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Recommended Citation

Vaught, W. O., "God's Dwelling Place" (1978). *Vaught Sermon Notes: Hebrews*. 57.
https://scholarlycommons.obu.edu/vn_hebrews/57

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GOD'S DWELLING PLACE

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF HEBREWS
NUMBER 61
HEBREWS 9:1-2

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These next two chapters set up a contrast of shadows and reality. One of the main words in the Mosaic Law and in the structure called the Tabernacle is the word "Don't." The veil to the Holy Place and to the Holy of Holies said, "Don't---You cannot enter." The only ones who could enter those places were the Levitical priests and the great High Priest is the only one who could enter the Holy of Holies. It took the High Priest seven days to prepare himself for entering that holy place. You can see what a temptation this would be to the priests. Why not just take a peep behind that curtain? Why not just slip into the Holy of Holies and see what is there? But the Lord reserved that place for you and for me, and once Christ died, God ripped that curtain from top to bottom and said to all of us, "Now, you may enter."

Our Position In Christ

This is a picture of our position in Christ. Since the very day that we believed in Christ, we have been in the Holy of Holies. Our Lord has reserved for us this glorious and wonderful relationship. We are in his presence all the time, once we have accepted him by faith. The most humble believer in the Church Age has this privilege which was reserved in the Age of Israel for only the great High Priest. The key to these two chapters is found in Hebrews 10:1 so let us turn there for a moment and see that verse.

HEBREWS 10:1 "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect." This verse begins with the explanatory particle gar and is translated "for." Next we have ho nomos and this refers to the Mosaic Law. It is a divine authorizing agent, and the Mosaic Law gave the authorization for the Levitical priesthood and the environment under which the priest would function. It would deal with ritual and shadows. But remember this---the shadows to them were just as real as the reality is to us today. The Holy of Holies was forbidden to everyone except royalty. But Jesus Christ dwelt in the Holy of Holies. Once Christ died on the cross the curtain came down and that sacred place became available to every believer of the Church Age. This idea will be further explored in verses 7 through 9 of this tenth chapter.

Next we have "the law having" and the word for "having" is a present, active, participle of echo. It means the Mosaic Law always had this. The next word is "shadow." In a sense we still have that shadow, for the Mosaic Law is in the Bible and is a part of the background of our Christian living. This word for "shadow" is skia and it means a shadow in contrast to reality. It isn't the reality itself, but it points to the reality. No reality, no shadow. There has to be reality for there to be a shadow. Christ is the reality and the Mosaic Law is the shadow. So the Mosaic Law is the authorizing agency for these things.

(I refer you to a review of The Mosaic Law at this point in Paper No. 52, pages 5 and 6.)

Now when you are dealing in shadows you have a lot of don'ts. When you deal with reality the systems are on go all the time. Next we have the words "of good things" and this is the plural of agathos. It means things that are always profitable, they have intrinsic value. If you are a believer, you can never be a loser. No way to be a loser if you are a Christian. You are on the winning side. The prizes you receive are permanent.

The blocks that confront us

1. The criterion block.

This is the refusal to accept the Bible as the absolute criterion for your life. (Don't accept experience, or emotion, or what people say--Just accept the Bible as authority.)

2. The ignorance block.

This means you don't know doctrine and therefore you don't know how to appropriate it. (1 Cor. 6:19) The body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and when you are in fellowship, then the Holy Spirit controls your life. Once you are a believer, the Holy Spirit never leaves your body. The old sin nature indwells the soul but the Holy Spirit indwells the body.

3. The volitional block.

This is the one who accepts the Bible as authority but refuses to submit to the teaching of Scripture.

Next in this verse we have the words "to come." And this is a present, active, participle of mello. This is what we call a futuristic present, so certain it is contemplated as having already happened. The good things to come are Bible Doctrine which is about to come into your life. So thus far, we have in this verse, "For the law possessing a shadow of coming good things." The words "not the very image" is the accusative singular of eikon. The real thing is Christ on the cross and in resurrection and in ascension. That is the real thing. "Of the things" is from progma and it means events. These events refer to the events of your life.

Now we will go back to Hebrews 9:1 and pick up the message. In chapter nine we have this outline--

Verses 1-11--Shadows of the Tabernacle.

Verses 12-14--Shadows of the blood.

Verses 15-23--Shadows of the Testament.

Verses 24-28--Shadows of the appearances.

Here in verse 1 we begin with the shadow of the Tabernacle.

HEBREWS 9:1 "Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary." The Tabernacle and later on the Temple was the center of Jewish worship. Someone divided this chapter at the wrong place for this verse is a continuation of verse 13 in the previous chapter.

