

Hebrews 12 chapter 9a

Tom Tillman

The writer to these Hebrews continues to explain the superiority of the Lord Jesus Christ over all people and angels and over the old religious system.

Under the previous contract with God... worship was based on three things: the **priesthood, sacrifices** and the **Old Covenant** or contract. As long as man was holy and without sin, he could have fellowship and relationship with God but that only lasted a little while... until Adam and Eve sinned. Then, all men were sinners and unable to come into the presence of God Who is Holy and Sinless. So God, in His grace and mercy, established the **First Covenant**. Through the system of **Sacrifices**, men's sins could be covered over and they could approach God through the mediatory work of the **Priesthood** but even then only the High Priest could ever come into God's presence and that, only once a year for a very short time on the Day of Atonement for the purpose of sprinkling blood on the Mercy Seat of the Ark of the Covenant as a covering for the sins of the people from the previous year. Even so, with all the Old Testament sacrificial system performed by the entire priesthood over 1500 years, man's complete access to God remained impossible.

Then, the writer further showed that the First Covenant was insufficient, that another, better Covenant was God's plan all along and that God had established the first Covenant to prepare the way for that New Covenant. God had established sacrifices of animals to point to the coming perfect sacrifice, the Lord Jesus Christ as **the Lamb of God**, and He had established the first priesthood, all of whom were sinners just like the people they served and all of whom died leaving their office to be filled by another, to point to the need for the new and perfect Priesthood of just one perfect Priest who would never die again, **a Priest after the Order of Melchizedek, the Lord Jesus Christ**.

Jesus Christ is the end, the completion, the fulfillment of all to which the Old Covenant leads.

The writer shows his Hebrew readers of the need for a better **covenant**, a better **priesthood** and a better **sacrifice** from their own scriptures, the Old Testament. He quoted Psalm 110:4 to show God's plan for a new **Priesthood** like Melchizedek: 'The LORD has sworn and will not relent, "You *are* a priest **forever** According to the order of Melchizedek."

And he will show God's plan for a better, Eternal **Sacrifice** when he quotes Psalm 40 in the chapter 10:

'Therefore, when He came into the world, He said:

"Sacrifice and offering You did not desire,

But a body You have prepared for Me.

⁶ In burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin
You had no pleasure.

⁷ Then I said, '**Behold, I have come—**

In the volume of the book **it is written of Me—**

To do Your will, O God.' "

And he shows God's plan for a new **Covenant** by quoting Jeremiah: "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, **when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel** and with the house of Judah..." Jer. 31:31

The first half of this chapter shows the purpose of the Old Covenant: **to point to Jesus Christ, the perfect Priest and Sacrifice of a New and perfect Covenant.**

Chapter 9: 'Then indeed, even the first *covenant* had ordinances of divine service and the earthly sanctuary.'

The first Covenant had its purpose; it was good; it was God given and ordained. It wasn't worthless or bad. It was good and established by God for His purposes.

But... it was, by its very nature, temporary.

It never made anyone perfect or acceptable to God and it never gave man access to God.

He describes the Tabernacle... the portable Sanctuary, built for the 40 years of wandering while the Israelites were led by God from Egypt to the Promised Land of Canaan where God showed His presence and led them in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

God gave Moses the Law and instructions for the Tabernacle and Priesthood but it was all 'earthly,' temporary, meant to eventually be replaced by the Perfect and Eternal... the Heavenly.

Verse 2: For a tabernacle was prepared: the first *part*, in which *was* the lampstand, the table, and the showbread, which is called the sanctuary; ³ and behind the second veil, the part of the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of All, ⁴ which had the golden censer and the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which *were* the golden pot that had the manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant; ⁵ and above it (above the Ark) were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail.

The Hebrews were very familiar with the Tabernacle and its furnishings so he didn't have to go into great detail... but we'll look closer.

The Tabernacle was where God's presence resided in the area at the center of the huge encampment of the 12 tribes of Israel who had been led out of Egypt by Moses in the Exodus. The Tabernacle was enclosed by a fence with only one doorway which pictured the Lord Jesus Christ as our only way into the presence of God. Just inside the gate was the Outer Court where the Israelites, by families, would enter with their animals for sacrifice; they learned that death and shed blood were necessary to cover the sins of their family.

