

"... The Imperfection Of The First ..."

"Which is a figure for the time present; according to which are offered both gifts and sacrifices that cannot, as touching the conscience, make the worshipper perfect ..." (Heb. 9:9).

In the previous chapter the writer has discussed Jeremiah's prophecy of a new covenant, which prophecy was introduced by the statement: *"For if that first covenant had been faultless, then would no place have been sought for a second ..." (Heb. 8:7)*. In chapter nine the writer concedes that the first covenant had *"ordinances of divine services, and a sanctuary of this world"* (Heb. 9:1). He then specified the items in that sanctuary and discussed how both priests and high priests functioned in that sanctuary.

Yet, although the first covenant had *"ordinances of divine services"* something was lacking. The Holy Spirit had not yet made manifest the way into the true holy place (9:8). That sanctuary (tabernacle) was a *"figure for the time present"* and while gifts and offerings were made, they were only copies of the true cleansing which was to come through Christ: *"which gifts could not as touching the conscience, make the worshipper perfect."* But what those copies could not do, as far as the conscience was concerned, Christ could do who *"through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God"* (Heb. 9:14).

The Old Covenant, with its sanctuary, sacrifices and priests were just copies of the heavenly things later to be revealed and because they were copies, it was never intended that they should be permanent. In the writer's words, they were *"only (with meats and drinks and divers washings) carnal ordinances, imposed unto a time of reformation"* (Heb. 9:10).

That day of reformation has come for Christ has come *"a high priest of the greater things to come"* (Heb. 9:11). He has entered into that greater and more perfect tabernacle, which tabernacle had been kept in secret while the first tabernacle stood, and the tabernacle into which Christ has entered is one not made with hands, as contrasted with the tabernacle the priests entered; that one was made by human hands (Heb. 9:11). Nor did Christ enter that heavenly tabernacle with the blood of bulls and goats, but rather it was His own blood which He carried into that holy place, which blood was shed once for all (Heb. 9:12). The blood He offered was that which secured eternal redemption through the Spirit, for while the blood of goats and bulls and ashes of a heifer cleansed the flesh, the blood of Christ is able to cleanse the conscience which, having already been noted, the first services were unable

to claim (Heb. 9:14). The effectiveness of the blood of Christ in cleansing the conscience will be noted in chapter ten for there all are urged to "*draw near with a true heart in fulness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water*" (Heb. 10:22).
Next: "A Death Having Taken Place ..."

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