

# THE NEED FOR THE NEW

Hebrews 9:1–10

# An Introduction to Hebrews 9

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- The *recipients* of Hebrews: a mixed Jewish-Christian audience.
- The *purpose* of Hebrews: the superiority of Jesus Christ (“*Jesus is better!*”).
- The *context* of Hebrews 9:
  - Jesus’ Superior Position (1:1–4:13 → Psalm 8:4–6; 97:7–11)
  - Jesus’ Superior Priesthood (4:14–7:28 → Psalm 110:4)
  - Jesus’ Superior Ministry (8:1–10:18 → Jeremiah 31:31–34)



# An Outline of Hebrews 9

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- I. The Operation of the Old Covenant (9:1–10)
  - A. Its Sphere Is Earthly (vv. 1–5)
  - B. Its Function Is Repetitive (vv. 6–7)
  - C. Its Purpose Is Illustrative (vv. 8–9a)
  - D. Its Efficacy Is Superficial (vv. 9b–10)
- II. The Operation of the New Covenant (9:11–28)

## A. Its Sphere Is Earthly (9:1–5)

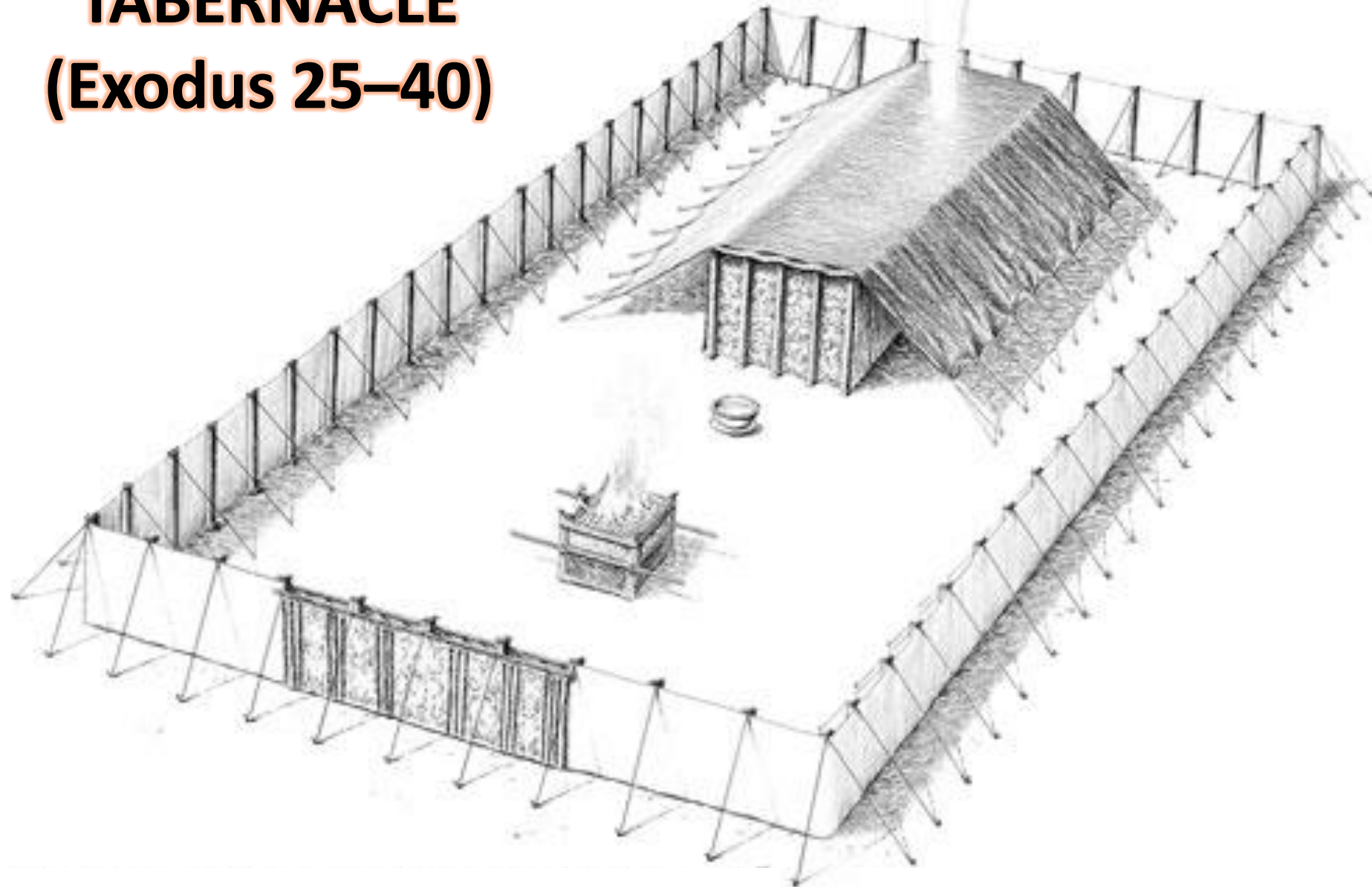
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[9:1] Now even the first *covenant* had regulations of divine worship and the earthly sanctuary. [2] For there was a tabernacle prepared, the outer one, in which *were* the lampstand and the table and the sacred bread; this is called the holy place. [3] Behind the second veil there was a tabernacle which is called the Holy of Holies, [4] having a golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden jar holding the manna, and Aaron's rod which budded, and the tables of the covenant; [5] and above it *were* the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat; but of these things we cannot now speak in detail.

