

# Jesus Opens the Way Through the Veil



Week Ten

## inTro



Read This Week's Passage  
Again: Hebrews 9, 10

### UP, UP, AND A WAY!

When the disciples returned from the Mount of Olives, right after Jesus had ascended to heaven, they were filled with joy and triumph. Their Master and Friend had ascended to a position of power over the world and had invited them to approach God in His name with the absolute confidence that God would respond favorably to their prayers (John 14:13, 14). Even though they continued in the world, attacked by the forces of evil, their hope was strong. They knew that Jesus had ascended to prepare a place for them (John 14:1–3). They knew that Jesus was the Captain of their salvation and that He had opened a way into the heavenly homeland through His blood.

The ascension of Jesus to heaven is central to the theology of Hebrews. It marks the beginning of Jesus' rule and the beginning of His High Priestly ministry in our behalf. Finally, and more important, Jesus' ascension marks the moment that the new covenant, which provides the means through which we can approach God boldly through faith, has been inaugurated. It is our privilege now to approach God with confidence through Jesus and the merits of His righteousness.



## **inScribe**

Write out Hebrews 10 from the translation of your choice. If you're pressed for time, write out Hebrews 10:19–22. You may also rewrite the passage in your own words, or outline or mind-map the chapter.



Go back to your scribed text and study the passage.

**Circle** repeated words/phrases/ideas

**Underline** words/phrases that are important and have meaning to you



Draw **Arrows** to connect words/phrases to other associated or related words/phrases

What special insights do your marks seem overall to point to?



Memorize your favorite verse in Hebrews 10:1–22. Write it out multiple times to help with memorization.

Did the Israelites in the wilderness have the assurance of salvation? Why or why not?

Because of Jesus, why should we not be afraid to draw near to a holy God?



Read more at [www.inverseible.org/heb10-3](http://www.inverseible.org/heb10-3)

**BEFORE THE LORD**

God instructed Israel that their males should go three times every year up to Jerusalem to “appear before the Lord” with an offering. The appointed times were the Feast of Passover (Unleavened Bread), the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), and the Feast of Booths (Exod. 23:14–17; Deut. 16:16). Passover celebrated Israel’s deliverance from Egypt. Pentecost celebrated the barley harvest and, by the time of the New Testament, was associated with the giving of the law at Sinai. The Feast of Booths celebrated God’s care for Israel during their sojourn in the desert. According to the New Testament, all the Old Testament feasts also have prophetic significance.

Hebrews 9:24 describes Jesus’ ascension into the presence of the Father. He arrived at the heavenly sanctuary, “the true ones,” (plural in Greek, referring to the two-apartment heavenly sanctuary) in order to “appear” before God with a better sacrifice (Heb. 9:23, 24, NIV)—His own blood.

Jesus fulfilled the pilgrimage feasts’ prophetic significance with amazing accuracy. He died on the day for the preparation of the Passover at the ninth hour, the moment in which Passover lambs were sacrificed (John 19:14; Matt. 27:45–50). Jesus was resurrected on the third day and ascended to heaven to receive assurance that His sacrifice had been accepted (John 20:17; 1 Cor. 15:20), when the priest was to wave the sheaf of ripe barley as the first fruits (Lev. 23:10–12). Then, He ascended forty days later to sit at the right hand of God and inaugurate the new covenant on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 1, 2).

The purpose of pilgrimage in ancient Israel was to “behold the face of God” (Ps. 42:2, NRSV). This meant to experience God’s favor (Ps. 17:15). Similarly, the Hebrew expression “to seek the face of God” meant to ask God for help (2 Chron. 7:14; Ps. 27:8; 105:4). This is the sense, in Hebrews, of Jesus’ ascension. Jesus ascended to God with the perfect sacrifice. Jesus ascended to heaven also as our forerunner into the presence of God (Heb. 6:19, 20). He has made real the promise for the believers who journey “seeking a homeland,” desiring “a better country” and looking “forward to the city . . . whose architect and builder is God” (Heb. 11:10, 13–16, NRSV).

When God called Israel from Egypt, His plan was to create a personal, intimate relationship with them. (Exod. 19:3, 4).

Thus, through Moses God gave the necessary instructions to prepare the people to meet with Him. The people needed to consecrate themselves first (Exod. 19:10–15). Once the people had prepared themselves for two days, then “when the trumpet sounds a long blast” on the third day, God instructed that the people “shall come up to the mountain” (Exod. 19:13, ESV). He wanted them to have the experience Moses and the leaders of the people would have when they ascended the mountain and “beheld God, and ate and drank” in His presence (Exod. 24:9–11, ESV). The people later recognized that they had seen God’s glory and that it was possible for God to speak “with man, and man still live” (Deut. 5:24, ESV). But, when the moment came, they lacked faith. Moses explained years later: “You were afraid because of the fire, and you did not go up into the mountain” (Deut. 5:5, ESV). Instead, they asked Moses to be their intermediary (Deut. 5:25–27; compare with Exod. 20:18–21).

