

## Monday, August 31, 2009

With Labor Day being so late and Memorial Day so early this year, we've enjoyed 15 weeks of summer 2009 thus far, and now we get this bonus week...use it well, reflect on what you've learned and experienced about God's "Anchors for your Soul". Heb. 6:19 has been our summer theme: "*We have this HOPE as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure*". What are your anchors?

This week we're in Hebrews 9 & 10 in our summer study. Hebrews 9 begins with a description of the Tabernacle Moses built at Mount Sinai, having received specific instructions from God when on the mountain top for 40 days (Ex. 35-40). Every Jew reading Hebrews would read this with a strong sense of ethnic pride and personal association with its familiarity. No other people in the world could claim God had done for them what HE did for Israel. (Deut. 4:32-40) Yet look at the shocking statement of Hebrews 9:8-10!

It's true...no matter the complexity of religious rituals, traditions, elaborate ceremonies, fantastic cathedrals, or even articulate priests/preachers/Rabbis...the fundamental question remains: have we gained any true change down deep in our souls? Make this personal, friend...what gives you contentment, peace at the deepest core of your being? What brings you a 'clear conscience' of freedom from the guilt and shame of sin? Hebrews 9:11-15 is the answer! The "*Most Holy Place*" is God's Presence.

God Himself is the only One able to clear the guilty conscience, the only One able to bring peace to a troubled mind, the only One able to bring hope to a heart in despair! It's more than hopeful thinking or religious ritual...it is accomplished by Jesus Christ as He reaches to you and establishes a personal relationship between you and God. "*Christ is the mediator of a new covenant*" (Heb. 9:15). Link it with 1 Timothy 2:4-6 "*God wants all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all men*"! Add to that Colossians 1:15-22 "*once you were alienated from God...enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now He has reconciled you...to present you holy in His sight, without blemish, and free from accusation*"! Do you see the deep "soul hope" in that? How's your heart today?

## Tuesday, September 1, 2009

Perhaps the most recognizable of all pictures of Jerusalem is the "Wailing Wall" and black clothed men bowing with small prayer book in one hand, and their other hand on the wall. Do you know what that is?

That wall, at least up to a height of about 10 ft., is all that remains of the wall which surrounded the "Temple mount" when the Jewish Temple last stood in Jerusalem in the first century. When Hebrews was written, it was still the centerpiece of architecture and worship in Jerusalem, being seen from many miles away. That fabulous Temple, the "Temple mount" and wall around it was demolished, along with most of Jerusalem, by the Roman army in 70AD. Jews today pray earnestly for God to send Messiah, lead them to rebuild their great Temple and restore Israel to their days of "glory".

You'll recall the Tabernacle which Moses built in the desert (Exodus 40), was a large tent which the Levites dismantled and moved each time the cloud moved (Numbers 9:15-23) as they wandered for 40 years. It crossed the Jordan with Joshua and the "next generation", and was set up in the Promised Land in various places of worship. Samuel, you'll recall, grew up living in it under the watchful eye of Eli the High Priest (1 Samuel). Finally King Solomon built the first magnificent Temple in Jerusalem and the Tabernacle (Tent of Meeting) was "folded up" and brought into the Temple where it was stored as a greatly valued historical artifact for succeeding generations of Jews (2 Chronicles 5). See the national pride?

That great Temple stood for nearly 500 years, finally destroyed by King Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian army in 586BC (2 Chron. 36). King Cyrus, after the 70 year captivity, invited exiled Jews to return and rebuild their Temple (Ezra 1) on its same location. This "second Temple" is the same Temple, with some renovations, which Jesus visited and the remains of the "Temple mount" wall at which Jews today pray in Jerusalem.

Why the history lesson today? It explains why so much of Hebrews focuses on the system of sacrifice and worship of the Temple...it is the historical centerpiece of Jewish religion and culture. Look closely at Hebrews 9:24-28. What do you see?

## Wednesday, September 2, 2009

One week from today, we'll be knee deep in the first full week of fall. Summer will be history. For the rest of this week most Walworth County folks will be knee deep in the County Fair, the great climax of summer 2009. As you go there, take your "Anchors of the Soul" with you!!!

