

“Full Access with a Clear Conscience”

Hebrews 9:1-14

May 5, 2024

I. The Old Covenant Priesthood could not provide full access to God or a clear conscience. (9:1-10)

- A. The writer includes the elaborate tabernacle furnishings to emphasize the tabernacle as being God’s dwelling place.
- B. The tabernacle proper had two rooms: the holy place and the holy of holies.
 - 1. *Only* priests could enter the holy place.
 - 2. Only the high priest could enter the holy of holies, on the Day of Atonement once-a-year.
- C. The restrictions and physical barriers in the tabernacle showed that access to God’s presence was not yet available.
- D. That lack of access also meant that the Old Covenant priestly ministry could not cleanse the consciences of the Israelites.
 - 1. God did forgive the saints of Old Covenant believers, but not through the priestly ministry (Rom. 3:25-26).
 - 2. Believers in Old Covenant times did have the experience of a clear conscience.

Psalm 32:1–2 - ¹ Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. ² Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit....^{5b} I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,” and you forgave the iniquity of my sin.

- a. But such experiences were short lived.
- b. The structure of the tabernacle/temple and the need for repeated sacrifices showed that sin had not been fully paid for. →

II. Christ’s Priesthood provides believers with both a clear conscience and full access to God. (9:11-14)

- A. Jesus, after making full atonement for our sins, entered the Father’s heavenly presence and has secured our eternal redemption.

B. Believers can now possess a clear conscience. After all:

1. The One who died for them is also divine.
2. Jesus died willingly for our sins.
3. Jesus was a perfect, spotless sacrifice for our sins.
4. Believers can and should enjoy an internal sense of peace with God, even in light of sins past, sins present, and sins future.

C. Jesus has granted us clear consciences *so that* we might *serve* God.

1. "Serve" here is priestly language.
2. Because of Christ's death and resurrection, all believers now live as priests to God.
3. This means that we have access to God's presence.
4. This is true not only in worship but in all of life:

Romans 12:1 - I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

5. A clear conscience allows us to fulfill our priestly duties before the Lord without fear or sorrow.