We have a series of particles men oun kai and should be translated "Even so therefore." Next we have "the first" from he prote referring to The Mosaic Law. Next we have the imperfect, active, indicative of echo. It means that all during the Age of Israel the Mosaic Law was the basis for their divine service. So we can translate this "used to have". Next we have "ordinances" from dikaioma and this means regulations for worship.

This "used to have" suggests that things have now changed. Christ changed Saturday as the day of worship to Sunday. He changed the specialized priesthood to the royal priesthood of every believer. He changed special days so that every day is a special day to the believer. Back there everywhere you moved, you saw "don't." Next we have "a worldly sanctuary." The words are to te hagian kosmion. And it means something on the earth in contrast to the heavens. It means "a sanctuary belonging to the world."

So a corrected translation of this verse is--"Even so therefore the first (Mosaic Law) used to have regulations for worship and its sanctuary, its tabernacle was right here in the world.

1. The shadow is something real on the earth that could be seen by human eyes. That Tabernacle was real and no one could miss seeing it. But it was a shadow depicting heaven. It was a visual aid to teach them that we will abide in God's Tabernacle forever and forever.
2. Heaven is the true Tabernacle, but not the actual Tabernacle of Israel. You and I have never seen the third heaven. But heaven is more real than this Tabernacle in the wilderness. "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." God and Heaven cannot be seen, but we know their reality through doctrine.
3. The Tabernacle of Israel was an authorized building. God gave the exact specifications. Spirit filled men built it. It provided the focal point of worship. Where did they put it? Not to one side, as if it were not important. But they put it right in the center of everything. Sacrifices were made right in front of the Tabernacle. There was one person who lived permanently inside the Tabernacle and that person was the Lord Jesus Christ. He lived in the Holy of Holies. Royalty lived there and people were supposed to stay out. If you tried to enter that place, you were dead. Only the High Priest, after seven days of preparation, could go in there once a year. But once the dispensation of the church came, that curtain came down. From top to bottom it was ripped and the Age of Israel was over. At that moment the royal family came into existence. The sanctuary now is your body.
4. The actual Tabernacle on earth was a shadow and a picture of the work of Christ in salvation. A picture of the strategic victory of Christ with promise of super-grace for every royal family member who would take it.
5. Since the Tabernacle was declared to be God's dwelling place, only Jesus Christ dwelt there to depict the principle of grace (Exodus) 25:1-9)
6. The regulations portray many spiritual truths, doctrines, functions, actions. A promise of greater things to come and blessings for those who derived pertinent doctrines from the shadows.

7. The Tabernacle was a way to teach doctrine and the principles related to grace.
8. The analogies often referred to the priesthood. The functions of the Levitical Priesthood pointed to the coming of the Royal Priesthood of the Church Age. You will see an occasional analogy for this purpose.

The fact that the priest stopped at that curtain indicated that in the future something better was coming. A veil to keep out indicated that one day it was coming down so we could go in to better things. The moment Christ was glorified, down came that curtain. When you die you will go to the Holy of Holies.

HEBREWS 9:2 "For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary." The seven stated feasts depict the whole history of Israel and the plan of redemption and also the history of Israel and the Church Age and the Millennium. Let us look at this for a moment.

Christ The Firstfruits

Look at a list of the Jewish Feasts.

1. THE PASSOVER. One day--On April 14th
2. UNLEAVENED BREAD. A week - Began on April 15th (1 Cor. 5:7)
3. FIRSTFRUITS. One day - April 18th (Always on Sunday)

Now 50 days go by. Forty days and he ascended
Ten days until Pentecost.
(Look at Leviticus 23:15-16)

4. PENTECOST June 8th - also always on Sunday.

THE CHURCH AGE TAKES PLACE

5. THE TRUMPETS. November 1, Leviticus 23:24 (Regathering)
6. ATONEMENT. November 10 (Yom Kippur) (Leviticus 23:27)
7. TABERNACLES November 15 - Lasted 7 Days
This pictures the Millennium.

This is a picture of Israel's history.
They sang Psalm 118 twice a year-- at Passover (The Cross) and at Tabernacles (The reign of Christ).

The ritual for the spiritual life is gone, once Christ came. All of the holy days were gone. Animal sacrifice was gone. Doctrine had replaced all these things. We do not celebrate any of these events. That was a part of the Age of Israel. The Jews have been set aside in order that Jesus Christ might build his own royal family. Tradition and ritual has been set aside so the Church Age can build the body of Christ.

