

STUDIES IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

STUDY NUMBER FIFTEEN - HEBREWS 9:1-10

TEXT:

v. 1 Now even the first covenant was having regulations of divine worship and the earthly sanctuary.

v. 2 For there was a tabernacle prepared, the outer one, in which were the lampstand and the table and the sacred bread; this is called the holy place.

v. 3 And behind the second veil, a tent which is being called the Holy of Holies,

v. 4 having a golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant having been covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden jar holding the manna, and Aaron's rod which budded and the tables of the covenant.

v. 5 And above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat; concerning which things we are not now speaking in detail.

v. 6 Now when these things have been thus prepared, the priests are continually entering the outer tabernacle, performing the divine worship.

v. 7 But into the second only the high priest is entering, once a year, not without [taking] blood, which he is offering for himself and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance.

v. 8 The Holy Spirit is signifying this, that the way into the holy place has not yet been revealed, while the outer tabernacle is still standing;

v. 9 which is a symbol for the present time. According to which both gifts and sacrifices are being offered which are not able to make the one who is worshipping perfect in conscience,

v.10 since they relate only to food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until a time of the new order.

INTRODUCTION:

(Even Eagles Need a Push by David McNally)

Life is empty if we are not useful. We defy a primary purpose of our existence when we are not being useful. We abandon our gifts and talents and destroy the creative force within us when we are not being useful. We sacrifice joy, happiness, fulfillment, peace, and contentment when we are not being useful.

p. 40

1 Kings 12:6, 7

Then King Rehoboam consulted the elders who had served his father Solomon during his lifetime. "How would you advise me to answer these people?" he asked. They replied, "If today you will be a servant to these people and serve them and give them a favorable answer, they will always be your servants."

(Can We Save the Evangelical Church? by Bill Hull)

The late Karl Menninger said the best cure for depression is to roll up your sleeves, cross the railroad tracks, and help somebody.

p. 145

(First Things First by Stephen R. Covey, A. Roger Merrill, & Rebecca R. Merrill)

As one of the early pioneers of the American West, Bryant S. Hinckley, said:

Service is the virtue that distinguished the great of all times and which they will be remembered by. It places a mark of nobility upon its disciples. It is the dividing line which separates the two great groups of the world--those who help and those who hinder, those who lift and those who lean, those who contribute and those who only consume. How much better it is to give than to receive. Service in any form is comely and beautiful. To give encouragement, to impart sympathy, to show

interest, to banish fear, to build self confidence and awaken hope in the hearts of others, in short--to love them and to show it--is to render the most precious service.

There is so much we can do to render service, to make a difference in the world--no matter how large or small our Circle of Influence. It's our hope that each of us will connect more deeply with conscience and give light and warmth to the world from our fire within.

p. 306

(Broken in the Right Place by Alan E. Nelson)

Servant Leaders

Don't give us blessings--give us grace to be unquestionably obedient to Your every last command and desire.

Don't give us status--give us a place to serve.

Don't give us things for our use--use us.

Don't give us a mansion to live in--give us a spring-board to take Christ's love to the whole world.

Don't give us good jobs--put us to work.

Don't give us pleasure--give us perspective.

Don't give us satisfaction--teach us sacrifice.

Don't give us entertainment--enable us.

Don't give us good salaries--give us strength to do Your will.

Our great joy in life is in pleasing our Lord--and there is no other joy comparable.

p. 199

(Even Eagles Need a Push by David McNally)

Albert Einstein stated: "Great spirits have always encountered violent opposition from mediocre minds." Commitment is the enemy of resistance for it is the serious promise to press on, to get up, no matter how many times you are knocked down.

p. 152

(Abba's Child: The Cry of the Heart for Intimate Belonging by Brennan Manning)

The word passion means basically "to be affected by," and passion is the essential energy of the soul. It seldom strikes us that the capacity to be affected by anything is a source of energy. Yet we find a luminous illustration of this truth in the gospel of Matthew (13:44).

It appears to be just another long day of manual labor in the weary rhythm of time. But suddenly the ox stops and tugs mischievously. The peasant drives his plowshare deeper into the earth than he usually does. He turns over furrow after furrow until he hears the sound of a harsh metallic noise. The ox stops pawing. The man pushes the primitive plow aside.

With his bare hands he furiously digs up the earth. The dirt flies everywhere. At last the peasant spies a handle and lifts a large earthen pot out of the ground. Trembling, he yanks the handle off the pot. He is stunned. He lets out a scream--"Yaaaahh!"--that makes the ox blink.

The heavy pot is filled to the rim with coins and jewels, silver, and gold. He rifles through the treasure, letting the precious coins, the rare earrings, and sparkling diamonds slip through his fingers. Furtively, the peasant looks around to see if anyone has been watching him. Satisfied that he is alone, he heaps the dirt over the earthen pot, plows a shallow furrow over the surface, lays a large stone at the spot as a marker and resumes plowing the field.

He is deeply affected by his splendid find. A single thought absorbs him; in fact, it so controls him that he can no longer work undistracted by day or sleep undisturbed by night.

The field must become his property!

As a day laborer it is impossible for him to take possession of the buried treasure. Where can he get the money to buy the field? Caution and discretion fly out the window. He sells everything he owns. He gets a fair price for his hut and the few sheep he has acquired. He turns to relatives, friends, and acquaintances and borrows significant sums. The owner of the field is delighted with the fancy price offered by the purchaser and sells to the peasant without a second thought.

The new owner's wife is apoplectic. His sons are inconsolable. His friends reproach him. His neighbors wag their heads: "He stayed out too long in the sun." Still, they are baffled by his prodigious energy.

The peasant remains unruffled, even joyful, in the face of widespread opposition. He knows he has stumbled on an extraordinarily profitable transaction and rejoices at the thought of the payoff. The treasure, which apparently had been buried in the field for security before the last war and whose owner had not survived, returns a hundredfold on the price he had paid. He pays off all his debts and builds the equivalent of a mansion in Malibu. The lowly peasant is now a man whose fortune is made, envied by his enemies, congratulated by his friends, and secure for the rest of his life.

pp. 117-18

We come now in our study of the book of Hebrews to Hebrews 9.

Lane points out:

In 9:1-10 the writer concentrates narrowly upon the disposition of the tabernacle and its provisions of cultic worship. The comparison of Jesus as priestly ministrant and mediator of the new covenant with the Levitical arrangement under the terms of the Sinaitic covenant in 8:1-13 established a context for the statement that “the first covenant” had been regarded by God as obsolete (8:13).

p. 217

He considers first the arrangement of the tabernacle (9:2-5) and the regulations for cultic worship (9:6-10). The point of transition between the two paragraphs is clearly marked by the summarizing comment in v 5*b* (“We cannot speak in detail now about these things”), which prepares the reader for the new development in vv 6-10. In the initial paragraph (9:2-5), the writer seeks to stress as strongly as possible the distinction and independent significance of the front and rear compartments of the desert sanctuary (Riggenbach, 238). This emphasis prepares for the argument in 9:6-10 concerning the meaning of the cultic actions that reflect these arrangements.

p. 217

Montefiore in Black’s commentary says:

At the end of the last chapter there was quoted Jeremiah’s prophecy of the new covenant. This chapter is concerned with the contrast between the cultus of the two covenants, the old and the new. Verses 1-10 summarise the cultus of the old covenant, and the remainder of the chapter explains the difference between this and Jesus’ high priestly work in the heavenly sanctuary.

p. 143

Griffith Thomas says:

At this point the discussion becomes exceptionally difficult, and great care is necessary in order that the main thoughts may be clear. It would seem as though the Apostle wishes to teach that as Jesus in His priesthood mediates a better covenant (8:7-13), so He mediates it in a better sanctuary (9:1-14).

p. 108

Richards says:

