

## HEBREWS CHAPTER NINE

Have you noticed that house cleaning – particularly laundry – is never really *done*? By the time I collect all the dirty clothes, haul them to the laundry room, sort them into piles, do numerous rounds of washing, drying, and folding, and then put them all away, there is already more that needs washing. Dusting and mopping are just as bad. By the time I get to the end of the tile with the mop, something has been spilled near the beginning. The need to clean never ends. Wouldn't it be great if one time of cleaning made the house clean forever? You could move into a new house, clean it once, and then never have to do it again!

The Levitical sacrificial system was a little like cleaning house. The work had to be done over and over again. The priests sacrificed daily. Blood flowed constantly. But the sins continued to pile up because these sacrifices could not change the heart of the worshipper. They were simply a bandage on a deep wound. God's people needed healing from the inside out.

In chapter 8, the author showed the superiority of the New Covenant over the Old Covenant. He also began a comparison of the earthly tabernacle with the heavenly one to further prove the insufficiency of the Old Covenant. In chapter 9, not only does he add some details to the tabernacle comparison, he also initiates a new comparison with eternal significance. The sacrifice of the New Covenant is far superior to sacrifices of the Old Covenant. The death of one Superior Savior accomplished what the death of countless bulls and goats never could – eternal forgiveness of sins and freedom from its guilt!

### **The Old Establishment**

#### **Read Hebrews 9:1-5**

God determined the rules and regulations of the first covenant and gave them to Moses in great detail. In the last lesson, we discovered that God told Moses to follow these instructions precisely because they prescribed the way the people could relate to God. God would dwell among them if they obeyed His commands.

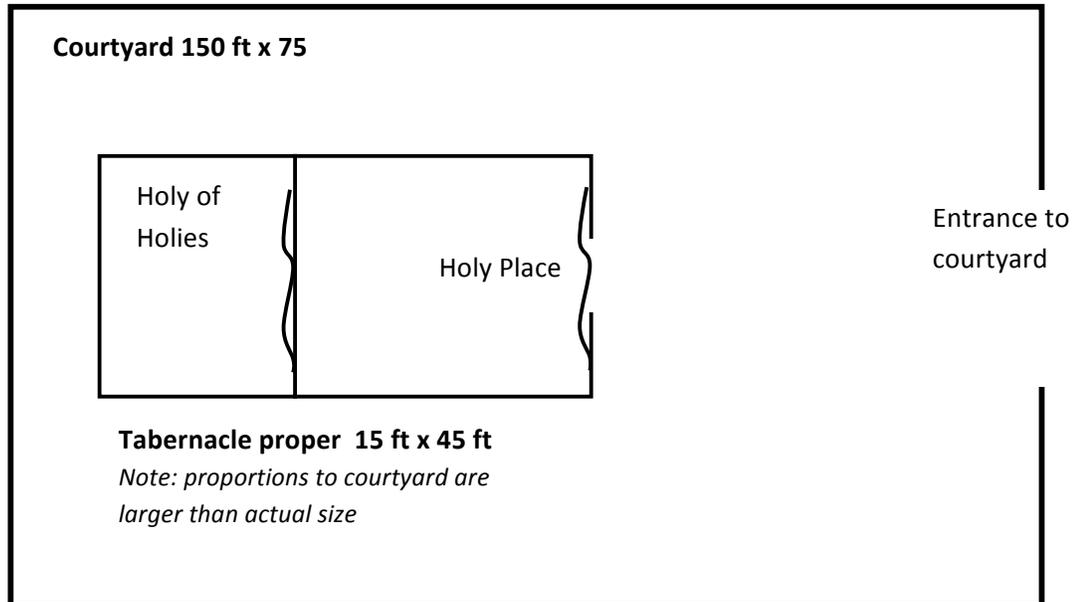
Everything God established in the Levitical priesthood, the sacrificial system, and the tabernacle had significance. As we've studied, although these things were temporary, they pointed to a greater spiritual reality that God brought about through Christ. Since the New Covenant is the fulfillment of the Old Covenant, learning more about the Old will help us understand and appreciate the New. So, let's take a closer look at the tabernacle and its furnishings.

*Fill out the table below to learn more about the tabernacle, its items, and their significance.  
This will take a little time, but will be worth it!*

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>BRIEF DESCRIPTION</b> Include size if given	<b>PURPOSE</b>	<b>LOCATION IN TABERNACLE</b>	<b>SYMBOLISM IN CHRIST</b>
<b>Tabernacle</b> Ex 25:8-9; 26:1-37 (optional)			X	John 1:14
<b>Ark of Covenant</b> Ex 25:10-22				Romans 3:25
<b>The Table</b> Ex 25:23-20				John 6:32-33
<b>Lampstand</b> Ex 25:31-40				John 8:12
<b>Altar of Sacrifice</b> Ex 27:1-8				John 1:29
<b>Altar of Incense</b> Ex 30:7-10				Eph 5:2; Rev 8:3-4
<b>Basin for washing</b> Ex 30:17-21				Eph 5:25-26

Are you still with me? I know that was a bit tedious, but I hope discovering Christ in the elements of the tabernacle made the work rewarding. Oh, and we aren't done yet! Now I want us to "set-up" the tabernacle so we can picture what the daily ministry of the priests and the happenings of the once-a-year Day of Atonement looked like.