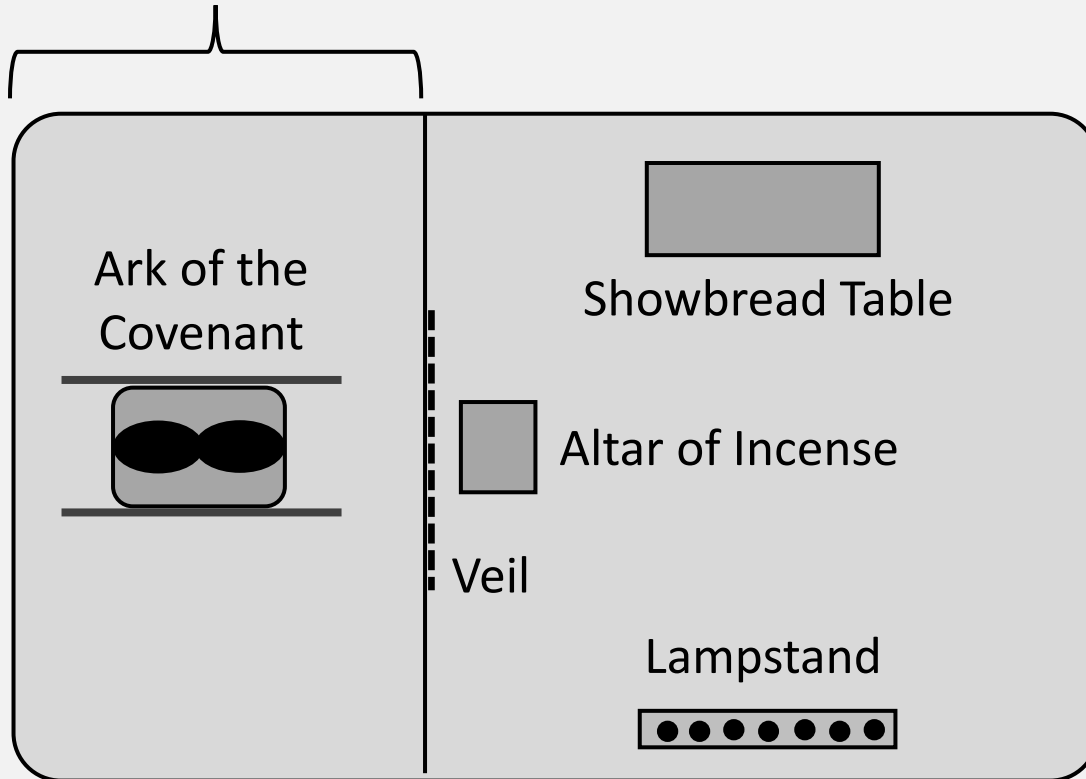
- Hebrews 9 employs a *lesser-to-greater* argument; the lesser object is “**the first covenant**”—the Mosaic Law (9:1; cf. 8:13).
- It is important to note that the writer does not disparage this “**first covenant**.”
  - **Romans 7:12, 16** – “So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good. . . . the Law is good.”
  - **Galatians 3:21** – “Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! . . .”
  - **1 Timothy 1:8** – “But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully.”
- After all, the writer states that its “**regulations**” pertained to “**divine worship**” (v. 9).

