

The Tabernacle and the Church

Introduction.

1. The book of Hebrews, as its contents would indicate, was written to Jewish Christians, some of whom had become discouraged, and were in danger of falling away. Heb. 3:12-13; 4:1,11, 23-25, etc.
2. Throughout this book emphasis was placed upon fact that the New Covenant is “*better*” than the covenant under which the Jews lived and died, Heb. 8:6.
 - a. In fact, “*better*” is a key word in this epistle: Christ is “*better than the angels*,” 1:4, we have a “*better hope*,” 7:19; a “*better covenant*,” which was established upon “*better promises*,” 8:6. We have a “*better*” substance, 10:34; we desire a “*better*” country, 11:16; we read of a “*better*” resurrection, 11:35, and the blood of Jesus speaks “*better things than that of Abel*,” Heb. 12:24.
3. As it relates to this lesson, we are drawing a contrast between tabernacles. Specifically, we are discussing the tabernacle which Moses built and the “*tabernacle*” Jesus built.
4. Our text is Heb. 8:1-6.

Discussion:

I. Examine the Text.

- A. The grand summation, we have “*such a high priest*,” v. 1.
 1. The writer had repeatedly talked about the priesthood of Jesus, Heb. 2:17; 3:1; 4:14; 5:10; 6:20; 7:26; 9:11; 10:21.
- B. Who “*is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens*,” Heb. 8:1. One who is:
 1. “*A minister of the sanctuary*,” v. 2. “*Minister*” means servant. The “*sanctuary*,” contextually, is heaven itself, which corresponds to the most holy place of the tabernacle which Moses and the children of Israel built.
 2. “*And of the true tabernacle*,” which:
 - a. “*The Lord pitched, and not man*.” Man pitched or built the tabernacle under the law, note v. 5.
 - b. Jesus pitched, or built the “*tabernacle*,” or church, which corresponds to the holy place of the tabernacle built by Moses. Matt. 16:18. Cf. Eph. 2:19-21; I Tim. 3:15; Heb. 3:6; 10:21; I Pet. 2:5.
- C. “*Every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices*,” v. 3.
 1. The priests under the law were required to offer such. Cf. Heb. 5:1.
- D. “*Wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer*,” v. 3.
 1. Referring to Jesus who offered the supreme sacrifice for sin, Himself! Heb. 7:27; John 1:29
- E. “*If He were on earth, He should not be a priest...*,” v. 4.
 1. Priests under the Law had to be of the tribe of Levi, but Jesus descended from Judah, Heb. 7:14.
 2. Since He cannot be priest on earth, then He is priest in heaven, Heb. 8:1, where He “*ever liveth to make intercession*” for those who “*come unto God by Him*,” Heb. 7:25-26.
- F. The Priests under the law served “*unto the example and shadow of heavenly things*,” v. 5.
 1. The Law served as “*a shadow of good thing to come*,” Heb. 10:1, but it had its limitations, Heb. 10:4.
 2. The tabernacle foreshadowed the church, “*the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched*,” v. 2.
 - a. Even so, it had to be built “*according to the pattern*,” v. 5.
- G. Jesus hath “*obtained a more excellent ministry*,” v. 6.
 1. Thus he “*is the mediator of a better covenant...*,” v. 6.

II. Important Facts about the Tabernacle and the Church.

- A. The Tabernacle had a divinely appointed builder.
 1. Built by Moses and the Israelites, Heb. 8:5.
 2. The church was built by Jesus Christ, Matt. 16:18.
- B. The Tabernacle had a divine purpose.
 1. The place where God dwelt among His people, Ex. 25:8; 29:45.
 2. The church is God’s temple in this age, Eph. 2:19-22.
 - a. Thus “*in the Lord*” we are “*builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit*,” v. 22.
- C. The Tabernacle was built according to a Divine pattern.
 1. Ex. 25:40; Heb. 8:5.
 2. In every particular, the church must follow God’s divine pattern. Col. 3:17; 2 John 9-11.

III. Specific Items Regarding the Tabernacle.

- A. Enclosed within the outer court, Ex. 27:9-17; 38:9-20
 1. 100 cubits long by 50 cubits wide, Ex. 27:18.
- B. Within the outer court, there existed:
 1. The Brazen Altar, Ex. 27:1-8.

