

The Distinctive Identity of the Church According to the Pattern

While Moses was on Mt. Sinai he was told to make the tabernacle and “all things according to the pattern” he was shown while there (*Heb 8:5*). It was with reference to the “shadow of good things to come” (*Heb 10:1*) that the Law of Moses was eventually replaced by the “new covenant” making the old “ready to vanish away” (*Heb 8:13*) which it finally did once Jerusalem and the sacrificial system were destroyed in 70 AD. Each of the furnishings, whether in or before the tabernacle, was made to represent its counterpart after “the fullness of time was come [and] God sent His Son... made under the Law” (*Gal 4:4*), and afterward “nailing it to His cross” (*Col 2:14*).

Altar of Burnt Sacrifice

First inside the courtyard of where the tabernacle was constructed, a Levite priest would find the altar of burnt sacrifice. It was an instrument of death where the animal sacrifices served as a “sweet savor, an offering by fire unto the LORD” (*Ex 29:18*). As the apostle Paul would later write with reference to the New Testament priesthood, “we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ” (*2 Cor 2:15*) and that our “bodies [are] a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God” (*Rom 12:1*).

Luk 9:23 And [Jesus] said to *them* all, If any *man* will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. 24 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for My sake, the same shall save it.

The cross was an instrument of death (*separation of the life from the body*), a form of capital punishment perfected by the Romans, and it was prevalent during Jesus’ life on earth. He would use its graphic portrayal as a means to explain the true nature of the Christian sacrifice. It was employed in Jesus’ teaching as a means of spiritual separation from the world and all the “lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” (*1 Jn 2:16*). The altar of burnt sacrifice thus served as a shadow of Christ’s crucifixion and our emulating it through baptism. It is through baptism that we are connected to the blood of Christ through obedience.

Heb 9:22 Indeed, under the Law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.

The writer doesn’t name the things that weren’t purified with blood, stating “almost” thus not everything was *cleansed* by means of a blood sacrifice. *Even so* in every case where sin is involved (*O.T. or New*), “the shedding of blood”, i.e., an atoning sacrifice (*victim*), is necessary before “forgiveness” would be possible. As with Adam and Even before they left the garden, “the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of **skins** and clothed them” (*Gen 3:21*), an animal (*or animals*) had to be sacrificed (*shed their blood*) in order to cover their nakedness (*which was caused by their guilty consciences*). Sin was not the result of their nakedness, nakedness was the result of their sin (*Gen 2:25*). Thus, it is the like reason that Christ, as the Lamb without spot, offered Himself as a garment (*Gal 3:27*) to cover (*Heb 4:13*) our sins (*guilty conscience- 1 Pet 3:21*). As the High Priest of the New Covenant, He also had to offer something as they did under the Old. (*emp. added*)

Heb 9:12 He entered once for all into the Holy Places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of His own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.

The Israelites were warned against eating flesh without first draining the blood. Since “the life of the flesh is in the blood” and was given to Israel “to make atonement for [their] souls” (*Lev*

17:11), obedience to that sacrificial system could only have been satisfied with the blood of animals. Yet it was to be ongoing, as often as the people sinned, especially with the yearly sacrifice (10:3) on the Day of Atonement. Whereas, Christ's blood, "like that of a lamb without blemish or spot" (1 Pet 1:19), was/is the only means (*by*- Gk.1223) to remove sins perpetually (1 Jn 1:7) "thus securing eternal (Gk.166- *perpetual*) redemption" (Gk.3085- *a ransoming*).

Heb 9:13 For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, 14 how much more will the blood of Christ, Who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

Following the thought on the Day of Atonement, these were the sacrificial animals that were employed for that event. The "ashes of a heifer" were mixed with water and "kept for the water of impurity for the congregation of the people of Israel; it [was] a sin offering" (Num 19:2-10). They only concerned "the purification of the flesh" and had nothing to do with the conscience, wherein lies a recollection. In comparison to these, the writer asks rhetorically "how much more" would the blood of Christ accomplish since with animals there was "a reminder of sins every year" (10:3) on the Day of Atonement? As stated in 8:12 and 10:17, with the "blood of the (New) Covenant" (Mat 26:28), God "will remember (Gk.3415- *recollect*) [our] sins no more".

