

Hebrews Chapter Nine (vv.1-14)

Hebrews 7 emphasises the *superiority* of the **Person** and **Priesthood** of the Lord Jesus. Hebrews 8 speaks of the *superiority* of His **ministry** in relation to the new covenant. Hebrews 9 shows us the *superiority* of the **sanctuary** into which the Lord Jesus has once for all entered in virtue of His *superior sacrifice*. The chapter divides as follows:

- vv.1-10: *The Worldly Sanctuary*. Its **structure** (vv.1-5), **service** (vv.6-7) and **significance** (vv.8-10).
- vv.11-14: *The Heavenly Sanctuary*. Its **structure** (v.11), **service** (v.12) and **significance** (vv.13-14).

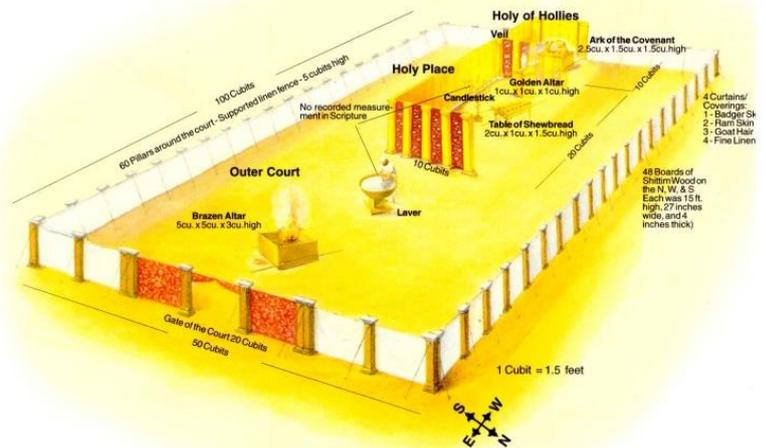
The Worldly Sanctuary (vv.1-10)

1 ¶ Then verily the first (covenant) had also ordinances of (divine) service, and a worldly sanctuary.

The Lord Jesus has established a new (second) and better covenant which is associated with a greater service and sanctuary. The first covenant had 'ordinances of divine service', that is, divinely given regulations with regard to worship. These were 'carnal' (v.10) or ceremonial and ensured that everything in relation to the service and worship of God was done properly, orderly and righteously (root of the word 'ordinance'). The first covenant was also associated with a 'worldly' or earthly sanctuary. It was built of earthly materials and related to this present, passing world.

2 For there was a tabernacle (tent) made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary.

The writer speaks of some of the details of the tabernacle. He does not take time to develop the typical teaching (v.5) but merely reminds his readers of the contents of the 'tent' (which had two compartments). These are the things which speak of Christ in glory. The first section of the tent or 'holy place' contained the **lampstand** (Christ the light of the heavenly sanctuary, cf. John 9.5) and the **table of shewbread** (Christ the sustenance and satisfaction of His people). There is no mention of the **outer court** as this emphasises Christ's ministry on earth as He was manifested before men. Here were the fine **linen hangings** (the claims of divine righteousness), the **brazen altar** (the cross) and the **laver** (cleansing, refreshment and life).



3 And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; **4** Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; **5** And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly.

The first veil formed the entrance to the holy place. The 'second veil' separated the holy place from the holiest of all. God's immediate presence and glory was unapproachable under the old covenant. Only the High Priest could enter through this veil once a year and not without blood. It was the holiest of all which 'had the golden censer'. It did not belong here, but was used in relation to it on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16.12-13), a day which was fully in the mind of the writer (see v.7). The sweet incense reminds us of the fragrance and acceptability of the Lord Jesus to God, as well as His intercession (7.25, Revelation 8.3-4). The Holiest contained the Ark of the Covenant *within* which was the 'golden pot that had manna', *Christ as man glorified in heaven*, 'Aaron's rod that budded', *Christ as our Priest on the other side of death*, and the 'tables of the covenant', *Christ who magnified the law*. Over the Ark were the 'cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat', *Christ as the meeting place between a holy God and sinful man*.

David Newell: The manna speaks of Christ our Provision for the wilderness journey; Aaron's rod that budded speaks of Christ our Priest in resurrection life; and the tables of the law speak of Christ our Pattern. In the OT, Israel despised the provision (Numbers 11, 21), denied the priesthood (Numbers 16) and disobeyed the precepts of the law (Exodus 32).

