**Hebrews 9-13**

Today’s Summary: Paul concludes this most awesome book and today’s amazing Scriptures by telling us that it is only through the blood of Jesus that our sins and souls can be forgiven and cleansed so that - through Jesus – we can continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise - the fruit of lips that openly profess HIS NAME.And not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased. Doesn’t get any clearer than that to know what God loves and wants from us. How are you doing in this? The whole point of today’s amazing and detailed reading is to point everyone to Jesus at all times and constantly lift praises to our Gracious Heavenly Father. And as we read the Hall of Faith names ask yourself if you are like them – risking it all for His kingdom, not your own. I am doing the same.

Worship in the Earthly Tabernacle

**9**Now the first covenant had regulations for worship and also an earthly sanctuary. **2**A tabernacle was set up. In its first room were the lampstand and the table with its consecrated bread; this was called the Holy Place. **3**Behind the second curtain was a room called the Most Holy Place, **4**which had the golden altar of incense and the gold-covered ark of the covenant. This ark contained the gold jar of manna, Aaron’s staff that had budded, and the stone tablets of the covenant. **5**Above the ark were the cherubim of the Glory, overshadowing the atonement cover. But we cannot discuss these things in detail now.

**6**When everything had been arranged like this, the priests entered regularly into the outer room to carry on their ministry. **7**But only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance. **8The Holy Spirit was showing by this that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still functioning. 9This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper. 10**They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings - external regulations applying until the time of the new order.

The Blood of Christ

**11**But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that are now already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not made with human hands, that is to say, is not a part of this creation. **12**He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. **13**The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. **14How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!**

**15**For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance - now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.

**16**In the case of a will, it is necessary to prove the death of the one who made it, **17**because a will is in force only when somebody has died; it never takes effect while the one who made it is living. **18**This is why even the first covenant was not put into effect without blood. **19**When Moses had proclaimed every command of the law to all the people, he took the blood of calves, together with water, scarlet wool and branches of hyssop, and sprinkled the scroll and all the people. **20**He said, “This is the blood of the covenant, which God has commanded you to keep.” **21**In the same way, he sprinkled with the blood both the tabernacle and everything used in its ceremonies. **22**In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

**23**It was necessary, then, for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. **24**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. **25**Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. **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. **27Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, 28so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.**

Christ’s Sacrifice Once for All

**10**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 repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship**. 2Otherwise, would they not have stopped being offered?** For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. **3**But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins. **4**It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

**5**Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said: “Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me; **6**with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased. **7**Then I said, ‘Here I am - it is written about me in the scroll - I have come to do your will, my God.’”**8**First he said, “Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them” - though they were offered in accordance with the law. **9**Then he said, “Here I am, I have come to do your will.” **He sets aside the first to establish the second. 10And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.**

**11**Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. **12**But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, **13**and since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool. **14For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.** **15**The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First he says: **16**“This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds.”**17**Then he adds: “Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more.” **18And where these have been forgiven, sacrifice for sin is no longer necessary.**

A Call to Persevere in Faith

**19Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus**, **20**by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, **21**and since we have a great priest over the house of God, **22let us draw near to God with a sincere heart** and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.**23Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. 24And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, 25not 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.**

**26**If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, **27**but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. **28**Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29How much more severely do you think someone deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified them, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? 30For we know him who said, “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” and again, “The Lord will judge his people.” 31It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

**32**Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you endured in a great conflict full of suffering. **33**Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated. **34**You suffered along with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions. **35So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. 36You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. 37For, “In just a little while, he who is coming will come and will not delay.”** 38And, “But my righteous one will live by faith. And I take no pleasure in the one who shrinks back.” 39But we do not belong to those who shrink back and are destroyed, but to those who have faith and are saved.

Faith in Action

**11 Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. 2This is what the ancients were commended for.**

**3By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.**

**4**By faith **Abel** brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead.

**5**By faith **Enoch** was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death: “He could not be found, because God had taken him away.” For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. **6And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.**

**7**By faith **Noah**, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that is in keeping with faith.

**8**By faith **Abraham**, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. **9**By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. **10**For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

**11**And by faith even **Sarah**, who was past childbearing age, was enabled to bear children because she considered him faithful who had made the promise. **12**And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore.

