

# Hebrews

## Chapter 9, Part 1

### I. Introduction

- a. As we have seen, this book was written to prove to a Jewish audience (some believers and some unbelievers) that Jesus is superior to all of Judaism
  - i. Thus far, He has been shown to be superior to angels, prophets, Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and the Jewish priesthood (Aaronic and Levitical)
    1. None of these are listed as anything but faithful men
      - a. The Lord doesn't in any way discount their faithfulness and even promotes the faithfulness of some (**Hebrews 3:5**)
        - i. By using faithful men and showing Christ to be superior to them, He shows Christ to be extremely superior
- b. We have made it into the portion of the book where the priesthood of Jesus is being shown to be superior to the priesthood of the old covenant
  - i. In connection, the covenant which Christ mediates for is superior to the old covenant
    1. Today's lesson moves forward with this thought

### II. Commentary

#### a. **Verses 1-5**

- i. Much has been said concerning the superiority of Jesus and the new covenant
  1. However, that is not mean to imply that the old covenant was completely useless – it wasn't
- ii. God designed the old covenant so we know there was some benefit to it
  1. The intended purpose, however, was not to remove sin
    - a. The primary purpose of the old covenant was merely to point forth to the coming Messiah Who would Himself remove sin
- iii. Everything in the Tabernacle pointed to Jesus
  1. There was one door which pictured Jesus as the One Way to God
  2. The brazen altar showed Jesus as the only sacrifice for sin
    - a. It took place in the outer court which showed that His death would take place here on Earth in the sight of mankind
  3. The brazen laver showed our need to be cleansed if we are to fellowship with God intimately
    - a. This cleansing surely comes from Jesus
  4. The table of the bread of the Presence shows how Jesus feeds us daily
  5. The seven tiered lampstand (the Menorah) shows how Jesus lights our path, as believers, daily
    - a. Notice, this does not picture Jesus as the Light of the World
      - i. This light is inside the Tabernacle proper away from the sight of the world

1. Jesus said, “As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world” (**John 9:5**)
  - a. Today, the world is in darkness (**Colossians 1:13**)
6. The altar of incense shows Christ as Intercessor for us
  - a. This passage seemingly puts this altar behind the veil in the Most Holy Place
  - b. The Greek word *qumiasthrion* translated “*altar of incense*” in **verse 4** gives some difficulty here as it was actually located in the Holy Place, not the Most Holy Place
    - i. Strong’s gives two possible meanings of it
      1. A utensil for fumigating or burning incense
      2. An altar of incense
    - ii. Bible versions and Bible translators are torn as to exactly which way to translate it
      1. A. T. Robertson said, “The present active participle *ecousa* (feminine singular) agrees with *skhnh* (the Holy of Holies). It is not certain whether *qumiathrion* here means censer or altar of incense. In the LXX (**2 Chronicles 26:19; Exodus 8:11; IV Macc. 7:11**) it means censer and apparently so in the inscriptions and papyri. But in Philo and Josephus it means altar of incense for which the LXX has *qusiasthrion tou qumiato* (**Exodus 30:1-10**). Apparently the altar of incense was in the Holy Place, though in **Exodus 30:1-10** it is left quite vague. B puts it in verse **Hebrews 9:2**. So we leave the discrepancy unsettled. At any rate the altar of incense was used for the Holy of Holies (“its ritual associations,” Dods).
        - a. In other words, perhaps the greatest Greek mind of our generation wasn’t sure
          - i. But his last statement is the key
          - ii. The “*censer*” or “*altar of incense*” wasn’t kept behind the veil but was used in connection with it on the day of atonement (**Exodus 30:1-10**)
          - iii. And so Gill says, “It should be observed, that the apostle does not say, that the golden censer was laid up in the holy of holies, and kept there, but that it “had” it; as it had it on the day of atonement, when it was carried in

there by the high priest, who there made use of it; and it was for the use of it in that place, that it was peculiarly designed.

7. The ark of the covenant and the mercy seat certainly showed Jesus as being our sacrifice and offering His blood in the real temple
- iv. The author of Hebrews didn't go into great detail on these things
  1. But he didn't need to
    - a. The people to whom he was writing had great knowledge on this subject

**b. Verses 6-10**

- i. The priests went "*regularly into the first section, performing their ritual duties*"
  1. In fact, they went into the Holy Place daily to trim the wicks and add oil to the lampstand
    - a. They also daily added incense on the altar of incense
  2. Weekly on the Sabbath day, the priests changed the bread on the Table
    - a. They would eat the old loaves
  3. This never ending work pictured Jesus as constantly ministering on our behalf even now
    - a. He daily feeds us, lights us and intercedes for us
- ii. The High Priest entered the Most Holy Place only once a year on the Day of Atonement, or Yom Kippur (**Leviticus 16**)
  1. The High Priest entered the Most Holy Place several times on this day
    - a. To put the smoke of incense
    - b. To offer the blood of a bull for himself
    - c. To offer the blood of a goat for the people
  2. The Law had penalties for known sins which were to be enforced throughout the year
    - a. However, many sins of ignorance mounted up throughout the year
      - i. This Day of Atonement was for those sins
- iii. This entire service in the Tabernacle taught several things
  1. The worship of God was limited in the old covenant
    - a. The curtain remained
  2. The cleansing of the old covenant was merely external cleansing that never truly put sin away
    - a. Even the goat labeled Azazel (sometimes called the scapegoat) could make it's way back into the camp
    - b. There was no sure assurance of cleansing but only a picture of it
  3. The cleansing of the old covenant was temporary
    - a. This was signified by all of the repetition
- iv. The Tabernacle service was merely "*symbolic*"

1. This Greek word is *parabolhē* (*parabolē*) from which we get the English word “parable”
  - a. It was merely a picture of a spiritual truth
    - i. The Tabernacle and its services pointed forth to the real and actual salvation through Jesus Christ
    - ii. The old covenant pointed forth to and showed the necessity of the new covenant which actually sanctified and cleansed men
- v. The old covenant was temporary and was only intended to remain “*until a time of reformation*”
  1. The Greek word here translated “*reformation*” is *διορθωσις* (*diorthōsis*)
    - a. Strong’s defines this word as “in a physical sense, a making straight, restoring to its natural and normal conditions something which in some way protrudes or has got out of line, as broken or misshapen limbs”
      - i. The work of Jesus as the High Priest of the new covenant straightened out what the old covenant never could
        1. He actually put sin away by the sacrifice of His own body and the offering of His own blood
        2. The old covenant pointed forth to Him and has now become obsolete (**Hebrews 8:13**)