The first covenant had provision made for worship and also for an earthly sanctuary (9:1). That earthly sanctuary was the place where men could go to meet God. It was a temporary meeting place, and its existence showed that we could not yet actually enter the true presence of God (9:8). Yet every item in that place of worship pictured a spiritual reality that would become ours when the way into God's presence was finally opened. The writer of Hebrews calls it "an illustration for the present time" (9:9).

p. 87

DeHaan prepares us for the passage by saying:

The most perfect type of the Lord Jesus in the entire Bible was the Tabernacle in the wilderness. It was called the "tent of meeting," the one place where God would meet with man, and where the humanity and Deity of Christ were united in one. Every part of this building, every single little detail spoke of some characteristic of Christ and His ministry. The materials spoke of Him: The silver spoke of redemption; gold, of His Deity; wood, His humanity; brass, His judgment; the altar, His Cross; the shewbread, the Bread of Life. The candlestick spoke of Him as the Light of the World; the gold incense pointed to His high priestly intercession. Every detail had some message in type which was fulfilled in Christ. This is elaborated upon in Hebrews nine.

pp. 122-23

Pink makes this observation:

The chief obstacle in the way of the Hebrews' faith was their failure to perceive that every thing connected with the ceremonial law--the tabernacle, priesthood, sacrifices--was *typical* in its significance and value. Because it was typical, it was only preparatory and transient, for once the Antitype materialized its purpose was served. The shadows were no longer needed when the Substance was manifested. The scaffolding is dispensed with, taken away, as soon as the finished building appears. The toys of the nursery become obsolete when manhood is reached. Everything is beautiful in its proper season.

p. 460

Kistemaker says:

Every chapter in the Epistle to the Hebrews has its own central message. For example: chapter 5, Christ is superior to Aaron the high priest; chapter 7, Christ is high priest in the order of Melchizedek; and chapter 9, Christ offers himself as a sacrifice once for all.

Although the topic of the covenant has become an integral part of the epistle at this point, the author nevertheless has to link the topic to the continuing discussion of the priesthood of Christ. In chapter 9 the author of Hebrews brings together these two strands and weaves them into a grand design. He portrays the construction of the tabernacle of the desert period, enumerates the various furnishings inside the sanctuary, and mentions the Most High Place with the ark and the cherubim.

p. 235

Westcott says:

Having pointed out generally the new scene and the new conditions of Christ's High-priestly work, the writer goes on to consider it in detail in comparison with that of the Levitical system. He (1) describes with affectionate reverence the ordered arrangements of the Old Sanctuary and its furniture, and the limited privileges of the Old Priesthood (ix. 1-10).

p. 242

Barclay prepares us for this study by saying:

The writer to the Hebrews has just been thinking of Jesus as the one who leads us into reality. He has been using the idea that in this world we have only shadows and pale copies of that which is truly real. The worship that men can offer is only a pale copy and ghostlike shadow of the real worship, which Jesus, the real High Priest, alone can offer. But even as he thinks of that his mind goes back to the Tabernacle. We must remember that it is the Tabernacle and not the Temple that he is thinking of. Lovingly he remembers its beauty and its loveliness; lovingly he lingers on it and its priceless possessions. And the thought that is in his mind is this--if this earthly worship was as lovely, as beautiful, as moving as this, what must the true worship be like? If all the loveliness of the Tabernacle was only a shadow of reality, how surpassingly lovely reality must be.
p. 103

Delitzsch says:

The antithesis is not between an earthly tabernacle and that in heaven, but between the first covenant with its ministries of mediation, and the new covenant with its divine Mediator.
p. 47

Hughes points out:

Directly behind the laver was the Tabernacle, a flat-roofed, oblong tent fifteen feet in height and width and forty-five feet long. It was covered with three layers. The first consisted of gorgeous woven tapestries of blue, purple and scarlet yarns and linen, which was then overlaid with two layers of animal skins. Inside, the Tabernacle was divided into two rooms by an ornate veil woven of the same colors along with gold and embroidered with cherubim. The veil was supported by four golden columns set on silver bases. The first outer room was called the *Holy Place*, and the second inner compartment the *Most Holy Place* or *Holy of Holies*.
p. 224

Hewitt says:

A detailed description of the component parts of the earthly tabernacle is given (1-5). The limitations of the priestly ministry within the two parts of the tabernacle are shown (6, 7). In all this there is a divine lesson that the old covenant was not perfect (8). The limitations of the priestly ministry apply also to the sacrifices which they offered (9, 10).
p. 138

Wiersbe titles verses 1-10:

A better sanctuary (1-10). In every way, the present heavenly sanctuary is better than any sanctuary on earth, including the temple in Jerusalem. In the earthly temple, the furnishings were only symbols, the work was never finished, and the ministry could never change the human heart. We should be grateful for the price Jesus paid to make His heavenly ministry possible.
pp. 818-19

Phillips says:

In this section the writer of Hebrews compares the earthly sanctuary, given to the Hebrews people, with the true, heavenly sanctuary now opened up for the people of God. Because of the provisions of Calvary, we have a better sanctuary. Israel's earthly sanctuaries, both the tabernacle and the Temple, were indeed ordained of God but were rudimentary, illustrative, temporary, and suited only for those still in their spiritual infancy. These earthly shrines were given by God only until such time as a higher and more spiritual revelation could be given. Calvary has made such a higher revelation possible.
p. 115

Wiersbe in his commentary says:

1. The inferior Old Covenant sanctuary (9:1-10)

Hebrews reminds readers that the regulations and practices in the tabernacle were ordained of God. If there was any inferiority in the tabernacle service, it was not because God had not established the ritual. While the Old Covenant was in force, the ministry of the priests was ordained of God and perfectly proper.

What was it, then, that made the tabernacle inferior? There are five answers to that question: [in these verses.]

p. 97

Stedman says:

The ninth chapter of Hebrews may seem to many to be involved and even confusing, but it was perfectly clear to the Hebrew readers to whom this letter was first written. It describes in rather close detail the Tabernacle in the wilderness with its sacrifices and regulations of food, drink and clothing, and therefore seems difficult to us and even a little dull.

p. 129

Bruce says:

The inadequacy of the old order as compared with the new is now set forth with reference first to the arrangements of the sanctuary under the old covenant and then to the sacrificial ritual associated with that sanctuary. Provision was made under the old covenant for the people of God to worship him, but the sanctuary erected for this worship was a material one. The particular sanctuary which our author has in mind is plainly the wilderness tent described in detail in the book of Exodus.

p. 198

Macaulay prepares us adequately for the passage when he says:

Do you have in your mind a picture of the tabernacle with its three compartments? The court had the brazen altar, where the sacrifices were slain, and the laver, where the priests washed. The holy place could be entered only by the priests, where they daily trimmed the lamps on the seven-branched lampstand, attended to the shewbread on the golden table, and waved incense before the golden altar. Beyond that, behind the great veil, was the Holy of Holies, where was the Ark of the Covenant holding the tables of the Law, with the Mercy Seat overshadowed by the cherubim. This was symbolically the place of God's presence, hallowed by the Shekinah glory. To enter here was to come into the presence of God. Only the high priest had this sacred privilege, and that only on one day of the year, the great Day of Atonement. On that occasion, with great solemnity, he passed alone through the holy place, even the priests being barred from their sphere of daily ministry lest they should be tempted to look beyond the lifted veil. Entering the place of awful sanctity, he offered an atonement for the sins of the nation. But even he dared not enter without blood. For him the blood of atonement was the blood of access. Any attempt to enter the sacred precincts without the covering blood of atonement would have meant death to the intruder, high priest though he be. Even for himself, being a sinner, he must present the blood, and as representing sinners he must present the blood. So covered, he was received on his own behalf and on behalf of the people whom he represented.

p. 130

Lenski says:

The writer simply passes on from a comparison of the two testaments to the comparison of the two Tabernacles. He first describes the Tabernacle in the wilderness and relates what the common priests did daily in the Holy [Place] and the high priest once a year in the Holy of Holies.

p. 273

Draper says:

It has always been in the heart of man to build a sanctuary to God. In addition, God commanded his people saying, "Let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them" (Exodus 25:8). The sanctuary would be a symbol, a reminder to them of the presence of God in their midst.

p. 227

MacArthur says:

God never asks anyone to give up anything without His offering something far better in return. The chief obstacle in the way of the Hebrews' faith was their failure to see that everything connected with the ceremonial law (covenant, sacrifices, priesthood, and ritual) was preparatory and transient. So the writer painstakingly and definitively pursues a clear revelation of the better character of the New.
p. 220

McGee points out:

Our subject is the priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ who is a priest after the order of Melchizedek. Presented to us are two ministries which are in sharp contrast. The Levitical service, the ministry of the Aaronic priesthood, was carried out in an earthly tabernacle down here. That sanctuary on earth was merely a type of the one which is in heaven, the sanctuary in which the Lord Jesus is serving today. This sanctuary in heaven provides for better worship.
p. 562

Stitzel in his Argument of Hebrews 7-9 has the following summary:

“Jesus Christ is a better priest who has a better ministry, under a better covenant.”