The first thing they came to was the Brazen Altar. Here the priests killed the animals for sacrifice... day in and day out... over and over again... animals killed by the millions... blood flowing by the barrels full.

The next thing within the Outer Court was the Brass Laver, a large bowl for washing and ceremonial cleansing.

Then, separated from the Outer Court was a special enclosed area, behind a veil called **the Holy Place**... it was the **Inner Court** into which only priests could enter for their daily duties. Within the Holy Place were three furnishings: the **Table of Showbread**, with twelve loaves of bread, the **Golden Candlestick**, with 7 wicks and the **Altar of Incense**. Finally, enclosed within the Holy Place, **behind the second Veil** was the **Holy of Holies**.

There was only one thing within the Holy of Holies, the **Ark of the Covenant which itself held three things**: a golden jar containing **Manna**, **Aaron's rod** that budded and the **stone tablets** of the Ten Commandments.

Only the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies and that, only once each year on the Day of Atonement.

Verse 6: Now when these things had been thus prepared, the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing the services. (that is, the Outer Court and the Inner Court of the Holy Place)

The priests had to go past the first veil into the Holy Place every day. In and out, every day, day in and day out... never ending. They had to trim the wicks of the Golden Lampstand and refill it with oil, they had to put fresh incense on the Altar of Incense every day and every Sabbath they had to put 12 fresh loaves of bread on the Table of Showbread, one for each of the 12 tribes of Israel.

All of this represented the coming Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ and His Priestly ministry.

Only one doorway into the Outer Court... He is the Way, the only way into God's presence.

The Brazen Altar upon which blood was shed... His Sacrifice and shed Blood is our only forgiveness.

The Brass Laver where the priests were cleansed... only when our sin is covered by His Blood can we be cleansed from sin, given a new and clean heart and made righteous and holy in God's sight.

The table of Showbread... He is the Bread of Life; He feeds us daily by His Word.

The Golden Lampstand... He is the Light of the World.

The Altar of Incense... incense always represents prayer and intercession going up to God. 'He ever liveth to make intercession for us.' Heb 7:25

The priests' never ending work, day after day, was a picture of Jesus Christ's never ending ministry on our behalf. His blood always covers our sin; He continually cleanses us. He never stops feeding us, He never stops lighting our way and He never stops interceding for us.

All of this clearly points to the work of The Lord Jesus Christ on our behalf, but it's especially clear through what the high priest did on the Day of Atonement.

Verse 7: But into the second part (the Holy of Holies) the high priest *went* alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and *for* the people's sins *committed* in ignorance;

The Day of Atonement pictures Jesus Christ. Throughout the year, everyone came to the Tabernacle, over and over, with their sacrifices for the forgiveness of sins. But all through the year there were many sins that were either forgotten or they didn't even realize they had committed, so no sacrifice had been made for all those sins and they just kept piling up on every person and on every family all year long. But God required payment for every one of those sins also. That's what the Day of Atonement was for. Everyone knew they were a sinner, everyone knew they were guilty before God so everyone looked forward to the day when all those sins of ignorance would be taken care of by the special sacrifice on the Day of Atonement.

The Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur, was and is, the highest and holiest day of the year.

The High Priest would rise up early and thoroughly bathe. Then he would put on his glorious High Priestly garments and first go through all his daily routine of sacrifices... much work, much shed blood.

When he finished his regular daily duties he removed his bloodied ceremonial robes and carefully bathed again. Then he put on a simple, pure white linen garment which symbolized holiness and purity.

Again, this clearly symbolizes Jesus Christ as He laid aside His Heavenly Glory and Majesty to put on the simplicity of human flesh, yet pure human flesh without sin.

'Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men' Philippians 2:6
He laid aside His Heavenly Glory but never His Holiness and Purity.

