

Title: Worship For All To See

Text: Hebrews 9:1-5

INTRODUCTION:

Read: **Hebrews 9:1-5** —Illustration #1: Show Malachi's Lego Gameboy: Ask the audience if they know what it is?: What seems to be a Gameboy is only a lego replica. Does that mean this lego replica is worthless? No, it served its purpose perfectly, but it only revealed its limitations and pointed towards the real thing. ****Copies aren't bad, but they are simply a pattern point of something even better.**

—Similarly, the old covenant gave a hint of what things could be like between God and His imagers; it served its purpose for *that* age of time, but once that age came to an end, and the veil would be completely lifted, a new age would come into existence that would be far more fruitful and satisfactory. —Under the Old Mosaic Covenant the regulations for worship associated with the tabernacle/temple weren't worthless—they were perfectly suited for serving their purpose and yet they were limited in what they could accomplish, in comparison to the real thing. It's not that the temple, practices, and priesthood were not needed—they served their purpose—they served as copies.¹ ****Copies aren't bad, but they are simply a pattern point of something even better.**

—The letter of Hebrews is one great account of the transition from the old Mosaic covenant toward the consummation of the New and Better covenant of Christ—one of grace, one with law written on our hearts, one in which the Covenant is made between God and His perfect Son sealed by His spirit, in which we take part in through faith. —This morning, my goal is to identify the various regulations of Temple Worship under the old covenant, and to show how those regulations have only expanded and become enhanced within the Better Covenant.

MOVEMENT 1:

—Read: **Hebrews 9:1** —Although the interaction between us and God is completely different from the Old covenant to the New, the regulations of worship didn't go away from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant, but like a caterpillar becoming a butterfly, they took on their most beautiful and authentic form.

—Illustration #2: Tell about Dezzy the cat. —May 2024 a new young cat shows up on our back porch (we are dog people...cats don't go to heaven folks). We find out it's our neighbors, but this cat has picked us—she brought her sacrifices to us often. —My kids take an interest in this cat by spending a lot of time with it, playing with it, and even building it a cardboard house. —BUT because we weren't the owners, our interactions with Dezzy were limited, but we did offer her an idea of what the Hammer family was all about. —HOWEVER, this summer, her owner told us she was moving, and asked if we would take Dezzy. Overnight, the cardboard house became the warmth of a real home. The interaction was no longer limited but limitless. Affection became more than simply playing, but now feeding and deworming. What once pointed to our love for her, when ownership changed, the terms of interaction became more fruitful, so that she could truly embrace what those symbols of love were actually about... in the most full way possible (although she still brings sacrifices lol)!

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—It's not that the temple, regulations of worship, and priesthood were bad and done away with; they were simply limited and replaced with its truer form. —Under this Better Covenant, we have an authentic *priesthood, *temple, *lampstands, *bread, *Holy of Holies, and a *better sacrifice by a great high priest!

—Read: **Hebrews 9:2** —The regulations of worship in the Temple were restricted to the office of priests. Whether entering into the outer room of the temple, oiling the lampstands, or preparing the bread of presence, under the old covenant these duties were not to be carried out by your average Jew, but they were reserved for the office of priests from the tribe of Levi;² however, in this New Covenant the priesthood is no longer confined

¹ Heb. 9:23-24.

² In the Old Temple access was limited, timed, and regulated. Gentiles could only access the most external outer court; if they passed the dividing wall (Eph. 2:14), they would be punished by death. Closer to the temple, the court of women

to a certain tribe within a certain lineage of people, but the priesthood is now open to all who put their trust in the Great High Priest, Jesus Christ. —**1 Pet. 2:9** *But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, THAT you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*³ —Ex. 40 reveals that there was also a ceremonial washing in order to enter into the priesthood followed by putting on holy garments (Ex. 40:12-13).⁴ Furthermore, priests were required to wash their *hands and feet* prior to entering the temple to perform their duties (Ex. 30:17-21). For this reason, it was appropriate for Jesus to wash *the hands and feet* of His disciples prior to the last supper, as He was preparing for them to receive a better temple in the near future (Jn. 13:1-17). Baptism now corresponds to this entrance into the priesthood and temple worship, Paul says in Galatians 3:27, “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” Here we have the washing and the putting on of the Holy Garment...which is Christ! —And just as there was a Temple for the priests to perform their duties—a divine structure that bridged the earth to the heavens,⁵ a place for man and God to dwell, this better covenant gives us a much better temple. Christ becomes the bridge between heaven and earth⁶, and those in Him become a physical temple to our world. **1 Cor. 3:16-17** *Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? 17 If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.* —As the priests entered into the Holy Room, a room replicating the garden of Eden when God dwelled with man, lampstands would be lit with the most pure olive oil to symbolize God's light and presence continually shining in His dwelling place (Ex. 27:20-21; Lev. 21:1-4). Under the New Covenant, we too have lampstands, just far better because they permeate the entire earth. **Matt. 5:14-16** *You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.* These lampstands aren't lit by other priests, but from light himself. Christ, the true light, would be the one who lights our lamp.⁷ This light is no longer to be hidden in a holy room secluded from the rest of the world, but in this better covenant the light goes forth to the entire world in hopeful expectation that the brighter the light gets the more the nations will walk in it.⁸ Our light becomes the righteousness of Christ on display through our lifestyles as we love people sacrificially as Christ

allowed both Jewish women and men to dwell, and then even further in, the Court of Israelites allowed Jewish men to come and offer their sacrifices to the priests as the heads of their families. Next, there was a court for the levitical priests, followed by access into the holy room of the temple for whatever rotation of priests scheduled for that time, and then the Most Holy Place was reserved for the High Priest to enter once a year on behalf of Israel.