**13All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth.** **14**People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. **15**If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. **16Instead, they were longing for a better country - a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.**

**17**By faith **Abraham**, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had embraced the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, **18**even though God had said to him, “It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.” **19**Abraham reasoned that God could even raise the dead, and so in a manner of speaking he did receive Isaac back from death.

**20**By faith **Isaac** blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future.

**21**By faith **Jacob**, when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph’s sons, and worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff.

**22**By faith **Joseph**, when his end was near, spoke about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and gave instructions concerning the burial of his bones.

**23**By faith **Moses’ parents** hid him for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king’s edict.

**24**By faith **Moses**, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. **25**He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God **rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. 26He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.** **27**By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king’s anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible. **28**By faith he kept the Passover and the application of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel.

**29**By faith **the people** passed through the Red Sea as on dry land; but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned.

**30**By faith **the walls of Jericho** fell, after the army had marched around them for seven days.

**31**By faith the **prostitute Rahab**, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient.

**32**And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about **Gideon**, **Barak**, **Samson**, and **Jephthah**, about **David** and **Samuel** and **the prophets**, **33**who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, **34**quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. **35**Women received back their dead, raised to life again. There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection. **36**Some faced jeers and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. **37**They were put to death by stoning; they were sawed in two; they were killed by the sword. **They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated - 38the world was not worthy of them.** They wandered in deserts and mountains, living in caves and in holes in the ground.

**39These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, 40since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.**

**12 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, 2fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.** For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. **3**Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

God Disciplines His Children

**4**In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. **5**And have you completely forgotten this word of encouragement that addresses you as a father addresses his son? **It says, “My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, 6because the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son.”**

**7**Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father? **8**If you are not disciplined - and everyone undergoes discipline - then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all. **9**Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live! **10**They disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but **God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness.**

**11No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.**

**12**Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees. **13**“Make level paths for your feet,” so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed.

Warning and Encouragement

**14Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.** **15**See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many. **16**See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son. **17**Afterward, as you know, when he wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected. Even though he sought the blessing with tears, he could not change what he had done.

The Mountain of Fear and the Mountain of Joy

**18**You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire; to darkness, gloom and storm; **19**to a trumpet blast or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them, **20**because they could not bear what was commanded: “If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned to death.” **21**The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, “I am trembling with fear.”

**22But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, 23to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the Judge of all, to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, 24to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.**

**25**See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven? **26At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, “Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.” 27The words “once more” indicate the removing of what can be shaken - that is, created things - so that what cannot be shaken may remain.**

**28**Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, **29**for our “God is a consuming fire.”

Concluding Exhortations

**13 Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters. 2Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.** **3**Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.

**4Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral. 5Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”**

**6So we say with confidence, “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?”**

**7**Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. **8**Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

**9**Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings. It is good for our hearts to be strengthened by grace, not by eating ceremonial foods, which is of no benefit to those who do so. **10**We have an altar from which those who minister at the tabernacle have no right to eat.

**11**The high priest carries the blood of animals into the Most Holy Place as a sin offering, but the bodies are burned outside the camp. **12**And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood. **13**Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore. **14**For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.

**15Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise - the fruit of lips that openly profess his name. 16And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased. 17**Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you.

**18**Pray for us. We are sure that we have a clear conscience and desire to live honorably in every way. **19**I particularly urge you to pray so that I may be restored to you soon.

Benediction and Final Greetings

**20**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, **21**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. Amen. **22**Brothers and sisters, I urge you to bear with my word of exhortation, for in fact I have written to you quite briefly. **23**I want you to know that our brother Timothy has been released. If he arrives soon, I will come with him to see you. **24**Greet all your leaders and all the Lord’s people. Those from Italy send you their greetings. **25**Grace be with you all.