

## **The Midweek Podcast:**

Heaven and Earth: Hebrews 9:1-5 | July 21, 2025 | Michael Trautman + Pete Hammett

### **Michael Trautman**

It's good to be with you guys. My name is Michael Trotman. I serve on staff at Westover as the Mission of Life pastor and you're listening to the Midweek Podcast. Today with the first part of our time, we're looking at Hebrews 9:1-5, and then I have the privilege of hosting Pete Hammett for a conversation around those verses, but before we go any further, allow me to give a huge thank you to all of our Next Gen staff and volunteers. What an amazing week last week was as the halls of our building were filled with kids here for VBS, none of which would have been possible if it weren't for the hours of preparation and planning put in by several of our staff and the many hands coming together to pull everything off. So coming off that week, just want to say thank you to everyone involved in making last week possible for our Next Gen kids.

If you're joining with us for the first time today, welcome. We're glad that you are listening in. We do these podcasts as a supplement for our church family and aid, if you will, to our discipleship. We believe that discipleship is not limited to what happens on Sunday morning. Rather, our discipleship is lived out just as much Monday through Saturday. And so we want to be intentional about providing opportunities for growth tools that can help deepen our relationship with Christ. And this podcast is one of those. As a church family, we're working our way through Hebrews, both in these podcasts as well as during our time gathered together on Sunday mornings. And in doing so, we've divided Hebrews into four mini-series, the second of which we're currently entitled Heaven and Earth. In his book, [Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in Hebrews](#), Al Muller writes, "The author is determined throughout Hebrews to show how Jesus' work in the heavenly temple is fundamentally superior to the work done by priests in the earthly tabernacle."

And it's this exact comparison, a contrast between that which was earthly and its true heavenly counterpart that our text highlights. The tabernacle or tent as referenced here in verse two of chapter nine, the epicenter, if you will, of old covenant worship, which to be quite honest is an interesting shift of focus following the conclusion of chapter eight, verse 13.

Nonetheless, we reached chapter 9 and if you're anything like me, you probably listen to podcasts while multitasking on something else. Meaning it's likely that the scriptures aren't readily in front of you. So allow me to read these five verses for us as we dive in. This is Hebrews chapter 9 starting in verse 1.

“Now even the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly place of holiness, for a tent was prepared. The first section, in which were the lampstand and the table and the bread of the presence, is called the holy place. Behind the second curtain was a second section called the most holy place, 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, an errand staff that budded, and the tablets of the covenant. Above it were the cherubim of glory, overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail.”

In Exodus chapter 33, following the Israelites' exodus from Egypt, we see in verses 7-11 a description of what's termed the Tent of Meeting, a place outside of the Israelite camp where Moses would meet with God. Scripture tells us whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people would stand at their own tent to watch. Upon entering the tent of meeting, a pillar of cloud would descend upon it, and the Lord would speak with Moses. When all the people saw this take place, they themselves would worship from their own tent doors.

So not only is this where the term tent referenced here in Hebrew 9:2 points us, the book of Exodus is also where we see God provide the instructions to Moses for building the tabernacle, the first mention of which can be found in Exodus 25. So though our text in Hebrews refers to a “tent”, the description we're offered is in fact the tabernacle as a whole consisting of two rooms, the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place, described here in Hebrews by the author from the perspective of the High Priest as he would enter into them.

The first section, the Holy Place, was occupied by the lampstand and the table on which was placed the bread of presence. Though not mentioned in the Hebrews account, we learn from the instructions given to Moses in Exodus 25, the lampstand was made of pure gold and placed at the south end of the holy place serving as the provision of light to that which was within the tabernacle. Opposite the lampstand on the north end of the first section was the table also overlaid with gold on which the bread of presence was placed. 12 loaves of bread, representing the 12 tribes, set on the table each Sabbath and consumed by the priests on the following Sabbath.

In verse 3, the reference to a second curtain signifies the existence of a first curtain, and that would have served as the outer doorway leading from the Tabernacle courtyard into the tent itself. However, the words that start verse 3, right, behind the second curtain, also serve to highlight a division, a separation that existed between the holy place and the most

holy place, or as one author puts it, a progressive limitation on access to God. Verses 3-5 here in Hebrews continue the description of that which occupies the tabernacle, specifically the furnishings of the Most Holy Place.

First, the Golden Altar of Incense. Now, yes, I'll give a quick head nod to the fact that here the author, by use of the word having at the start of verse 4, seems to more closely associate the Altar of Incense with the Most Holy Place. Yet a study of the Old Testament will reveal that that altar seemed to belong in the first section.

So a quick thought to help us understand how this description unfolds without getting caught up, right? There seems to be a desire to demonstrate the close connection between incense burned by the high priest on the day of atonement, so that's Leviticus 16, and the second section, the most holy place.

But regardless, the focal point and that which the author quickly turns to giving the most attention is the Ark of the Covenant. The Ark of the Covenant residing inside the Most Holy Place contained three items. The golden urn of manna. A reminder of God's sustaining care of his people during their 40 years in the wilderness. Aaron's staff that budded. A reminder of how God chose Aaron for the priesthood and established the authority of the priestly office. And most central, the tablets of the covenant, a reminder and representation of God's relationship with his people and his commitment to bring the promised inheritance despite their rebellion against him.

Now we've merely scratched the surface of what we could study pertaining to the tabernacle, and if you find yourself wanting a more in-depth study, I'd encourage you towards Exodus chapter 25 through 40. A great place for a deeper dive. You see, we could go back and forth cross-referencing the description of the ark and how it was built, the significance behind each aspect of its construction, and that would be time well spent. However, for the moment that we have remaining before Pete joins our conversation, I want to shift our focus from that which occupied the tent to the concept of function and purpose.

Function and purpose. So, so far as the progression of Hebrews nine goes, the author offers a shift that happens in the text just beyond where our conversation centers today. A little plug there for you to join us this coming Sunday. However, as we reference back and forth between Exodus and these five verses, we don't need to go any further for the function and purpose of the tabernacle to be clear. Coming back to exalting Jesus in Hebrews, Al Muller writes in his exposition, "See, humans tend to place greater trust in things they can see with their own eyes and touch with their own hands."

When I read that, that quote got me thinking. And it stirred a memory for me, a memory of summer camp and the team building exercise known as the trust fall. I'm sure some of you listening in have had your own experiences with this team building exercise or maybe some of you have seen blooper reels of trust falls gone wrong. See, generally speaking, when performing that team building exercise, a group of people huddle around an elevated platform like a ledge or a picnic table and one of the team members climbs on top of that elevated surface, faces away from the rest of the team, and then falls backwards off the ledge, trusting that their team below is going to catch them.

What makes the trust fall nerve-racking is the fact that when you lean backwards, allowing yourself to fall off the ledge on which you were once safely standing, you can't see the arms of the team waiting below to catch you. You simply have to trust that they will. You see, while the contents and furnishings inside served as a representation of God's presence amidst His people and of His promise to guide and sustain, God in His grace gives something very tangible to which all the people could look to as a reminder. You see, the tabernacle itself served as a visual reminder to all the people of God's covenant with them. Amidst a culture of polytheism, it functioned as a place of worship, reminding them of worship that was to be directed to and only to the one true God, Yahweh.

It served as a place of atonement by the high priests. But though they could see the tabernacle, though it served those functions, it was abundantly clear the tabernacle was not to be approached. You see, the reality of the Old Testament tabernacle was that of limited access. Hear that again. The reality of the tabernacle was that of limited access. Yet, we know, through Christ, the veil has been torn. So, we conclude our look at these five verses where we began in the beginning with the verse that leads into chapter 9. Listen to this, Hebrews 8 verse 13. "In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete."

### **Michael Trautman**

Joining me now is Pete Hammett. Pete is a member of our church family. Some of you may recall him leading us from the pulpit back in March. But rather than me introduce him, I'll allow him to do that. Pete, thanks for joining with us on this week's episode of the Midweek. How you doing?

