



Calvary LifeGroup Leader's Guide

Week of 11/7/21

Warm Up

It's always true that we can't cover everything, ***but it's especially true this week!*** There are plenty of opportunities to get down into the weeds of the passage, but please know that it's ok to simplify your discussion. It's completely acceptable to take the questions you see here and modify them so that you stay more on the surface and focus on the main thing (e.g., Jesus is greater, the new covenant is greater, etc.). Your big-picture goal is to guide a conversation that everyone can participate in and where everyone walks away with a clearer picture of who Jesus is. Even that is a supernatural work, so let's pray that God's Spirit would move in and among us this week!

Icebreaker: What's your reaction to the sight of blood? Do you feel faint, cringe, or have to look away? Or, maybe it's no big deal to you? (Please feel free to share a humorous, embarrassing "blood-reacting" story if you have one!)

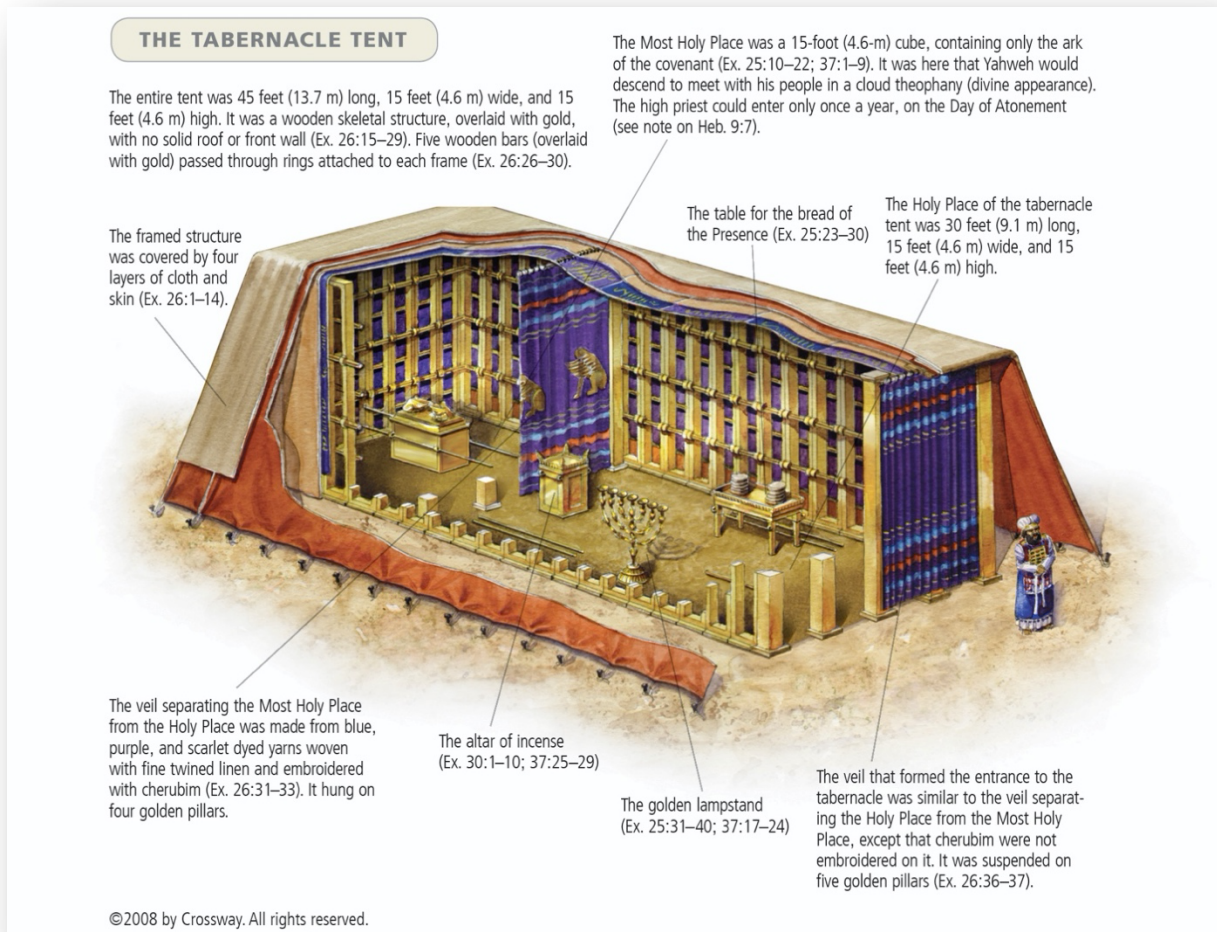
This ranks up there as one of the strangest icebreaker questions, but there's a lot of blood in this chapter! Question 3 points this out and asks us to think about blood...Ew! There is a purpose for the question...the sight of blood typically makes us a bit uncomfortable, yet God's plan of redemption is full of blood.

Discussion Questions for Hebrews Chapter 9:1-10:18

Read the passage, then select 2-3 questions from below to discuss together.

Since this is such a lengthy passage, you may want to consider asking everyone to read the passage prior to the meeting. If you have time to read it together, great!

As a reference, check out the illustration below from the ESV Study Bible:



1. The diagram above and the description in Hebrews 9:1-10 portray God's "regulations for worship and an earthly place of holiness" (9:1) under the first (a.k.a., "old") covenant. What do you see or read in these verses that depict the limitations of the first covenant? We could think of this in a couple ways: limited access and limited results.

Limited access to God's presence: Only priests (who are of a certain lineage of men from the tribe of Levi) are able to go into the first section, the Holy Place. Then, "into the second only the high priest goes, and he but once a year, and not without taking blood..." (v. 7). The diagrams depict this limited access.

Limited results: According to the passage, "gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscious of the worshiper..." (vv. 9-10).

Building Christ-centered communities of people fully devoted to loving God and loving others.

2. What can we see in verses 11-14 about how Jesus' ministry overcame the limitations of the first covenant?

Jesus "entered once for all into the holy places" in v. 12, and his blood purifies "our conscience from dead works to serve the living God" in v. 14.

3. The word *blood* shows up 13 times in this week's passage! What runs through your mind when you hear this word repeated so many times?

This is an "open mic" opportunity for people to just express what they think. It's very common for people to feel like they don't understand why there's so much blood, what the point of it is, to be grossed out by it, and that it just seems really strange! It could be a good opportunity to offer a few points that could add in some clarity.

What purpose(s) does *blood* serve according to the passage, especially in verses 15-22 of chapter 9?

These are deep waters, but the intent here is to explain the "bloodiness." First, the starting point is that God is holy. He cannot tolerate impurity or sin. Blood is associated with purification from sin that in-turn provides access to God's presence (vv. 12-13). The train of thought can be traced to the fact that sin produces or leads to death. Blood is often associated in the OT with the "life" of an animal—it's the tangible substance that supplies life. Sin/death must be "covered" (atoned) by the "life" of a substitute. In this sense, then, death is covered up by life as blood is sprinkled on the holy objects of worship that have been made impure by sin.

Blood also serves to "inaugurate" a covenant (v. 18). This goes back to the ancient near eastern practice of cutting animals in half, separating the halves, and then walking between those halves when a covenant was established (see Gen 15 and Jer 34:18). It was a graphic way of enforcing the severity and weight of the covenant—"may we become like these animals if we break this covenant."

To summarize, these details should point us to at least a few conclusions: (1) sin is serious and costly; (2) God is merciful and has gone to extraordinary lengths to cover up our sin once and for all through Jesus!

4. Hebrews 9:23-28 offers another summary of how Christ accomplished in the new covenant what the priests could never attain under the old. How would you summarize the relationship of these two covenants?

One way of answering this is to point out how the old was a means of preparing for the new. It instructed God's people and then pointed them to the need for a better covenant (and human covenant-keeper) that would bring fulfillment of what God required. The priests had to offer repeated sacrifices, while Christ offered one final sacrifice.

5. Hebrews 10 includes two direct OT quotations—one from Psalm 40 and one from Jeremiah 31—where God promised something better that would not come until a future generation. Today, we get to see how God fulfilled those promises in Christ and the new covenant. How can this build our own faith as we consider God’s promises that have not yet been fulfilled?

This is a shameless “Sunday school answer” setup, but God’s faithfulness in the past should cause us to think of how he will be faithful in the future as well. Heb 10:13 reminds us of another yet-to-be-fulfilled promise—Christ’s future return. We have the privilege of living in a day when we can look back on so many of God’s fulfilled promises!

6. Look back at the illustration of the tabernacle. Now, picture in your mind the cross. What points of comparison can we make between the two?

Here are things we could think about...Both are part of God’s single plan of redemption. One’s construction is complex and intricate, requiring a craftsman. The other is primitive, requiring few skills. One was composed of costly materials. The other was cheap and efficient—easily discarded and replicated. One was the domain of priests. The other was the instrument of a king (Caesar). One required continuous sacrifices. The other required only one—“It is finished.” The tabernacle was an earthly shadow of heaven. The cross was the instrument that will one day bring heaven to earth (skip to Revelation for that one).

With this comparison in mind, what gives you a sense of gratitude for what Christ has accomplished in the new covenant?

There are a lot of things that could be mentioned, including that Christ has dealt with sin in a complete and final way. Like last week, this could be a good transition point into a time of prayer.

Wrap Up

We mentioned it last week, but we want to remind you to have a conversation about everyone’s plans for Thanksgiving and Christmas. Does everyone have a place to go?

Also, it would be great if some in our church who aren’t traveling might be willing to invite people over who don’t have a place to be. If there are people in your group who have space for someone around your table, would you let us know?