

1. The Earthly Tabernacle (Heb 9:1-5)

The author continues his reasoning on the superior priesthood of Christ by demonstrating the inferiority of and limitations associated with the earthly tabernacle. As the basic floor plan and furniture of the tabernacle is described, one notes the material make-up of the structure. Though many things were made of or overlaid with gold, it was still a manmade, temporal structure – a far cry from heaven itself where our present High Priest currently serves.

1. Over what were the wings of the cherubim stretched? What is its significance?

2. Symbolic Rituals of the Tabernacle (Heb 9:6-10)

Services relative to the tabernacle allowed daily activities in the outer chamber and very limited access to the inner chamber. There only the high priest could enter, and then only once a year, and “*not without blood*” (Heb 9:7). These restrictions did more than signify the holiness of God; they indicated “*that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing*” (9:8). That is, on its own merits, the tabernacle worship “*cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience*” (9:9). Spiritual access to heaven, i.e., full fellowship with God, was unattainable by the ordinances of Moses. A genuine Israelite should have been aware that ultimate forgiveness was yet in the future, and that in his present time he was granted a favorable position by God’s grace via these “fleshly ordinances.” How this should have made him long for the “the Lamb of God” to take away his sins!

2. Who is said to be teaching deeper spiritual truth through tabernacle worship?

3. The fleshly ordinances of the tabernacle were imposed until when?

3. The Perfect Tabernacle (Heb 9:11-15)

The author’s argument reaches its full force in this section. The shadows and symbolism of the earthly priesthood and tabernacle were finally dispelled in the coming of Jesus. He serves in the tabernacle “*not made with hands, that is, not of this creation*” (Heb 9:11). He entered the Most Holy Place “*not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood*” (9:12). His sacrifice surpasses the “*purifying of the flesh*”; it is able to “*purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God*” (9:14). His nature and accomplishments make him “*the Mediator of a new covenant*” (9:15), a covenant of the “better promises” of eternal redemption and eternal inheritance (8:6; 9:12, 15). But what is it exactly that sets the sacrifice of Jesus apart from all others? It involved the free-will offering of an eternal spirit (9:14). Translators added the capital “S” according to their own opinion, thus obscuring the meaning. The blood of animals had nothing to do with free will, the spirit or moral purity. They were fine physical specimens of no moral significance slaughtered against their own will. While this satisfied God’s requirements of ritual purification (see, for example, Lev 12), there was no ultimate cleansing of the conscience from transgression. The sacrifice of Jesus, on the other hand, was

morally pure, eternal spirit freely offering Himself for the sins of others. Not only was this offering effective, it was *eternally* effective – “*once for all*” (9:12). This was the ultimate plan of God before the world began – to redeem sinful men to Himself by the blood of His Son.

4. What kind of redemption did Jesus obtain with His own blood?
5. What effect does the blood of Jesus have upon sins under the first covenant?
6. From what is our conscience purged by the blood of Jesus?

4. Death and the New Covenant (Heb 9:16-22)

The phrase “Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death” (Heb 9:15) is now further developed. The author makes three points to establish the necessity of the death of God’s Son – a huge stumbling block to the Jew. First, having just described salvation as an “eternal inheritance,” he notes that a will only goes into effect when the testator dies (9:16-17). This should further help the Jew accept why his Messiah had to die. Secondly, blood has always been associated with the dedication of holy things (9:18-21). If the Jew could accept at face value the necessity of the Law, the tabernacle and its furnishings being dedicated with blood, could he not see the necessity of the new covenant and the heavenly tabernacle being dedicated with divine blood? Thirdly, “*without shedding of blood there is no remission*” (9:22). The penalty for violating God’s law is death. By grace God had previously accepted the death of an animal in lieu of the death of the transgressor, but this was insufficient. Ultimate forgiveness required ultimate bloodshed.

7. Compare Hebrews 9:20 with Matthew 26:28. What now represents the blood of the covenant once shed by Jesus?

5. The Better Sacrifice (Heb 9:23-28)

The words “necessary” (Heb 9:23) and “of necessity” (9:16) are important. What had transpired regarding Christ was not happenstance but deliberate: it *had to be*, and God had orchestrated it. In addressing the “once-for-all” sacrifice of Jesus (see 9:12, 25-26, 28), the author brings the future into view: 1) “*It is appointed for men to die once*”; 2) “*But after this the judgment*”; 3) “*He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.*” The death of Jesus reaches far into the past as well as into the future.

8. What is the significance of the phrase “at the end of the ages” (Hebrews 9:26)?
9. Contrast Jesus’ first and second comings. Who will enjoy salvation when He comes?