

“Christ in the Tabernacle”
Hebrews 9:11-17
(Preached at Trinity, July 21, 2024)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citation will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. The Book of Hebrews was written in the context of persecution. Many in the Jewish community were paying a high price for their commitment to Christ. There were some who had turned back to Judaism and others were being tempted. The author has been systematically teaching the infinite superiority of Christ. He is superior to the Old Covenant prophets, superior to the angels, to Moses, Joshua, and Aaron. Why would these Hebrews who had seen the excellence of Christ consider turning away? The Old Covenant was but a foreshadow of the perfection of Christ. Jesus Christ is all in all.
2. This is not irrelevant for us today. Do you see Jesus Christ as all glorious and worthy of following? Is He the source of your hope and the confidence of your life? Is He sufficient to keep you pressing on? Too many are tempted to return to their former way of living. The Book of Hebrews puts Jesus in His proper place. As we turn our attention to Him this afternoon may our hearts be lifted up in praise and our confidence in Him be magnified.
3. Throughout **Chapter 8** we saw that Jesus as the great High Priest is superior to the Old Covenant. The shadow had to be replaced by the fullness.
Hebrews 8:13 NAU - "When He said, "A new *covenant*," He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear."
4. The Book of Hebrews stresses that Jesus as High Priest has ushered in the New Covenant which fulfills and replaces the Old Covenant and the Levitical priesthood. The New Covenant in Christ had been working in the background since Genesis 3:15. God has been saving His elect people through Christ. There has never been another way of salvation. The Old Covenant symbols shined with the excellence of Christ.
5. In **Chapter 9** the author reminds us that the Old Covenant had it's earthly Tabernacle. Last time we saw it was a magnificent structure. But Jesus is the true Tabernacle. The earthly Tabernacle was but a symbol of the more perfect Tabernacle in Christ.
 - A. The first Tabernacle had to be destroyed. The curtain baring the way to God had to be torn, the way opened.
Hebrews 9:8 NAU - "The Holy Spirit *is* signifying this, that the way into the holy place has not yet been disclosed while the outer tabernacle is still standing,"
The word for "outer" is πρῶτος means "first" which is how most translations render it.
In other words, the way unto God was not possible until the wall of separation was removed.
 - B. Jesus made this possible. He entered through the greater and more perfect heavenly Tabernacle.
Hebrews 9:11 NAU - "But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, *He entered* through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands"

- I. The earthly Tabernacle served as a type of that which was to come.
- A. It was a sign or symbol
1. The word for “symbol” in **Verse 9** is παραβολή which is most often translated “parable” – 47 of the fifty times it’s used in the NT—it refers to a figure of speech where one idea is set beside another by way of illustration. The sign bears testimony to the reality.
 2. The earthly Tabernacle was deficient in relieving the guilt of the human conscience. The Law continued to speak, “Guilty!”
Hebrews 9:9 NAU - "Accordingly both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make the worshiper perfect in conscience,"
- B. Likewise, the blood of the animal sacrifices served as a type – a sign or symbol.
1. The blood could not provide lasting forgiveness. It could not bring relief to the conscience. The atoning sacrifice was made and yet the guilt remained.
 2. Rivers of blood was spilled but it could not give relief.
 3. The Old Covenant was a progressive revelation of the covenant of grace. It served to point to the perfection in Christ. The animal sacrifices were never meant to save. They were never able to provide eternal salvation.
 4. How were Old Covenant saints saved? They were saved by believing in God’s promise of Christ.
 - a. Jesus is the seed of the woman.
Genesis 3:15 NAU - "And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel."
 - b. Jesus is the seed promised to Abraham.
Genesis 22:18 NAU - "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."
 - c. Abraham believed this promise unto salvation.
Genesis 15:6 NAU - "Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness."
Romans 4:3 NAU - "For what does the Scripture say? "And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness."
 5. The Old Covenant saints looked forward to the fulfillment of God’s promise of a Savior. We look backward to the fulfillment of God’s promise of a Savior. That promise is Christ. There has never been another way of salvation.