The only way to have a clear conscience before God is through obedience to the 'righteous ordinance' of baptism (1 Pet 3:21). Only then does one truly begin "to serve (Gk.3000- [*a hired menial*]; to minister [*to God*], that is, render religious homage) the living (Lk 20:38) God". Going back to the initiation process of the priesthood under the Mosaic Law, every male of the tribe of Levi that qualified for service was commanded to obey the ordinance of immersion into the laver before he could put on the priestly robe and serve in the Holy Place (Lev 16:4). Likewise, under the New Covenant priesthood, all persons who wish to enter/serve in the kingdom/church (*type of Holy Place*) must obey the ordinance of baptism. Ceremonially, under the O.T., immersion was a means of removal of dirt from the flesh before being able to don the priestly garment. Subsequently, it is not merely done as ceremony under the New, but as "the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit" (Tit 3:5). Holy Spirit is received at baptism (Act 2:38) and is (*once the penitent is purified*- 1 Pet 1:22) "the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of His glory" (Eph 1:14).

Laver/Baptism

Immersion was a common practice for the Jews under the Old Covenant since every Aaronic priest had to perform such for initiation into the priesthood before first entering the Holy Place.

Lev 16:4 He shall put on the holy linen coat and shall have the linen undergarment on his body, and he shall tie the linen sash around his waist, and wear the linen turban; these are the holy garments. He shall **bathe his body** in water and **then** put them on. (*The same goes for us in Gal 3:27 to enter the N.T. priesthood.*) (*emp. added*)

But in this case it took on a whole new meaning, under a whole new priesthood with an entirely new High Priest Who came from the tribe of Judah of which "Moses said nothing about priests" (Heb 7:14). Our baptism into Christ via the "washing of regeneration" (Titus 3:5) is our garment of invitation to "the wedding supper of the Lamb" (Rev 19:9). And anyone without such an invitation wearing that garment, Jesus said will be thrown "into outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Mat 22:13). Once initiated, the laver served "for Aaron and his sons" to "wash their hands and their feet thereat" (Ex 30:19).

The one thing that separated Moses, Aaron and the priests from entering the Holy Place was the laver. As in the church, we cannot be added to her unless we've been washed.

Act 2:40 And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. 41 Then they that gladly received his word were **baptized**: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls. *(emp. added)*

Act 2:47 ... And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

Once in the tabernacle/church the priests (*under both covenants*) were/are to perform their spiritual worship set within the parameters given by God.

The Tabernacle/The Church

Heb 9:1 Then verily the first *covenant* **had also ordinances of divine service**, and a **worldly** sanctuary. *(emp. added)*

Exo 25:8 And let them make Me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. 9 According to all that I shew thee, *after* the **pattern of the tabernacle**, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, **even so shall ye make it**. *(emp. added)*

Moses was given a specific pattern to go by when constructing the tabernacle which would serve as a shadow of the "true tabernacle", the church. The Old tabernacle, which was a physical structure, was pitched by the Levites. The New tabernacle was pitched by God.

Heb 8:1 Now of the things which we have spoken *this is* the sum: We have such an High Priest, Who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; 2 A Minister of the sanctuary, and of the **true tabernacle**, which the Lord pitched, and not man. *(emp. added)*

There are qualifications necessary to be heeded in order to enter either tabernacle which both were patterned by God and not man.

Lampstand and Table of Shewbread

Exo 27:20 And thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always. 21 In the tabernacle of the congregation without the vail, which is before the testimony, Aaron and his sons shall order it from **evening to morning** before the LORD: *it shall be* a statute forever unto their generations on the behalf of the children of Israel. *(emp. added)*

Heb 9:2 For a tent was prepared, the first section, in which were the lampstand and the table and the bread of the Presence. It is called the Holy Place.

This first tabernacle was what modeled the temple of Solomon in Jerusalem as to its layout. The first room in the tabernacle that Moses built was known as the Holy Place. It was a shadow (8:5) of the church. The "lampstand" (*on the left as you enter*) was the only light that illuminated it for the priests to perform their daily ministries. Therefore, it had to be trimmed morning and evening according to Ex 30:7-8. Spiritually it represents "the light of the Gospel of the glory of

Christ" (2 Cor 4:4) (and the word of God- Psa 119:105) which is to light the path of the N.T. priesthood, those who support it (Phil 2:14-16).

