

Old vs. New  
Hebrews 9:1-14

Good morning Church! I pray that you and your family had a wonderful Easter. This morning, we return to the Epistle to the Hebrews. I was considering continuing on in Luke's Account of Jesus's days proceeding His resurrection, but after much prayer I felt the nudge of the Spirit to return to the thought in which we left Hebrews, which is the New Covenant.

Friends, if it seems to you as we're going through this letter that there is a lot of repetition, you're not mistaken. We are touching on very important themes in a repetitive way and the reason why it is so repetitive is because the writer has one main point and one Pastoral purpose within the letter. **The main point being that Jesus is Superior over all things.** These Hebrew readers must have their confidence in Christ bolstered. Therefore, the Author has been pointing the readers to see Jesus as the better Priest, He serves in a better place, He has offered the better offering, and He has mediated the better covenant. Jesus is better.

**The Pastoral Purpose of this letter is building up the perseverance of the saints.** Those Hebrews that have trusted in Christ are lovingly provided all the evidence they need to not turn back to the old practices and way of life.

This is extremely important as these converted Jews are now in a culture in which their faith has ostracized them from those they love, and with that are facing persecution from those even closest to them, they are encouraged to stay the course, and run their race, keeping their eyes on Jesus, the Author and perfecter of their faith. No turning back!

**God preserves His people through warning.** We need these warnings in order to keep our eyes on Jesus. God uses warnings as a tool to help and not harm.

**His main point is "Look to Jesus" and His Pastoral Purpose is "Continue with Jesus".**

The repetition is purposeful. Don't be aggravated by it. You may not see the truth of what is said until the tenth time you read it. That's the beauty of Holy Scripture. It's living and active. It's alive. Don't get board with it, in fact if there is repetition it's calling you to lean into it.

So we come to **Hebrews 9:1-14**, and the author, once again unravels the depth of the New Covenant we have with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. What is offered in the text before us is a threefold Compare and contrast between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant.

**Hebrews 9:1 (ESV)** Now even the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly place of holiness. Here are the two things He's going to draw our attention to; **the regulations** and **the place. The practices and the place.**

### **1. The Places of Worship.**

**Hebrews 9:2-5 (ESV)** <sup>2</sup>For a tent was prepared, the first section, in which were the lampstand and the table and the bread of the Presence. It is called the Holy Place. <sup>3</sup>Behind the second curtain was a second section called the Most Holy Place, <sup>4</sup>having the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron's staff that budded, and the tablets of the covenant. <sup>5</sup>Above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail.

He is giving a very general description of the tabernacle, the place people approached God in worship under the Old Covenant.

What He is describing is the first tabernacle. He's describing the rooms, and the utensils that were used. Some of the artifacts that symbolized God's work on behalf of His people. God gave this to Moses right after the first Covenant was ratified in **Exodus 24**.

Beginning in **Exodus 25** all the way through **Exodus 40** you find the description of the tabernacle; how it was to be constructed, and how it was to be used to offer God worship. I wish I had time to give the full description of the temple, but that would be a fun exercise to you to do this week. It will give you an even greater understanding of how the Old Sacrificial System limited God's people and pointed them to a need for an unlimited way to approach God and worship God.

In the original Tabernacle prescribed by God, there was an outer court where the people would come and offer their sacrifices.

Then behind a veil would be the "Holy Place" and behind another veil would be the "Holy of Holies". Which is what is described in **verses 1-5**

You had the Holy Place which was 15 x 15 x 30 area.  
Then you had the Holy of Holies which was a 15 x 15 x 15 area.

vs. 2 described the Holy Place. **2For a tent was prepared, the first section, in which were the lampstand and the table and the bread of the Presence. It is called the Holy Place.** When you walk in to the left is a golden lampstand with seven lamps, a menorah. The reason why Jews have an eight-candle menorah in their home was because only the Tabernacle or Temples was permitted to hold a seven candelabra. To your right was a table in which they'd place "The Bread of presence". Here they'd lay 12 loaves of bread representing the 12 tribes of Israel. Every Sabbath these were put out and the Priests would consume these at the end of the week. Beyond that, you have an altar of incense. In our text before us, the author connects this place with the Holy of Holies, but it was on the outside of the veil through which you'd enter the Holy of Holies.

Now the Priests would operate in this first section, but only the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies. In the Holy of Holies you would find the Ark of the Covenant, and on top of the Arc of the Covenant were the Cherubim on the Mercy Seat.

**Side note but very important:** Once the Law was placed inside the ark, a lid called the mercy seat closed the box (**Ex. 25:17-22**). The mercy seat is where God meets His people. God knew that Israel would break His law, but He would remain merciful and cover their law-breaking to guard those who truly loved Him from His wrath. Ultimately, this was achieved through the death of a substitute and the sprinkling of blood on the mercy seat itself (**Lev. 16**). **Dr. John MacArthur aptly comments that "blood from the sacrifices stood between God and the broken law of God."** Isn't it wonderful that Jesus is at the mercy seat now? That He is the one through whom God meet's with His people and that His blood is what makes their presence acceptable? Awesome stuff!

So, the Mercy Seat covers the Ark and on it sacrificial blood is put. Inside the Ark were the tablets of the Covenant and also the Golden Jar of Mana and Aarons Staff that budded.

Notice, this is what is described to us.

<sup>3</sup>Behind the second curtain was a second section called the Most Holy Place, <sup>4</sup>having the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron's staff that budded, and the tablets of the covenant. <sup>5</sup>Above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail. **This is a visual lesson, and what does it show us?**

**Everything about this first tabernacle shows us how temporary it was meant to be.** It's a tent. It's portable. This is not permanent. What is he wanting us to think about? I think he does want us to recognize that there was a certain glory regarding the worship within the context of the Old Covenant. **All of these things were constructed under God's precise instructions.** Great care was taken as it was being crafted. It was a Holy place. Separated and designated as the place to offer worship to God Almighty. It was special, but it was temporary.

On the other hand, even though there is a beauty about the place of God's worship, there is an ugliness to it too. In this place of worship, there would be lots of death and lots of bloodshed. But through it there is a message of Holiness that is being communicated. **You don't get to worship God any way you want! God prescribes the worship due Him.** God tells you where He is to be worshipped, how He is to be worshipped, and how the place of worship should be constructed. God cares about His own worship!

And If that First Covenant Worship was associated with Glory, Beauty, Sacrifice, and Holiness how much greater friends must the Second Covenant be? But notice He doesn't stop with the place. He also gets into the regulation or practices of worship.

## **2. The Practices of Worship.**

**Hebrews 9:6-10 (ESV)** <sup>6</sup>These preparations having thus been made, the priests go regularly into the first section, performing their ritual duties, <sup>7</sup>but into the second only the high priest goes, and he but once a year, and not without taking blood, which he offers for himself and for the unintentional sins of the people.

Here is the description of what the Priests and High Priest did.

What did the Priests do? They made the regular offerings for God's people. It involved the constant sacrificing of animals, the constant ritualistic washings, the constant burning of incense twice a day. Their work was constant, but their work never went beyond that first 30 ft of the tent. They were prohibited from serving past that.

Only the High Priest was permitted to enter through a veil into the Holy of Holies and his access was extremely limited. He would do this only once a year, on the day of atonement. When He would enter he was required to take with him blood as an offering for sin, both for Himself and those he represented.

On that day, by the offering of blood there was the covering of the unintentional sins of the people. So once a year, there was a sense of relief from God's people. A sense of forgiveness. **It's almost like when you turn your tax filing in. You're relieved that you got it done in time, and that you had a whole other year before you had to file again!** Lol That may not be the best example, but you get the picture. Their sacrifice brought a sense of relief, but that sense of relief was only temporary. It wasn't permanent.

BUT here is what the writer really wants us to focus on.

**Hebrews 9:8-10 (ESV)** <sup>8</sup>By this the Holy Spirit indicates (What is the Holy Spirit communicating?) **that the way into the holy places is not yet opened as long as the first section is still standing** <sup>9</sup> As long as you have the earthly tabernacle or temples operating under the old law and old covenant, the way into the true Holy of Holies is not yet open. In fact, in **verse 9** he says, **(which is symbolic for the present age)**. That word **symbolic** is associated with the word **Parable**. He's saying it's like a Parable for the present age. **According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper,** <sup>10</sup>**but deal only with food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until the time of reformation.**

What is the Holy Spirit saying? He's saying, **"As long as the first tabernacle stood, the way into God's presence has not yet been fully manifested."**

God's people couldn't go into the first tent much less approach Him in the Holy of Holies. God's people were without direct access Him. And the one who represented them in the Holy of Holies was just like them, a sinner. Therefore, he was restricted in how he entered and how often he entered. There was still a divide between God and His people. Until they had a perfect substitute to be the propitiation for their sin, their conscience was never clear of sin.

**verse 9** According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered that **cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper, The very fact that I have no access there shows that there is something wrong with me.** It was all to point the people of Israel to a need of a Messiah, a Savior to free them from their guilty conscience by paying the sin debt that they owed, freeing them to have a real relationship, a right relationship with God.

Their guilt still needed dealt with. Everything was dealing with things externally <sup>10</sup>**but deal only with food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until the time of reformation.** They were in need of an eternal solution!

The Old Covenant along with it's places and practices was limited and temporary. It was a bridge until the true and lasting Covenant with God is made by the Messiah. And this is where the Author leads the reader. He now points out what they were waiting for had come! The permanent has arrived!

1. **The Places of Worship.**
2. **The Practices of Worship.**
3. **The Powerful Results.**

**Hebrews 9:11-14 (ESV)** <sup>11</sup> But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) <sup>12</sup> he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. <sup>13</sup> For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, <sup>14</sup> how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

Jesus is better, the covenant He meditates is better, the sacrifice is better, the place is better, the same themes over and over.

In **verses 11-12** he describes the place of the New Covenant.

<sup>11</sup> But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) <sup>12</sup> **he entered once for all into the holy places**, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.

Christ has entered Heaven. A place not made with Human hands. The old was limited and temporary and **now what Jesus has provided is limitless and permanent.**

Jesus served us as priest on the cross as He offered Himself up for our sins as the perfect sacrifice. Now He serves us as Priest as He sits at the right hand of God interceding for us at all times.

Do you know what is greater still? Look at **verse 12**. **thus securing an eternal redemption.** In Christ Jesus we have been seated with Him in the Heavenly places. In Christ the believer is accepted into the presence of God! No restrictions of time nor location. What a Savior!

**Ephesians 2:4-6 (ESV)** <sup>4</sup> But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— <sup>6</sup> and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

Where is the Christian positionally with God? They are seated in the Holy of Holies! How? Jesus blood! More specifically, Jesus now operates the mercy seat. His blood was perfect. His sacrifice was without blemish! It satisfied God's wrath to the fullest for all who would believe and it ratified a new covenant that would offer sinners complete forgiveness by faith in Him making them clean and therefore given a clean conscience and welcomed in God's presence. **We've gone from no access to full access in Christ Jesus our Lord!**

**Philippians 3:20 (ESV)** <sup>20</sup> But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

We have seen the place of Jesus' High Priestly Ministry, but now we see the performance of it. **Hebrews 9:12-14 (ESV)** <sup>12</sup> he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.

### **How did Jesus enter the final tent?**

**1. He entered once.** He entered once in a final way.

**2. He entered for all.** He entered in a representative way for all the elect. We are tied to Him by His entrance. We live in Him, we died in Him, we were raised in Him, we have ascended in Him and we are seated in Him.

**3. He entered by an accepted way.** Into the Holy Places. Because the Father is pleased with the Righteousness of Christ, He is pleased to be with all who are covered by that righteousness. Because He is accepted in the Holy of Holies, we are as well.

**4. He entered in a Substitutionary way.** By means of His own blood. Not something external like the other High Priests, but my means of His own blood. His blood secured an eternal redemption. His blood has purchased us. We have been bought off of the slave market for sin by faith in Jesus's blood. Not the blood of goats and calves, but by Christ's blood.

### **Jesus met every regulations that was required of salvation! Look at the outcome!**

**<sup>13</sup>For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, <sup>14</sup>how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.**

All other High Priests could never purify the conscience of people from dead works. Only the blood of Jesus Christ is enough to cover the sins of men!

When a lost sinner has the veil removed and comes to saving faith in Christ by God's grace, their sins are washed by His blood. Their conscience is made completely clear as they are covered by His righteousness. It is the covering of Christ's righteousness that takes a sinner from no access to God to complete access to God.

### **Friends, can you see how powerful the realities of New Covenant are?**

If anything, **Hebrews 9:1-14** is to build the confidence we who believe have in the Lord Jesus. It is to cause us to enter into the presence of God at every opportunity knowing in Christ we have complete access to the Father. My prayer is as you leave this place, the word of God that you have heard would drive you into His presence more and more. And that you live in the realities of what the better New Covenant offers. Let's pray.