### **Pete Hammett**

Yeah, yeah, I'm doing well. Thanks for asking.

### **Michael Trautman**

Good deal, Pete. Tell us a little bit about yourself, just really quick for those of our audience listening in who might not know who you are, your connection to Westover, just give us kind of a little high level synopsis.

**Pete Hammett**

That's a good question. Well, my wife and I joined in 19 just before COVID and then went through all that fun stuff with the church. We used to live here a long time ago. I moved up here from Florida with American Express and then moved to Oklahoma for a job and then came back here in 2019. We have three kids, 6 grandkids. Gradkids are the best we could talk about that all day long. Grandkids are God's gift of a do over. That's what I say. And I'm honored to be part of the verse by verse teaching team, and that's a lot of fun. Life Communities. The brother, that's that's, that's where that's where life happens in those communities and then have the honor hanging out with you guys. Yeah, so.

**Michael Trautman**

Yes, absolutely. So Pete leans in with some of our leadership team here at Westover and we are grateful for the wisdom and perspective that he brings. You mentioned Colorado real quick. How long were you?

**Pete Hammett**

Did I say Colorado? I meant Oklahoma. Goodness gracious, no, I'm by that. Oklahoma is where we were. Yeah.

**Michael Trautman**

Oklahoma, I might have said the wrong you might have, said Oklahoma. OK, Oklahoma, how long?

**Pete Hammett**

10 years, 10 years, 10 years and then now back here.

**Michael Trautman**

Couldn't escape the East Coast.

**Pete Hammett**

Oklahoma's great people are. Wonderful. Weather is not fun, so it was good to get back to the Carolinas.

**Michael Trautman**

Well, I would say welcome back, but you've been here a little.

**Pete Hammett**

While so yeah, yeah, it's good to be home.

**Michael Trautman**

Hey. So today we're talking about Hebrews 9:1-5 and mean a lot of bridges of the Tabernacle or tent as it is referenced here in this verses, a lot of references back to the Tabernacle in Exodus in Chapters 25 through 40. Thoughts. What? What? What comes to your mind when you think of the Tabernacle and its connection to what our author here in Hebrews is trying to say.

**Pete Hammett**

So I I love that question and in in your message around this, right. And so a few thoughts came to my mind, when I was reflecting on what you were sharing. And the distinction perhaps Mike, is the difference between how people approach God in the first covenant and how we approach God in the new covenant and how would you draw that distinction? Or or what do we now have in our ability in our new covenant to approach God?

**Michael Trautman**

Right. Yeah. So right as we were talking just a minute ago, kind of executing that text and and looking at this idea of limited access or progressive access, right, the first section and then the second section of progressive limitation on access to God in the old covenant. And yet now through Christ, we are all, access is available to all of us and so and and not only that, right, but this idea of in the Old Testament we see the old covenant we see a "going into", the high priest would go into the Tabernacle. The action being that the high priest would go towards. Now with Christ, we see that that Christ has come to. Us it's not us going towards him. He comes to us and that's actually pretty, man, and when you think about it, that's actually pretty unique to Christianity, right? It's a God who, through his son God Incarnate Jesus came to us.

**Pete Hammett**

Right. Right. And so when I think about that right in the way. The way in the Old Testament, how much people prepared to approach God and with great reverence and dire consequences if they didn't do it just right, right? They tied a line on the poor man, right? Just in case you didn't do it right and you drop over. Just in case. And you don't need that smell, right? So we're going to pull you out and it convicts me because I think today, even though our ability to approach God has been enabled through the death and resurrection of Christ, I still feel sometimes that I approach God irreverently. I don't prepare enough. I don't think enough. I don't, I don't pause enough to realize I'm approaching the Lord God Almighty. And you know, I wouldn't want to be so ritualistic like we were in the first

covenant. But I think I need to do it more intentionally, more humbly. Yeah, that's what I wonder.