6 Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. **7** But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people:

After these things had been 'prepared' for Divine service then the priests (plural) went *daily* into the first tent in order to attend to the lampstand and burn incense after the morning and evening sacrifices. The shewbread was changed *weekly*. There was a continual service in relation to the Holy Place. **But!** The second tent was only entered once a year

and by the High Priest alone. On this day he entered in his white linen (Leviticus 16.4). He stood before the Lord with nothing to offer but blood; blood of the bullock for his *own sins* and blood of the goat for the 'errors' or 'sins of ignorance' of the people. Blood is the medium of approach to God; the sign of death accomplished.

8 ¶ *The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: 9 Which was a figure for the time ~~then~~ present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;*

What was the Holy Spirit declaring? As long as the 'first tabernacle' or 'tent' was still standing, then access into the immediate presence of God was not yet revealed. It was restricted. God dwelt within and man stood without. There would, however, come a time when the veil would be rent from the top to the bottom (Luke 23.45). All of this was a 'figure' or 'parable' for the ensuing time (tense suggests a time that was *then* present, but is *now* past). The tabernacle was not a *narrative* parable for the **ears** but an *object* lesson for the **eyes**. There was a barrier between God and men. Part of this visual parable was the offering of both 'gifts' (to please God) and 'sacrifices' (to propitiate God). However, no matter how many offerings the priests (or people) brought, they could not make him 'perfect as to conscience'. *True, Israelites were forgiven when in repentance and faith they brought their sacrifices (Leviticus 4.20, 26). The animal sacrifices did not secure their forgiveness; they were only a token payment. The real price of their sins was to be paid by Christ at Calvary.* But, this did not mean they were permanently in the clear with God or else they would have not felt any need to bring further sacrifices (10.1-3). Whenever they sinned again, another sacrifice was required. They never knew complete forgiveness or peace. They remained fearful of the presence of God and ever stood at a distance.

10 *Which stood only ~~in~~ (upon) meats (food) and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.*

This tabernacle parable had its basis on outward, ritualistic and ceremonial regulations which concerned 'food' (Leviticus 6.16, 26, 7.6), 'drink' (Leviticus 23.13, 18) and different 'washings' (Exodus 29.4, Leviticus 1.9, 11.25). These regulations could not effect inward cleansing or touch the conscience. They were a burdensome duty pressed upon the nation 'until the time of reformation' or time of 'putting things right'. A change was to be introduced in Christ. He would establish the new covenant and provide complete forgiveness of sins and access into the presence of God.

The Heavenly Sanctuary (vv.11-14)

11 *But Christ being come an high priest of (the) good things ~~to~~ (now) come, by (means of) a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building (creation);*

Now follows the great contrast: **but Christ!** He is High Priest of 'the good things **now** realised' in the new covenant of which He is the Mediator (Hebrews 8.6-12, 9.12, 14). All that the tabernacle foreshadowed is become reality in Christ. These blessings can be realised because Christ has 'arrived' in the greater and more perfect heavenly tent. He has passed through the heavens (4.14, 7.26) and now serves in the sanctuary which is not of this creation, i.e. eternal. It is precisely because He officiates here that His work and provision is effective and eternal, not typical and temporal.

12 *Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption ~~for us~~.*

Note the **contrasts**. **1.** Aaron entered the holiest of all with the blood of goats and calves (Leviticus 16); Christ has entered 'by means of' His own precious blood. It is **not** that He has carried His blood into heaven, but rather *after* making propitiation on the cross at Calvary, He entered in virtue of His finished and completed work. *FF Bruce: Through His own blood, that is, by virtue of the infinitely acceptable oblation of His life, He could appear before God.* **2.** Aaron entered the holiest of all annually; Christ has entered into 'heaven itself' (9.24) **once for all**. Aaron obtained temporal atonement for the nation; Christ has **sought, found** for Himself (middle voice) and **obtained eternal** redemption.

13 *For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: 14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*

Atonement and purification from defilement were available through the rituals of the old covenant. This amounted to ceremonial and external cleansing of the body. How much more is available through the intrinsic value of the blood of Christ! He has cleansed and purified the believer's conscience. We are no longer burdened by sin. We stand free from accusation, guilt and fear in the presence of a holy God. *We do, however, have a conscience about sinning. If we sin, we have an Advocate to assist us towards restoring fellowship. It is an erring child being restored to communion with his Father.* Once we were marked by '**dead works**'; all works performed in the natural sinful state and through our own strength. Now our consciences are cleansed from sin we are free to enjoy communion with the living God and serve Him (Acts 14.15; 1 Thessalonians 1.9). *WE Vine: It brings us into a life of service to the living God, not a mere outward service, but a service springing from the inward experience of communion with and devotion to the Lord, devoid of all self-merit.*