

# Hebrews: A Bridge from the Old to the New

## Hebrews Chapter 9

### Jesus Christ: A Superior Priesthood – A Better Sanctuary

#### A Description of the Inferior Earthly Sanctuary (Verses 1-10)

Note that this section <sup>v.1-10</sup> starts <sup>v.1</sup> and ends <sup>v.10</sup> with references to regulations (ordinances, laws).

- 1-2** The Old Covenant was administered in an earthly (temporary) sanctuary mandated by God <sup>Exodus 25:8-9</sup>. In addition to His commands to Moses on how to build the tabernacle <sup>Exodus 26:1-30</sup>, God also described the internal structure <sup>Exodus 26:31-37</sup> and the things that must be placed within the tabernacle <sup>Exodus 25:10-40</sup>. The first defined area was the “first room” or “Holy Place”, where God said three items should be placed: the lampstand (*menorah*) (often referred to as the Golden Lampstand) <sup>Exodus 25:31-40</sup>, the table <sup>Exodus 25:23-29</sup> and the bread (the “bread of Presence” <sup>Exodus 25:30</sup>, referring to God’s presence). The table and the twelve loaves of bread (tribes) placed on it are referred to as the Table of Showbread <sup>Exodus 40:22-23, Leviticus 24:5-8</sup>.
- 3-4** A curtain separated the Holy Place from the “Most Holy Place” <sup>Exodus 26:31-33</sup>, where God told Moses to place “the golden altar of incense” <sup>Exodus 30:1-10</sup> and “the gold-covered ark of the covenant” <sup>Exodus 25:10-22</sup>. The ark (*aron*) was to contain “the gold jar of manna” <sup>Exodus 16:31-35</sup>, “Aaron’s [budded] staff” <sup>Numbers 17:2-11</sup> and “the stone tablets of the covenant” <sup>Exodus 31:18, 1 Kings 8:9</sup> (i.e., the Ten Commandments <sup>Exodus 20:3-17</sup>).
- Despite this verse <sup>v.4</sup>, the “altar of incense” was placed (at God’s command) in the Holy Place <sup>Exodus 30:6</sup>.
- 5** The atonement cover <sup>Exodus 25:17</sup> for the ark had two golden cherubim (replicas of special angels <sup>Genesis 3:23-24</sup>) who were above and at either end of the cover <sup>Exodus 25:18-21</sup>. In between the cherubim was the place where God “sat” (traditionally “the mercy seat”) when He met with Moses <sup>Exodus 25:22, Numbers 7:89</sup> to discuss Israel. The author’s comment about more detail was his way of saying it would obscure his main point: Jesus.
- 6** Generally, the Levitical priests carried out many ministry duties in the Holy Place <sup>Numbers 18:2-6, 28:3</sup>.
- 7** Besides Moses, Aaron, his sons and the later high priests were the only ones allowed to enter the Most Holy Place <sup>Leviticus 16:11-19</sup>, and anyone else approaching that area would be put to death <sup>Numbers 18:7</sup>. The only time they would enter the Holy of Holies was on the Day of Atonement <sup>Exodus 30:10, Leviticus 16:34</sup>. These first references to the blood offerings <sup>Leviticus 16</sup> were foreshadowing the blood sacrifice of Jesus <sup>John 6:53-56</sup>.
- 8-9** Through the Scriptural teaching of the Holy Spirit <sup>John 14:26, 2 Timothy 3:16</sup>, it was made clear that the Levitical system (the Old Covenant) did not provide the people direct access into God’s presence. Therefore, the Old Covenant was an “illustration” (*parabole*: parable, an object lesson) of the inadequacy of the gifts and sacrifices <sup>Hebrews 5:1</sup> given at that time to cleanse and clear the conscience of the “worshiper” <sup>2 Corinthians 1:12</sup>.

**10** The author emphasized the external, temporary and incomplete nature of the Old Covenant, especially the “external regulations” (fleshly or outward requirements) on food and drink <sup>Leviticus 11:1-47, Deuteronomy 14:3-21</sup> and on ceremonial washings <sup>Exodus 30:18-21, Leviticus 16:3-4,23-28</sup>, that will be replaced by the “new order” (NC).

### *The Superior Sacrifice and the Superior Heavenly Sanctuary (Verses 11-28)*

**11-12** Christ came from Heaven <sup>v.24</sup> (the perfect tabernacle <sup>Hebrews 8:2</sup>), not from the inferior, man-made tent. The phrase “are already here” is better translated “are to come”, meaning the eternal redemption <sup>v.27-28</sup>, which was made possible, not through the insufficient sacrifices of the Levitical system, but as a result of the perfect, eternal sacrifice of atonement <sup>Romans 3:21-26, 1 John 4:10</sup> made by Jesus shedding His own blood.