**Michael Trautman**

I like that word that you use. They're more intentionally. You know, I think I think back to, you know, a few years ago, we kind of had or we saw a, a movement kind of almost like this like "Jesus is my homeboy," you know, a familiarity with Jesus that kind of took some of that reverence, right. That respect. However, I think it's somewhere in between, right? It's not necessarily just this. "Oh, Jesus is just my homeboy kind of thing." While at the same time, the formality that existed under the Old Covenant. I mean, God invites us to approach him. God invites us to come to him, however, we are, yeah, I I think that's you know you mentioned the rituals and the preparation. You know I I find comfort for me in the fact that I don't have to have myself all cleaned up to approach Christ you know.

**Pete Hammett**

Right, right, right.

**Michael Trautman**

I don't have to have everything in my life squared away. Christ invites me, He bids me come unto me. You know, thinking that that's part of our discipleship pathway. Yeah, come to Christ. Christ bids me, come to me. Yeah. And and man, what an invitation that is. While at the same time, like you're saying there's an intentionality there. There's a respect, a reverence that is due, and we're talking about the God of the universe.

**Pete Hammett**

You know, what you were saying, it kind of reminds me of the call that was always on the Billy Graham Crusades, "just as I am", right? And they would always sing that when people were coming down front. And I like that. Right. You don't have to. You don't have to clean yourself up. God wants you just as you are. I like that. And yet there is a place where I need to ponder, and I think it's more for those of us who are believers. You know, I travel a bit and there are times I have to get on a plane and I always plan for that. And if I have an early morning flight, I go to bed early. I'll pack early. Now I'm old enough to remember a time when you got on an airplane, it was a pretty big deal and people didn't like, put on a suit, but they kind of got spiffed up. If you've been on a plane recently.

**Michael Trautman**

Comfortable as you can, right?

**Pete Hammett**

Man, pajamas. And sometimes you think I don't. I don't think your parents would be happy with what you're wearing on the plane right now. And I think at times when I approach God on Sunday, I'm not. I'm not planning on that, for example. Well, am I going to bed at a good time on Saturday, if I'm knowing I'm going to church on Sunday? Am I preparing? Am I reading my lesson before church on, you know, it's kind we come to church sometimes thinking just feed me as a matter of fact. No. Just feed me, chew it up for me and we're we're not even. I'm not really doing a lot of planning and thinking as I approach God and I it convicts me a little bit.

**Michael Trautman**

Yeah. There's a there's an active participation there when when I hear you talking about the preparation beforehand. Yeah, I like that.

**Pete Hammett**

Yeah, I love what you just shared because I think when we look at our fellowship in Christ, part of it is our identity, right? Our identity with Christ. And then our identity, with the church, and then our identity at Westover. But the other equal part of that is my activity. Not just who I am. But what I do? Right. It's like that quote from Batman, Remember? Yeah, it's not what I say that defines me, but what I do. Yeah, I like that. I wish I could say it in the Batman voice. Would that be good?

**Michael Trautman**

I thought for a minute there you're going to break out into come just as you are for us, but maybe we'll leave that for the crusade.

**Pete Hammett**

And that takes me to the next part, right? Because the sacrifices in the old covenant were sacrifices that were consumed. They were, you know, they were. They were. They gave their life. And today we're called to be. A living sacrifice. Man!

**Michael Trautman**

Romans 12 has a lot to speak of that, right? And it kind of ties in to what you were just saying about what I do, right, offering ourselves as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to the Lord. This is your spiritual act of worship and man, that ties in to as Christ has come and therefore I can approach God. There is out of that flows action. And that action is kind of in response to what Christ has done, you know, salvation to be very clear isn't anything that we do. It's not our works that earn us a right standing with God totally on based on what Christ has done in our place, you know as we talked about the sacrifice. Yeah. And yet, as a result of that, what we do action that flows.



**Pete Hammett**

Right. I love that. That's that'll preach right there.

**Michael Trautman**

Well, Pete, I really appreciate you being willing to jump in and join us this week as a part of this conversation. Again, just a little plug is just part of the conversation. We want to encourage you guys to, As Pete just said, the preparation. Preparing yourself and looking towards this coming Sunday as we continue our conversation in Hebrews. Pete, thanks for join us, and we look forward to seeing you guys this weekend.