- II. Jesus entered the perfect heavenly Tabernacle offering up the perfect sacrifice.
Hebrews 9:11 NAU - " But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, *He entered* through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation;"
- A. Jesus was the fullness of God's promise.
1. Jesus entered the perfect Tabernacle that was not of human construction – not made with hands.
 2. The earthly Tabernacle revealed to Moses was a copy of the heavenly Tabernacle.
Hebrews 8:5 NAU - "who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned *by God* when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for, "See," He says, "that you make all things according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain."
- B. Jesus was the perfect sacrifice.
Hebrews 9:12-14 NAU - "and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. ¹³ For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, ¹⁴ how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"
1. Jesus didn't enter into the heavenly Tabernacle, sprinkle His blood, and then exit so that it could be repeated the next year. Jesus accomplished atonement once and for all.
 2. It will never again be repeated. This is one of the errors of the Roman Catholic Mass.
- III. Jesus is the Mediator of a more perfect Covenant
- A. The Old Covenant was a unilateral agreement God made with His people.
1. God confirmed His covenant with an oath.
Genesis 22:16 NAU - "By Myself I have sworn, declares the LORD"
 2. At Mount Sinai Moses read from Law and Israel pledged obedience to the Covenant.
Exodus 24:7 NAU - "Then he took the book of the covenant and read *it* in the hearing of the people; and they said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient!"
 3. It was sealed with the blood of the animal sacrifice.
 4. Israel was not faithful to their pledge. They continued to break God's Law. The covenant became obsolete because the blood of the animals could not result in a clear conscience. Transgressions committed against the covenant could not be permanently erased by offering animal sacrifices. The purification had to be repeated over and over.

B. The Old Covenant was a broken covenant.

Jeremiah 31:31-32 NAU - "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, ³² not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD."

1. The Old Covenant sacrifices were a constant reminder of their guilt.
2. In **Verses 13-15** the author contrasts the sacrifices of the OC with the sacrifice of Christ.
3. Jesus entered into the true heavenly Tabernacle.
Hebrews 9:24 NAU - "For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a *mere* copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;"
4. The sacrifice of Christ ushered in the New Covenant.
Hebrews 9:15 NAU - "For this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant,"
Jesus confirmed this at the Last Supper.
Matthew 26:27-28 NAU - "And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave *it* to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; ²⁸ for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins."
5. The sacrifice of Christ accomplished what the Old Covenant sacrifices could not do. The blood of Christ cleanses from sin – it is a perfect propitiation.
Hebrews 2:17 NAU - "Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people."
6. This is the promise of the New Covenant.
Jeremiah 31:34 NAU - "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

IV. **Verses 16-17** describe a necessary death

A. Context is important

1. Often a word's meaning can only be ascertained by the context of its use.
 - a. For example, the word "elder" in the Bible can refer to an aged person or to an office in the church. Only the context tells us which way it should be understood.
 - b. The word "letter" can refer to a single letter of the alphabet or it can refer to an entire document.
2. In **Verse 15** the word διαθήκη is speaking of a covenant. The catechism defines a covenant as an agreement between two or more persons. It can refer to a contract, a pledge, or a commitment.

3. In **Verses 16-17** the word διαθήκη has a different meaning. The NASB still translates it “covenant” but its meaning is different. Here it is referring to a “testament.” We sometimes hear of a last will and testament. **Hebrews 9:16 ESV** - "For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established."
In order for a person’s will to be carried out he must first die. Before his death it isn’t binding. It can even be changed. But after the death occurs it is fixed and binding.
Hebrews 9:16-17 NAU - "For where a covenant is, there must of necessity be the death of the one who made it. ¹⁷ For a covenant is valid *only* when men are dead, for it is never in force while the one who made it lives."
 4. By the death of Christ He sealed the New Covenant thus ushering in its promises as a binding oath.
- B. Jesus Christ is God’s promise. He sealed it with His own blood.
1. In the Old Covenant Israel was required to receive the covenant and obey. As the children of Israel were required to receive and obey God’s covenant we too must receive God’s promise and obey.
 2. The Gospel is always presented in command mode.
The Gospel is not an offer, it is a command.
"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved"
 3. Salvation is by grace. It cannot be earned. It is bought for us by Christ. Yet salvation demands a response of obedience and submission.
 4. God commands men to turn from their sinful disobedience and trust in Christ.

Conclusion:

1. There is no more physical temple. Levitical priesthood sacrifices are ended. Jesus Christ is now our High Priest and Holy Temple. We now live in the presence of Christ.
2. The way of salvation has been provided. Jesus has entered into the heavenly Tabernacle and offered the full, final, sacrifice of His own blood. All who trust Him now have access before the throne of God.
3. Most will not have Christ. Most don’t see His significance. Most are not captivated by His excellence. They ignore Him and deny His authority.
The author of Hebrews is reminding his readers that Jesus must not be ignored. Sadly, after the Temple veil was torn, God demonstrating access into His throne room through Christ, the priests sewed it back. It was a manmade attempt to do it their own way. And it continues—manmade attempts to approach God. But there is no other way. Jesus is the only entrance into the Holy of Holies. He must be received by faith.