Here is what the high priest did on the Day of Atonement which so clearly signified the coming work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

After he bathed the second time and put on a simple pure white linen garment, the first thing he did was to go through the only doorway into the Outer Court. There he took coals from the Brazen Altar of sacrifice and put them into a golden sensor mixed with incense which he carried past the first veil, into the Inner Court, past the second veil, into the Holy of Holies and into God's presence. He held the sensor up before him and waved it while filling the Holy of Holies with the smoke of the burning incense. It's a clear picture of Christ interceding for us before we can come into God's presence.

Then he went back out past the veils, through the Inner Court to the Outer Court, where he sacrificed a bullock which he had paid for himself, because it was sacrificed for his own sin. He then collected the shed blood and took it back in, past the veil into the Holy Place, past the second veil, into the Holy of Holies and sprinkled it on the top of the Ark of the Covenant... on the Mercy Seat. Only then, when his own sin was covered, was he able to intercede for people's sins of the past year.

This one act, the sacrifice made for his own sin was not a prefiguring of the ministry of Jesus Christ.

Remember what was written back in Heb. 7:7 "(Jesus Christ) Who needeth not daily as those high priests who offer up sacrifice first for his own sin." Jesus Christ needed no sacrifice; He never sinned.

After sprinkling blood from his bullock on the Mercy Seat, the high priest went back through the veil to the Inner Court and back through the first veil to the Outer Court where other priests waited with two goats. Inside a box were two scarlet cloths. On one was written, 'For Jehovah,' and on the other was written, 'For Azazel.' The high priest then reached into the box and drew lots over the goats. One goat would be sacrificed and the other would be released into the wilderness. The goat which was chosen 'For Jehovah,' was sacrificed by the high priest on the Altar and its blood was collected. Then he took that blood through both veils into the

Holy of Holies and sprinkled it on the Mercy Seat. When he came back out, he laid his hands on the head of the goat chosen 'For Azazel' and confessed first his own sins and then the sins of the people. In so doing he was symbolically transferring all the sins of Israel onto the 'Scapegoat' which was then taken far out into the wilderness and released.

These two goats represented one sacrifice, not two. Lev. 16:5 says, "And he shall take two kids of a goat for **a sin offering.**" The first goat, sacrificed on the Altar, represented satisfaction of God's requirement of death and shed blood for the remission of sin. It represented Jesus Christ's death which satisfied God. He bore all our punishment and all our judgment. His shed blood paid the full penalty for all our sin. That is why He said, on the Cross, 'It is finished.' He had paid it all.

The second goat, the scapegoat which was released in the wilderness, represented the removal of all our sin. All our sin was put onto Jesus Christ as He hung on the Cross and was completely removed from us. That was the moment when God turned away from Him and Jesus cried out from the Cross, "**Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?**" 'My God, My God, Why have You forsaken Me?' That was represented by the scapegoat forsaken in the wilderness. That represented satisfaction for men... propitiation and pardon of our sin... the complete removal of all our sin from us... never to be judged, never to be even remembered by God...

'... as the heavens are high above the earth,

So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him;

¹² As far as the east is from the west,

So far has He removed our transgressions from us.' Psalm 103:11

Jesus Christ was our propitiation and our substitution. He suffered and died to pay the full penalty for all our sin and He completely bore away all our sin... past, present and future.

We were completely forgiven at the Cross.

God instituted the **First Covenant, imperfect and incomplete**, to teach and signify that something, perfect and complete was to come later.

Verse 8: 'The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing:'

Through the First Covenant, God was 'signifying.' It was a type, a picture of what was still to come. Our entrance into the true Holy of Holies... the actual Heavenly Throne Room of God was not yet available until the New Covenant came with the Sacrifice and Priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

God was teaching three things through the Old Covenant.

First, because of his sin, man had no access to God even with the sacrifices and priests. Man was separated from God and there was nothing man could do about it... God would have to rectify it Himself.

Verse 9: 'Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;

Second, the Old Covenant offered only partial cleansing. They were not made perfect, holy, righteous and acceptable to God.

Only the Lord Jesus Christ could do that for us.

The Old Covenant provided no access to God.

