

# CHAPTER 9

The apostle, having declared the Old-Testament dispensation antiquated and vanishing away, proceeds to let the Hebrews see the correspondence there was between the Old Testament and the New; and that whatever was excellent in the Old was typical and representative of the New, which therefore must as far excel the Old as the substance does the shadow. The Old Testament was never intended to be rested in, but to prepare for the institutions of the gospel. And here he treats,

- I.** Of the tabernacle, the place of worship (v. 1-5).
- II.** Of the worship and services performed in the tabernacle (v. 6, 7).
- III.** He delivers the spiritual sense and the main design of all (v. 8 to the end).

## HEBREWS 9:1-7

### THE FURNITURE OF THE TABERNACLE

Here,

**I.** The apostle gives an account of the tabernacle, that place of worship which God appointed to be pitched on earth; it is called *a worldly* sanctuary, wholly of this world, as to the materials of which it was built, and a building that must be taken down; it is called a worldly *sanctuary*, because it was the court and palace of the King of Israel. God was their King, and, as other kings, had his court or place of residence, and attendants, furniture, and provision, suitable thereto. This tabernacle (of which we have the model, Exodus 25-27) was a moving temple, shadowing forth the unsettled state of the church militant, and the human nature of the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom the fullness of the Godhead dwelt bodily. Now of this tabernacle it is said that it was divided into two parts, called a first and a second tabernacle, an inner and an outer part, representing the two states of the church militant and triumphant, and the

two natures of Christ, human and divine. We are also told what was placed in each part of the tabernacle.

**1.** In the outer part: and there were several things, of which you have here a sort of schedule.

**(1.)** The candlestick; doubtless not an empty and unlighted one, but where the lamps were always burning. And there was need of it, for there were no windows in the sanctuary; and this was to convince the Jews of the darkness and the mysterious nature of that dispensation. Their light was only candle-light, in comparison of the fullness of light which Christ, the Sun of righteousness, would bring along with him, and communicate to his people; for all our light is derived from him the fountain of light.

**(2.)** The table and the show-bread set upon it. This table was set directly opposite to the candlestick, which shows that by light from Christ we must have communion with him and with one another. We must not come in the dark to his table, but by light from Christ must discern the Lord's body. On this table were placed twelve loaves for the twelve tribes of Israel, a loaf for a tribe, which stood from sabbath to sabbath, and on that day were renewed. This show-bread may be considered either as the provision of the palace (though the King of Israel needed it not, yet, in resemblance of the palaces of earthly kings, there must be this provision laid in weekly), or the provision made in Christ for the souls of his people, suitable to the wants and to the relief of their souls. He is the bread of life; in our Father's house there is bread enough and to spare; we may have fresh supplies from Christ, especially every Lord's day. This outer part is called *the sanctuary or holy*, because erected to the worship of a holy God, to represent a holy Jesus, and to entertain a holy people, for their further improvement in holiness.

**2.** We have an account of what was in the inner part of the sanctuary, which was within the second veil, and is called *the holiest of all*. This second veil, which divided between the holy and the most holy place, was a type of the body of Christ, by the rending whereof not only a view, but a way, was opened for us into the holiest of all, the type of heaven itself. Now in this part were,

**(1.)** The golden censer, which was to hold the incense, or the golden altar set up to burn the incense upon; both the one and the other were typical of Christ, of his pleasing and prevailing intercession which he makes in

heaven, grounded upon the merits and satisfaction of his sacrifice, upon which we are to depend for acceptance and the blessing from God.

(2.) The ark of the covenant overlaid round about with pure gold, v. 4. This typified Christ, his perfect obedience to the law and his fulfilling of all righteousness for us. Now here we are told both what was in this ark and what was over it.