God’s manifestation of His holiness at Mount Sinai was to teach the people to learn to “fear,” or respect, Him. The “fear of the Lord” leads to life, wisdom, and honor (Deut. 4:10; compare with Ps. 111:10; Prov. 1:7; 9:10; 10:27)—and also to the lesson that He is merciful and gracious (Exod. 34:4–8). Thus, while God wanted Israel to come to Him, the people became afraid and requested Moses to be their intermediary. The description in Hebrews of the events at Sinai follows primarily Moses’ reminding the people of their lack of faith and their apostasy with the golden calf, and how he was afraid of meeting God because of their sin (Deut. 9:19). The people’s reaction was not God’s plan for them; it was, instead, the result of their unbelief and consequent disobedience and rebellion, as Hebrews emphasizes (Heb. 3:12, 19; 4:2, 6, 11).

## UNVEILED

Veils have a double function. The term Hebrews uses for “veil” (*katepetasma*) could refer to the screen of the court (Exod. 38:18), the screen at the entrance of the outer apartment of the sanctuary (Exod. 36:37), or the inner veil that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies (Exod. 26:31–35). These three veils were both entrances and boundaries that only some people could cross.

The veil was a protection for the priests as they ministered before a holy God. After the sin of the golden calf, God said to Moses that He would not accompany them in the way to the Promised Land lest He consume them because they were a “stiff-necked people” (Exod. 33:3). Thus, Moses moved the tent of meeting and pitched it far off, outside the camp (Exod. 33:7). After Moses interceded, however, God agreed to go with them in their midst (Exod. 33:12–20), but He established several measures to protect the people as He dwelled among them.

For instance, Israel camped in a strict order that created a hollow square in the middle of the camp where the tabernacle was pitched. In addition, the Levites camped around the tabernacle in order to protect the sanctuary and its furniture from encroachment by strangers (Num. 1:51; 3:10). They were, in fact, a kind of human veil that protected the people of Israel: “But the Levites shall camp around the tabernacle of the testimony, so that there may be no wrath on the congregation of the people of Israel. And the Levites shall keep guard over the tabernacle of the testimony” (Num. 1:53, ESV).

Jesus, as our Priest, has also been our Veil. Through His incarnation, God pitched His tent in our midst and made it possible for us to contemplate His glory (John 1:14–18). He made it possible for a holy God to live in the midst of an imperfect people.

Hebrews 10:19–22 argues that Jesus has entered into the heavenly sanctuary and invites us to follow His lead. This idea agrees with the conception introduced before that Jesus is the “captain” and “forerunner” of believers (Heb. 2:10; 6:19, 20; 12:2). The “new and living way” is the new covenant that Jesus inaugurated with His sacrifice and ascension. The expression “new and living” contrasts with the description of the old covenant as “obsolete and growing old” (Heb. 8:13). It is the new covenant, which has provided forgiveness of sin and has put the law in our hearts, that makes it possible for us to approach God with confidence, not because of ourselves or anything we have done, but only because of what Jesus has done for us by fulfilling all the covenant obligations.

Hebrews noted that the inauguration of the old covenant involved the inauguration of the sanctuary and the consecration of the priests (Heb. 9:18–21; compare with Exodus 40; Leviticus 8, 9). The purpose of the covenant was to create an intimate relationship between God and His people (Exod. 19:4–6). When Israel accepted this relationship, God immediately commanded that a sanctuary be built so that He could live among them. The inauguration of the sanctuary and God’s presence in the midst of His people was the moment when the covenant between God and Israel was completed.

The same is true of the new covenant. The new covenant also implies the inauguration of Jesus’ priestly ministry in our behalf (Heb. 5:1–10; 7:1–8:13).

Jesus’ ascension before God has inaugurated a new era for the people of God. Zechariah 3 mentions that Satan was in the presence of God to accuse God’s people, who were represented by the high priest Joshua. This accuser is the same that raised questions about Job’s loyalty to God (Job 1–, 2). With the sacrifice of Jesus, however, Satan has been cast out of heaven (Rev. 12:7–12; compare with John 12:31 and 16:11). Now it is Jesus who intercedes for us and, through His sacrifice and faithfulness, claims salvation for us!



## inTerpret

After looking at your scribed and annotated text, what special insights do your marks seem to point to overall?



What questions emerge after studying this passage? What parts are difficult?

What other principles and conclusions do you find?

What does the fact that the Creator would dwell among His people teach us about how close God can be to us? Does that reflect your reality now?



Read more at  
[www.inverseible.org/heb10-4](http://www.inverseible.org/heb10-4)



What relationship do the following verses have with the primary passage?

Hebrews 9:24

Exodus 19:3, 4

Hebrews. 12:18–21; 22–24

Leviticus 10:1–3; 16:1, 2

Colossians 3:1



What other verses come to mind in connection with the Ascension?

Review your memorized verse from Hebrews 10.