No one who died during the time of the Old Testament ever went to Heaven because of the Old Covenant. In fact, no one ever went to Heaven until Jesus Christ died and took them all to Heaven. Adam didn't go to Heaven... David didn't go to Heaven... nor did Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, John the Baptist or Lazarus.

No one went to Heaven... no one had been sanctified or made perfect, holy and righteous... no one was made acceptable to God by the Old Covenant to be able to come into His presence.

The Old Covenant was imperfect and was always planned to be temporary.

If they didn't go to Heaven... where did they go?

Everyone... good and bad... went to Sheol, the 'place of the dead.' God created Sheol somewhere down under the surface of the Earth; it is comprised of two separate sections: the bad side, where the wicked and unbelieving go when they die, is called Hades. The good side where believing Old Testament Saints all went is called Paradise. Paradise is pleasant; Hades... not so much.

When Jesus Christ was Crucified, His Soul and Spirit went down to Paradise where He gathered the Saints who had been waiting for Him... Abraham, Jacob, David, Daniel etc... all of them. He showed Himself as the Messiah whom they had believed in and had been waiting for all their lives; He took them all up to Heaven.

Paul writes about this in Ephesians:

'But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. ⁸ Therefore He says:

"When He ascended on high,
He led captivity captive,
And gave gifts to men."

⁹ (Now this, "He ascended"—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? (to Paradise to get them) He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)' Eph. 4:7

That is the first time any of the Old Testament Saints had true access to God; that is the first time any of them went to Heaven into God's presence. The possible exceptions are Enoch, Elijah but even if they were taken into Heaven, it would not have been because of the Old Covenant, priests or sacrifices. It would have been because they believed God's Word and had put their faith and trust in the promised Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ.

*{When Jesus Christ returned to Heaven with all the Old Testament Saints, it was then that He received His Glorified Eternal Body. Did the Old Testament Saints receive new, glorified bodies at that time? Did they receive eternal rewards at that time? (He gave gifts to men.) Was that a sign pointing to our future Rapture, a prefiguring of the Rapture for the Old Testament Saints? Was that a type and prefiguring of the New Testament Rapture of the Church? Remember, when Paul talks about the Rapture, it concerns only the New Testament Church. He says, 'the **dead in Christ** shall rise first (only born again believers are 'in Christ') and then we (Christians, the Church) who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air...'*

The Rapture is a very special event which pertains to the true Church, the Body of Christ.

On the other hand, it may be that the Old Testament Saints receive their new bodies when the Church Age Saints receive theirs at the Rapture.

Just thinking out loud... setting my mind on things above... using my God given imagination.

We only learn if we're willing to think.}

Back to Chapter 9:

Verse 10: 'Which stood only in meats and drinks, and diverse washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the **time of reformation.**'

Everything about the Old Covenant pertained only to temporary things: foods, washings etc. The Old Covenant was only temporary... it was never meant to be forever; it was always looking forward to the coming of Messiah Who would set things right... Who would bring about the **time of reformation**. This isn't talking about what we commonly refer to as 'The Reformation' during the 16th Century when Martin Luther and others broke away from Catholicism, regaining the understanding of Salvation by faith alone through God's grace, which was actually a time harkening back to this, what we're now studying, God's time of true Reformation when He opened the door for man to be made holy and righteous, by faith, through the finished work of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross.

The Old Covenant taught that there was no true access to God for sinful man, that there was no true cleansing for sinful man, but thankfully, it was all temporary, pointing to and waiting for the New and Eternal **Covenant**,

presenting the new, perfect and Eternal **Sacrifice**, presided over by the new, Perfect and Eternal **High Priest**, the **Lord Jesus Christ**.

Verse 11: 'But Christ came *as* High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect **tabernacle not made with hands**, that is, not of this creation. ¹² Not with the blood of goats and calves, **but with His own blood** He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, **having obtained eternal redemption**. ¹³ For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, ¹⁴ how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?' ¹⁵ And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

The Tabernacle in the wilderness and later, the Temple in Jerusalem were Earthly copies of the Heavenly reality which was the actual Throne Room of God Almighty and the Mercy Seat, hovered over by the Golden Angels was an Earthly copy of God's Throne, hovered over by the Seraphim and Cherabim.