[1.] What was in it. *First, The golden pot that had manna*, which, when preserved by the Israelites in their own houses, contrary to the command of God, presently putrefied; but now, being by God's appointment deposited here in this house, was kept from putrefaction, always pure and sweet; and this to teach us that it is only in Christ that our persons, our graces, our performances are kept pure. It was also a type of the bread of life we have in Christ, the true ambrosia that gives immortality. This was also a memorial of God's miraculously feeding his people in the wilderness, that they might never forget such signal favour, nor distrust God for the time to come. *Secondly, Aaron's rod that budded*, and thereby showed that God had chosen him of the tribe of Levi to minister before him of all the tribes of Israel, and so an end was put to the murmuring of the people, and to their attempt to invade the priest's office, Numbers 17. This was that rod of God with which Moses and Aaron wrought such wonders; and this was a type of Christ, who is styled *the man, the branch* (<sup>302</sup>Zechariah 6:12), by whom God has wrought wonders for the spiritual deliverance, defence, and supply of his people, and for the destruction of their enemies. It was a type of divine justice, by which Christ the Rock was smitten, and from whom the cool refreshing waters of life flow into our souls. *Thirdly, The tables of the covenant*, in which the moral law was written, signifying the regard God has to the preservation of his holy law, and the care we all ought to have that we keep the law of God — that this we can only do in and through Christ, by strength from him nor can our obedience be accepted but through him.

[2.] What was over the ark (v. 5): *Over it the cherubim of glory shadowing the mercy-seat*. *First, The mercy-seat*, which was the covering of the ark; it was called *the propitiatory*, and it was of pure gold, as long and as broad as the ark in which the tables of the law were laid. It was an eminent type of Christ, and of his perfect righteousness, ever adequate to the dimensions of the law of God, and covering all our transgressions, interposing between the Shechinah, or symbol of God's presence, and our

sinful failures, and covering them. *Secondly, The cherubim of glory* shadowing the mercy-seat, representing the holy angels of God, who take pleasure in looking into the great work of our redemption by Christ, and are ready to perform every good office, under the Redeemer, for those who are the heirs of salvation. The angels attended Christ at his birth, in his temptation, under his agonies, at his resurrection, and in his ascension, and will attend his second coming. God manifest in the flesh was seen, observed, visited, by the angels.

**II.** From the description of the place of worship in the Old-Testament dispensation, the apostle proceeds to speak of the duties and services performed in those places, v. 6. When the several parts and furniture of the tabernacle were thus settled, then what was to be done there?

**1.** The ordinary priests went always into the first tabernacle, to accomplish the service of God. Observe,

**(1.)** None but priests were to enter into the first part of the tabernacle, and this to teach us all that persons not qualified, not called of God, must not intrude into the office and work of the ministry.

**(2.)** The ordinary priests were only to enter into the first part of the tabernacle, it would have been fatal presumption in them to have gone into the holiest of all; and this teaches us that even ministers themselves must know and keep in their proper stations, and not presume to usurp the prerogative of Christ, by offering up incense of their own, or adding their own inventions to the ordinances of Christ, or lording it over men's consciences.

**(3.)** These ordinary priests were to enter into the first tabernacle always; that is, they were to devote themselves and all their time to the work of their office, and not alienate themselves at any time from it; they were to be in an habitual readiness for the discharge of their office, and at all stated appointed times were actually to attend to their work.

**(4.)** The ordinary priests must enter into the first tabernacle, that they might there accomplish the service of God. They must not do the work of God partially or by halves, but stand complete in the whole of his will and counsel; not only beginning well, but proceeding well, and persevering to the end, fulfilling the ministry they had received.

**2.** Into the second, the interior part, went the high priest along, v. 7. This part was an emblem of heaven, and Christ's ascension thither. Here observe,

**(1.)** None but the high priest must go into the holiest; so none but Christ could enter into heaven in his own name, by his own right, and by his own merits.

**(2.)** In entering into the holiest, the high priest must first go through the outer sanctuary, and through the veil, signifying that Christ went to heaven through a holy life and a violent death; the veil of his flesh was rent asunder.

**(3.)** The high priest entered but once a year into the holiest, and in this the antitype excels the type (as in every thing else), for he has entered once for all, during the whole dispensation of the gospel.

**(4.)** The high priest must not enter without blood, signifying that Christ, having undertaken to be our high priest, could not have been admitted into heaven without shedding his blood for us, and that none of us can enter either into God's gracious presence here or his glorious presence hereafter, but by the blood of Jesus.

**(5.)** The high priest, under the law, entering into the holiest, offered up that blood for himself and his own errors first, and then for the errors of the people, v. 7. This teaches us that Christ is a more excellent person and high priest than any under the law, for he has no errors of his own to offer for. And it teaches us that ministers, when in the name of Christ they intercede for others, must first apply the blood of Christ to themselves for their pardon.

