

Heb. 9:1 ¶ Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.

This chapter continues in context from the previous, the topic being the difference in the old and new covenants. The writer is explaining that the first covenant was permeated with rules and regulations regarding how to worship and serve God. This worship and service was facilitated through the priesthood established to serve in an earthly sanctuary, a place specifically built according to the directions given by Almighty God.

Heb. 9:2 For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein *was* the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary.

This earthly sanctuary was obviously and specifically divided into two sections. In the first section stood the candlestick or menorah, the seven-branched gold candlestick, the table and the shewbread. I thought it was interesting that the CJB translated “shewbread” as “Bread of the Presence.” This candlestick was to be kept burning and the table was never to be empty as testimony to the fact that God is always ready and waiting to receive the worship, praise and requests of His children and to provide them with the direction, guidance and provision needed to serve and obey Him. As the psalmist so beautifully expressed, there is no place that we can escape His presence.

Knowing that everything in the tabernacle pointed to the Savior, one can't help but be reminded of the Lord's words as He identified Himself as the light of the world and the bread of life.

John 8:12 ¶ Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

John 6:35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

Heb. 9:3 And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all;

Heb. 9:4 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;

Continuing with reference to the earthly tabernacle/temple, the writer explains that separated by a huge veil in the inner sanctum was the Holy of Holies. The first veil would have separated the “holy place” from the outer court; the second veil, the holy place from the “Holiest of all.”

The Holy of Holies was said to have a golden censer and the ark of the covenant. This appears to be one of those “contradictions” found in scripture. I know that there are no contradictions in scripture; there is only lack of knowledge as to the explanation for many of these apparent flaws in scripture. God tells us that every word of scripture is truth.

John 17:17 ¶ Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

Psa. 119:160 ¶ Thy word *is* true *from* the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments *endureth* for ever.

David Stern in his Jewish New Testament Commentary gave the following explanation:

“The Holiest Place **had** associated with itself **the golden altar for burning incense**. Critics have been quick to conclude that the author did not know what he was talking about, since the *Torah* clearly states that the golden altar was outside the curtain (Exodus 30:6, Leviticus 16:18, 1 Kings 6:22). Actually, the author knew his subject well. Although the incense altar was used daily for other purposes, it was used in a special way by the *cohen hagadol* on *Yom-Kippur*, when he would take from it a golden censer of coals and bring them into the Holiest Place (Exodus 30:10, Leviticus 16:12, 15)... Earlier, in v. 2, the Greek text says that the table with showbread and the *menorah* were “in” the Holy Place. And in the latter part of the present verse, the Greek says that the manna, rod and tablets were “in” the ark. But the Greek expression for the relationship between the Holiest Place and the incense altar is not “in which” but “having,” i.e., “having associated with itself.” Like the ark the incense altar was *associated with* the Holiest Place. But the author did *not* make the mistake of *locating* the incense altar *in* the Holiest Place, which would have been an error; on the contrary, choosing his words carefully, he associated the incense altar with the Holiest Place *even though* it was outside.”

Heb. 9:5 And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly.

The lid of the ark of the covenant, also known as the mercy seat, is representative of God’s throne. As in heaven, it is depicted as being shadowed by the wings of the cherubim.

Psa. 99:1 ¶ The LORD reigneth; let the people tremble: he sitteth *between* the cherubims; let the earth be moved.

Is. 37:16 O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, that dwellest *between* the cherubims, thou *art* the God, *even* thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth: thou hast made heaven and earth.

Psa. 11:4 ¶ The LORD *is* in his holy temple, the LORD’S throne *is* in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men.

The term “mercyseat” speaks of propitiation or atonement. It was this seat that was sprinkled with blood by the high priest one day each year on the Day of Atonement. (7/09) Why can he not speak particularly? Because the ark has been missing since the Babylonian captivity.

Heb. 9:6 Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God.

Heb. 9:7 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:

Heb. 9:8 ¶ 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:

The “holy place” that was entered by the priests from the outer court was a place where priests served the Lord daily; they kept the lights on the candlestick burning, maintained the presence of the bread, and burned incense on the altar.