³ God's original plan, prior to the giving of the Mosaic Law was to make the exiles of Egypt a nation of priests (Ex. 19:6); however, they would reject this offer for fear of their lives, and instead asked Moses to be a mediator, which would change how Yahweh interacted with them throughout the Old Testament (Deut. 5:1-5; 22-27; cf. Ex. 19).

⁴ Christ's baptism was about—an entrance into the priesthood. John the Baptist was at first reluctant to baptize Jesus, because John's baptism was one of repentance for sins, and he understood that Jesus was the spotless lamb who would take away the sins of the world, therefore he did not see it fit to baptize him for repentance, but when Jesus alludes to fulfilling righteousness (Jn. 1:29; Mt. 3:13-17; Ps. 110:5; Zec. 6:13), the reason for baptism shifts as for one entering into the priesthood (cf. Ex. 40:9-15). Gal. 3:27-28 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. Furthermore, the wash basin the priests used for their ritual cleansing was also known as the “sea” (1 Kings 7:23-25, 39; Jer. 52:17-20). There is good reason to believe that the language of “sea” in Rev. 21:1 is speaking to the wash basin of the temple and the destruction to occur in 70 AD.

⁵ Psalm 11:4: “The LORD is in his holy temple; the LORD's throne is in heaven; his eyes see, his eyelids test the children of man.” Psalm 102:19: “For he looked down from the heights of his sanctuary; from heaven the LORD looked at the earth.” These passages reveal the temple in Jerusalem as sacred space that bridged the heavens to earth under the Mosaic Covenant.

⁶ Mk. 14:58; Jn. 2:19-21; cf. Zec. 2:10; Jn. 1:14

⁷ Jn. 1:9 The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world (cf. Isa. 42:6; 49:6—the Messiah to be a light to the nations). Psalm 18:28 For it is you who light my lamp; the Lord my God lightens my darkness.

⁸ Isaiah 60:3: “Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn” (often linked to Jerusalem's restoration). Cf. Revelation 21:24: “By its light the nations will walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it,” describing the New Jerusalem where God's presence is the eternal light.

has loved us (Jn. 13:34-35). Not condemning people, but serving people. Not cursing, but blessing! Not living out our fleshly desires but walking by His Spirit (Gal. 5:16).

—COMMUNION: In addition to all of this, priests would regularly prepare the Bread of *Presence* in the Holy Room.⁹ This bread was a reminder of God's provision for those in the wilderness, when His Angel, who also went by the title the "glory of the Lord" or "the Angel of His *Presence*"¹⁰ offered manna to the grumbling and complaining Israelites. —No shocker that after a long day of ministry—feeding 5000 and walking on water, a crowd of people found Jesus wanting more food, but He responded saying, *"I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.... 41 So the Jews grumbled about him, because he said, 'I am the bread that came down from heaven.'"* (Jn. 6:35,41). He went on to say, *I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."* 52 *The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"* 53 *So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you"* (Jn. 6:51-53).

Later, He would institute a new meal with his disciples *"when Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body.'"* 27 *And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink of it, all of you, 28 for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins' (Mt. 26:26-28).* —The bread is still part of our gatherings each Sunday, as we remember our eternal life and our righteousness is Christ's body that we eat and which in turn brings us together to be His physical body to the rest of the world when we leave here (Acts 2:42-47).

MOVEMENT 2:

—Read: **Heb. 9:3-5** —The second room was separated by a curtain four inches thick, and in front of this curtain was the altar of incense in which the priest would burn a fragrant aroma morning and evening (Ex. 30:1-8).

—With a pure heart the Psalmist writes (**Ps. 141:2**) *Let my prayer be counted as incense before you, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice!* Paul would write to Timothy, *I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands* (**1 Tim. 2:8**). Our worship today incorporates a better incense as we pray to the Lord.¹¹

—As you passed the altar of incense, and made your way past the thick curtain, you'd arrive into the Most Holy Place. If the first room was symbolic of earth, this second room was symbolic of heaven—for this very reason Jews would refer to the Temple as "Heaven and Earth."¹² It was in this Most Holy Place where the ark of the

⁹ Ex. 25:23-30

¹⁰ "The glory of the Lord": Ex. 16:10 (cf. Ex. 14:19, 24); 24:16-17 (cf. Ex. 33:18, 22-23; Isa. 6:1 (targum); Ezek. 1:28; 9:3-4; Zech. 2:5). Compare to NT: Jn 1:14; 12:41; Heb. 1:3; 2 Cor. 4:6 (cf. Jn 5:44; 17:5; Acts 7:2-3; 7:55-56, etc.). "The Angel of His Presence": Isa. 63:9.