Today, look closely at the verses I pointed you to yesterday - Hebrews 9:24-28. They are powerful! Jesus Christ, as our High Priest and Mediator, did not enter a man-made Tabernacle or Temple to perform a human priestly function...oh no, He entered heaven itself, the very Presence of God, where He represents EVERY person as our Mediator (1 Tim. 2:4-6).

Secondly, Jesus did not enter the Presence of God empty handed, nor carrying the sacrifice of animals, as a human priest did, rather He entered there a victorious Savior! He offered Himself as the ultimate sacrifice for the sin of the world, and then defeated death with His resurrection so He could enter and stand victorious over sin, Satan and death, in God's Presence. Now don't rush over that...grasp it, for this is what separates Jesus Christ from any person who has ever lived; any religious system which prescribes rituals which must be performed; any religious leader who aims to satisfy the spiritual search of someone seeking God or release from their sin burden!

Hebrews 9:27 is a verse you have heard before, but what does it mean? Every human life God creates is unique, and is made with an immortal soul which will live forever, but a human body which will live only an earthly lifetime. Each of us will die only once, and each of us will face God and stand in judgment for our lives lived on earth. 2 Corinthians 5:10 repeats this promise of accountability before God. Watch this...the forgiveness God extends to the repentant sinner removes guilt and any record of that sin, thus when you and I stand before God the sin which has been forgiven by God because of Jesus' atonement, ("*so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people*" Heb. 9:28), will not be part of judgment for it is covered under Christ's blood, forgiven and cleansed (1 John 1:9; Romans 5 & 6)! God's forgiveness is ONLY available because of Jesus' atonement (1 John 4:9,10) sacrifice and resurrection. Note Heb. 10:1-10!!

Thursday, September 3, 2009

Have you noticed the number of “famous” people who have died in 2009? As you consider their lives, what do you conclude they held firmly to as their hope of life beyond the grave? Most recently Michael Jackson and Ted Kennedy are good examples. To what are you holding in hope of eternal future?

Hebrews is a book of hope! It is intended to help people release their grip on rituals, traditions, religion and anything other than the ONLY Savior, Jesus Christ. Consider Heb. 9:28. Jesus came as God incarnate when born in Bethlehem. He lived a perfect life, spoke God’s truth, died a sacrificial death on the cross, rose triumphantly from the tomb, and returned victoriously back to His heaven to stand as the only acceptable mediator for mankind before Holy God, and make salvation possible for any and all who acknowledge their sin and trust Jesus Christ for their full Salvation. Do you agree?

What does Heb. 9:28 mean “He will appear a second time not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for Him.”? Remember the angelic men who promised Jesus would return again (Acts 1:9-11)? Remember Paul’s clear explanation in 1 Corinthians 15 that we will all receive “immortal bodies” after death, to replace these earthly bodies, so we can live forever? Paul also explained the coming sudden return of Christ in 1 Thess. 4:13-18, when this first resurrection will take place. This return of Christ and this resurrection affect ONLY those who have trusted Christ to be their Savior (Rev. 20:4-6). All others remain as they are...alive or dead. They are affected in the second resurrection (Rev. 20:11-15).

This “salvation” Hebrews 9:28 speaks of, is the resurrection/ rapture which takes place at Christ’s return that will bring His followers into their glorified bodies and into God’s Presence as the unified people of God. Salvation means rescue. We are rescued “saved”, from our sin as we trust Christ’s atonement, and we are rescued “saved” from this earthly life which we live surrounded by evil, when we are delivered from life here and ushered into life in God’s Presence...get it? Are you “waiting for Him” as it says in Heb. 9:28, with confidence that when He comes you will not be left behind, but will go with us?

Friday, September 4, 2009

As we head into this final summer weekend, I hope it’s one filled with memories and celebration for you. I also hope you carry many “Anchors for the Soul” which you’ve developed this summer. Remember Hebrews 6:19??

Hebrews 10:19-39 is great stuff! Because Risen Jesus Christ stands in God’s Presence, sinful people like you and me are welcome there, for Jesus has earned our entry and paid for our sin! We can call upon God, draw near to God, and develop a powerful relationship with God because Jesus has ransomed us from the guilt, stain and bondage of our sin! With clean consciences, we can hold “*unswervingly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful!*”! What is the hope you hold to, and for what are you counting on Jesus to be faithful??

Notice please the 5 “let us” statements in these verses. “*let us draw near to God*”; “*Let us hold unswervingly to the hope*”; “*let us consider how we may spur one another on*”; “*Let us not give up meeting together*”; “*let us encourage one another*”. It’s like the head football coach preparing the team, the military leader preparing his troops, the family leader rallying his family, the church leader seeking to draw his church family to unity and purpose...do you see it? How do each of the 5 fit in your life? I suggest you write a short paragraph on each in your summer journal, as you draw summer to a close, using them as spring board statements propelling you into the fall. “Anchors for your Soul”!

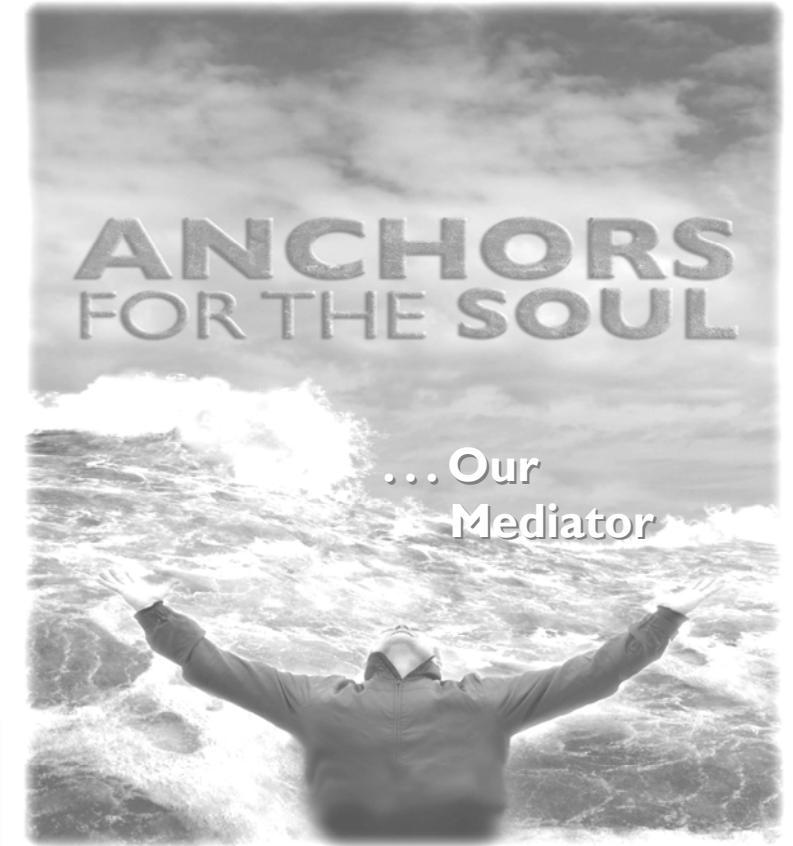
Once again you notice in Hebrews 10:26-39 the author is challenging readers NOT to drift or draw back, from the truth in Jesus Christ and the power of what He desires to do in transforming their lives. Can you make the application to yourself? Why do you drift? From what do you draw back?

Do you see that phrase “*deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth.*”? (Heb. 10:26) Link it with 1 John 3:4-9 & 5:18,19. What do you see? The Bible does not teach “sinless perfection” for those who trust Christ, but it does teach transformation, “progressive sanctification”. As the Holy Spirit continues His work in you, your awareness of sin should sharpen, your readiness to repent should increase, your repulsion of your sin should intensify. They are indications of true salvation.



Pastor Doug Anderson

August 31 - September 4, 2009



### Verse of the Week

*"...Christ is the mediator of a new covenant...a ransom to set us free from sin..." (Heb. 9:15)*  
*"God...wants all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all men." (1 Tim. 2:4-6)*

A Disciplemaking Tool  
**DIGGING**  
**DEEPER**