- a. Where animal sacrifices were offered for the sins of the people, Lev. 9:7.
 - b. Typical of the sacrifice of Jesus, Heb. 13:10-12.
2. The Laver, Ex. 30:17-21.
 - a. Made of brass and located between the brazen altar and the entrance to the tabernacle.
 - b. Where the priests washed their feet and hands before entering the tabernacle.
 - c. Typical of baptism, whereby we are cleansed from sin and gain entrance into the Lord's church, Acts 2:38; I Cor. 12:13.
- C. The Tabernacle itself:
 1. Consisted of the Holy Place, Ten cubits wide and 20 cubits long, Heb. 9:2; Ex. 26:15-17.
 - a. Where priests went continually to do service unto God, Heb. 9:6
 - b. Typical of the church.
 2. Consisted of the Most Holy place, Heb. 9:3; Ex. 26:33 (ten cubits by ten cubits by ten cubits). A cube
 - a. Into which the high priest went alone once every year, with blood, offering for himself and for the errors of the people, Heb. 9:7.
 - b. Typical of heaven itself, into which Christ has entered, Heb. 9:11-12, 23-24 and where Christ "*ever to make intercession*" Heb. 7:25 for those who "*come unto God by Him.*"
- D. The Furnishings of the Holy Place, Heb. 9:1-2.
 1. The golden candlestick, Ex. 25:31-39; 26:35.
 - a. It had seven branches, Ex. 25:31-32.
 - b. It burned continually, Lev. 24:1-4.
 - c. It was fueled by pure olive oil, Ex. 27:20.
 - d. It furnished the only light for the holy place, Lev. 24:1-4.
 - e. It was typical of Christ and the light of His word, John 1:1-9; John 8:12; Ps. 119:105,130; Acts 20:32.
 2. The table of showbread, Ex. 25:23-30; Lev. 24:5-9.
 - a. Eaten by Aaron and his sons in the holy place.
 - b. Typical of the Lord's supper, Acts 20:7 I Cor. 11:23-26.
 - (1) Partaken of by Christians, the priests of Christ, I Pet. 2:5, in memory of Christ, Luke 22:19.
 3. The altar of incense, Ex. 30:1-10.
 - a. Upon which priests burned incense and every evening; "*a perpetual incense before the Lord,*" v. 8.
 - b. Typical of the prayers of the saints, Rev. 5:8; 8:3, and their "*perpetual*" prayers, I Thess. 5:17.
- E. The Furnishings of the Most Holy Place
 1. The ark of the covenant, Ex. 25:10-15. In which:
 - a. Were tablets of stone, Ex. 25:16, Deut. 31:26, typical of God's revelation, the New Covenant.
 - b. Was the golden pot that had manna, Heb. 9:4
 - (1) The manna may typify Christ who is the bread of life, John 6:48-51.
 - c. Aaron's rod that budded, Heb. 9:4; Num. 17:2-10.
 - (1) The only rod that budded which indicated God's choice of Aaron over the others, and typical of Christ selection of only the apostles as His ambassadors, 2 Cor. 5:19-20.
 2. The mercy seat and Cherubim, Ex. 25:17-22.
 - a. Where God communed with the High Priest.
 - b. Typical of God's throne of grace unto which Christians can come in time of need, Heb. 4:16, meeting place of law and mercy.

IV. Concluding Thoughts:

- A. The holy place of the first tabernacle (Heb 9:2) foreshadowed (Heb. 10:1) "*the true tabernacle*" (church) which the Lord pitched and not man, Heb. 8:2.
 1. Everything regarding the tabernacle built by Moses had to be built according "*to the pattern*" God revealed, Ex. 25:40.
 - a. Anytime the pattern was violated the violators thereof suffered the consequences, Heb. 2:2.
 - b. If it was necessary to follow God's plan under "*the first covenant,*" it is certainly necessary to follow His pattern under the new & better covenant of which Christ is the mediator, Heb. 8:6; Rev. 22:18-19.
- B. **If** the first tabernacle was intended to foreshadow the church, **then** the church was not an afterthought in the mind of God; to the contrary, it existed in His "*eternal purpose,*" Eph. 3:11.
- C. To enter the Most Holy place (representative of heaven), one had to go through the holy place (representative of the church).

Conclusion:

--Bobby Witherington, July 17, 2016