The Holy of Holies, however, was only entered on one day each year only by the High Priest as he sought atonement for the sins of the people for the past year according to God's instructions to Moses. Even then, the high priest had to go through a specific ritual of cleansing in preparation to even enter the room holding the ark and its mercy seat, the place of God's presence. Point is made that the high priest was not only seeking forgiveness for the sins of the people, he was also seeking forgiveness for his own sins. It was interesting to me that the writer declares that through these rituals the Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit was declaring or making plain (from the Greek) that the Holy of Holies was not open to the people. I think this wording is in acknowledgement of the fact that it is the Holy Spirit that guides us into knowledge of spiritual truth.

John 14:26 But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things....

John 16:13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth:

1Cor. 2:12-13 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, **not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.**

I was struck with David's Sterns comments in his commentary regarding the last phrase of verse 8. It made much more sense to me than just being a reference to existence or being in use as is referenced in other translations. First I will quote his translation of verse 8 in The Complete Jewish Bible.

"By this arrangement, the *Ruach Hakodesh* showed that so long as the first Tent had standing, the way into the Holiest Place was still closed."

"**Had standing.** Some versions have "existed," but this is wrong. The author is referring to the time when the Tabernacle or Temple had status or position as an essential element in God's way of dealing with sin under the Mosaic Covenant."

I think it is important to note that when Jesus died on the cross, the Lord ripped the veil that allowed access to the Holy of Holies from top to bottom.

Matt. 27:50-51 Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom....

This was God's physical declaration that the Holy of Holies was now open to men of faith through the ministry of Jesus Christ as their High Priest. The child of God can now come "boldly to the throne of grace." (Hebrews 4:16)

Heb. 9:9 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;

Heb. 9:10 Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.

The writer is making the point that though the high priest could serve before God after following the prescribed cleansing ritual, this process was a process of outward cleansing and could not cleanse his conscience, nor could he provide that cleansing for the people he served.

“until the time of rectification” – This phrase makes reference to a time that is coming when the spirit or conscience can be reformed or rectified (implied: through the ministry of a “better” high priest). The following verses will declare this reformation to have come in the person of Jesus Christ.

Heb. 9:11 But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;

Heb. 9:12 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. The writer is basically declaring Christ as the high priest of the reformation referenced in the previous verse, the “good things to come.” The Greek for that phrase referenced *benefits*, and the benefits are many through the ministry of Jesus Christ as our High Priest, beginning first and foremost through the provision of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Scripture tells us that the tabernacle was but a shadow of the things of heaven. Jesus is not serving in a man-made tabernacle; He is serving in the original that casts the shadow. He is not serving using the blood of goats and calves; He is serving by right of the sacrifice of His own precious blood. He does not have to make a yearly appearance on behalf of His people; He has entered the heavenly Holy Place to provide eternal redemption for those who accept His gift in faith. He has provided open access to the Holy of Holies for all who accept Him as Lord and Savior.

Heb. 9:13 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:

Heb. 9:14 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?

In these verses the writer is making the point that the blood of Christ is far more efficacious than the blood or ashes of animals. The ashes of the red heifer were specific to the ritual of purification. As was pointed out previously, the cleansing provided through the sacrifice of animals and the ashes of the red heifer could not effect cleansing of the conscience or spirit. The shed blood of Jesus Christ, the spotless Lamb of God, through His willing sacrifice in obedience to His Father can cleanse your spirit, can make you a new creation in Christ. There is “power in the blood” as the old hymn states. Nothing man does in the flesh can lead him to salvation; through the empowerment of the Spirit in Jesus Christ, man can now serve and worship the living God for eternity.

I think it is important to note that it is the fullness of God in three persons that effects our salvation---the willing sacrifice of **Christ** through the **Spirit** to **God**.

Heb. 9:15 ¶ And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions *that were* under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

It was the willing sacrifice of Himself as the spotless Lamb of God in death that qualifies Jesus to become the mediator of the *new testament*; the Greek makes reference to a new contract, a will, a new covenant.

I understand the second half of this verse to be referencing the salvation of all those people of faith who died while following God in obedience to the directives of the old testament. The death of Jesus just as surely provided for their eternal inheritance as it does for all people of faith since His death and resurrection.

