A Study of the Book of Hebrews Lesson 12

↗ Read Hebrews 9:1-10.

↗ Reread Hebrews 9:1-5.

- The purpose of the first covenant was to enable the Israelites to live in relationship with a holy God. However, because the people were sinful, that relationship had to be regulated for their protection.
 a. What happens to sinful people who see God's glory face to face? (Ex. 33:18–20)
 - b. What two types of regulations did the first covenant establish so that God in his glory could dwell among his people? (v. 1; 🕮* Ex. 29:42–46)
- 2. The author of Hebrews gives a simple description of the physical dwelling of God with his people, the tabernacle, which the Israelites set up in the wilderness. This tabernacle became the pattern for the future temples. What kind of dwelling did God design at the beginning of the first covenant? (v. 2; Ex. 39:32; Acts 7:44–45)

- 3. In verse 2 the writer briefly describes the sparse furnishings in the Holy Place. Each piece played a role in how Israel was to worship God, in accordance with his instruction.
 - a. When was the lampstand to burn before the Lord? (Lev. 24:1-4)
 - b. When was the consecrated bread on the table? (Lev. 24:8)

- 4. Behind the lampstand and the bread lies a deeper symbolism that points us to Jesus.
 - a. The lampstand provided light only inside the tent, but what does Jesus illuminate? (Jn. 1:4, 9; 8:12)
 - b. How is the bread of life different from the ceremonial bread that needed to be replaced regularly? (Jn. 6:35)
- 5. The contents of the ark are listed briefly and without context. The manna was God's daily provision for his people as they wandered in the desert for forty years (Ex. 16). Aaron's staff budded as God's confirmation that Aaron, his tribe, and his descendants were the chosen priests and caretakers of the tabernacle after other tribes rebelled and tried to claim the priesthood for themselves (Num. 17:1–11). The two stone tablets were the laws of the covenant that the Israelites were to obey (Ex. 24:12).

What do you think it would be like for the Israelites to have the physical objects that were a reminder of God's faithfulness (the manna), a warning against rebellion (Aaron's staff), and the standard for God's people (the stone tablets) out of sight, inside the ark, behind a curtain, in the forbidden inner room of the tent sanctuary?

6. "The second curtain" (v. 3) that separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place (the Holy of Holies) is described in Exodus 26:31 as depicting specific angelic beings that also adorned the ark. Who were these beings depicted above the ark, and how are they described? (v. 5a; A Ex. 25:18–20)

Cherubím

Of cherubim, Daniel M. Gurtner writes, "their presence suggests the presence of Yahweh enthroned among his people."¹

↗ Read Hebrews 9:6-10.

7. The lampstand needed to be refilled daily and the consecrated bread had to be replaced every week before it went stale, so what area of the tabernacle were the priests allowed to enter regularly? (vv. 2, 6)

8.	 The inner room, the Most Holy Place was holy because it was where the presence of the Lord came to rest on the lid of the ark of the covenant, called the mercy seat or the atonement cover. a. What happened to anyone who wasn't a priestly descendant of Aaron who came near to God's dwelling? (Num. 18:7)
	 What were the conditions under which high priests from the line of Aaron could enter the Most Holy Place? (v. 7; Lev. 16:1–2, 34)
9.	When "the first tabernacle was still functioning" (v. 8), what did God's rules and regulations show about access to the Most Holy Place? (v. 8)
10	. God's first covenant enabled him to dwell among his people. a. What did the law with its offerings of gifts and sacrifices do? (Rom. 3:19–20)
	b. What were the gifts and sacrifices of the first covenant <i>not</i> able to do? (v. 9)
11	. Where has the author of Hebrews told us that we can go for mercy and grace for our guilt under the new covenant or "new order" (v. 10)? (Heb. 4:16)

12. What happened to allow us to confidently "approach God's throne of grace" (4:16) in the heavenly Most Holy Place, instead of fearing death for entering into the presence of a holy God? (Heb. 10:19–22; Mt. 27:50–51a)

Now when you look at the rules and regulations regarding the tabernacle, think about your full access to God through Jesus. Do you need to carry around a guilty conscience, or can you approach God in confidence?

13. The tabernacle with its regulations was a picture of man's desperate need for atonement and for a better high priest. Reread the passage and write down or draw some aspect of the old covenant that encourages you as you see it fulfilled in Jesus.