**(6.)** When the legal high priest had offered for himself, he must not stop there, but must also offer for the errors of the people. Our high priest, though he needs not to offer for himself, yet forgets not to offer for his people; he pleads the merit of his sufferings for the benefit of his people on earth. Observe,

**[1.]** Sins are errors, and great errors, both in judgment and practice. We greatly err when we sin against God; and who can understand all his errors?

[2.] They are such errors as leave guilt upon the conscience, not to be washed away but by the blood of Christ; and the sinful errors of priests and people must be all done away by the same means, the application of the blood of Christ; we must plead this blood on earth, while he is pleading it in heaven for us.

## ~~398~~ HEBREWS 9:8-14

### THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST

In these verses the apostle undertakes to deliver to us the mind and meaning of the Holy Ghost in all the ordinances of the tabernacle and legal economy, comprehending both place and worship. The scriptures of the Old Testament were given by inspiration of God; holy men of old spoke and wrote as the Holy Ghost directed them. And these Old-Testament records are of great use and significancy, not only to those who first received them, but even to Christians, who ought not to satisfy themselves with reading the institutes of the Levitical law, but should learn what the Holy Ghost signifies and suggests to them thereby. Now here are several things mentioned as the things that the Holy Ghost signified and certified to his people hereby.

**I.** That the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while the first tabernacle was standing, v. 8. This was one lesson the Holy Ghost would teach us by these types; the way to heaven was not so clear and plain, nor so much frequented, under the Old Testament as under the New. It is the honour of Christ and the gospel, and the happiness of those who live under it, that now life and immortality are brought to light. There was not that free access to God then that there is now; God has now opened a wider door; and there is room for more, yea, even for as many as are truly willing to return unto him by Christ.

**II.** That the first tabernacle was only a figure for the time then present, v. 9. It was a dark dispensation, and but of short continuance, only designed for awhile to typify the great things of Christ and the gospel, that were in due time to shine forth in their own brightness, and thereby cause all the shadows to flee away and disappear, as the stars before the rising sun.

**III.** That none of the gifts and sacrifices there offered could make the offerers perfect as pertaining to conscience (v. 9); that is, they could not take away the desert, or defilement, or dominion, of sin; they could not deliver conscience from a dread of the wrath of God; they could neither discharge the debts, nor resolve the doubts, of him who did the service. A man might run through them all in their several orders and frequent returns, and continue to do so all his days, and yet not find his conscience either pacified or purified by them; he might thereby be saved from corporal and temporal punishments that were threatened against the non-observers, but he could not be saved by them from sin or hell, as all those are who believe in Christ.

**IV.** The Holy Ghost hereby signifies that the Old-Testament institutions were by external carnal ordinances imposed upon them until the time of reformation, v. 10. Their imperfection lay in three things: —

- 1.** Their nature. They were but external and carnal meats and drinks, and divers washings. All these were bodily exercises, which profit little; they could only satisfy the flesh, or at best sanctify to the purifying of the flesh.
- 2.** They were not such as were left indifferent to them to use or disuse, but they were imposed upon them by grievous corporal punishments, and this was ordered on purpose to make them look more to the promised Seed, and long more for him.
- 3.** These were never designed for a perpetuity, but only to continue till the time of reformation, till the better things provided for them were actually bestowed upon them. Gospel times are and should be times of reformation, — of clearer light as to all things necessary to be known, — of greater love, inducing us to bear ill-will to none, but good-will to all, and to have complacency in all that are like God, — of greater liberty and freedom both of spirit and speech — and of a more holy living according to the rule of the gospel. We have far greater advantages under the gospel than they had under the law; and either we must be better or we shall be worse. A conversation becoming the gospel is an excellent way of living; nothing mean, foolish, vain, or servile becomes the gospel.