Just as the lampstand was the only light within the tabernacle to light the way for the priests to perform their duty within, so the Bible, God's word, is our only source of enlightenment to give us instructions on our worship in the church today. One act of worship in our priestly function within the church then is Bible study and instruction through teaching and preaching.

Psa 119:105 NUN. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

1Ti 4:13 Till I come, give attendance to **reading**, to **exhortation**, to **doctrine**. (emp. added)

Concerning "the bread of the Presence" (Gk.4286- specifically the show bread as exposed before God), 12 loaves of unleavened bread were placed on a table that was overlaid with gold, one loaf representing each of the twelve tribes of Israel (Lev 24:5-9). On the seventh day of the week, i.e., the Sabbath, Aaron and his sons were to eat of it as an act of worship before the Lord. In the church (done on the first day of the week- Act 20:7) it represents communion and since under the O.T. only the priests (who are the shadow of the N.T. priesthood) were permitted to partake of the sacred bread (1 Sam 21:4), how does that differ from the way the church shares it today (1 Cor 11:28-29)? To partake without "discerning the body" one would bring "judgment on himself". Paul chastened the church at Corinth because they weren't distinguishing the bread of the communion from the common bread they were eating, making it part of a common meal. To not recognize the difference would bring judgment.

Lev 24:5 And thou shalt take fine flour, and bake twelve cakes thereof: two tenth deals shall be in one cake. 6 And thou shalt set them in two rows, six on a row, upon the pure table before the LORD.

Lev 24:8 Every sabbath he shall set it in order before the LORD continually, *being taken* from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant. 9 And it shall be Aaron's and his sons'; and they shall eat it in the holy place: for it is most holy unto him of the offerings of the LORD made by fire by a perpetual statute.

Only the Levites were to partake of the shewbread inside the Holy Place on the Sabbath and then replace it with 12 newly baked loaves, one representing each of the tribes of Israel. As the New Covenant priests we share in the Lord's table through communion on the first day of each and every week.

Act 20:7 And upon the **first day of the week**, when the disciples came together to **break bread**, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight. (emp. added)

1Co 11:23 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed took bread: 24 And when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is My body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me. 25 After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the **new testament in My blood**: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me. (emp. added)

Altar of Burnt Incense, the type of Prayer

Exo 30:1 And thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon: *of shittim wood shalt thou make it.*

Exo 30:6 And thou shalt put it before the vail that *is* by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy seat that *is* over the testimony, where I will meet with thee. 7 And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense **every morning**: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it. 8 And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it, a **perpetual incense** before the LORD throughout your generations. 9 Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt sacrifice, nor meat offering; neither shall ye pour drink offering thereon. *(emp. added)*

Luk 18:1 And He spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought **always** to pray, and not to faint;

Lev 16:12 And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar *(of burnt sacrifice)* before the LORD, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring *it* within the vail: 13 And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that *is* upon the testimony, that he die not:

Part of acceptable worship is to follow the instructions to the tee. Here the priest, who offered up the incense, retrieved the coals from the altar of burnt sacrifice. Our prayers are only acceptable as we live a life of sacrifice to God.

Rev 8:3 And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him **much incense**, that he should offer *it* **with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne**. 4 And the smoke of the incense, *which came with the prayers of the saints*, **ascended up before God** out of the angel's hand. *(emp. added)*

1Ti 2:1 I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks, be made for all men;

Today, our prayers are a type of incense. As they enter the throne room of God, Heaven, they must first pass through the veil, Jesus.

Heb 10:19 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through **the veil**, that is to say, **His flesh**; *(emp. added)*

The Most Holy Place

Heb 9:3 Behind the second curtain was a second section called the Most Holy Place,

(Ex 26) The first curtain was at the entrance of the tent. The “second” was what separated the Holy Place from “the Most Holy Place”. It represents Christ *(10:20)* as intercessor between God and man. Remember, only the high priest was permitted to go into the Most Holy Place once each year on the Day of Atonement which the following verse describes.

Heb 9:4 having the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron's staff that budded, and the tablets of the Covenant.