And I would also add to his statement:

IN A BETTER PLACE--THE HEAVENLY SANCTUARY

He says continuing:

It often has been said that if an unbeliever turns away from Christ, he has no where else to turn. This is equally true of the believer. To turn from Christ is to turn to nothing. There is no other person or thing in the universe in whom one can find peace, satisfaction and all that Christ alone offers.

One writer, summarizing the chapter which is before us, said this:

This is a chapter of contrasts. We have in it the great contrast between the two tabernacles, one earthly way to God failed, the other in heaven itself. [There is] No veil there.

1. Made by hands; the other not of this creation.
2. The two priesthoods: Levitical priests and Christ, our one great High Priest.
3. Their offerings: the Levitical priests continued sacrifices on the Day of Atonement every year and Christ's one great sacrifice of Himself at the cross.
4. The results of their sacrifices of animals, goats and bulls could not atone for sin or relieve the conscience of the sinner. Christ offered up himself through the eternal Spirit who cleansed the conscience to serve the living God; Christ's one offering, obtaining eternal redemption and an eternal inheritance.
5. The earthly sacrifices: mere copies of things in the heavens, sanctifying unto the cleanness of the flesh. Christ's sacrifice which brought Him not into a holy place made with hands like in pattern to the true; but in heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God for us, not once a year but constantly.
6. The sacrifices of the Levitical priests constantly repeat it, Christ's once for all.
7. The universal appointment unto men once to die, and after this the judgment. Christ, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, which included death and judgment, shall appear a second time apart from sin to them that wait for Him unto salvation.

Ray Stedman prays at the beginning of chapter 9:

“Our Father, open our eyes to this new principle of human behavior. Teach us to grasp this, Lord, and to accept Your sentence of death upon everything in us that is not of Christ, and to recognize that in Him, by Him, through Him we can do everything that needs to be done by us. Through Him who loves us and who strengthens us. In His name, Amen.”

p. 144

In trying to get a handle on these 10 verses we could call it:

A BETTER SANCTUARY or

THE SUPERIOR SANCTUARY or

THE NEW SANCTUARY IS BETTER THAN THE OLD.

The passage divides itself up into:

verses 1-5--focusing on the SANCTUARY

verses 6-10--focusing on SERVICE

verses 1-10 focus on the PAST

verse 11 to the end of the chapter--focusing on the PRESENT.

v. 1 Now even the first covenant was having regulations of divine worship and the earthly sanctuary.

Speaking of this “FIRST COVENANT,” the author points out that there were 2 THINGS true of it. It had:

1. “REGULATIONS OF DIVINE WORSHIP”
2. “THE EARTHLY SANCTUARY”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

With regard to the “aging” First Covenant, the writer wished to discuss that covenant’s **regulations for worship** and its **earthly sanctuary**. These he highlighted in order to contrast them with the superior features of the New-Covenant ministry. How “earthly,” or mundane, that first sanctuary was, he emphasized by reviewing the material objects associated with it.

p. 801

J. Vernon McGee comments on the phrase “THE EARTHLY SANCTUARY”:

. . . it means a sanctuary of this world; that is, it was made of materials of this world. It was made so long, so wide, and so high, and there was a ritual that the people went through in the sanctuary down here.

p. 562

MacArthur makes this interesting observation:

Only two chapters in the Bible are devoted to the creation story, whereas some fifty chapters focus on the Tabernacle (see especially Ex. 25-40). The Tabernacle is important and demands attention in our study, because it is a giant portrait of Jesus Christ. Everywhere you look in the Tabernacle you can see Him.

The courtyard of the Tabernacle was one hundred fifty feet long and seventy-five feet wide. Its single gate, on the east side, was thirty feet wide and seven and a half feet high, allowing a large number of people to enter at the same time. It is a graphic picture of Jesus Christ, who said, "I am the way" and "I am the door." Just as there was only one entrance to the Tabernacle, there is only one way to God--the only Way and the only Door, Jesus Christ. Christianity is exclusive, not because Christians make it so but because God has made it so.

p. 221

Wiersbe said:

A. IT WAS AN EARTHLY SANCTUARY (9:1). This means it was made by man (9:11) and pitched by man (8:2). The Jewish people generously brought their gifts to Moses, and from these materials the tabernacle was constructed.

p. 97

Griffith Thomas says:

The tabernacle, though beautiful and impressive, was yet incapable of bringing about that access to God which man needed beyond all else.

p. 108

G. Campbell Morgan puts it all in perspective when he says:

Having considered the superiority of the new covenant, the writer now turned to the subject of the superiority of the worship that is made possible to men through the Son. Once in this chapter we find the word “worshipper” (ix. 9). It is found again in the plural number in the second verse of chapter ten. These are the only places where the word occurs, but the cognate verb occurs in this chapter nine, at verse fourteen, where it is rendered “serve.” This is an arresting fact, showing the relationship between worship and service. It will be remembered that in the hour of our Lord’s temptation, He said to the enemy:

“It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.”

Worship, in the last analysis, is the secret of service, and service is an expression of worship.

The first thought of worship is that of rendering homage and adoration in the presence of God, whether by an individual soul, or by a company of men and women united in the sacred activity. The outcome of such worship is ever that of service. At this point, however, we are principally concerned with worship as adoration.

pp. 98-99

Lane says:

The predicate adjective qualifies the tabernacle as belonging to the earth, as distinct from the heavenly sanctuary in which the eschatological high priest now ministers.

p. 219

J. Vernon McGee has written a little book called The Tabernacle: God’s Portrait of Christ. He says:

The typology of the Tabernacle sets forth in a clear and concise manner the doctrine of the New Testament. It is God’s story book with pictures for babes in Christ. It is well at this juncture to recall the dictum of Hengstenberg in his Christology, “The elucidation of the doctrine of types, now entirely neglected, is an important problem for future theologians.” The theology of the Tabernacle is set forth in typology. A consideration of its types will well repay the time and trouble spent in a study of their meanings.

There is a Tabernacle in Heaven which is the original Tabernacle, and the one on earth was merely a figure. Does this imply that there is a literal Tabernacle in Heaven, and the one on earth was only a duplication? If by literal we understand that it is one of earthly materials, certainly the answer is an emphatic, “No!” But if we understand that there is a real Tabernacle in Heaven, and through it there is the only approach to God; then the answer must be in the affirmative. There is in Heaven a Tabernacle as real as the Wilderness Tabernacle, for the Wilderness Tabernacle conformed to it and corresponded to its detail. The wilderness Tabernacle is merely a figure.
p. 22

John Brown points out:

Having made these general remarks, we are now prepared to enter on the more close investigation of the apostle’s particular statements. The object of the apostle is to show that Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant has a more excellent ministry than Aaron and his sons, who are the mediator of the old covenant. The first thing to be done in prosecuting such an object is to show what kind of ministry Aaron and his sons had, and that is precisely what the apostle does in the first ten verses of this chapter.

v. 2 For there was a tabernacle prepared, the outer one, in which were the lampstand and the table and the sacred bread; this is called the holy place.