***Read Exodus 40:17-37. Using the information in these verses, draw and label the furnishings from the chart above in the courtyard, Holy Place, and Holy of Holies.***



You are doing great with all this detail work! Just a quick comment on Hebrews 9:3. You may have noticed that the author of Hebrews makes it sound like the altar of incense was "inside" the Holy of Holies. However, when you read the Exodus passage it clearly shows the altar of incense was to be set just outside the Holy of Holies in *front* of the curtain. Passages in Leviticus confirm this. Biblical commentators feel that Hebrews 9:3 reflects the close connection the altar of incense has to the Holy of Holies. As you will see below, the high priest had to take incense from it into the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement.

Now that you've set up the tabernacle let's see what activity took place inside it.

### **Read Hebrews 9:6-10.**

According to verse 6, the priests entered the "outer room," or the "The Holy Place" everyday to carry out God's instructions for worship.

***Read Exodus 30:7-8 and Leviticus 24:1-9. List the daily duties of the priests.***

In addition to the daily ministering inside the Holy Place, the priests made daily sacrifices on the altar of sacrifice in the courtyard. We will not go into the various kinds of sacrifices and offerings. However, we will take a closer look at the Day of Atonement and the sacrifices offered on that day. This is the “once a year” sacrifice the author of Hebrews refers to in verses 7-10.

The sacrifices and rituals of the Day of Atonement - or “Yom Kippur” – symbolized the ultimate atonement God would provide for His people through Christ. Sin contaminates everything. On the Day of Atonement, the High Priest “purified” himself, the people, and even the sanctuary. The Holy of Holies, the dwelling place of God, could only be entered this one day a year. And only the high priest could do this. Ordinary men had no direct access to God.

***Read Leviticus 16:1-22, 34. Summarize the sacrifices and rituals the high priest had to perform.***

***According to Hebrews 9:9, these gifts and sacrifices were not able to “clear the conscience of the worshippers” Why not? See Psalm 51:16-17 to help your answer.***

Animal sacrifices and ritual cleansings are mere “external regulations.” They have no power to change the heart or the nature of a person. The Old Covenant was glorious in that it established a way to relate to God and revealed the need for a Savior. But it was only a temporary bandaid.

God draws people to Himself because He wants to be in relationship with us. However, we are sinful and He is holy. Therefore, God has established regulations by which we can approach Him and He can dwell among us. Before Jesus, this was through the Old Covenant. Now, we can approach Him through the New Covenant established by Jesus.

### **A Superior Sacrifice**

**Read Hebrews 9:11-15.**

*List all the reasons you can find that show how Jesus' covenant offering is superior to the earthy priests' offerings.*

*Look again at verse 14. What did the blood of Christ accomplish that the blood of bulls and goats could not? (See 9:9)*

Only the blood of Christ can provide internal and eternal cleansing. His unblemished sacrifice initiated the New Covenant, the covenant of the heart. His blood purchased our ransom from sin and death and provides an eternal inheritance in heaven!

**Read Hebrews 9:16-22.**

“Will” and “covenant” in these verses are both translated from the same Greek word *diatheke*. It refers to an “authoritative laying down of what should be done.” God’s covenant is not an agreement negotiated by two parties. God is the sole determiner of His covenant. Like a will, a covenant (testament) requires a death for it to be effective.

*How was the Old Covenant put into effect? (See verses 19-21. See also Ex 24:1-8 for more information.) What life was offered?*

The blood of bulls and goats made the Israelites outwardly clean. Animal sacrifice was also necessary to put the Old Covenant into effect. But a superior Covenant requires a superior sacrifice.

### **Full Atonement**

**Read Hebrews 9:23-28.**

***What was offered to put the new covenant into effect?***

***Contrast Jesus' sacrifice of atonement with the offering made by the earthly high priest on the yearly Day of Atonement. Describe the difference below.***

***Read Romans 3:21-25 and compare it with Hebrews 9:22. Why was Jesus' death necessary?***

Christ blood did not merely *cover* our sin. Hebrews 9:26 says Jesus appeared to “do away with sin.” The Greek word *athetisin* implies a cancelling or total annulment of sin. Yes, we will all die physically and face God’s judgment, but those of us who have received forgiveness of sin through the blood of Christ have no need to fear this judgment! We will enter into God’s presence and receive the full and final consummation of our salvation.

***Have you been washed in the blood of Christ? As we close this lesson reflect on the words of the old hymn below. Thank God for your salvation or give your life to Him for the very first time!***

*Have you been to Jesus for the cleansing power?  
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?  
Are you fully trusting in His grace this hour?  
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?*

*Are you washed in the blood,  
In the soul cleansing blood of the Lamb?  
Are your garments spotless? Are they white as snow?  
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?*