Isaiah wrote, 'I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His *robe* filled the temple. ² Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. ³ And one cried to another and said:

"Holy, holy, holy *is* the LORD of hosts;
The whole earth *is* full of His glory!"

⁴ And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. Isa 6:1

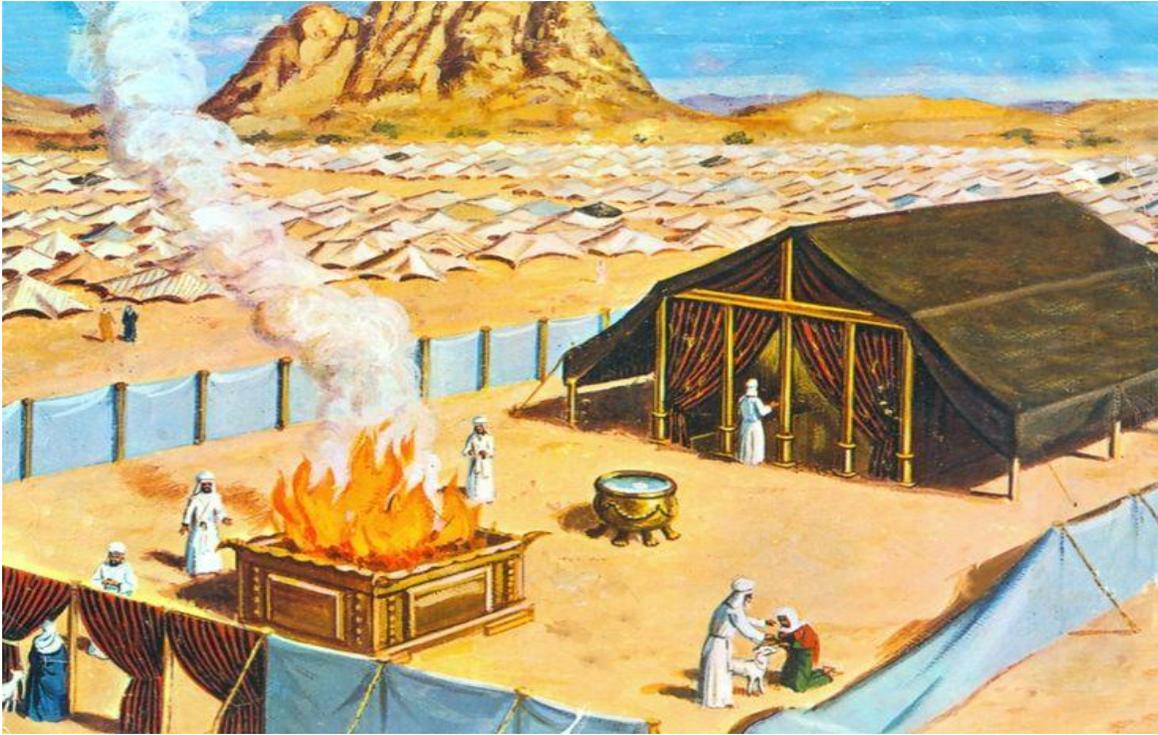
Notice the Seraphim above the Throne and the Throne Room filled with smoke... remember the high priest filling the Holy of Holies with the smoke of incense.

Now, instead of an earthly, sinful high priest who had to offer sacrifices for his own sins before he could minister on behalf of the people, ministering in an earthly copy of God's Throne Room, before an imitation of God's Throne, with imitation angels above it... we now have a perfect sinless Eternal **High Priest** Whose perfect **Sacrifice** has made us perfect and acceptable to God; He is sitting in the actual Throne Room of God at the Father's right hand, with real angels hovering overhead and He is constantly praying and interceding for us, strengthening and encouraging us and greatly looking forward to the time, soon, when He will have us to Himself forever in His physical presence instead of only in His spiritual presence as it is now.

'(He) raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together(now) in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus...' Eph 2:6

We are now made perfect to come into and stay in God's presence.

'Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.' Heb 4:16



Moses' Tabernacle

Exodus 25

