

Lesson Fourteen

(9:1-10)

THE TABERNACLE

9 Now even the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly sanctuary. ²For a tent was prepared, the outer one, in which were the lampstand and the table and the bread of the Presence; it is called the Holy Place. ³Behind the second curtain stood a tent called the Holy of Holies, ⁴having the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, which contained a golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; ⁵above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail.

6These preparations having thus been made, the priests go continually into the outer tent, performing their ritual duties; ⁷but into the second only the high priest goes, and he but once a year, and not without taking blood which he offers for himself and for the errors of the people. ⁸By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the sanctuary is not yet opened as long as the outer tent is still standing ⁹(which is symbolic for the present age). According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot perfect the

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conscience of the worshiper, ¹⁰but deal only with food and drink and various ablutions, regulations for the body imposed until the time of redemption.

The tabernacle was built by Moses and the Israelites according to God's revealed plan. It, though, was but a shadow and copy, a type of what was to be revealed later. The very fact that it was a tent, and could be carried about, should have "said" something to all who knew about it. This lesson dwells upon the tabernacle, the sanctuary wherein the priests served. The importance of it, together with its deficiency, is specified, so that the first readers might see again how much they had in Christianity, and what loss would be sustained should they accept Judaism in its stead.

9:1 — The place of religious worship under the Old Covenant was highly visible, with its various items of furniture, the different personnel, etc.

V. 2 — **a tent** — This tent, approximately 15' x 45' x 15' in dimension, was within a courtyard, approximately 150' x 75' in size. Within the courtyard was an altar for the various sacrifices and a laver, containing water, for use by the priests. Various sacrifices were offered as required by law.

Within the Holy Place, the priests served daily, offering incense and trimming the lampstand. Once a week, on Saturday, the loaves on the table were replaced with new ones, and the old unleavened loaves being consumed by the priests.

The Holy Place in which the daily service was done was separated from the Holy of Holies by a heavy curtain made of fine cloth. Within the Holy of Holies, originally, was the ark of the covenant, in which were placed a pot of manna, the two tablets of stone containing the ten "words" God gave to Moses, and Aaron's rod (Numbers 17). The top of the ark was called the "mercy seat," the place where the high priest, on the Day of Atonement, would sprinkle sacrificial blood on behalf of himself and the people of Israel.

The mercy seat, called the place of propitiation/expiation (see on 2:17), represented the place where sins were recognized, atoned for, and forgiven. It was the place, in effect, where God allowed man to submit an acceptable offering and be reconciled to God.

As we study these various things, let us not neglect to observe that they are but types, shadows, predictive in nature. We are not told here what each of them specifically represents, if anything, in the Christian religion. What is made plain is that all of it has been replaced by Jesus and the system he represents. He is the sacrifice, offered once for all, for sins. The Holy Place and the Holy of Holies, once divided by a curtain, have been united, the veil having been torn in two pieces at Jesus' death,

Matthew 27:51, signifying that the two are one. They both are equal to the true tent, 8:2, which is in heaven, made by God. Some over the years have said that each item represents something in Christianity, but our text does not so speak. We may find similarities in the different items, but our text doesn't so affirm. We need to practice teaching what is plainly taught, but also recognize what is unclear, or a matter of inference.

V. 6 — **ritual duties** — The Greek term is *λατρεία*, generally denoting religious service, especially to God. See Matthew 4:10; Luke 1:74; John 16:2; Acts 7:7; Romans 9:4; 12:1; II Timothy 1:3; Revelation 7:15. In our book, only here in ch. 9, v. 1, 6, 14.

V. 7 — **the second** — The outer/first part, known as the Holy Place, had things occur in it every day. The inner/second part, the Holy of Holies, was only entered on the Day of Atonement (about our October 1) and only as the text indicates.

V. 8 — The significant point of this is expressed: there was no way for man to approach God. His sin had separated him, and the law, in a manner of speaking, kept him separate. The particular arrangement, the author says was the work of God through the Holy Spirit.

V. 9 — **symbolic** — That is, it was a parable with a meaning. As the book has already shown in several places, Jesus as our high priest has passed through the veil, and opened the way to God. Therefore we, as Christians, may boldly go right to the throne of grace.

conscience — The Greek term is *συνείδησις*. It means either the idea of "conscience," or the broader and more significant term "consciousness." The last is the preferred translation, both here, v. 14, and in 10:2, 23. It could mean either idea in 13:18. The fact is that men realized that they were still conscious of sin, having perceived that it really was impossible for the blood of goats and bulls, etc., to cleanse them from sin. Whenever they worshipped, they went away as empty in regard to forgiveness as when they came. As a result, the Hebrew epistle is a great letter of emancipation, assuring all who read that Jesus can ransom us from sin, cleansing us completely, and continually. It is a great reason to rejoice!

V. 10 — **food and drink . . . ablutions** — If the above verse states the truth, then in fact all that was done was actually done only in regard to things other than sin. Sin, as such, the Mosaic law could not touch.

reformation — The Greek term is *διόρθωσις*. It meant the general idea of straightening something up, as a crooked wall, a broken bone, etc. The implication is that the system built on Jesus was God's means of putting things right, of bringing order out of chaos. How foolish, then, to even contemplate leaving such a glorious new order for that which is broken, weak, incapable. Clearly implied, too, is the fact that the old system was but a temporary thing at best.

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QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 14:

127. Compare the old sanctuary with the new sanctuary, as described in our text (you may need to use 8:1-6).
128. Where does the text affirm that the things mentioned in 9:1-10 equal some specific item(s) in the Christian system (so that no assumptions or inferences are required)?
129. The basic problem with the old system is pointed out in what verse?
130. Does the Christian system claim to provide forgiveness of sins (thereby giving a clean, new life)?
131. What in actuality was the old system able to do, as stated in our text?
132. What is the time of reformation?