- Nonetheless, this “sanctuary” was “earthly” (v. 1)—not in the sense of *carnal* or *corrupted*, but in the sense of *physical, temporal, built by men*:
  - **Hebrews 8:2** – Christ, “a minister in the sanctuary and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man.”
  - **Hebrews 9:11** – Christ entered “through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation.”
  - **Hebrews 9:24** – “For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a *mere* copy of the true one . . .”
- The specific “tabernacle” (v. 2) in view is the tabernacle which God prescribed *in Scripture* through Moses (Exodus 25–40)—not the “Temple” built by Solomon.

# THE MOSAIC TABERNACLE (Exodus 25–40)

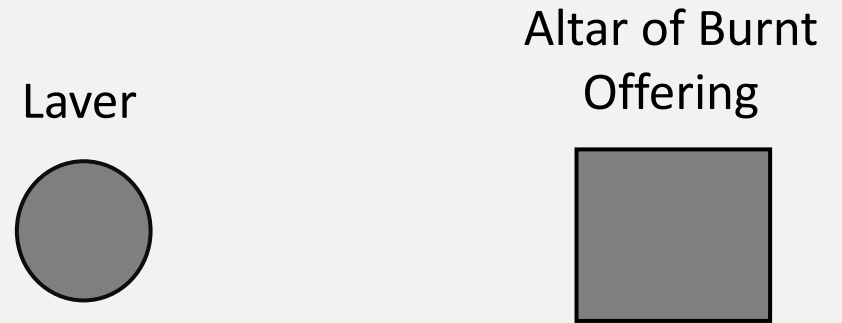


## HOLY OF HOLIES



## HOLY PLACE

## OUTER COURTYARD



## THE MOSAIC TABERNACLE (Exodus 25–40)



- The writer focuses on the *two compartments* of the Mosaic tabernacle.
- First, the “**outer one**” (v. 2), which refers to “**the holy place.**”
- The writer identifies the two pieces of furniture in this Holy Place:

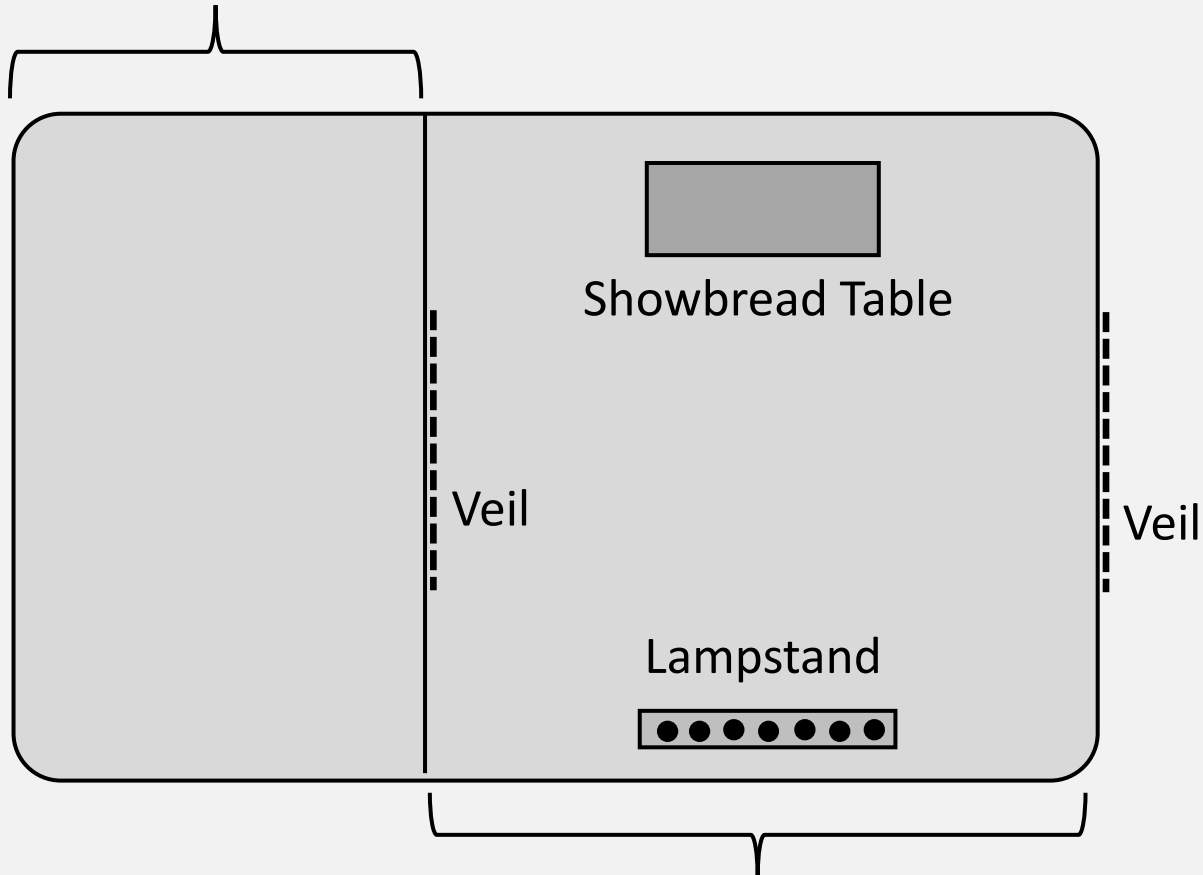


1) “**The lampstand**” (Exodus 25:31–40; 26:35; 37:17–24).

2) “**The table and the sacred bread**” (Exodus 25:23–30; 26:35; 37:10–16; Leviticus 24:5–9).



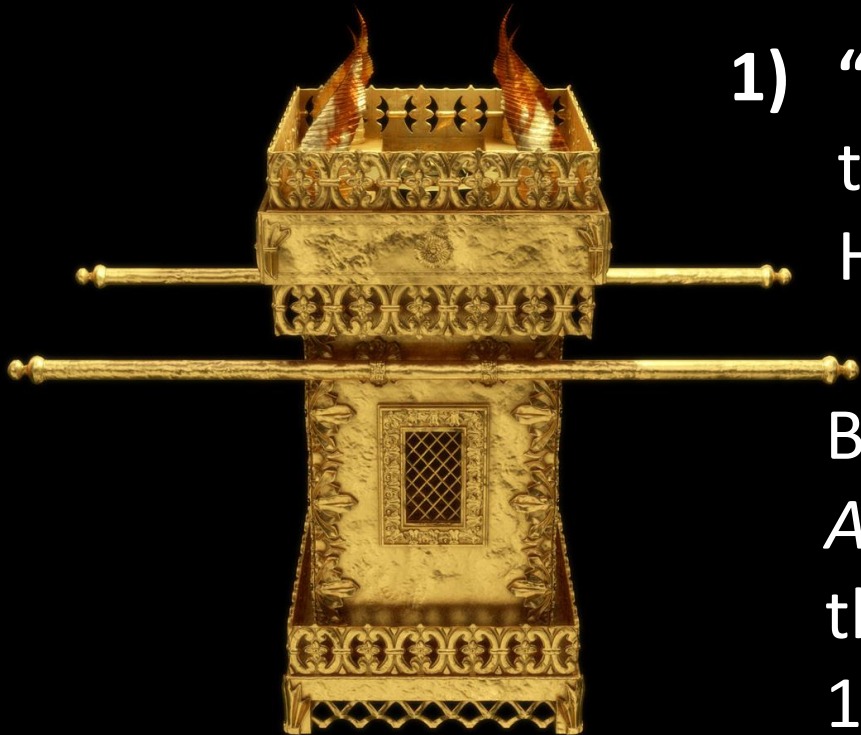
## HOLY OF HOLIES



“You shall set the table  
outside the veil, and  
the lampstand opposite  
the table on the side of  
the tabernacle toward  
the south; and you  
shall put the table on  
the north side.”

—Exodus 26:35

- A “**second veil**” separated the “**holy place**” from the “**inner tabernacle**” or “**holy of holies**” (v. 3), assuming a “**first veil**” which separated the “**holy place**” from the courtyard.
- The writer identifies two items that are part of this “**holy of holies**”:



- 1) “**The golden altar of incense**” (v. 4), which technically was positioned in the Holy Place, not the Holy of Holies (Exodus 30:1–10).

But because of its connection to the *Day of Atonement* and the ministry of the High Priest in the Holy of Holies (Exodus 30:10; Leviticus 16:12–13), the writer connect it to the inner tabernacle.

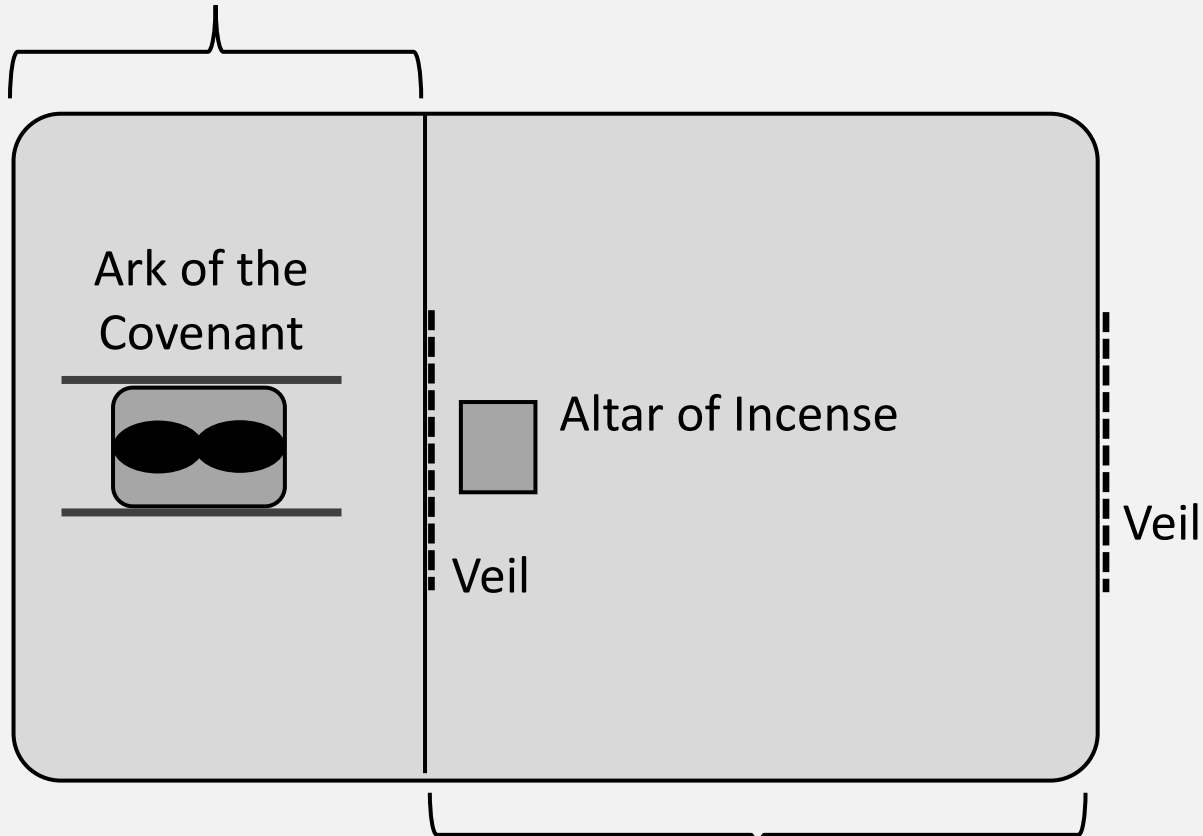


2) **“The ark of the covenant” (v. 4)** – the principal piece of the entire tabernacle (Exodus 25:10–16).

In the Ark were placed **“a golden jar of manna”** (*provision*—Exodus 16:32–34); **“Aaron’s rod which budded”** (*need*—Numbers 17:10–11) and **“the tables of the covenant”** (*covenant*—Exodus 25:16, 21).

- **“The cherubim of glory”** were depicted as spreading their wings over **“the mercy seat”** (v. 5)—the central focus of the entire tabernacle structure (Exodus 25:10–22; 37:1–9), the counterpoint to “the throne of grace” (Hebrews 4:16).

