

Fresh Brewed Faith

Week 6 - The True Tabernacle

Hebrews 9:1-28

Hebrews was written to Jewish believers, new converts who were wavering in their faith and clinging to the rituals and religious routines of Judaism. In an effort to rescue these new converts from returning to the bondage of the Law, the writer describes how Christ is superior to the old Mosaic system. *Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come we are no longer under a tutor* (Galatians 3:24-25). Christ is superior to the Law and offers a better way administered from a better sanctuary.

I. The Old Covenant (9:1-10)

The tabernacle was a mere shadow of things to come, being *the earthly sanctuary* (Hebrews 9:1) made with human hands according to God's divine directions. The writer gives a brief overview description of the Old Testament tabernacle. The brazen altar and the laver stood in the outer court. A heavy veil separated the outermost court from *the holy place in which were the lampstand and the table and the sacred bread* (Hebrews 9:2) as well as the altar of incense. Only Levitical priests were permitted access into the Holy Place to perform regular duties such as changing the lamp oil, the bread of the presence, tending the incense fire, and presenting daily offerings. The blood covered sin, but could never wash it away. Likewise the blood of animals could never change the heart of the worshipers. They were temporary acts awaiting the full revelation of the grace of God in Jesus Christ, *the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world* (John 1:29).

Behind the second veil there was a tabernacle which is called the Holy of Holies having a golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant 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; and above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat; but of these things we cannot now speak in detail (9:3-5). Only the high priest could go into the Holy of Holies and then only on the annual Day of Atonement having followed very specific instructions concerning atonement for his personal sin and for the corporate sin of the nation of Israel.

The writer of Hebrews places the altar of incense as being included inside the Holy of Holies, The altar of incense was closely tied to its function in the Holy of Holies. As its incense burned, the smoke drifted into the Holy of Holies. He was obviously not attempting to give an in-depth study of the tabernacle. His reference to it seems to be a general illustration of the supremacy of Christ when compared to the sacrificial system of the Old Testament.

All of the sacrificial system of Judaism pointed to Jesus and were shadows of the greater spiritual realities found in Christ. *For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near* (Hebrews 10:1). When Christ

died, *the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom* (Matthew 27:51) and the need for an earthly sanctuary was abolished.

II. The New Covenant (9:11-28)

When Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands (9:11). Christ inaugurated the New Covenant with His own blood, the once-for-all-time sacrifice for sin presented to God the Father. *For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us* (9:24).

“When compared to Mosaic tabernacle worship the new covenant high priesthood of Jesus provides a single superior sacrifice in a superior heavenly tabernacle (which tends for God’s very presence); and thus brings complete forgiveness of sins, eternal salvation, purified consciences, and direct access to God” (ESV Study Bible).

The writer uses the illustration of a will. A will specifies how to distribute the estate but is not enacted until the death of the person. Christ had an eternal inheritance to give to His church, where *there is neither slave nor freeman, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus* (Galatians 3:28). When we believed on Jesus Christ we were forgiven and *sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God’s own possession, to the praise of His glory* (Ephesians 1:13-14). The indwelling Holy Spirit is God’s guarantee of our eternal salvation.

So Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin to those who eagerly await Him (9:28). Jesus was the one time sacrifice for sin. He is currently *seated at the right hand of God* (Colossians 3:1) and ever lives to make intercession for us. And . . . as if that weren’t enough **He is coming again** to take His people home!

May the aroma of your Fresh Brewed Faith fill your life with the fragrance of Jesus Christ!