## THEY WILL SEE HIS FACE

It is argued that believers “have come” to Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, through faith. In this sense, their experience anticipates the future. Thus, the heavenly Jerusalem belongs to the realm of the things “hoped for” and “not seen” but nevertheless assured to us through faith (Heb. 11:1).

While true, this is not the whole meaning of this passage. We have also arrived at Mount Zion, in the very presence of God, through our representative Jesus (Eph. 2:5, 6; Col. 3:1). Jesus’ ascension is not a matter of faith, but of fact. It is this historical dimension of Jesus’ ascension that provides compelling force to the exhortation of Hebrews to hold fast to our confession (Heb. 4:14; 10:23). Paul says: “Since . . . we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, . . . let us . . . with confidence draw near” (Heb. 4:14, 16, ESV).

Thus, we have already arrived through our representative and, therefore, should act accordingly. Through Him, we “have tasted the heavenly gift . . . and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come” (Heb. 6:4, 5, ESV). The reality of Jesus’ ascension and ministry in the heavenly sanctuary is “a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul” (Heb. 6:19, ESV), the guarantee that the promises have substance and are worthy of confidence (Heb. 7:22). For us, faith has a historical anchor.

God’s purpose will be fulfilled not only in Jesus, however, but also in us. We have said that Jesus’ ascension fulfilled the typology of the first two yearly pilgrimages of Israel, Passover and Pentecost. According to Hebrews and the book of Revelation, the last pilgrimage, the Feast of Booths, is yet to be fulfilled. We will celebrate it with Jesus, when we are in the “city . . . whose architect and builder is God,” in the heavenly homeland (Heb. 11:10 [NIV], 13–16). We will not build booths, but God’s tabernacle, will descend from heaven, and we will live with Him forever (Rev. 7:15–17; 21:1–4; 22:1–5; Num. 6:24–26).



inVite

Meditate on Hebrews 10 again  
and look for where Jesus is.



What is He saying to you through these texts?

In what sense have we already arrived at the heavenly Jerusalem into the presence of Jesus?

How do you see Jesus differently or see Him again?

Prayer: How do you respond to seeing Jesus in this way?



Read more at  
[www.inverseible.org/heb10-6](http://www.inverseible.org/heb10-6)



Review the memory verse.  
How does it apply to your  
life this week?

—————→  
After this week's study of the  
passage, what are personal  
applications you are convicted of  
in your life?

What are practical applications  
you must make in your social life  
regarding the Ascension?

**AUTHORITY, ASSURANCE, AND ANIMATION**

“Christ’s ascension to heaven was the signal that His followers were to receive the promised blessing. For this they were to wait before they entered upon their work. When Christ passed within the heavenly gates, He was enthroned amidst the adoration of the angels. As soon as this ceremony was completed, the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples in rich currents, and Christ was indeed glorified, even with the glory which He had with the Father from all eternity. The Pentecostal outpouring was Heaven’s communication that the Redeemer’s inauguration was accomplished. According to His promise He had sent the Holy Spirit from heaven to His followers as a token that He had, as priest and king, received all authority in heaven and on earth, and was the Anointed One over His people. . . .

“Pentecost brought them the heavenly illumination. The truths they could not understand while Christ was with them were now unfolded. With a faith and assurance that they had never before known, they accepted the teachings of the Sacred Word. No longer was it a matter of faith with them that Christ was the Son of God. They knew that, although clothed with humanity, He was indeed the Messiah, and they told their experience to the world with a confidence which carried with it the conviction that God was with them.

“They could speak the name of Jesus with assurance; for was He not their Friend and Elder Brother? Brought into close communion with Christ, they sat with Him in heavenly places. With what burning language they clothed their ideas as they bore witness for Him! Their hearts were surcharged with a benevolence so full, so deep, so far-reaching, that it impelled them to go to the ends of the earth, testifying to the power of Christ. They were filled with an intense longing to carry forward the work He had begun. They realized the greatness of their debt to heaven and the responsibility of their work. Strengthened by the endowment of the Holy Spirit, they went forth filled with zeal to extend the triumphs of the cross. The Spirit animated them and spoke through them. The peace of Christ shone from their faces. They had consecrated their lives to Him for service, and their very features bore evidence to the surrender they had made.” (White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 38, 45, 46.)



Read more inSight from the  
Spirit of Prophecy at  
[www.inverseible.org/heb10-7](http://www.inverseible.org/heb10-7)



Share insights from this week's memory verse and Bible study as well as any discoveries, observations, and questions with your Sabbath School class (or Bible study group). Consider these discussion questions with the rest of the group.



With all of Hebrews teaching about the assurance of salvation, how must we be careful not to mistake presumption for assurance?

Why can we approach God without the need of anyone else but Jesus?

How can we have a genuine thirst when coming into the presence of God?

What are the conditions for us to be able to draw near?

What accusations could Satan make against you before God, if He were allowed?

How can we learn to make the promise of eternal life real to us now?

What answer can you give to those who say that this is all just a fantasy to help us feel better about our life here and now?