## HOLY OF HOLIES



“The LORD said to Moses:  
‘Tell your brother Aaron  
that he shall not enter at  
any time into the holy  
place inside the veil,  
before the mercy seat  
which is on the ark, or he  
will die; for I will appear  
in the cloud over the  
mercy seat.’”

—Leviticus 16:2

## B. Its Function Is Repetitive (9:6–7)

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[9:6] Now when these things have been so prepared, the priests are continually entering the outer tabernacle performing the divine worship, [7] but into the second, only the high priest *enters* once a year, not without *taking* blood, which he offers for himself and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance.

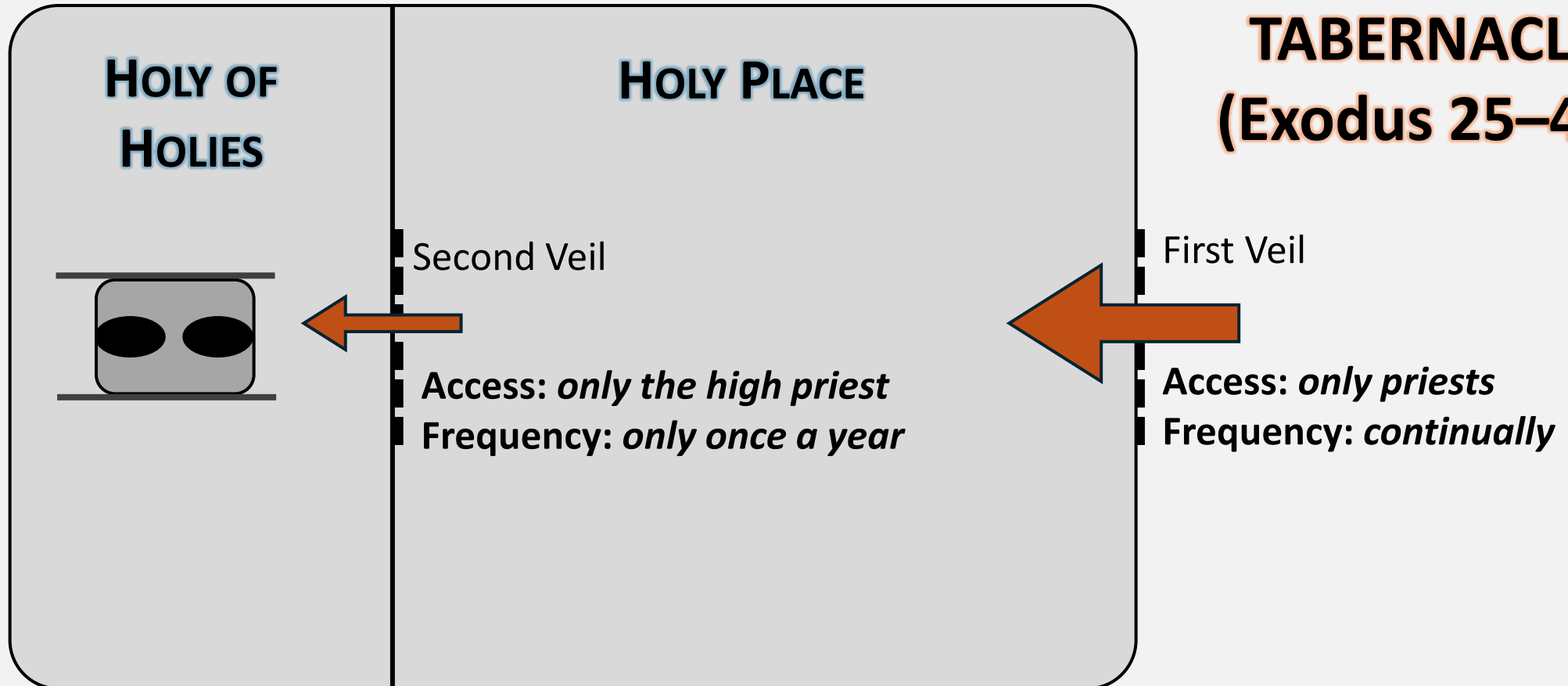
- The writer now turns from the *layout* and *furniture* of the tabernacle to the different *activities* that took place in its two compartments.
- “**These things have been so prepared**” (v. 6) indicates that the layout and function of the tabernacle was designed to teach a greater lesson.

