

Heb. 9:1-10 (BCF 25) “Symbols for the Present Time”

For the Children: When you study history, you can learn certain lessons – that proud empires do not last; that even the best people are far from perfect. When you study the Bible, you can learn even more important things from the past. You can learn from the OT about the Messiah, the Lord Jesus,- how He would come, what He would be like, what He would do; how we should serve Him. You can learn such important lessons from the laws about worshipping God in the Tabernacle. However, we also need to know the NT to understand such things.

Questions: What are some things that we learn from the way God designed the tabernacle, its furniture and the priests who served in it? Why did God put an end to the doing of these laws? How important is it for us to know about these laws today?

Introduction:

First Point: The Ceremonial Regulations

- 1) The Tabernacle Structure: The Tabernacle as a whole taught about God’s Presence in the midst of His people. Its 2 sections, the “outer” Holy Place and “inner” Most Holy Place, separated by a curtain, taught of how sin restricts the sinner’s access to God.
- 2) The Tabernacle Furniture: The various items in the Tabernacle (vss. 2-5) taught various truths about God’s glorious Presence, His covenant, His provision and protection of His people, His mercy and faithfulness; His willingness to receive their prayers and help them in their needs.
- 3) The Tabernacle Service: The service of the priests showed the need for mediators to represent sinners, in order to deal with sin and bring them into God’s Presence. In addition, the high priest showed how the way into intimate closeness to God was still restricted at that time – since he could only enter the Most Holy Place once per year, and only with sacrificial blood for his own sins and the sins of the people. None of this could remove sin or guilt in itself, or cleanse consciences inwardly.
- 4) And Much More: There were many more regulations about food and drink and washings (v. 10); about leprosy, mixing crops or fabrics; contact with Gentiles; the Levirate Law; the Nazirite Laws; Sabbath laws that added to the abiding Sabbath principle; feast days; and much more. Many of these had to do with purity and dedication.

Second Point: The End of the Ceremonial Regulations

- 1) The Contrast of Covenants: The passing of the practice of the ceremonial law is implied by the contrast between the old/first covenant and the new. See also Heb. 8:7f and 9:11f. The first is “earthly” and for the “body” i.e., outward (vss. 1,9) a “copy and shadow” (8:5), versus the fulfillment in Christ; which is “heavenly,” “greater and more perfect” (8:5, 9:11); and inwardly efficacious (9:9).
- 2) Imposed for a Time: The ceremonial ordinances were only for a time, until the “time of reformation” (v. 10), the “present time”. This is the time when Christ has made us right and complete, once and for all opening up the Way to closeness to the Holy God. This is seen in His tearing down of the veil of the Temple (Mt. 27:51). Other NT verses show the end of the practice of the other ceremonial laws: Mt. 8:1-4; 9:25; Mk. 7:19; Acts 10-11; Gal. 4:10; Col. 2:16-17.

Third Point: The Use of the Ceremonial Regulations

- 1) Symbols and Types for Our Use: The ceremonial law is not required for our practice now, but it is to be used for teaching (BCF 25). The Holy Spirit “is signifying” things for us through it (v. 8). It is a “symbol (comparison) for the *present time*” (v. 9). After all, God’s whole Word is living and active (Heb. 4:12).
- 2) What We Are Taught: Studying the ceremonies teaches us about Christ, God’s presence through Him (Jn. 1:14); His High-Priestly work for us; His propitiation; Christ as the Bread from Heaven; the One who perfectly cleanses the whole sinner. We are taught that we are sinners who need Christ. We are also reminded that gratitude to Him calls us to a life of purity, dedication, joy and separation from the world.

Conclusion: