



GracePoint: A Weekly Sermon Discussion

3 = ... In A Better Temple

Announcements:

~~12/20 @7:30~~

~~—Prayer~~

~~12/21 @6:30~~

~~—Grace Group~~

12/24 @8:30 -

Sunday School

12/31 @6:00 -

Family Night

NEW YEARS

GAME NIGHT!

ICE BREAKER: When you think of the title “Priest” what do you think of?

READ: Hebrews 9

“Jesus is Better” has become the cry of this entire series looking at the book of Hebrews. He is better than the angels, he is better than Moses, and then he is better than some (really important though also really mysterious) guy named Melchizedek (see chapter 7). This all leads to what we talked about on Sunday. That Jesus is the better priest of a better covenant. But even here, with this sentence, we can and should continue. Truly the writer of Hebrews wants us to see and know that Jesus is the better priest of a better covenant *who serves in a better TEMPLE*. But what does this mean? How is it better? Why is the temple so important? So let's dive in.

Depending on the translation that you are using you will see one of two words in verse 2, either “Tent” or “Tabernacle”. This is the idea that is at the center of the argument here. To help alleviate some confusion, the tabernacle was a tent, but not in the way that any of us would recognize. It was huge and fancy and important (see Exodus 25 and following if you are interested). In Hebrews 9:2-5 we can read some of the things that were particular about the tabernacle. But just getting to it, here is the point: it was still a TENT here on EARTH. The temple that the better priest serves in is not fleeting and temporary and mobile and earthly, but permanent, eternal, and in heaven. It is not made by human hands, and is therefore “greater and more perfect” (verse 11). Really we could use some of Jesus' own words to try and drive the point home: We need a priest in a temple not here on earth, where moth and rust destroy, but a priest in Heaven! So it is better because of the LOCATION, but there is much more to look at.

It is a better temple because in this temple we see a better OFFERING. This is the larger argument that the writer is making in all of chapter 9. In the tabernacle (and then by extension the temple, that's the point here) sacrifices were being made all the time. Goats and bulls and doves and sheep and heifers and grain and We could go on and on describing the sacrifices that would be laid on the altars. But that is just the sacrifices themselves, there were also many *types* of sacrifices that were made. There were burnt offerings, sin offerings, freewill offerings, and more. All these were being made in an attempt to sanctify both the building and the people who would be there. The blood of animals only *kinda* worked, so this was an ongoing process where animals were offered over and over and over again. But in the perfect temple in heaven we do not see this same pattern. Instead a perfect sacrifice was given, ONCE FOR ALL TIME (verse 26). In the perfect temple the perfect priest offers a perfect sacrifice: himself. This is why the temple is better.

Really this is the thought that I would like to end on. The temple is better ultimately because of the priest who is ministering there. It is not just some priest, not another in the line of Levi or descending from Aaron. No, in heaven it is our great high priest, our intercessor, our friend and brother and God and King, Jesus Christ. Our priest there is not *just* our priest, but also our prophet and our king. And our priest “there” is not staying there. He will “Appear a second time, not to deal with sin [because he already has!] but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.” (Hebrews 9:28)

REFLECTION: In what ways can these truths encourage your heart? What does it mean, not just in general, or even in a “theologically true” sort of way, but what does it mean to your day-to-day life that you have a better high priest serving in a better temple who made a better sacrifice who is coming back for you?