I always like to point out the phrases that emphasize that God's provision in Jesus to the sinner is to an eternal inheritance, eternal life. It is not conditional on what we do; it is secure in what Jesus has done.

Heb. 9:16 For where a testament *is*, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.

Heb. 9:17 For a testament *is* of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.

We all know that a testament or will is put into effect upon the death of the one making that will. It has no legal grounds for enforcement as long as the author of that will lives.

Heb. 9:18 Whereupon neither the first *testament* was dedicated without blood.

Heb. 9:19 For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people,

Heb. 9:20 Saying, This *is* the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you.

God required the use of blood under the old testament covenant to teach His people from that perspective. Innocent blood was shed to provide cleansing and allow them to maintain a position of blessing under God's covenant with them.

Heb. 9:21 Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry.

Heb. 9:22 And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

God emphasized the necessity of the shedding of innocent blood by requiring that every vessel used in service to Him in the tabernacle be sprinkled with blood. He wanted His people to understand that forgiveness of sin is impossible without the shedding of innocent blood.

Heb. 9:23 ¶ *It was* therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

The writer again makes the point that the earthly tabernacle and the vessels in it are all but shadows of the real thing in heaven. My question became, "Why would the "real things" in heaven require sacrifice?"

David Stern again makes a thoughtful statement: "The Messiah's blood made it possible for undefiled heavenly things to purify defiled sinners. For external cleansing, external sacrifices suffice (9:9-10); but for spiritual cleansing, spiritual ones are needed."

The NIV Commentary added understanding with this statement: "...the earthly sanctuary needed cleansing, not so much because it was unclean, but because it was the place where sinners were restored. So with heaven."

Heb. 9:24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:

Point is made again that Christ is serving in the presence of God in the original Holy Place, the shadow of which was shown us through the tabernacle, its vessels, and the ministry that took place there. Why is He serving? For us, people of faith, those who have accepted Him as Lord and Savior.

Heb. 9:25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others;

Heb. 9:26 For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

The High Priest Jesus Christ does not have to make a yearly sacrifice to atone for sin. He did not have to suffer the humiliation of the cross but once. That one sacrifice is sufficient for all who will receive Him once for all time.

It is interesting to note that the writer makes reference to the sacrifice of Jesus as occurring "in the end of the world." The Greek made reference to "fulfillment and consummation" and "a Messianic period," and this makes better sense to me. Christ is the embodiment of the fulfillment of God's plan for mankind. By His coming to offer Himself in sacrifice to become our Savior, He guaranteed the establishment of His eternal kingdom and the consummation of God's plan for man as was intended at creation.

Heb. 9:27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

Heb. 9:28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

Verse 27 is a very sobering statement. Every human is destined to die under the natural scheme of things as determined by God. All men are appointed to face judgment after death; the Greek for the word *judgment* references justice and damnation. In other words, we get this one life to get it right and no second chances. Because man is born in sin, he is born condemned.

John 3:17-18 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth

on him is not condemned: but **he that believeth not is condemned already**, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

1Cor. 15:21-22 For since by man *came* death, by man *came* also the resurrection of the dead. For as **in Adam all die**, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

As stated in the verse from Corinthians above, Christ came to provide life and salvation through His willing sacrifice on the cross.

“to bear the sins of many” – The use of the word *many* makes reference to those who accept God’s provision in Jesus by faith. Scripture does not contradict itself and is clear in stating that Jesus’ sacrifice was sufficient for all. Again, the verse above from 1Corinthians applies.

Rom. 5:18 Therefore as by the offence of one *judgment came* upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one *the free gift came* upon **all** men unto justification of life.

And from the beginning of this epistle:

Heb. 2:9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death **for every man**.

“unto them that look for Him...” – Jesus came to earth the first time to redeem man from sin. Those who accept that gift in faith are looking forward to His return to earth to usher in His kingdom and eternal deliverance from sin as provided for in His sacrifice on the cross at His first coming. Never again will men of faith have to fear the consequences of sin and can enjoy the blessings of eternal life as recorded in God’s word.