**V.** The Holy Ghost signifies to us hereby that we never make the right use of types but when we apply them to the antitype; and, whenever we do so, it will be very evident that the antitype (as in reason it should) greatly excels the type, which is the main drift and design of all that is said. And,

as he writes to those who believed that Christ had come and that Jesus was the Christ, so he very justly infers that he is infinitely above all legal high priests (v. 11, 12), and he illustrates it very fully. For,

**1.** *Christ is a high priest of good things to come*, by which may be understood,

**(1.)** All the good things that were to come during the Old Testament, and now have come under the New. All the spiritual and eternal blessings the Old-Testament saints had in their day and under their dispensation were owing to the Messiah to come, on whom they believed. The Old Testament set forth in shadows what was to come; the New Testament is the accomplishment of the Old.

**(2.)** All the good things yet to come and to be enjoyed in a gospel state, when the promises and prophecies made to the gospel church in the latter days shall be accomplished; all these depend upon Christ and his priesthood, and shall be fulfilled.

**(3.)** Of all the good things to come in the heavenly state, which will perfect both the Testaments; as the state of glory will perfect the state of grace, this state will be in a much higher sense the perfection of the New Testament than the New Testament was the perfection of the Old. Observe, All things past, present, and to come, were, and are, founded upon, and flowing from, the priestly office of Christ.

**2.** Christ is a high priest *by a greater and more perfect tabernacle* (v. 11), *a tabernacle not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building*, but his own body, or rather human nature, conceived by the Holy Ghost overshadowing the blessed virgin. This was a new fabric, a new order of building, infinitely superior to all earthly structures, not excepting the tabernacle of the temple itself.

**3.** Christ, our high priest, has entered into heaven, not as their high priest entered into the holiest, with the blood of bulls and of goats, but by his own blood, typified by theirs, and infinitely more precious. And this,

**4.** Not for one year only, which showed the imperfection of that priesthood, that it did but typically obtain a year's reprieve or pardon. But our high priest entered into heaven *once for all*, and has obtained not a yearly respite, but eternal redemption, and so needs not to make an annual entrance. In each of the types there was something that showed it was a



type, and resembled the antitype, and something that showed it was but a type, and fell short of the antitype, and therefore ought by no means to be set up in competition with the antitype.

**5.** The Holy Ghost further signified and showed what was the efficacy of the blood of the Old-Testament sacrifices, and thence is inferred the much greater efficacy of the blood of Christ.

**(1.)** The efficacy of the blood of the legal sacrifices extended to the purifying of the flesh (v. 13): it freed the outward man from ceremonial uncleanness and from temporal punishment, and entitled him to, and fitted him for, some external privileges.

**(2.)** He infers very justly hence the far greater efficacy of the blood of Christ (v. 14): *How much more shall the blood of Christ*, etc. Here observe,

**[1.]** What it was that gave such efficacy to the blood of Christ. *First*, It was his offering himself to God, the human nature upon the altar of his divine nature, he being priest, altar, and sacrifice, his divine nature serving for the two former, and his human nature for the last; now such a priest, altar, and sacrifice, could not but be propitiatory. *Secondly*, It was Christ's offering up himself to God through the eternal Spirit, not only as the divine nature supported the human, but the Holy Ghost, which he had without measure, helping him in all, and in this great act of obedience offering himself. *Thirdly*, It was Christ's offering himself to God without spot, without any sinful stain either in his nature or life; this was conformable to the law of sacrifices, which required them to be without blemish. Now further observe,

**[2.]** What the efficacy of Christ's blood is; it is very great. For, *First*, It is sufficient to purge the conscience from dead works, it reaches to the very soul and conscience, the defiled soul, defiled with sin, which is a dead work, proceeds from spiritual death, and tends to death eternal. As the touching of a dead body gave a legal uncleanness, so meddling with sin gives a moral and real defilement, fixes it in the very soul; but the blood of Christ has efficacy to purge it out. *Secondly*, It is sufficient to enable us to serve the living God, not only by purging away that guilt which separates between God and sinners, but by sanctifying and renewing the soul through the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit, purchased by Christ for

this purpose, that we might be enabled to serve the living God in a lively manner.

~~305~~ **HEBREWS 9:15-22**

**THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST**

In these verses the apostle considers the gospel under the notion of a will or testament, the new or last will and testament of Christ, and shows the necessity and efficacy of the blood of Christ to make this testament valid and effectual.