The Jewish Tabernacle and Temple were the greatest teaching aids that ever existed in history. Prior to the printed Word of God, this is the way God had to get out his message. The Tabernacle was the basis for the teaching of doctrine to Israel, prior to the coming of Christ and the Church Age. Each article in the Tabernacle, from the badger skin on the top to the white walls of the outer curtain, all the beautiful colors of the curtains, this was their Bible for over 500 years. In verse one we had the words to hagion kosmikon, the sanctuary of the world. This second verse begins with the particle "gar" and it is to explain the furniture in the Tabernacle. "There was made" is an aorist, passive, indicative of kataskeuazo and it means to construct. "A tabernacle was constructed." This is a constative aorist and it gathers up all the time that was used in constructing this beautiful Tabernacle. Skene is the word for Tabernacle. "He prote" are the words for "the first" and this means the holy place.

Outside was the brazen altar for the sacrifice and the lavre was for the washing of the priests. Inside the holy place was the lampstand, the shewbread and the altar of incense.

We have here the word "candlestick" but it should be "lampstand" he luchnia for they contained oil and wicks. This was not a candlestick but a lampstand. The lampstand speaks of Christ, the Light of the World. This speaks of Christ the living word, just like the shewbread will speak of Christ the written word.

NINETEEN POINTS ON THE LAMPSTAND.

1. The golden lampstand is described in great detail in Exodus 25:31-40 and Exodus 37:17-24. Every detail of this golden lampstand is ever so important. It stood, as you enter the holy place, on the left hand side opposite the table of shewbread. (Exodus 40:24)
2. The original construction tells us that a talent of pure gold was used for its construction. It was hammered out in this form. Only the mercy seat and the lampstand are of pure gold. The artisans who worked on these things were filled with the Holy Spirit the Bible says.
3. There was a central shaft and three shorter branches on each side of the central branch. Each branch had a bowl for oil and a wick.
4. It was the only light in the holy place just like the shekinah glory was the only light in the Holy of Holies.
5. The light from the lampstand revealed a scene of real beauty. It represented Christ as being the only source of understanding God. The priest would come into the holy place and the light would let him see many things. Christ's light lets us see many things about God. Only through Christ can we see what God is like. It made it possible for the priest to see the table of shewbread and the altar of incense. All this spoke of Christ. Christ is the key to everything.

6. Only the priest could enter in and see this beautiful scene and he could interpret it to the people. This is a forecast that in the Church Age every believer priest would see God revealed in Jesus Christ. We have the completed Canon of Scripture that lets us see God.
7. This illustrates also how the unbeliever cannot see the glory of God and the beauty of Christ. This only comes through knowledge of doctrine.
8. As we see God through Jesus Christ we then come to understand the meaning of the gospel and this leads us on to maturity.
9. The golden lampstand is a shadow or type of union with Christ. John 15:5 "I am the vine, ye are the branches." Christ is that central stem and the branches are all in union with the vine. "I in you and ye in me." 1 Cor. 12:12 portrays the branches in relationship to the main stem. 1 Cor. 12:13 tells us we are in union with Christ.
10. Six is the number for man in Scripture and stands for incompleteness. Seven is the perfect number. Six lamps represent humanity, completed by the seventh. This is a picture of union with Christ, and we are completed when we are converted. (Col. 2:10)
11. To portray in shadow form the royal family of the Church Age, each branch is not only joined to the central branch, but each is joined to the other to show the unity among believers. Our unity is based on regeneration. At the moment we are all entered into union with Christ, we are told to "love the brethren", and this is one of the results of that union with Christ. (Romans 12:4 and 5)
12. All six branches are lower than the central branch to remind us that Christ is the head of the church and the source of our light and power. Aside from him we are nothing. He is the King of Kings in the royal family.
13. The central shaft is the source of all light for Christ is the light of the world. (John 8:12, John 1:4, Luke 1:78) He not only reveals God but he reveals the way to God.
14. The six branches give light because the royal family in the Church Age is to give light. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world" but immediately after that he said, "Ye are the light of the world." Jesus was the source. We pass the light on. (Matthew 5:14, and 5:16, Ephesians 5:2) We represent the true light. That lampstand burned in the Tabernacle for 500 years and in the Temple for 1000 years, reminding the Jews of this. You can look at the lampstand and know that your life has purpose and you are in full-time Christian service.