Incense was burnt on this altar and was of a specific blend that was only for this purpose (*Ex 30:34-38*). This altar was placed inside the Holy Place right before the veil except for on the Day of Atonement when the high priest moved it beyond the veil into the Most Holy Place of the tabernacle (*Lev 16:12-13, 16*). The high priest taking the altar of incense beyond the veil was significant in that it represents Christ when He returned to Heaven (*Act 1:9*) to begin making intercession for the saints in the Most Holy Place, i.e., into Heaven itself.

Concerning “the ark of the Covenant”; (*Ex 25:10-16*) in it, at that time (*we have no record of it being in Herod's temple at the time of Christ*), was “the golden urn holding the manna”, which served as a reminder to the Jews of their need to trust God to sustain them during their wanderings in the wilderness. Also, there was “Aaron's staff that budded” (*Num 17:6-10*) which was there as a sign against their murmuring supposing Moses and Aaron were exalting themselves above them. After twelve rods were presented inside the tabernacle overnight with the names of the twelve chiefs, one representing each tribe, Aaron's rod budded showing the rest that God had chosen him over them as second in command to Moses.

Concerning “the tablets of the Covenant”; this was the second set of tablets that Moses brought down from Mt. Sinai since he broke the first set out of anger (*Ex 32:19; 34:1*). They were there as a reminder of the Covenant they had made with God at the base of Mt. Sinai. For the writer here to speak in such detail of these things shows, once again, that he must have been a Jew who had such an intimate knowledge concerning the worship of the O.T. priesthood.

Heb 9:5 Above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail.

It was from the “mercy seat” (*the lid of the ark*) that God communed with Moses (*Ex 25:22*) in dispensing the Law to Israel. It represents God's throne in Heaven from which His mercy (*by way of the Gospel*) is dispensed on the church via His Son. There were two “cherubim” (*Exo 25:18-20*) covering the ark with their wingspans. “Of these things” the writer states that he could not *share* in particular. Maybe because none was ever to look at or inside the ark (*1 Sam 6:19; Num 4:18-20*) or it could have been at that time not even the high priest could describe it since it might not even have existed at the time of the building of Herod's Temple.

The Difference

Heb 9:11 But when Christ appeared as a High Priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation)

Christ became our High Priest once He fulfilled “every righteous ordinance” (*Mat 3:15; Lev 16:4- see notes on Mat 3:15-16*). It was prophesied (*Lk 4:17-19*) that He would bring “the new and living way that He opened for us through the curtain, that is, through His flesh” (*10:20*). Concerning the “greater and more perfect tent” here (*even though the same Greek word as in verses 2, 6 and 8*) Thayer states, “the name is transferred to Heaven, as the true dwelling-place of God and the prototype of the earthly ‘tabernacle’ or sanctuary”. Christ entered Heaven on our behalf, the place “not made with hands, that is, not of this creation” (*Dan 2:34-45- speaks of the*

spiritual kingdom/church as not made with hands), i.e., a place only God can take responsibility for building.

Heb 9:23 Thus it was necessary for the copies of the Heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the Heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

Under the Mosaic system, only the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies, the copy of Heaven itself, after the tabernacle, along with the utensils used for worship therein, was dedicated with blood. He first had to sacrifice for himself and then for the people with literal blood sacrifices involving literal animals. On the other hand, in order for Christ to enter the Holiest of all (*Heaven*) a “better” sacrifice “than these” was necessary.

Heb 9:24 For Christ has entered, not into Holy Places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into Heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.

Under the Law, only men from the tribe of Levi could perform as priests in the tabernacle. But since Christ changed the priesthood, He also established a New Law (7:12). Entering “into Heaven itself” (*the Holy of Holies being only a shadow of Heaven*) this High Priest, is now sitting “at the right hand of the Majesty on high” (1:3) where He continually makes intercession for us (7:25).

Heb 7:12 For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. 13 For He of Whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe (*Judah*), of which no man gave attendance at the altar. 14 For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.

No longer under the Old Covenant we are to worship according to the pattern of the New. Since God is our audience, let’s do our best to please Him.

Heb 12:28 Wherefore we receiving (*Gk.3880- Thayer: to receive something transmitted*) a kingdom (*church*) which cannot be moved (*Gk.761- unshaken*), let us have grace, whereby we may **serve God acceptably** with **reverence** and **godly fear**: 29 For our God is a consuming fire.

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