**I.** The gospel is here considered as a testament, the new and last will and testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It is observable that the solemn transactions that pass between God and man are sometimes called a covenant, here a testament. A covenant is an agreement between two or more parties about things that are in their own power, or may be so, and this either with or without a mediator; this agreement takes effect at such time and in such manner as therein declared. A testament is a voluntary act and deed of a single person, duly executed and witnessed, bestowing legacies on such legatees as are described and characterized by the testator, and which can only take effect upon his death. Now observe, Christ is the Mediator of a New Testament (v. 15); and he is so for several ends and purposes here mentioned.

- 1.** To redeem persons from their transgressions committed against the law or first testament, which makes every transgression a forfeiture of liberty, and makes men debtors, and slaves or prisoners, who need to be redeemed.
- 2.** To qualify all those that are effectually called to receive the promise of an eternal inheritance. These are the great legacies that Christ by his last will and testament has bequeathed to the truly characterized legatees.

**II.** To make this New Testament effectual, it was necessary that Christ should die; the legacies accrue by means of death. This he proves by two arguments: —

- 1.** From the general nature of every will or testamentary disposition, v. 16. Where a testament is, where it acts and operates, there must of necessity

by the death of the testator; till then the property is still in the testator's hand, and he has power to revoke, cancel, or alter, his will as he pleases; so that no estate, no right, is conveyed by will, till the testator's death has made it unalterable and effectual.

**2.** From the particular method that was taken by Moses in the ratification of the first testament, which was not done without blood, v. 18, 19, etc. All men by sin had become guilty before God, had forfeited their inheritance, their liberties, and their very lives, into the hands of divine justice; but God, being willing to show the greatness of his mercy, proclaimed a covenant of grace, and ordered it to be typically administered under the Old Testament, but not without the blood and life of the creature; and God accepted the blood of bulls and goats, as typifying the blood of Christ; and by these means the covenant of grace was ratified under the former dispensation. The method taken by Moses, according to the direction he had received from God, is here particularly related

**(1.)** Moses spoke every precept to all the people, according to the law, v. 19. He published to them the tenour of the covenant, the duties required, the rewards promised to those who did their duty, and the punishment threatened against the transgressors, and he called for their consent to the terms of the covenant; and this in an express manner.

**(2.)** Then he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and applied this blood by sprinkling it. This blood and water signified the blood and water that came out of our Saviour's pierced side, for justification and sanctification, and also shadowed forth the two sacraments of the New Testament, baptism and the Lord's supper, with scarlet wool, signifying the righteousness of Christ with which we must be clothed, the hyssop signifying that faith by which we must apply all. Now with these Moses sprinkled,

**[1.]** The book of the law and covenant, to show that the covenant of grace is confirmed by the blood of Christ and made effectual to our good.

**[2.]** The people, intimating that the shedding of the blood of Christ will be no advantage to us if it be not applied to us. And the sprinkling of both the book and the people signified the mutual consent of both parties, God and man, and their mutual engagements to each other in this covenant through Christ, Moses at the same time using these words, *This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you.* This blood, typifying the

blood of Christ, is the ratification of the covenant of grace to all true believers.

[3.] He sprinkled the tabernacle and all the utensils of it, intimating that all the sacrifices offered up and services performed there were accepted only through the blood of Christ, which procures the remission of that iniquity that cleaves to our holy things, which could not have been remitted but by that atoning blood.

## ~~3023~~ HEBREWS 9:23-28

### THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST

In this last part of the chapter, the apostle goes on to tell us what the Holy Ghost has signified to us by the legal purifications of the patterns of the things in heaven, inferring thence the necessity of better sacrifices to consecrate the heavenly things themselves.

**I.** The necessity of purifying the patterns of the things in heaven, v. 23. This necessity arises both from the divine appointment, which must always be obeyed, and from the reason of that appointment, which was to preserve a proper resemblance between the things typifying and the things typified. It is observable here that the sanctuary of God on earth is a pattern of heaven, and communion with God in his sanctuary is to his people a heaven upon earth.

**II.** The necessity that the heavenly things themselves should be purified with better sacrifices than of bulls and goats; the things themselves are better than the patterns, and must therefore be consecrated with better sacrifices. These heavenly things are the privileges of the gospel state, begun in grace, perfected in glory. These must be ratified by a suitable sanction or consecration; and this was the blood of Christ. Now it is very evident that the sacrifice of Christ is infinitely better than those of the law.