15. The value of the lampstand is based on the talent of pure gold from which it was made. A talent of gold would be worth more than \$20,000.00. In these inflated times it would be worth a quarter of a million dollars.
16. The value of this lampstand was enhanced after it was hammered and shaped. The beating of the gold represents the cross and the suffering that was necessary for the light to be produced. The gold was hammered into something useful and meaningful. Made into the lampstand, the gold had far greater value. Christ was maximum value but he is now bringing many sons to glory and this means the value of his kingdom is greatly increased. Never look at the lampstand without remembering the source of your light. Also remember that you are of unlimited value to God.
17. The gold represents the Deity of Christ which was present at the time Christ was crucified. The hypo-static union was a reality when Christ died. (Isaiah 53:5 and 10) Christ was shaped into something meaningful by the beating of the cross. The six branches are in the process of being completed in the Church Age. WHEN THEY ARE COMPLETED, THE LAMPSTAND WILL BE LIFTED UP INTO ITS PROPER PLACE INTO HEAVEN. The Rapture of the Church will bring this about.
18. The cross brings something of greater value into history. The talent of gold was alone until the lampstand was constructed but it became seven lights after it had been hammered into shape. Christ was alone on the cross but now he has multiplied himself. This is the basis of the permanent royal family.
19. One Son left glory to bring many sons into glory. (Hebrews 2:9-14) This is also portrayed by the oil in the lamps. The light burns through the filling of the Holy Spirit. Every day the priest had to come in and trim the lamp of the burned wick so it would continue burning. That burned wick was trimmed off and put into the golden snuff box which refers to the Lord's memory and the basis of our reward in eternity.

Next in this verse we have "and the table." The word is trapeiza.

1. The table is described in Exodus 25:23-30, Exodus 37:10-16 and Leviticus 24:5-9.
2. The table was made of wood plated with gold. The accasia wood was the foundation and was overlaid with gold. It pictures the uniqueness of Christ.
3. There was bread on the table. This table speaks of Bible doctrine by which we come to know the love of Jesus Christ. Couldn't have bread unless there was a table to put it on. Doctrine is ours by the thinking of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Cor. 2:16 says the Bible is the mind of Christ.
4. The table was located on the north side of the holy place, facing the golden lampstand. (Exodus 40:22)

5. Around the edge of the table was a crown--a molding of gold which extended all around the table to keep the bread from falling off. This crown reminds us of the eternity of the Word of God. Bible Doctrine abides forever, it cannot be destroyed.
6. The bread was called Shewbread but the Hebrew says, "Bread of the face." Bread of the presence. Bible Doctrine portrays to you what God is like. It is the bread which shows his face. This bread shows us how we come to know God.
7. The bread was made from fine flour, describing the perfection of the character of Christ. Therefore Christ is qualified to be our high priest, our King of Kings.
8. The absence of leaven in the bread is a reminder of the virgin birth. Christ was born without a sin nature and without the imputation of Adam's sin.
9. The baking of the bread with fire is a picture of the cross. His suffering produced the bread, and when we eat it, we have life forevermore.
10. Putting the bread on the table was accompanied by offering frankincense in the golden bowls. This is a picture of the fragrance of Christ and how he satisfied the high demands of God.
11. The eating of the bread by the priest is a picture of the believer priest in the Church Age eating daily from the Word of God. The priest ate the bread and was sustained. As we eat Bible Doctrine, we are spiritually sustained.
12. No leper could ever eat the shewbread. (Lev. 22:4) And this means that no reversionist can take in Bible doctrine and profit from it.
13. No stranger could eat the bread according to Lev. 22:10. This is the unbeliever and he cannot understand doctrine. (1 Cor. 2:14)
14. The shewbread cost the priest nothing, and this is a picture of salvation by grace. Salvation costs us nothing.
15. The twelve loaves of bread represent the twelve tribes of Israel. All of these were on one table and God meant for there to be unity among those tribes. The thing that brought unity to them was Bible Doctrine. Unity is always based on the perception of Doctrine.

Next our verse says, "And the shewbread" he prothesis ton arton. The prothesis of the bread means "bread that is planned." It means the way of thinking of the bread. The twelve loaves on the table represent God's way of thinking. The bread was never seen without the light shining on it. The bread represents Bible Doctrine and you must eat it. No understanding of Bible Doctrine apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ. So this means "The believer eats of the way of thinking bread." Bible doctrine is the spiritual food for the believer priest of the Church Age.

Next we have the word "which" from hostis and it means which category of things and this is a present, passive, indicative of lego. It means "is designated." This tabernacle was designated to be understood. The word for sanctuary is hogia and means "The holy place."

So this verse correctly translated says, "For the first tent was constructed in which there was both the golden lampstand and the table of the way of thinking bread which category is designated the holy place."

All of this was shadows. We now have the reality. Behind these shadows is the reality, and the reality has come in Christ. This was a special message to those people who were still dabbling in shadows. What a tragedy it is for royal family members to still be dabbling in shadows. This verse is a great challenge to us to come from shadows to reality.