¹¹ Rev. 8:4 connects the idea of prayer to incense.

¹² The following passages equate the man built Tabernacle/temple with the terms "heaven and earth." Psalm 78:69 "He built his sanctuary like the high heavens, like the earth, which he has founded forever." 1 Kings 8:27 "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you; how much less this house that I have built!" Psalms. 66:1 Thus says the Lord: "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; what is the house that you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest? Ezra. 5:11 And this was their reply to us: 'We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth, and we are rebuilding the house that was built many years ago, which a great king of Israel built and finished. the Jews of antiquity commonly referred to "Heaven and Earth" as the Temple of God. One might think that it is a stretch, but a little research will prove this understanding to be accurate. The Jewish historian, Josephus, is a prime example of how first century Jews spoke of the temple: "For that third part thereof which was within the four pillars, to which the priests were not admitted, is, as it were, a heaven peculiar to God [Holy of Holies]. But the space of the twenty cubits [Holy Place] is as it were, sea and land, on which men live [earth], and so this part is peculiar to the priests only. (Josephus, Jewish Antiquities, book 3, ch. 6, 123. "For if anyone does without prejudice, and with judgment, look upon these things [tabernacle/temple], he will find they were every one made in a way of imitation and representation of the universe. When Moses distinguished the tabernacle into three parts, and allowed two of them to the priests, as a place accessible and common, he denoted the land and the sea [earth], these being of general access to all [Holy Place and Outer Court]; but he set apart the third division for God [Holy of Holies], because heaven is inaccessible to men." (Josephus, Jewish Antiquities, bk 3, ch. 7, 180-181

Covenant resided. This ark was “the mercy seat” or throne of God, symbolizing His presence with His people, and yet the author of Hebrews explains that he can no longer explain these things in detail because the ark had been missing from Herod’s Temple for centuries, sometime prior to the Babylonian invasion. –Pull back the curtain, the Most Holy Room is empty, but as we’ll see it makes sense as Christ is seated on the true throne in the heavenlies (Heb. 9:24).

CONCLUSION:

—Don’t take this New Temple with its regulations of worship for granted! Under the Old Covenant we are all severely restricted by time, space, and regulations. We would be stuck in the court of gentiles—not even able to see the Priests doing their duties. In Christ time, space, and regulations for worship have been redeemed!
—Under this better covenant, The temple courts cannot be measured,¹³ because the surface of the earth becomes its very courts as the meek inherit the earth¹⁴ to fill it with the knowledge of the glory of God.¹⁵ There’s no longer a diving wall separating Jewish believers from gentile believers—but the two have become one, as all are unified in the New Covenant (Eph. 2:13-15). The courtyard gets smaller and the Temple—Christ’s body—the Church—continues to grow on this earth¹⁶ like a tiny mustard seed or leaven in a batch of dough.¹⁷ —Under the new covenant, the church literally becomes the outer room of the temple, in which we as a nation of priests worship, and unlike the old covenant, **the unbelieving world gets a greater glimpse into this room as we as priests worship God boldly wherever our feet hit the ground!** —Jesus’ words to the woman at the well were true when in response to her question of where the right place of worship is, he proclaims, *“But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth” (Jn. 4:21-23a).*
—**In Christ the regulations of worship found in the Temple did not cease, they simply became better and farther reaching.** —As we walk about the earth we proclaim the reign of our sacrificial and Kingly High Priest Jesus Christ. And one day a week we come together in a very unique way to celebrate the homecoming of the church past, present, and future as we look towards our heavenly home and join with the angels singing, join with all saints at all times in communion, and gather around the word of God!!! Every Sunday we practice and prepare to enter into the holy of Holies—the heavens. —The temple of God—His church begins to permeate all cultures as the priesthood of believers continues to grow through water baptism, as daily we become walking lampstands reflecting the light of Christ to the world around us, finding our eternal satisfaction in the bread of Heaven—the body of Christ, and as we offer up prayers to our Lord throughout the day. The world can’t escape the flavor of this living temple...they might attempt to shut it down but it can never be completely snuffed out.

¹³ Rev. 11:2

¹⁴ Ps. 37:11; Mt. 5:5; cf. Rom. 4:13.

¹⁵ Num. 14:21; Isa. 6:3; Hab. 2:14.

¹⁶ Some hold to an eschatological view that speaks to the destruction of the earth, however multiple Old Testament scriptures contradict that belief when they describe the earth being more eternal in nature (Eccl. 1:4; Ps. 37:29; 78:69; 104:5. The misinterpretation of a new or renewed earth has more to do with misunderstanding covenantal language and how God operates with his earthly imagers under the New Covenant, as well as ANE literary devices and apocalyptic writing cf. 2 Pet. 3:10-12; Rev. 21:1ff.

¹⁷ Mt. 13:31-32; Mk. 4:26-29; Lk. 13:20-21; cf. Dan. 2:44; Isa. 9:6-7