Richards says:

What realities did the tabernacle furniture foreshadow, realities that help us realize the resources we now have to enable us to live a life of righteousness? Let's look at the seven pieces of furniture in order.

(1) As soon as a person entered the outer court he confronted the *brazen altar*. On that altar sacrifices for sin were offered. Man could only approach God by sacrifice.

Jesus is our altar and sacrifice. When we come into God's presence by Him we have full assurance of our welcome.

(2) The *laver* contained water for the cleansing of those who ministered in the tabernacle. Jesus' blood assures of the continual cleansing we need to maintain fellowship with God (1 John 1:9; Heb. 8:12). Provision has been made for our failures!

(3) Inside the first veil, in the Holy Place, a *seven-branched candlestick* fed by a continuous stream of oil stood on the left. It pictured the Holy Spirit, who continuously lights our way that we might understand God's plan for our lives. We can know the way of righteousness!

(4) In a corresponding position on the right was a *table* containing food. Here too the picture is clear. Jesus provides complete sustenance. He is the Strengthener, who enables us to live the righteous life.

(5) The golden *altar of incense* stood before a second veil. It pictures acceptable prayer. How exciting to realize that we can come with confidence to the very throne of grace, with both our praise and petitions welcome because of Jesus.

(6) Beyond the second veil was the Holy of Holies. In it was the *ark*, the symbol of the covenant made between God and man. Today Jesus is our Guarantee, He who has entered into the Holy of Holies in heaven for us.

(7) On the ark, resting as a lid, was the *mercy seat*, the place where the blood of atonement was sprinkled yearly. This too spoke of the meeting of God and man, and of access. For us it speaks of our unbreakable link with God, now established in Jesus and sealed in His blood.

Put together, what is the author saying to us? Simply this. Jesus is Himself all the provision we need for righteous living. In Jesus we have access, cleansing, enlightenment, strength, welcome, and guaranteed entrance into the very presence of God when in need of mercy or grace to help.

pp. 87-88

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MacArthur says:

The first article of furniture in the outer court was the bronze altar. It was made of acacia wood sheathed with bronze. It was seven and a half feet square, stood four and a half feet off the ground, and was topped with a bronze grate. The coals were placed underneath the grate and the sacrifice was placed on top. On the four corners of the altar were horns, to which the animal was bound when it was being sacrificed. The bronze altar is again a perfect picture of Jesus Christ, who Himself was a sacrifice for sin.

The next piece of furniture in the court was the laver or basin, also made of bronze. In it the priests would wash their hands, and even sometimes their feet, as they went about the bloody services of sacrifice. Here is a picture of Jesus Christ as the cleanser of His people. Once we have received forgiveness for our sins through Christ's sacrifice of Himself, we still need His daily cleansing that restores fellowship and joy.

Still moving west across the courtyard, we come to the Tabernacle proper--forty-five feet long, fifteen feet wide, and fifteen feet high. The **holy place** took up two-thirds of this area, which means that the **holy of holies** was a perfect fifteen-foot cube. Only priests could go into the Holy Place, in which were three pieces of furniture. The writer of Hebrews mentions only two, because, as he says, he cannot **speak in detail** (9:5).

p. 222

Wiersbe says:

B. IT WAS A TYPE OF SOMETHING GREATER (Heb. 9:2-5). The writer listed the various parts and furnishings of the tabernacle because each of these carried a spiritual meaning.

p. 97

In the holy place stood the seven-branched golden candlestick (Ex. 25:31-40; 27:20-21; 37:17-24). "Lampstand" would be a better term to use, because the light was produced by the burning of wicks in oil, not by the use of candles. Since there were no windows in the tabernacle, this lampstand provided the necessary light for the priests' ministry in the holy place. The nation of Israel was supposed to be a light to the nations (Isa. 42:6; 49:6). Jesus Christ is the "Light of the world" (John 8:12) and believers are to shine as lights in the world (Phil. 2:14-15).

p. 99

There was also a table in the holy place, with 12 loaves of bread on it. It was called the table of showbread (Ex. 25:23-30; 37:10-16; Lev. 24:5-9). Each Sabbath, the priests would remove the old loaves and put fresh loaves on the table; and the old loaves would be eaten. These loaves were called “the bread of presence” and the table was called “the table of presence.” Only the priests could eat this bread, and they were required to eat it in the sanctuary. It reminded the 12 tribes of God’s presence that sustained them. It also speaks to us today of Jesus Christ, the “Bread of Life” given to the whole world (John 6).

p. 99

v. 3 And behind the second veil, a tent which is being called the Holy of Holies,

v. 4 having a golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant having been covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden jar holding the manna, and Aaron's rod which budded and the tables of the covenant.

We have somewhat of a problem here in that the “GOLDEN ALTAR OF INCENSE” is located right in front of the veil which separates the holy place from the Holy of Holies and thus is located in the holy place.

Like the altar of sacrifice is at the entrance into the holy place, likewise the “ALTAR OF INCENSE” is at the entrance into the Holy of Holies.

McGee in his little book on the tabernacle points out the fact that:

There were seven articles of furniture: the ark, the mercy-seat, the altar of incense, the table of shewbread, the lampstand of gold, the laver of brass, and the altar of brass. These articles occupied the following respective places: two articles in the Holy of Holies--ark and mercy-seat; three articles in the Holy Place--table of shewbread, lampstand of gold, and altar of incense; two articles in the outer court--altar of brass, and laver of brass.

p. 32

What a picture all of these articles are of what it cost Jesus Christ to purchase our redemption.

McGee quotes from the hymn:

*“None of the ransomed ever knew,
How deep were the waters crossed;
Nor how dark was the night,
That the Lord passed through,
Ere he found His sheep that was lost.”*

As we peer into the darkness of Calvary, there breaks forth a flash from the fire of the altar, and we behold the Dear Dying Lamb. Then, we can lift our hearts in hushed harmony to reverently sing,

*“Well might the sun in darkness hide,
And shut his glories in,
When Christ the Mighty Maker died
For man, the creature’s sin.”*

p. 52

McGee then addresses the problem that we have in verse 4:

When the writer to the Hebrews catalogued the articles of furniture of the Tabernacle in the ninth chapter, he included the altar of gold with the furniture in the Holy of Holies. We are not attempting to settle that mootable problem, but we believe it to be suggestive. Now, the veil is removed, and the believer can come with boldness to the Throne of Grace because he is in Christ. He has a position in the very presence of God. The altar of gold belongs rightly in both places. In the Holy of Holies it suggests the intercessory work of Christ for us; in the Holy Place it suggests our part in worship. It suggests the place where we pray and praise God. Christ is the One who genuinely worships God. He truly praises God in His prayer work for us. We have no merit that makes our prayers and praise acceptable to God. The basis of our prayers is not ourselves. God does not hear and heed our prayers because we are who we are, but because Christ is who He is. This is seen in the altar of gold.

pp. 82-83

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G. Campbell Morgan says:

Before the veil was found an altar of incense. The reading of this passage may suggest that this altar was inside the veil; but let it be carefully noticed that the writer says, “having an altar of incense,” which emphasizes that as the way of approach. A reference to Exodus will show its true place. There were senses in which it belonged to the inner realm, but it was the last thing outside.

p. 100

Griffith Thomas says:

Each piece of furniture in the tabernacle had its own typical meaning as foreshadowing Christ. One difficulty has been raised in connection with the altar of incense, which seems to be regarded as in the Holy of Holies, but the difference of expression, “wherein” (v. 2), and “having” (v. 4), should be noted, the explanation being, pretty certainly, that “having” means *belonging to*, the connection being one of idea and use, not of place. There seems to be no doubt that the altar of incense was directly connected with the Holy of Holies in regard to spiritual meaning (1 Kings 6:22). It also appears quite clear that the word should be translated “altar” (v. 4) and not “censer,” because not only was the censer entirely unknown in connection with the giving of the law and the construction of the tabernacle, but with the word “altar” every article in the tabernacle here finds its mention.

p. 109

1 Kings 6:22

So he overlaid the whole interior with gold. He also overlaid with gold the altar that belonged to the inner sanctuary.

Kistemaker says:

In Hebrews 9 the author stresses the prominence of the Day of Atonement (v. 7). For him, the altar of incense and the ark were the most important objects.

p. 239

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Owen says:

It doth not say that this censer was in this second part; but this second part “had” it. This “censer” may as well be the “altar of incense” overlaid with beaten gold; the Apostle speaks not of its *situation*, but of its *use*; the second part had the golden censer. The most holy place may well be said to have had this altar of incense, because the high priest could never enter into that place, nor perform any service in it, but he was to bring incense with him, taken in a censer from this altar.

p. 155

Montefiore in Black’s commentary says:

In any case our author does not actually commit himself to the view that the altar of incense is situated in the sanctuary: he merely says that it belonged to the sanctuary.

p. 145

Lenski says:

This inner veil or curtain was woven of blue, purple, and scarlet wool and fine, twined linen (byssus), was adorned with the figures of cherubim and was hung on four gilded pillars of acacia wood that rested in silver sockets; it shut off the Holy of Holies from the rest of the tent. Behind this curtain only the high priest entered on the Great Day of Atonement.

p. 276

If the writer refers to this altar of incense, how can he connect it with the Holy of Holies when this altar stood in the Holy Place? Meyer says that the writer made a mistake and thought that this golden altar was behind the veil. The writer does not, however, say that this golden altar was “in” the Holy of Holies; he uses [the word, “having”]. Although he uses the same word in connection with the golden pot, we nevertheless note a difference: a pot “contains” something, a great room “has” certain things pertaining to it. The difficulty is cleared up by 1 Kings 6:22: this golden altar was “*by* the oracle,” stood near the veil, pertained to the Holy of Holies, and is so considered here. Exod. 30:1-6 (see also 40:5) describes this altar and then connects it with the ark of the testimony: “Put it *before* the veil that is by the ark of the testimony, *before* the mercy seat that is over the testimony”--“set the altar of gold for the incense *before* the ark of the testimony.” This is conclusive for us. The golden altar of incense stood in the Holy Place close to the veil; when he was offering the incense the priest faced the mercy seat behind the veil; the incense was offered to God as being present on the mercy seat.

p. 277

Bruce says:

On the one day in the year when the holy of holies was entered the incense-altar played a significant part; not only was the holy of holies never entered without incense from the incense-altar (Lev. 16:12f.), but the blood of the sin offering on the Day of Atonement was sprinkled on the horns of the incense-altar as well as on the mercy-seat (Ex. 30:10; Lev. 16:15).²⁷

In any case, our author does not stay to answer the questions which his passing reference to the incense-altar may raise in his readers' minds; this is not the feature of the tabernacle to which he wishes to draw their attention more particularly, any more than the contents of the ark of the covenant, which he also passes over quickly.

27. See D. W. Gooding, *The Account of the Tabernacle: Translation and Textual Problems of the Greek Exodus* (Cambridge, 1959); also the same writer's article “Tabernacle,” in NBD².

p. 202

Hewitt says:

On the great day of atonement the veil or curtain would be drawn, then “the altar of incense” would in fact be before the mercy seat.

p. 141

Hughes says:

Scholars have been puzzled because elsewhere the Scriptures place the golden altar of incense not inside the Holy of Holies, but in the outer room “in front of the curtain” before the Holy of Holies (Exodus 30:6). In fact, it had to be outside the Holy of Holies because it was used daily by other priests (Exodus 30:7, 8). So why does the author of Hebrews present the altar of incense as part of the Most Holy Place? Most likely, as Leon Morris explains, “The author has in mind the intimate connection of the incense altar with the Most Holy Place. So it ‘belonged to the inner sanctuary’ (1 Kings 6:22), as is shown by its situation “in front of the curtain that is before the ark of testimony--before the atonement cover [mercy-seat] that is over the Testimony (Exodus 30:6).”¹ While the location of the incense altar is puzzling to some, its prophetic significance is not, for the incense prophecies of the ultimate prayers offered by Christ, our high priest, in the presence of God.

1. Leon Morris, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Vol. 12 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981), pp. 81, 82. pp. 224-5

Westcott says:

The Altar of incense bore the same relation to the Holy of Holies as the Altar of burnt offering to the Holy place. It furnished in some sense the means of approach to it.

p. 247

There certainly is no veil in the heavenly sanctuary, and as a result of Christ's death upon the cross we read:

Matthew 27:51:

And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom, and the earth shook; and the rocks were split,

v. 5 And above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat; concerning which things we are not now speaking in detail.

In the FINAL PHRASE in verse 5 the author says:

“CONCERNING WHICH THINGS” (these articles in the Tabernacle) WE ARE NOT NOW SPEAKING IN DETAIL.” In other words, the important thing is not the TYPE but the REALITY.

Montefiore in Black’s commentary says:

Our author wants to get back to the main course of his argument, and he is unwilling to particularise more about these sacred objects.

p. 146

Wiersbe says:

No doubt many spiritual truths are wrapped up in these pieces of furniture, and all of them are of value. But the most important truth is this: all of this was *symbolism* and not the spiritual *reality*. It was this fact that made the tabernacle of the Old Covenant inferior.

p. 100

Lane says:

The discussion of the two compartments and their respective furnishings ends abruptly with the declaration, “We cannot speak in detail now about these things.” That statement makes it clear that the writer has no interest in any hidden significance of the two compartments or the sanctuary furnishings.

p. 221

v. 6 Now when these things have been thus prepared, the priests are continually entering the outer tabernacle, performing the divine worship.

Here at this point we move from the:

SANCTUARY to the SERVICE.

The little word “NOW” introduced us to the SANCTUARY in verse 1,

and the little word “NOW” in verse 6 introduces us to the SERVICE of the priests in the sanctuary.

“NOW WHEN THESE THINGS HAVE BEEN THUS PREPARED, THE PRIESTS ARE CONTINUALLY ENTERING THE OUTER TABERNACLE, PERFORMING THE DIVINE WORSHIP.”

The KEY PHRASE in verse 6 is:

“CONTINUALLY ENTERING.”

The KEY is:

THE CONSTANT REPETITION OF THE SACRIFICES UNDER THE OLD COVENANT.

Westcott says:

After speaking of the material arrangements of the Sanctuary, the writer goes on to show the significant limitations which determined the use of it.
p. 249

Bruce gives the title to these next verses:

A TEMPORARY RITUAL (9:6-10)

When these things have been set up thus, the priests go into the first tent continually in the discharge of their sacred offices,

Lenski says:

From the description of the Tabernacle and its fittings the writer advances to the functions of the priests.
p. 280

Kistemaker remarks:

The author of Hebrews in 9:6-10 places in sharper focus the contrast alluded to in 9:1. He shows that the “regulations for worship” were external and consequently temporal. And he notes that the high priest entered the Most Holy Place only once a year; priests had no access to the inner sanctuary. As representatives of the people, priests and high priests faced limitations.
p. 242

Griffith Thomas says:

Then the meaning of this tabernacle is shown; and although it was a complete structure, yet its service was spiritually inadequate. It was as good as it could be, and yet the results were poor so far as man’s true position to God was concerned. The entire structure suggested restriction, imperfection, limitation, and exclusion, and it was a continual parable of deeper realities (vv. 8-10).
p. 109

J. Vernon McGee says:

“The priests went *always* into the first tabernacle.” The priests went continually--they never finished the job. If they went today, they would be going again tomorrow, and the next day, and on and on and on. I am of the opinion that it must have become very monotonous over the years for a priest to continually go through this ritual. The very repetition of it meant that it was not sufficient, that is, that one time would not do.
p. 564

English says:

The furniture having been denoted, equally briefly the service of the priesthood is now described.

p. 242

(Only Angels Can Wing It: The Rest of Us Have to Practice by Liz Curtis Higgs)

Newspaperman Kin Hubbard wrote, “A bee is never as busy as it seems; it just can’t buzz any slower.”

p. 113

v. 7 But into the second only the high priest is entering, once a year, not without [taking] blood, which he is offering for himself and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

This restricted access clearly demonstrated that a true entrance into God’s presence **had not yet been disclosed.**

p. 801

4 THINGS are noted about the ministry on the Day of Atonement that CONTRAST the OLD and the NEW:

1. THE HOLY OF HOLIES WAS ENTERED ONLY ONCE A YEAR
2. THE HIGH PRIEST ALONE COULD ENTER
3. THE ENTRANCE WAS THROUGH A POWER OTHER THAN HIS OWN
4. THE HIGH PRIEST NEEDED THE SAME PROTECTION OF THE BLOOD AS THE OFFERERS

Here the writer points up the fact that on the Day of Atonement and only then the high priest entered into the Holy of Holies. He did not enter without blood. That blood was an offering for himself and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance.