**1.** From the places in which the sacrifices under the law, and that under the gospel, were offered. Those under the law were the holy places made with hands, which are but figures of the true sanctuary, v. 24. Christ's sacrifice, though offered upon earth, was by himself carried up into heaven, and is there presented in a way of daily intercession; for he appears in the

presence of God for us. He has gone to heaven, not only to enjoy the rest and receive the honour due to him, but to appear in the presence of God for us, to present our persons and our performances, to answer and rebuke our adversary and accuser, to secure our interest, to perfect all our affairs, and to prepare a place for us.

**2.** From the sacrifices themselves, v. 26. Those under the law were the lives and blood of other creatures of a different nature from the offerers — the blood of beasts, a thing of small value, and which would have been of none at all in this matter had it not had a typical respect to the blood of Christ; but the sacrifice of Christ was the oblation of himself; he offered his own blood, truly called, by virtue of the hypostatical union, *the blood of God*; and therefore of infinite value.

**3.** From the frequent repetition of the legal sacrifices. This showed the imperfection of that law; but it is the honour and perfection of Christ's sacrifice that, being once offered, it was sufficient to all the ends of it; and indeed the contrary would have been absurd, for then he must have been still dying and rising again, and ascending and then again descending and dying; and the great work had been always *in fieri* — *always doing*, and always to do, but never finished, which would be as contrary to reason as it is to revelation, and to the dignity of his person: *But now once in the end of the world hath he appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.* The gospel is the last dispensation of the grace of God to men.

**4.** From the inefficacy of the legal sacrifices, and the efficacy of Christ's sacrifice. The legal sacrifices could not of themselves put away sin, neither procure pardon for it now power against it. Sin would still have lain upon us, and had dominion over us; but Jesus Christ by one sacrifice has made an end of sin, he has destroyed the works of the devil.

**III.** The apostle illustrates the argument from the appointment of God concerning men (v. 27, 28), and observes something like it in the appointment of God concerning Christ.

**1.** The appointment of God concerning men contains in it two things: —

**(1.)** That they must once die, or, at least, undergo a change equivalent to death. It is an awful thing to die, to have the vital knot loosed or cut asunder, all relations here dropped at once, an end put to our probation and preparation state, and to enter into another world. It is a great work, and it

is a work that can be but once done, and therefore had need to be well done. This is matter of comfort to the godly, that they shall die well and die but once; but it is matter of terror to the wicked, who die in their sins, that they cannot return again to do that great work better.

**(2.)** It is appointed to men that after death they shall come to judgment, to a particular judgment immediately after death; for the soul returns to God as to its judge, to be determined to its eternal state; and men shall be brought to the general judgment, at the end of the world. This is the unalterable decree of God concerning men — they must die, and they must be judged. It is appointed for them, and it is to be believed and seriously considered by them.

**2.** The appointment of God concerning Christ, bearing some resemblance to the other.

**(1.)** He must be once offered, to bear the sins of many, of all the Father had given to him, of all who should believe in his name. He was not offered for any sin of his own; he was wounded for our transgressions. God laid on him the iniquity of all his people; and these are many, though not so many as the rest of mankind; yet, when they are all gathered to him, he will be the first-born among many brethren.

**(2.)** It is appointed that Christ shall appear the second time without sin, to the salvation of those who look for him.

**[1.]** He will then appear without sin; at his first appearance, though he had no sin of his own, yet he stood charged with the sins of many; he was the Lamb of God that bore upon him the sins of the world, and then he appeared in the form of sinful flesh; but his second appearance will be without any such charge upon him, he having fully discharged it before, and then his visage shall not be marred, but shall be exceedingly glorious.

**[2.]** This will be to the salvation of all who look for him; he will then perfect their holiness, their happiness; their number shall then be accomplished, and their salvation completed. Observe, It is the distinguishing character of true believers that they are looking for Christ; they look to him by faith; they look for him by hope and holy desires. They look for him in every duty, in every ordinance, in every providence now; and they expect his second coming, and are preparing for it; and

though it will be sudden destruction to the rest of the world, who scoff at the report of it, it will be eternal salvation to those who look for it.