

Hebrews Chapter 9 Joseph Krygier LeTourneau 2022

Reminding them of the original purpose of God for the Tabernacle.

9:1–10 These verses describe the OT tabernacle, its furnishings, and its worship practices. This description of the “first covenant” lays the groundwork for the discussion of the new covenant in vv. 11–28 .

9:4 having the golden altar of incense . The altar of incense was not in the Most Holy Place; it was in the Holy Place, “in front of the veil” that separated it from the Most Holy Place. The author of Hebrews was quite familiar with the OT tabernacle and its sacrifices, so he would not mistakenly think this altar was inside the Most Holy Place. Thus it is better to understand “having” to mean that this altar of incense was closely tied in its function to the Most Holy Place. It “belonged to” the Most Holy Place. The text also says that a golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron’s staff that budded were in the ark of the covenant . However, the OT says the urn and the staff were placed in front of the ark (Ex. 16:32–34 ; Num. 17:10–11), not in it. Only the two tablets of the covenant were within the ark at that time (Ex. 25:16 ; Deut. 10:1–2). The two tablets contained the Ten Commandments (Ex. 34:1 , 28–29). It is possible that the urn and the rod were later stored in the ark. Or, the author of Hebrews may have been depending on information no longer available.

9:6 Having described the tabernacle (These preparations having thus been made), the writer describes the worship that took place there. priests go regularly into the first section . The Levitical priests were the only ones allowed to enter the Holy Place, to perform their regular duties (see Ex. 25:30 ; 30:7–8 ; Lev. 24:4 ; Num. 28:7). The mercy seat (9:5) was the place where the high priest sprinkled blood once a year to atone for the people’s sins (Lev. 16:14 ; see Ex. 25:22). In contrast, Jesus’ death redeemed our sins “once for all” (Heb. 9:12). His sacrificial death also gives us the freedom to serve God (9:14).

9:7 Once a year , on the Day of Atonement, the high priest entered into the second section, the Most Holy Place (Lev. 16:2–3 , 11–17). He sprinkled it with the blood of a bull and a goat as a sin offering (Lev. 16:6 , 9 , 15). Atonement for sins was required for the high priest himself and for all the people (Lev. 16:6 , Num. 15:22–31).

9:8 By this . That is, by the system that restricted to the Levitical priests the right of access into the presence of God in the Holy Place and especially the Most Holy Place. the Holy Spirit indicates . The Mosaic covenant was the command of God, through the Holy Spirit. By the Mosaic law God revealed both the spiritual separation of man from God due to sin and the pattern for Jesus’ high priestly ministry.

9:9–10 These verses contrast two ages: the present age and the time of reformation . The “present age” is described as a time of separation from God. Through Christ’s work, this present age is passing away (vv. 11–12, 26) and the new time of reformation has begun. It will be completed when Christ returns (see note on vv. 25–26).

9:9 cannot perfect the conscience . God did not intend the Mosaic sacrificial system to do so. The Messiah was to do this (7:18–19 ; 10:1–2).

9:10 food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body . The OT teachings about clean and unclean foods, sacrificial food and drink offerings, and ritual purification washings. These were later greatly expanded in Jewish tradition. The writer may have had in mind those who were advocating “diverse and strange teachings” about “foods” (13:9).

9:11–28 When compared to Mosaic tabernacle worship (vv. 1–10), Redemption through the Blood of Christ. When compared to Mosaic tabernacle worship (vv. 1–10), the new covenant high priesthood of Jesus provides a single superior sacrifice in a superior heavenly tabernacle (which stands for God’s very presence); and thus it brings complete forgiveness of sins, eternal salvation, purified consciences, and direct access to God.

Christ’s sacrifice cleanses the innermost being (10:22), which the Mosaic sacrifices could not do (9:9). from dead works . Deeds that cannot save due to human sinfulness (see 6:1).

9:15 mediator . See 8:6 ; 12:24 ; 1 Tim. 2:5 . new covenant . See Heb. 8:6–13 . Christ mediates the covenant by revealing it (1:2), by serving as its priest, and by offering himself in sacrifice (9:11–14). those who are called . God’s electing call to salvation (compare Rom. 8:30 ; 2 Tim. 1:9 ; 1 Pet. 5:10 ; 2 Pet. 1:10). promised eternal inheritance . Followers of Christ inherit everlasting salvation (Heb. 1:14 ; 5:9 ; 9:12). redeems them from the transgressions . The payment of sin’s penalty requires a death (see vv. 16–28). first covenant . The Sinaiatic covenant (see v. 1).

9:16–17 will . Either the will of a person who has died (compare “inheritance” in v. 15) or an ancient Near Eastern “covenant.” Making such covenants included offering an animal sacrifice. Thus both are carried out only after a death .

9:18–21 Therefore . The Sinaiatic covenant also began with blood . The Sinaiatic covenant-initiation ceremony is recalled in vv. 19–20 (see Ex. 24:3–8). The author adds some specific details, such as scarlet wool and hyssop , and the sprinkling of the book itself , which are not mentioned in Exodus . While the source of the author’s information is unknown, these

details are not improbable, since these elements were used in other purifying ceremonies; also Ex. 12:22). The purification of the tabernacle and its vessels is summarized in Heb. 9:21 , recalling the events of Exodus 40 . Redemptive History in the Book of Hebrews Hebrews shows the contrast between the old covenant and the new covenant. In the old covenant, the law and its ceremonies were a shadow of the good things to come. They only reflected the reality of the “heavenly things” (depicted by arrows intruding into the old covenant). The inauguration of the new covenant is described as a change in priesthood and law that brings about a change in reality because of the cross. After the work of Christ in the new covenant, the heavenly reality (Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem) not only intrudes into history but Christians actually participate in this new reality (arrows now go both ways) because the good things have come through Christ in his death, resurrection, and ascension. Christians live in a semi-heavenly age, whereas in the old covenant with its laws, rules, and regulations, people could not fully participate in the “heavenly things.” Although they participate in the heavenly reality now, in the age to come God’s people will fully realize their Sabbath rest.

9:23 This verse focuses on the purification of the place of worship. The copies (that is, heavenly realities (which represent the very presence of God). These heavenly realities require a greater purification sacrifice (the blood of Jesus).

9:24 holy places made with hands . The tabernacle built by Moses and the temple built by Solomon. copies of the true things . The eternal heavens are the “true things” because they are where God is.

9:25–26 Christ’s sacrifice is greater because this one offering of himself is sufficient for all his followers for all time. since the foundation of the world . A sin offering has been needed ever since the fall of humanity (Genesis 3 ; compare Heb. 4:3). The end of the ages began with Christ’s sacrificial death. It will be completed at Christ’s return (see 9:28).

9:27–28 appointed . to die once . Every person has only one life before facing eternal judgment . This rejects the idea of reincarnation and of any second chance to believe after death. The final judgment will take place when Christ comes again to save his followers.