J. Vernon McGee says:

Our Great High Priest has gone into the Holy of Holies, into the very presence of God. He has gone in, and He has not come out. He is going to be there as long as we are in the world. When He does come out, He is coming out after His own--we are a part of Him; we are the "body" of Christ.

The purpose of all of this is to make real to your heart and mine the presence of the Lord Jesus.

p. 564

Hughes says:

Ministry in the Holy of Holies was the domain of the high priest *once* a year. And what a day it was (cf. Leviticus 16)! During New Testament times, the high priest underwent rigorous preparation for that day. Seven days before the Day of Atonement, the priest left home and stayed day and night in the Temple (*Yoma* 1.1).³ During the week he practiced what he would do on the great day, so he would make no mistake (*Yoma* 2.2). He was especially cautious not to come close to anything that would make him ceremonially unclean.

Then on the morning of the Day of Atonement, the high priest offered a burnt offering (Numbers 29:8-11). Following this, he ritually bathed his entire body and then, instead of putting on his traditional gorgeous robes, donned a sacred white linen tunic along with white undergarments and a white sash and white turban (Leviticus 16:4)--thus symbolizing that he was free from defilement (*Yoma* 3.4-6).

Next he placed his hands on the head of a bull, selected as a sacrifice for his own sins and those of his family, praying:

O God, I have committed iniquity, transgressed and sinned before thee, I and my house, as it is written in the Law of thy servant Moses, "*For on this day shall atonement be made for you to cleanse you; for all your sins shall ye be clean before the Lord.*" And they answered after him, "Blessed be the name of the glory of his kingdom for ever and ever!" (*Yoma*, 3.8)

Then, leaving the bull for a few moments, he turned to two goats nearby and chose lots over them. One was designated for *Jehovah* and the other for *Azazel*, the scapegoat (Leviticus 16:8, 10, 26; *Yoma* 4.1). A piece of crimson wool was tied to the horns of the scapegoat, and a thread was bound around the goat to be slaughtered (*Yoma* 4.2). Then the goats were left standing together.

The high priest now turned to the bull and sacrificed it (*Yoma* 4.3). Next he filled a censer with burning coals from the altar of burnt offerings and entered the Holy of Holies, where he poured two handfuls of incense on the coals so that a cloud of incense covered the mercy-seat (Leviticus 16:12, 13; *Yoma* 5.1). This done, he exited, obtaining some of the bull's blood, which he then sprinkled on the mercy-seat and then seven times on the ground before the cover (Leviticus 16:14; *Yoma* 5.3).

After this, he sacrificed the goat designated for Jehovah and performed the same ritual in the Holy of Holies. Upon emerging, he mixed the blood of the bull and the goat, put it on the horns of the altar, and sprinkled the altar seven times to consecrate it from the uncleanness of the Israelites (Leviticus 16:18, 19; *Yoma* 5.4-6).

Then came the patently joyous part of the day's ceremonies. The priest laid both hands on the head of the live goat and confessed "all the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelites--all their sins--and put them on the goat's head" (Leviticus 16:21). The goat was then led away into the desert amidst the jeering of the people--"Bear [our sins] and be gone!" (*Yoma* 6.4).

3. Herbert Danby, trans., *The Mishnah* (London: Oxford, 1974), pp. 162-172, which gives the tractate *Yoma* ("The Day of Atonement").
pp. 225-6

v. 8 The Holy Spirit is signifying this, that the way into the holy place has not yet been revealed, while the outer tabernacle is still standing;

It is the function of the Holy Spirit to make the Scripture plain, to open our eyes spiritually, "that we may behold wondrous things out of thy truth."

John 14:6

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father but through me."

1 Timothy 2:5

For there is one God and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The Levitical arrangements were designed to convey the idea that the true way to God did not lie in them.
p. 801

1 Peter 1:11

seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow.

These remaining verses in this passage are pointing to the LIMITATIONS of the service of the tabernacle and of the whole Levitical system.

Lenski says:

The readers are acquainted with Matt. 27:51, know that by rending the inner veil the Spirit himself indicated the end of what the Tabernacle in the wilderness prefigured. When the sacrifice of Jesus on Calvary was complete, when he entered the heavenly Sanctuary with his expiating blood, all that the figure foreshadowed had come, the way to the heavenly Sanctuary was manifest at last. In the heavenly Sanctuary there is no longer a Holy Place and a Holy of Holies with a veil between them.
p. 284

Lane says:

The writer's concern in 9:1-10 is to assess the deficiency of the preceding covenant by referring to its cultic provisions for worship. The tabernacle and its ritual provide him with a vocabulary and grammar with which he is able to express the insights that have been disclosed to him by the Holy Spirit (9:8).
p. 225

Wiersbe titles verse 8:

D. IT WAS TEMPORARY (9:8). The fact that the outer court (“first tabernacle,” 9:6) was standing was proof that God’s work of salvation for man had not yet been completed. The outer court stood between the people and the holy of holies! As long as the priests were ministering in the holy place, the way had not yet been opened into the presence of God. But when Jesus died on the cross, the veil of the temple was torn from top to bottom (Matt. 27:50-51) and the way was opened into the holy of holies. There was no longer any more need for either the holy place or the holy of holies, for now believing sinners could come into the presence of God.

p. 101

MacArthur says:

In the illustration of the old sanctuary and its services, **the Holy Spirit** is teaching at least three things. First, the worship of God was limited in the Old Covenant. There was no access to God. The people, and even the high priest, could come only so close. Second, the Spirit wants to teach the imperfect cleansing accomplished through the old **sacrifices**. The Israelites never really knew that they were forgiven. The scapegoat was sent out to be lost in the wilderness, but there was always the chance of his finding his way back to the camp. There was no freedom of **conscience**, no assurance of cleansing. Third, the Spirit is teaching that the Old Covenant was temporary. Whether the scapegoat found his way back or not, the sacrifices--the daily and the yearly--all had to be repeated. The Old Covenant was limited, imperfect, and temporary. The provision of the New Covenant had to sweep back over all the believers of the past to provide access, cleansing, and permanent salvation.

p. 226

J. Vernon McGee says of verse 8:

In other words, all of this was a picture and a type that the way into the very presence of God (actually, right into the very *face* of God) had not yet been opened.

p. 565

v. 9 which is a symbol for the present time. According to which both gifts and sacrifices are being offered which are not able to make the one who is worshipping perfect in conscience,

The KEY PHRASE to his whole argument is the 1st phrase of verse 9:

“WHICH IS A SYMBOL FOR THE PRESENT TIME.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

What this indicates **for the present time** is that the Old-Covenant sacrificial system did not meet human need at its deepest level. It could not **clear the conscience of the worshiper**.

p. 801

It was not able to bring perfection to the conscience. The ordinances were external.

The GOAL OF THE WORSHIP was access to God; and the fact that only the high priest could enter that part of the tabernacle, the earthly counterpart of God's heavenly abode, showed that this goal had not been attained through Old Testament worship.

Wiersbe says:

E. ITS MINISTRY WAS EXTERNAL, NOT INTERNAL (Heb. 9:9-10). The sacrifices offered, and the blood applied to the mercy seat, could never change the heart or the conscience of a worshiper. All of the ceremonies associated with the tabernacle had to do with ceremonial purity, not moral purity. They were “carnal ordinances” that pertained to the outer man but that could not change the inner man.

p. 101

Hughes says:

So the limitations of the Old Covenant were profound--*limited access* and *limited efficacy*. Average Joes, like most of us, were several ecclesiastical layers removed from access to God's presence--and their consciences never rested easy.

p. 229

Bruce says:

If the former, then our author's meaning is that the presence of the veil was an "outward and visible sign" of the spiritual conditions then prevailing: the way to God had not yet been opened up. If the latter, then the veil, together with its significance, constituted "a parable bearing on the present crisis,"⁶¹ emphasizing the contrast between the free access to God now guaranteed through Christ and the strictly limited access permitted by the structure and ceremonial of the earthly sanctuary. In the earthly sanctuary sacrifices were indeed offered, but their efficacy was sadly restricted; they could not bring "perfection" to the worshiper because they did not affect his conscience.⁶² Now we see what our author wishes to teach his readers. The really effective barrier to a man or woman's free access to God is an inward and not a material one; it exists in the conscience. It is only when the conscience is purified that one is set free to approach God without reservation and offer him acceptable service and worship. And the sacrificial blood of bulls and goats is useless in this regard.

61. W. Manson, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (London, 1951), p. 132.

62. See C. A. Pierce, *Conscience in the New Testament*, SBT 15 (London, 1955); J. Stelzenberger, *Syneidesis im Neuen Testament* (Paderborn, 1961).

p. 209

A. T. Robertson in his Word Pictures says:

This was the real failure of animal sacrifice (10:1-4). *Make the worshipper perfect*. First aorist active infinitive (2:10). At best it was only ritual or ceremonial purification (7:11), that called for endless repetition (10:1-4).

p. 397

Wuest observes:

These gifts and sacrifices could not make the worshiper perfect so far as his conscience was concerned. The word “perfect” is *teleios* which does not mean sinless, but complete, finished. The word described that which needed nothing to make it what it should be, complete. The Levitical ritual as such did not touch the conscience. No ritual in itself ever does. There was nothing in it that could deal with conscience. Only the working of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God and the efficacy of the blood of the Messiah could do that.

p. 155

Delitzsch says:

The material offerings of the law are but parables intended to last only till the time when the reality shall be made manifest. Regarded in themselves, they are incapable of any operation on the inward part of man.

p. 71

Stedman says:

The point he makes is, there was nothing wrong with the activity of worship in the Tabernacle. It was God-authorized and perfectly proper. Also, there were God-authorized regulations.

p. 132

Stedman comments further on the last words of verse 8:

“Is still standing” is a mistranslation. It should be “still has any standing,” or “still has any value in their sight.” In other words, they could never see what God was driving at as long as they had their attention focused on the ritual. They could never realize the value intended until they saw behind the ritual to what God was saying. Until they saw the total worthlessness of outward things to do anything for them, they could never begin to appropriate the real message.

p. 135

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Stedman also says:

The second point he makes is, these ordinances were intended to have a deeper message. They are symbolic, he says, for the present age. No ritual had meaning in itself, it had meaning in what it stood for. That is the point. It was intended to convey a deeper message. The Tabernacle worship, with all these strange provisions--the bread, the incense, the offerings, the ornate building itself with its altars--all was a kind of religious play enacted to teach the people what was going on in their inner life. They were not to place importance upon the outward drama--that was only a play--it was what it stood for that was important. But they completely missed the point and thought God was interested in the ritual.

p. 134

G. Campbell Morgan says:

In the last analysis, the Tabernacle, with all its symbolic construction, spoke of exclusion. Men were not allowed to enter into the place where the Shekinah glory shone. Only one could enter, and he might not tarry there. The veil spoke for evermore of exclusion. When Jesus died, the veil of the Temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, a symbolic and supernatural action, revealing the fact that the way was now open into the very presence of God for all those who come through the One Who has entered in all the authority of His final priesthood.

pp. 103-4

Montefiore in Black's commentary says:

Unless the conscience has been cauterised (1 Tim. iv. 2), sin brings consciousness of guilt. The main purpose of the cultus under the old covenant was to remove guilt and thereby clear the conscience. This purpose could, however, be achieved only in an extremely limited sphere.

p. 149

Roy Hession says:

In spite of all they did, the priests never achieved by those means the sense of being cleared of guilt and blame in their relationship to God. We, too, find that our sacrifices and service do nothing to deal with our conscience, which is that part of us that gives us most trouble. We are struggling all along with an uneasy conscience, dogged with a sense of not being good enough and of being accused, sometimes about specific things in our lives, but more often not as acute as that--just a general and diffuse sense of not being right. And nothing we do, no service we offer, seems to be able to take it away.

p. 101

F. B. Meyer says:

The rites of Judaism are contrasted with the conscience-cleansing ordinances of the gospel.--They stood in meats, and drinks, and divers washings, which at the best were carnal ordinances, imposed until a time of reformation; and though they rendered the worshipper ceremonially clean, they left his conscience unappeased.

p. 33

Stedman says:

We each have a conscience. We may not be able to analyze it and we certainly cannot control it, but we know we all possess one. Conscience has been defined as "That still, small voice that makes you feel smaller still," or, as one little boy put it, "It is that which feels bad when everything else feels good." Conscience is that internal voice that sits in judgment over our will. There is a very common myth abroad that says that conscience is the means by which we tell what is right and what is wrong. But conscience is never that. It is training that tells us what is right or wrong. But when we know what is right or wrong, it is our conscience that insists that we do what we think is right and avoid what we think is wrong. That distinction is very important and needs to be made clear.

Conscience can be very mistaken; it is not a safe guide by itself. It accuses us when we violate whatever moral standard we may have, but that moral standard may be quite wrong when viewed in the light of God's revelation. But conscience also gives approval whenever we fulfill whatever standard we have, though that standard is right or wrong. And conscience, we have all discovered, acts both before and after the fact--it can either prod or punish.

(Standing Tall by Steve Farrar)

Yogi Berra once said, "If you come to a fork in the road, take it." Now, that doesn't make much sense. Usually a fork means you have to go left or go right. How does one fight the good fight? By doing two things: keeping faith and a good conscience. You have to do both. If you just keep faith, then you won't fight the good fight. If you just keep a good conscience, without keeping faith, you won't fight the good fight. You have to do both.
p. 176

(Amazing Grace: 366 Inspiring Hymn Stories for Daily Devotions by Kenneth W. Osbeck)

Teach me your way, O Lord; lead me in a straight path. (Psalm 27:11)

I have held many things in my hands, and I have lost them all; but whatever I have placed in God's hands, that I still possess.

--Martin Luther

I thank God for my handicaps, for, through them, I have found myself, my work, and my God.

--Helen Keller

Whatever absorbs our thinking will ultimately control our actions. It is so important for a Christian, then, to let the ways of the Lord become the controlling force in life. It was C. S. Lewis who reminded us that we are becoming now what we will be in eternity--either something beautiful and full of glory or something hideous and full of darkness.
p. 239

(When God Whispers: Glimpses of an Extraordinary God By an Ordinary Woman by Carole Mayhall)

I stopped long enough that day to take a hard look deep inside of me. I wasn't shocked to see nothing there.

I'd been going on my reserve tank for some time and had depleted all resources. The problem was, I couldn't stop! A zillion things still needed to be done for a major trip a few days away, and somehow I'd scheduled a retreat the weekend before. So there I was--rebellling inwardly at being hundreds of miles from home, needing to give what I didn't have.

