

Jesus: Showing Up for Us

What's the Big Idea?

Jesus appeared in heaven to provide his people with eternal redemption, appears now in the presence of God for us, and will appear to bring salvation to those who eagerly await him.

What's the Problem?

We're full of sin and uncleanness in the presence of a holy God. We have no ability to cleanse, rescue, or save ourselves.

What's our Response?

Come to Jesus for eternal redemption, cleansing, and final salvation.

Memorize

And not through the blood of goats and calves, but through his own blood, he entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.

Hebrews 9:12

What Do I Need to Know About the Passage?

In this chapter the author of Hebrews continues to contrast the first covenant with the new covenant. He paints a picture of life under the first covenant in verses 1-10. In verses 11-28 he shows Christ's superiority as the mediator of the new covenant.

The First Covenant-Hebrews 9:1-10

In these verses the author overviews the way God's people worshiped him under the first covenant. Priests offered sacrifices constantly, but they couldn't cleanse the worshiper's conscience because they merely related to external regulations. The high priest offered an animal sacrifice once each year in the Holy of Holies for himself and for the sins of the people, but access to God's presence was limited and infrequent.

Help your group see that God designed the regulations of the first covenant to show that something was missing. These regulations pointed to a better way that God would bring about for his people to come into his presence.

The New Covenant-Hebrews 9:11-28

Verses 11-14 show how Jesus showed up for us as he entered the true tabernacle in heaven. He didn't offer the blood of animals. He offered his own blood to bring eternal redemption to his people and cleanse them from dead works so that we could serve the living God.

Verses 15-22 explain that Jesus is the mediator (the bridge between God and his people) of this new covenant. He makes it possible for God's people to receive an eternal inheritance from God. The author explains that a covenant requires the death of the One who made it (verse 16), doesn't become valid until this death takes place, (verse 17), and requires blood to put it into effect (verse 18). The first covenant bears out these facts (verses 19-22).

Verses 23-28 show that Jesus showed up in God's presence for us to cleanse it in preparation for us being there. He didn't offer himself often but once-for-all. He didn't offer animal sacrifices; he offered himself. He didn't show up to bring us judgment; he showed up to free us from judgment by taking it upon himself. This paves the way for him to show up at the end of history to bring final salvation to those who eagerly await him.

Lead your group in marveling at the super-abundant grace that comes to us as Christ's followers because Jesus has shown up for us. Encourage your group to enter into the intimate relationship with God that Jesus has made possible as the mediator of the new covenant.

What Are the Questions?

Launch

Tell us about a time when someone showed up for you, to accomplish or provide something you couldn't?

-OR-

When was a time you felt relationally distant from someone you longed to be near to? What kinds of things tend to keep us relationally distant?

Explore

Read Hebrews 9:1-10

1. What was worship like for God's people under the first covenant (verses 1-7)?
2. What was the Holy Spirit trying to communicate to his people by the way worship was structured under the first covenant (verses 8-9)?
3. What made the first covenant inadequate (verses 9-10)?

Read Hebrews 9:11-14

4. When Christ showed up, where did he appear (verse 11)?
5. What was different about Christ than the sacrifices of the first covenant?
6. What do you think the author means by "eternal redemption" (verse 12)?

Read Hebrews 9:15-22

7. What is Jesus' role in the new covenant between God and his people (verse 15)?
8. What impact does Jesus have on God's covenant people according to verse 15?
9. What did Jesus need to do in order for God's people to receive the benefits of the new covenant (verses 16-22)?

Read Hebrews 9:23-28

10. Why do you think the heavenly things needed to be cleansed (verses 23-24)?
11. What's different about Christ showing up on our behalf compared to the workings of the first covenant (verses 24-26)?
12. What do we deserve upon death according to verse 27?
13. What does verse 28 say about Jesus' work on our behalf?

Apply

14. Describe a time in your life when you've felt a distance and lack of access to God similar to God's people under the first covenant.
15. What difference does it make to experience the eternal redemption that comes through Jesus Christ?
16. How does Christ cleansing our consciences affect our daily lives?
17. To what degree do you "eagerly await" Jesus' second appearance?
18. What keeps you from awaiting him more eagerly?
19. In light of the truths of this chapter, why would you be motivated to eagerly wait for him?

What Are the Answers?

1. There were barriers and distance between God and his people. It required constant animal sacrifices. Access to God was limited to certain people (the high priest) and a certain time (once each year).
2. God hadn't shown his people the true way into his presence while the first covenant was still in effect.
3. It couldn't cleanse a worshipper's conscience.
4. He appeared in "the greater and more perfect tabernacle" (i.e. in God's presence in heaven itself).

5. Jesus offered himself for our sins, not animal sacrifices. He brought us eternal redemption, not temporary cleansing. He cleansed our consciences, not just our bodies.
6. Jesus rescued us and made us clean forever.
7. Jesus is the mediator of the new covenant between God and his people.
8. He makes it possible for God's covenant people to receive his eternal inheritance.
9. He had to die.
10. Allow the group to discuss. Pastor and author John Piper says it's because imperfect people like us are going to be there. This verse has been heavily debated, so you may encourage your groups to consult good commentaries after CG, and try to keep your study moving.
11. Jesus appeared in heaven itself for us, not in the earthly tabernacle. He offered himself, while the first covenant called for animal sacrifices. Jesus offered himself once, but the first covenant called for frequent sacrifices.
12. Judgment.
13. Jesus bore our sins, taking the judgment we deserve upon him. Now all that's left is for him to show up a final time on our behalf to bring us ultimate rescue.
14. Allow the group to discuss.
15. Allow the group to discuss.
16. Allow the group to discuss.
17. Allow the group to discuss.
18. Allow the group to discuss.
19. Allow the group to discuss.