

COPYCAT

Scripture Reading: Read Hebrews 9

“Don’t be such a copycat!” You’ve probably heard the phrase before or something like it. Maybe you even used it yourself when you were a child and were frustrated when someone tried to mimic what you were doing. In the classroom, teachers don’t want their students to copy off someone else’s paper or plagiarize from someone else’s material when they’re writing an essay. They don’t want copycats. Instead, they want their students to produce original work.

In Hebrews chapters eight and nine, though, we discover that God was looking for a copycat when the tabernacle was built in the wilderness. In fact, he would not have been pleased if Israel had produced original work as Hebrews 8:5 makes clear: *“They [i.e. the priests] serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: ‘See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.’”* In other words, the tabernacle on earth was simply a reflection of a heavenly reality; and a temporary copy at that.

The copy had its place. It’s not that it was sinful or evil in and of itself. Far from it! Just look at how God’s glory was poured out on the completed tabernacle when it was dedicated to the Lord in Exodus 40. But, it was never meant to be permanent because it’s only a copy. The earthly tabernacle, the high priesthood of Aaron and his descendants, and the repeated sacrifices for sin were just not sufficient to produce true and lasting forgiveness as we see in today’s chapter reading: *“This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper.”*

We needed something better than a copy. We needed the original and in the high priesthood of Jesus and his once-for-all sacrifice, we find it. *“When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation. He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption.”*

Jesus isn’t just a copy. He is the original pattern by which the high priesthood was established. He didn’t enter a man-made Most Holy Place but heaven itself. He didn’t enter heaven again and again to offer a sacrifice but *“he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.”* In every way, he is superior!

Action Step & Prayer Focus: In order to appreciate more fully the message of Hebrews, read Exodus 25-31 or 35-40 to see how detailed God’s plans were for the copy of the heavenly original. Reread Hebrews 8-9 and reflect on how the tabernacle points to Christ and the heavenly realities. Finish by spending time in worship and prayer asking the Lord to bring home the truth of Christ’s superiority.

Take-a-way: *When it comes to salvation, don’t trust a copy. Put your faith in the original.*