**13-14** The Levitical system only provided for the external cleansing <sup>v.9</sup> from a person being defiled. However, the blood (the sacrificial work) of Jesus was much more powerful. He freely offered Himself <sup>John 10:11-18</sup> unblemished <sup>2 Corinthians 5:21, Hebrews 4:15</sup> to cleanse mankind from dead works <sup>Romans 6:23, James 2:14-26</sup> both inside and out <sup>1 John 1:9</sup> so they can serve the living God <sup>Romans 6:16-18, Ephesians 2:10, 1 Thessalonians 1:9b</sup>.

**15** Jesus is the mediator <sup>Hebrews 8:6</sup> between God and all who respond to His call <sup>Romans 8:28</sup>, as well as their redeemer, because His death set them free <sup>John 8:31-32, 36</sup> from their failure to live up to the law <sup>1 John 1:8</sup>.

**16-17** Death activates into reality the promises of a will (*diathēkē*: testament, covenant). Jesus’ last will and testament (the New Covenant) provides for salvation that could never be gained under the Old Covenant.

**18** The author used blood and death interchangeably <sup>Matthew 23:30,35, 27:6,24-25</sup> to speak of sacrificial offerings.

**19-22** God inaugurated both the Old (Mosaic) <sup>Exodus 24:8</sup> and the New <sup>Matthew 26:28</sup> Covenants with blood.

The consecration of the priests was accomplished by both blood and anointing oil <sup>Exodus 29:19-21</sup>. Sometimes ritualistic cleansing was done with water (Aaron and sons <sup>Exodus 29:4</sup>), incense and fire <sup>Numbers 16:46-47</sup> or anointing oil (e.g., the tabernacle and the associated instruments <sup>Exodus 40:9-11, Leviticus 8:10-11</sup>). However, the “shedding of blood” was a requirement necessary for the atonement of sins <sup>Leviticus 17:11, Luke 22:20</sup>.

**23-25** The earthly tabernacle and vessels were only symbolic replicas of the Heavenly tabernacle <sup>Hebrews 8:2, 9:11</sup>, and so the Levitical animal sacrifices had to be replaced by the superior sacrifice of Jesus <sup>Hebrews 9:13-10:18</sup>. By His one-time entrance into Heaven, Jesus has direct access to God the Father for intercession <sup>Romans 8:34</sup>.

**26-28** Every human is destined to die <sup>Genesis 3:19</sup> and face either a judgement leading to Heaven <sup>2 Corinthians 5:10</sup> or a judgement leading to Hell (called the “second death”) <sup>Revelation 20:11-15</sup>. Where an individual spends eternity is entirely determined by the decision they make during their earthly life on whether to embrace the complete offering of the sacrificial death of Jesus, or not. His finished act of atonement <sup>John 19:30</sup> paid the sin debt <sup>1 Peter 2:24, 1 John 3:5</sup> “for the transgressors” <sup>Isaiah 53:12</sup> “once for all” <sup>Romans 6:10</sup> in His First Coming. In His Second Coming, Jesus’ followers will receive the perfection of that salvation <sup>Matthew 16:27, Ephesians 1:3</sup>.

**Exodus 24:8** Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, "This is the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words."

**Exodus 25:8-9** Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them. Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you.

**Exodus 25:22** There, above the cover between the two cherubim that are over the ark of the Testimony, I will meet with you and give you all my commands for the Israelites.

**Exodus 26:31a,33b** Make a curtain of blue, purple and scarlet yarn and finely twisted linen, with cherubim worked into it... The curtain will separate the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place.

**Leviticus 17:11** For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life.

**Leviticus 24:5-8** Take fine flour and bake twelve loaves of bread ... Set them in two rows, six in each row, on the table of pure gold before the LORD. ... This bread is to be set out before the LORD regularly, Sabbath after Sabbath, on behalf of the Israelites, as a lasting covenant.

**Numbers 18:7** But only you and your sons may serve as priests in connection with everything at the altar and inside the curtain. ... Anyone else who comes near the sanctuary must be put to death.

**Matthew 26:28** This is my blood of the covenant, ... poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

**John 8:36** So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

**John 14:26** But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

**Romans 6:10** The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

**Romans 6:18** You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

**Romans 6:23** For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Romans 8:34** Christ Jesus, who died – more than that, who was raised to life – is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

**2 Corinthians 5:10** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

**2 Corinthians 5:21** God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

**Ephesians 1:3** Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

**1 Peter 2:24** He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.

**1 John 1:8-9** <sup>8</sup> If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves & the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

**1 John 4:10** This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.