It was then God led me to Psalm 51:10, which says, "Create in me a pure heart," and stopped me at that first phrase. His voice spoke to my heart with clarity and encouragement, and I wrote:

Create in me, Lord . . .

a pure heart, yes.

But Father, even more.

Create in me . . .

(out of nothing for that's what creation means)

an expectant heart. . . .

May I stand on tiptoe

waiting each moment in joyous anticipation

for what You are going to do!

Create in me an enthusiastic heart--

"en theo"--meaning "in God," God in me,

filled to overflowing with You, Lord!

Create in me a laughing heart--

one that sees the serendipities of an autumn leaf

and mist upon the mountains

and hears the chuckle of a child.

Create in me a heart of integrity--

to be real,

not to talk above my walk,

not to try to impress.

Create in me a caring heart--

tender toward the hurts and happenings of others,

more concerned with their needs than with my own.

Create in me an attentive heart--

able to hear Your whisper,

and moment by moment listen to Your voice.

Create in me a contented heart--

at peace with the circumstances of life.

Create in me a hungry heart--

longing to love You more,

desiring Your Word,

reaching . . . stretching . . . for more of You.
Creator Lord, create in me. Amen.

And you know . . . He did.
pp. 105-6

“WHICH IS A SYMBOL FOR THE PRESENT TIME. ACCORDING TO WHICH BOTH GIFTS AND SACRIFICES ARE BEING OFFERED WHICH ARE NOT ABLE TO MAKE THE ONE WHO IS WORSHIPPING PERFECT IN CONSCIENCE”

When I read those words “NOT ABLE” I was reminded of:

Hebrews 7:25

Hence also He is able to be saving forever those who are drawing near to God through Him, since He always is living for the purpose of making intercession for them.

v.10 since they relate only to food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until a time of the new order.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Hence the regulations which formed part of the observant worshiper’s adherence to this system were chiefly concerned with externals which were only meant to apply **until the time of the new order**. . . . The readers must remember the transitory nature of these things under the “aging” covenant and should not return to them.
p. 801

Lane says:

The old sanctuary consisted of a system of barriers between the worshiper and God. The reason for detailing the arrangement of the tabernacle and its furnishings in 9:2-5 is manifestly to show the lack of access to God under the old cultus. This, in turn, provides a framework for the development of certain deficiencies in the cultic regulations that had been imposed under the terms of the Sinaitic covenant in 9:6-10.
p. 226

Macaulay says:

That endless round kept saying, “This is not the true provision. These are only ‘carnal ordinances, imposed until a time of . . . [perfecting].”
p. 131

The LAST PHRASE says it all:

“UNTIL A TIME OF THE NEW ORDER.”

That “NEW ORDER” is spelled out in a:

1. NEW COVENANT
2. NEW PRIESTHOOD
3. NEW SACRIFICE

CONCLUSION:

What are some of the lessons that we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: Each part of the tabernacle foreshadows our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

LESSON #2: The “lampstand” speaks to us of the fact that He is the Light of the world.

LESSON #3: The “table and the sacred bread” speak to us of the fact that He is the Bread of life.

LESSON #4: The “golden altar of incense” speaks to us of our Savior being our Intercessor in the presence of the Father.

LESSON #5: The “ark of the covenant” and the “mercy seat” speak to us of that all-sufficient sacrifice of our precious Savior.

LESSON #6: The veil being torn from top to bottom bears witness to the fact that through the death of Christ we now have access into the presence of God the Father.

LESSON #7: Under the old Levitical system, the priests were continually occupied with offering sacrifices for sin.

LESSON #8: The ordinances were external and man’s need is internal.

LESSON #9: The Levitical system could not bring perfection to the conscience.

LESSON #10: In Jesus Christ we have a new covenant, a new priesthood, and a new sacrifice.

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Griffith Thomas says:

As we ponder all these references to the earthly tabernacle and its essential limitations, we see by contrast, as Bruce so well points out, that Christianity is a religion of access. As such, there is constant danger of hindrances being put to our freest, fullest approach to God. Gnosticism of old can be paralleled by more than one movement today. These do violence to this free, full access, which is the very life of Christianity and of our relation to God.

p. 110

(The Christian in Complete Armour by William Gurnall)

The sincere Christian is progressive. He never comes to his journey's end until he gets to heaven. This keeps him always leaning into God, thankful for each little favor but not smugly content with great measures of grace. "When I awake," said David, "I shall be satisfied with thy likeness" (Psalm 17:15). He enjoyed many sweet hours of communion at the house of God; and the Holy Spirit had brought him covered dishes of which the world knew nothing. Yet David realized he would never have enough until heaven gave him his full portion.

June 19

Satan will line the hedges with a thousand temptations when you come into the narrow lanes of adversity, where you cannot run as in the day of your prosperity. You may manage to escape an alluring world, only to be flattened when trouble strikes, unless you know how to persevere.

January 24

(Storms of Perfection: In Their Own Words by Andy Andrews)

“Finish every day and be
done with it. You have
done what you could.
Some blunders and
absurdities no doubt
crept in; forget them as
soon as you can.
Tomorrow is a new day;
begin it well and serenely
and with too high a spirit
to be encumbered with
your old nonsense. This
day is all that is good and
fair. It is too dear, with its
hopes and invitations, to
waste a moment on the
yesterdays.”

--Emerson

p. 107

(The Life God Blesses: Weathering the Storms of Life That Threaten the Soul
by Gordon MacDonald)

He taught me . . . that the man who
will keep right to the end of the
chapter is the man whose gaze is fixed
on God, whose joy is in God's
company and whose heart is pure in
its devotion to the will of God.

--George Young, missionary
apprentice to George Hunter

p. 131

(Rise and Walk by Dennis Byrd with Michael D'Orso)

That Sunday, before the Super Bowl game between the Cowboys and the Bills, I had an outlet even better than a press conference to be a witness for the Lord. I had prayed often during my career, telling God that if I ever made it to a forum like the Super Bowl, I would use the opportunity to share my faith and let people know what Jesus Christ meant to my life. A week before the game, NBC shifted its pregame broadcasting lineup, canceling a feature on Michael Jackson's half time show and asking me and Angela instead to do an interview with Bob Costas.

We did the interview with Costas speaking by video remote from the Rose Bowl and Angela and I sitting in a conference room at Mount Sinai. I told Costas and tens of millions of viewers that my hands and legs had come back strong and I expected to be walking by myself soon. We talked about some details of my progress, and then I was allowed to speak about the Lord without wondering how it would be edited or whether it would be deleted. This was television, and it was live.

"Without question," I said, "the biggest factor in my life has been my faith in Jesus Christ. That's been able to keep me going whenever the times are really tough.

"It's been a hard two months," I said, "but God's given us the strength every day."

pp. 227-8

(Holiness by J. C. Ryle)

Let me conclude all with the words of John Bunyan, in one of the most beautiful parts of Pilgrim's Progress. He is describing the end of one of his best and holiest pilgrims: 'After this it was noised abroad that Mr. Valiant-for-Truth was sent for by a summons, by the same party as the others. And he had this word for a token that the summons was true: "The pitcher was broken at the fountain" (Eccles. 12:6). When he understood it, he called for his friends, and told them of it. Then said he, "I am going to my Father's house; and though with great difficulty I have got hither, yet now I do not repent me of all the troubles I have been at to arrive where I am. My sword I give to him that shall succeed me in my pilgrimage, and my courage and skill to him that can get it. My marks and scars I carry with me, to be a witness for me that I have fought His battles, who will now be my Rewarder." When the day that he must go home was come, many accompanied him to the riverside, into which, as he went down, he said, "O death, where is thy sting?" And as he went down deeper, he cried, "O grave, where is thy victory?" So he passed over, and all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side.'

May our end be like this! May we never forget that without fighting there can be no holiness while we live, and no crown of glory when we die!
pp. 64-65

(The Message: Psalms by Eugene H. Peterson)

Psalm 22

"Live it up, from head to toe.
Don't ever quit!"

p. 32