memorable "I want to go back" experience that you've had.

We now come to the central part of this letter – where the writer confronts head-on, the temptation that his original readers would have faced to 'go back' to their Jewish past of temple, priesthood, and sacrifice. Perhaps this temptation stemmed from the fact that these things were their heritage, and that these were tangible things that previously marked them off as God's special people. But as we'll see, the message is clear, 'don't go back!' It's not worth it. The old ways only offer a dead end. To have Jesus is to have everything!

Read Hebrews 8:1-13

The system of priests/sacrifices/temple is directly compared to Jesus in verses 5, 6, 7 and 13. How is this system 'put in its place' in these verses?

The writer of Hebrews in verses 8-12 quotes Jeremiah 31. This was God's promise to his people that one day a new day would dawn, a day of hope and restoration. In the words of Jeremiah, the old system will be replaced by something new.

The old _____ will be done away with.

According to God's promise in Jeremiah, what makes this new covenant better?

With this new covenant, what will God do about people's sins?

In chapter 8 verses 1-2, the tabernacle/temple in Jerusalem is said to be just a shadow, a copy. What is it a copy of? What makes it a copy?

The tabernacle was just a copy. It offers a pattern for what Jesus does. In chapter 9, the writer of Hebrews now describes the pattern of the temple, to help us better understand Jesus. Read Hebrews 9:1-14. After reading it, on the next page have a go at drawing the pattern of the temple according to what's laid out for us in these verses.



According to 9:8, while the earthly temple is in operation, access to the (heavenly) Most Holy Place is unattainable. Why is this so? v9-10.

What do the gifts and sacrifices achieve?

Read Hebrews 9:11-10:4

In Hebrews 9:11-10:4, more comparison is made between Jesus and the old covenant priesthood. It's pretty dense stuff! But there are many wonderful promises and assurances that are given. Discuss a few things that come through loud and clear in this passage.

Where do the earthly priests serve in comparison to Jesus? v11-12, 24

How many times did the early priests have to serve and make sacrifices in comparison to Jesus? v12, 26-28. And why is there that difference?

What did the priests offer in their sacrifices in comparison to Jesus? v13-14

What did the sacrifices of the priesthood achieve in comparison to Jesus? v11-14



If the blood of bulls and goats did not take away sins, then what was the point of the priesthood and sacrificial system? How does 10:1-4 help give us an answer?

The writer of Hebrews has already made the point that the old way, the old covenant has been replaced by the new. The old covenant was but a shadow and copy (8:5). There was something wrong with it (8:7). It's obsolete (8:13). And it could never do what only Christ achieves – an eternal redemption and an eternal inheritance (9:12-15). And so in the final part of this letter, the writer makes the big point – don't 'go back' to the old way.

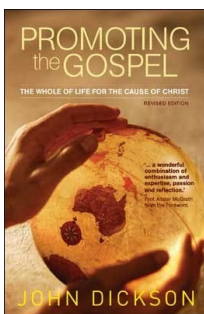
Read Hebrews 10:15-18.

The promise of what Christ achieves for us is that he *makes* holy those who are *being made* holy (10:10, 14). What stops us thinking we are holy?

When we think this way, what should we do?

Do you ever fall into the trap of thinking – you need to offer your own type of service or sacrifice in order to have your sin dealt with

How does the church sometimes project the false idea that we need to do things in order to have our sins dealt with?



Next week we're going to discuss Chapter 2 of 'Promoting the Gospel'. Read that section in advance and bring along your book.