- Verse 6 describes the activities that took place “**continually**” in the Holy Place.
  - Only “**priests**” could enter through the first veil from the courtyard into the “**outer tabernacle.**”
  - They did so *daily* to trim the lamp wicks (Exodus 27:20–21) and burn incense on the altar (Exodus 30:7–8; see Luke 1:8–9).
  - *Each week* they also replaced and ate the showbread (Exodus 25:30; Leviticus 24:5–9).
- This was part of the “**divine worship,**” and the repetitive nature indicated the work was never finished.

- Verse 7 describes the activities that took place “**once a year**” in the Holy of Holies.
  - Only the “**high priest**” could enter through the second veil from the Holy Place into the “**second tabernacle.**”
  - He did so not with *oil* (for the candles) or with *bread* (for the show table) but only with *blood*.
  - This he brought to sprinkle in front of and on the mercy seat, “**for himself and for the sins of the people**” (Leviticus 16:6–17).
- The veils represented *barriers*, and the repetitive cycles (daily/weekly; yearly) represented *insufficiency*.



# THE MOSAIC TABERNACLE (Exodus 25–40)



## C. Its Purpose Is Illustrative (9:8–9a)

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[9:8] 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, [9] which is a symbol for the present time.

- **Hebrews 8:5 (citing Exodus 25:40)** – “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.’”
- The entire set of “regulations” was to be understood as “a provisional sketch which prepares for the definitive design” (Allen, *Hebrews*, 456).

- Right from the start, the “**Holy Spirit**”—the divine Agent of revelation—intended a message for the earthly, repetitive design of the old covenant.
- In particular, the Spirit “**signified**” through these details that so long as the “**outer tabernacle**” functioned, access to God was limited.
- “**The way into the holy place**” – the way of direct access to God.
- This was a “**symbol for the present time**” (v. 9)—an *object lesson* in its own time, for all who observed its rituals.
- God built into the structure, furnishings, and activities of the tabernacle its message—*something better was needed!*

“The Mosaic covenant did have its faults (Heb 8:7), not because of a fault in the Covenant-making God, but because many of its provisions were deliberately built with a planned obsolescence.”

—Walter Kaiser, “The Old Covenant and the New Promise,” 21

“The author the author of Hebrews uses the Old Testament Scripture to prove that the old covenant with its sacrificial system was never intended to be permanent”

—David L. Allen, *Hebrews*, 456

## D. Its *Efficacy* Is Superficial (9:9b–10)

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[9:9b] Accordingly both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make the worshiper perfect in conscience, [10] since they *relate* only to food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until a time of reformation.

- “**Accordingly**” – the writer now draws out the implication of this *external, earthly* form of worship with its *limited* access.
- Earthly sacrifices could only cleanse the *body*, not the *conscience*.
- Thus, the *guilty conscience* was the real reason for the inaccessibility.

- The great need of “**the worshiper**” is to be made “**perfect in conscience**” (v. 9b).
- The “**conscience**” = “the inner man” as opposed to “the body”; it is that which is “directed toward God”; man’s “moral component.”
- But the Mosaic “**regulations**” were efficacious only to deal with the pollution of sin in “**the body**” (v. 10)—not for the pollution of sin in “**the conscience.**”
- The Mosaic “**gifts and sacrifices**” were only *unblemished* in the bodily, material sense—and thus could impute purity only at the bodily, material level.

- These regulations were “**imposed**” (v. 10)—i.e., they had the force of *obligation*—until the One who instituted them brought them to their designed end.
- Indicating his shift to the greater object, the writer concludes the first main section of the chapter by pointing to this end: “**until a time of reformation**” (v. 10).
- This “**time of reformation**” refers to “a process leading to a new order”—a time of *correction* or *resolution* when the inadequacy that was purposefully built into the old would be solved.
- Thus, God’s design in the structure and function of the tabernacle was to communicate the need for something superior; so long as the veil remained, that something was not realized. . . . But it did not remain!

# IMPLICATIONS



- Your greatest need: *access to God.*
- Your greatest barrier: *your guilty conscience.*
- Your greatest solution: *a comprehensive sacrifice, once-for-all, by a High Priest who Himself is not in need of atonement.*