

The Earthly Tent and the Earthly Ritual

Hebrews 9:1-10.



The writer of Hebrews continues to compare and contrast the old and the new. He points out to the Hebrews that what they once observed through the tabernacle and temple worship was ritual or a religious exercise. He is not saying it had no value, he is stating that it was limited in what it could accomplish. He continues to present the new order of worship that has come through Jesus Christ. He states that it is the reality of what they had once experienced as a picture of things to come.

The Earthly Sanctuary [Tent] Hebrews 9:1-5. (cf. Exodus 25-30).

1. Now the first covenant [the Mosaic Covenant] had regulations [rituals] for worship and also an earthly sanctuary [tent].
2. A tabernacle was set up [in the desert]. In its first room were the lamp stand, the table and the consecrated bread [showbread]; this was called the Holy Place.
3. Behind the second curtain was a room called the Most Holy Place [Holy of Holies],
4. which had the golden altar of incense and the gold-covered ark of the covenant. This ark contained the gold jar of manna, Aaron's staff that had budded, and the stone tablets of the covenant.
5. Above the ark were the cherubim [angels] of the Glory, overshadowing the atonement cover [mercy seat]. But we cannot discuss these things in detail now. (NIV, Emphasis and Interpretation Added).

The elements of the tabernacle pointed to Christ (cf. Exodus 25-30).

([Tabernacle 1 Video](#)) ([Tabernacle 2 Video](#))

We see in the Exodus account of the tabernacle that there was one gate to the tabernacle on the East side. Those who wanted to come unto God for salvation had to enter through that gate—there was no other way. In the revelation of Jesus Christ, we see that he is the one gate unto the Father. There is no other way in to God's presence. All who entered the gate of the tabernacle were seeking to have their sins forgiven so that they may come close to God. We know that through Christ our sins have been forgiving granting access into the Father's presence for everyone who believes.

As we move further through the gate of the tabernacle we come to the brazen alter of sacrifice. We know that Jesus is our sacrifice who gave his life on the altar of the cross. As we move further in we come to the laver or the wash basin which is for the cleansing of the priests before presenting the sacrifice. We know that Jesus is our baptism.

As we move toward the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle we see that a veil separates the outer court from the inner. We know that when Christ died on the cross the veil in the Jewish temple was ripped from top to bottom representing that now there is free access unto God through the completed sacrificial work of Jesus our High Priest.

Inside the Holy of Holies we see the golden lamp stand. We know that Jesus is the Light of the Glory of God. He also is lights our way into the presence of God. Next, is the table of showbread which contained the 12 loaves of unleavened bread that represented the provision of God. We now know that Jesus is our provision. He is our daily bread. He is our manna from God. Have you been feed today by God? The altar of incense represented the prayers of God's people rising up before the Lord. Jesus is now our intercessor who lifts up our prayers, worship, and thanksgiving to God.



Limitations of the Earthly Service [Ritual] Hebrews 9:6-10, (cf. Exodus 25-30).

6. When everything had been arranged [ordered] like this, the priests entered regularly into the outer room to carry on their ministry.

7. But only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year [on the Day of Atonement], and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance [in error].

8. The Holy Spirit was showing by this that the way into the Most Holy Place [in heaven] had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle [on earth] was still standing.

9. This is an illustration for the present time [today, this age], indicating that the [earthly] gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper.

10. They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings--external regulations [rules, rituals, temporal] applying until the time of the new order (NIV, Emphasis and Interpretation Added).

Comparison of the Old and the New

The old order or system was described as a shadow of the real thing. It could be compared to looking at a picture of someone and seeking to have relationship with a person through the picture. It may have some degree of purpose, but is no real comparison to a relationship with the reality—the real person.

Most churches today have rituals that they operate worship through and this may not be wrong in itself. However, if we are not careful we can begin to exchange worship through the reality of Christ with worship that is only ritual and void of the power of the Holy Spirit. This is really easy to recognize, for worship through the Holy Spirit of God will always bring forth life. The worship or ritual or religious order tends to be dull, lifeless, or do much to exalt the name of Christ.



The writer's words to the Hebrews having meaning for present day believers as well, in that we no longer worship in a shadow or copy, we now live and worship in the light of the reality of Christ.

The writer of Hebrews continues to demonstrate how a person can get to perfection, maturity, and salvation--the true God.

Ritual can only take a person so far in their pursuit toward God. The old did not bring people into the presence of God. So God set in motion a new order so that people could come to him. God made all this possible through his son Jesus the Christ. Jesus becomes the fulfillment of everything that the old religious system only pointed to. Jesus said, "No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6).

We have learned in this study that Jesus is the high priest, the new sacrifice for sin, and that which the new covenant is based on. Once again, he is the reality of the ritual, or the type, symbol, and picture. (See [The Superior Priesthood of Jesus](#)).

The old system was divine yet temporary, and ordained but limited. The writer of Hebrews is not depreciating the old system no more than he was depreciative in his comparison with Christ to the angels, prophets, Moses, or Aaron.

Please note that the sacrifice took place in the outer court, just as Jesus was sacrificed on earth, outside the Holy of Holies in heaven. Now Jesus, from the Holy of Holies in heaven, lights our path, feeds us, and intercedes for us. The old order was meaningful but only a limited picture that pointed to Christ. Jesus can take people into the presence of God. The old priests could not.

Because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved. God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:4-6).

What's Your Next Step?

You are loved!

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