

THE PHYSICAL TABERNACLE **(Hebrews 9:1-10)**

1. The description of the physical tabernacle (Hebrews 9:1-5).

- a. Verse 1 lets us know that the writer is speaking about things under the first covenant.
 - i. The word “ordinances” means legal rights.
 - ii. There were things that had to be done before God, which would include the sacrifices, thank offerings and things like that.
 - iii. It also had a sanctuary, or tabernacle on earth, which is the meaning of worldly.
- b. The tabernacle that was made is described in Exodus 26.
 - i. In that chapter we read of the covering for the tabernacle, as well as the fact that there were two areas, the holy place and the most holy place.
 - ii. Verse 2 contains what was in the holy place.
- c. In the holy place, all the priests could enter and do the work that was required there.
- d. The lampstand was there.
 - i. This is spoken of in Exodus 25:31-40 and Exodus 26:35.
 - ii. It was placed on the south wall of the tabernacle.
 - iii. It was made of gold and had seven lamps for burning the olive oil.
 - iv. This lampstand was never allowed to go out.
- e. The next piece mentioned is the table.
 - i. This is spoken of in Exodus 25:23-30, Exodus 26:35.
 - ii. This table was overlaid with pure gold and it was set against the north wall of the tabernacle.
- f. On it sat the next item mentioned, which is the shewbread.
 - i. This bread is described for us in Leviticus 24:5-9.
 - ii. There were 12 loaves kept on the table, being set up in 2 rows of 6.
 - iii. Every sabbath day, fresh loaves were brought in and the old ones were eaten by the priests.
- g. There was then a veil that was set up between the holy and most holy places.
 - i. In this area, only the high priest could come once a year.
 - ii. The veil is described in Exodus 26:31-33.
- h. The first item mentioned is the censer.
 - i. It is interesting that there is disagreement over what this is.
 - ii. Some believe it to be the golden altar of incense that was placed right next to the veil in the holy place.
 - (1) It is described in Exodus 30:1-10.
 - (2) Some believe the writer is describing this and that it is said to be in the most holy place because the incense, which represent prayers, was always before the presence of God.
 - iii. Others believe it to be the censer that was used every year by the high priest to bring in the incense before the mercy seat.
- i. He then mentions the ark of the covenant.
 - i. This was a chest made of a certain type wood that was four feet long and two and half feet wide (Exodus 25:10-16).
 - ii. It was covered with gold and it was the most sacred item in the tabernacle.

- iii. In it was contained:
 - (1) The golden pot of manna (Exodus 16:32-34).
 - (2) Aaron's rod that budded (Numbers 17:1-11).
 - (3) The tablets containing the 10 commandments (Deuteronomy 10:1-5).
- j. Over the ark was the mercy seat.
 - i. This is described in Exodus 25:17-22.
 - ii. The Lord would appear in a cloud above the mercy seat (Leviticus 16:2; 2 Kings 19:15).
- k. The writer tells us that he does not have time to talk about these things any more.
 - i. There is a great deal that could be said about them.
 - ii. Each item were shadows of things to come in the New Testament.
 - iii. However, that was not his purpose, and it isn't ours either.

2. The ritual of the physical tabernacle (Hebrews 9:6-7).

- a. The writer briefly describes the work done in the first part of the tabernacle, the holy place.
- b. There was work to be done every day in the temple.
 - i. They would trim the lamps on the lampstand (Exodus 27:20-21).
 - ii. They would offer incense on the altar of incense (Exodus 30:7-8).
 - iii. On the sabbath day, they would change out the shewbread (Leviticus 24:5-9).
- c. In the most holy place, only the high priest could enter and then, only once per year.
 - i. Leviticus 16:2 tells us the high priest would die if he came in any other time.
 - ii. He would enter in on the Day of Atonement, which was the 10th day of the 7th month (Leviticus 16:29).
- d. When he went in, he would do three things:
 - i. He would offer the incense to cloud the mercy seat (Leviticus 16:12-13).
 - ii. He would sprinkle the seat with the blood of a bull, as a sin offering for himself and his family (Leviticus 16:11, 14).
 - iii. He would sprinkle the seat with the blood of a goat, as a sin offering for the people (Leviticus 16:15).
- e. This is then a summary of what went into the tabernacle and the work done in it.

3. The limitations of the physical tabernacle (Hebrews 9:8-10).

- a. There were some things that were symbolic about the physical tabernacle.
 - i. The writer already told us that it was an example and shadow of heavenly things (Hebrews 8:4-5).
 - ii. Hebrews 10:1 and Colossians 2:16-17 tells us that the law served as a shadow of that which was to come.
 - iii. It served as symbol for what would come in Christ.
 - iv. It symbolized what the Lord would do for us in reality when He entered heaven.
 - v. The writer will discuss this in the rest of chapter 9.
- b. This was inspirations way of showing that the way into heaven was not yet

opened for man.

i. As long as the first tabernacle was in use, which would also include the temple, the way to heaven was shut.

ii. It would take Jesus to open it, which will be discussed later as we just mentioned.

c. The limitations mentioned here are that the sacrifices and gifts offered by those that came to the tabernacle didn't make the offerer perfect concerning his conscience.

d. The ceremonies involved carnal or physical ordinances that were to be observed until worship was to change.

i. Just as the tabernacle was earthly or physical, so were the ordinances of worship.

ii. We know that in heaven, it is spiritual.

iii. The things done under the Old Law were done to satisfy the physical senses of man.

iv. These were all designed to be temporary.

v. In the times of reformation, now, God demands that which is spiritual.

vi. This worship focuses on the inner man.

(1) Singing from the heart.

(2) Using our minds to remember Jesus during the Lord's Supper.

From material by Mark Copeland.