



The Better Tabernacle by [John T Polk II](#)

All Scriptures and comments are based on the **New King James Version**, unless otherwise noted.

The Old Testament tabernacle, where God was represented as meeting men, was a center of worship (**Exodus 33:10**). The summary of this is found in **Hebrews 9:1-8**. This "earthly sanctuary" (tabernacle) was divided into "the first part" ("the sanctuary" **v.2**) and "the second part" ("Holiest Of All" **v.3**). The "first" held The Table for Showbread (**Exodus 37:10-16; Leviticus 24:5-9**); The Gold Lampstand (**Exodus 37:17-24**); and The Altar of Incense (**Exodus 37:25-28; 30:7-9, 34-38**). Only qualified priests could enter this area during the week. A "veil" separated the two areas (**Exodus 26:31-35**) and only the High Priest could enter the second area behind the veil one day a year, the Day of Atonement (**Leviticus 16**). In this second area was The Ark of the Covenant (**Exodus 25:10-16**) which was never to be touched or seen by anyone else. On top of it, there were two Cherubim, facing each other, wings covering "the mercy seat" (**Exodus 25:17-21; 37:1-9**), where God said, "there I will meet with you" (**Exodus 25:22**). Inside, it held those items that represented the Covenant God had made with Israelites: "The golden pot that had the manna [reminder of the wilderness wandering, **Numbers 11:1-9**], Aaron's rod that budded [reminder of God's leadership out of Egypt, **Numbers 17:1-13**], and the tablets of the covenant [reminder of their Sinai promise, **Exodus 25:16; Deuteronomy 31:24-26**]" (**Hebrews 9:4**). God never made this Covenant to include anyone else! Outside the tabernacle was a Brass-covered Altar where burnt offerings for sins were offered (5 X 5 cubits, with a horn on each corner (**Exodus 27:1-8; 29:1-3**); and between it and the tabernacle entrance was a Laver for the Priests, Aaron and sons, to completely wash (**Exodus 29:4**), then dress as priests (**Exodus 29:5-9, 29-30**). Only after this could they enter the tabernacle!

Hebrews 9:8-9 says:

The Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing. It was symbolic for the present time. (**Hebrews 9:8-9**)

"Symbolic" is the word "parable," meaning that the Old Testament worship was to help Christians better understand New Testament worship. **Hebrews 9:11** says,

But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. (**Hebrews 9:11**)

Christians are "a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (**1 Peter 2:5**). To enter this priesthood, one must make a personal sacrifice and be washed in water, as first commanded on Pentecost,

Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (**Acts 2:38**)

Paul wrote, "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (**Galatians 3:27**). Repentance and baptism for remission of sins is the only way to wear Jesus Christ as our priestly garment. When this was obeyed, "the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved" (**Acts 2:47**). It is this church of Christ that is "the temple of the living God" (**2 Corinthians 6:16**) today. Only qualified "priests" can offer acceptable worship to God in the church! In the first part, our Lamp is Jesus Christ, "the light of the world" (**John 8:12**), therefore Christians do "not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ" (**Acts 5:42**). Our "showbread" is the weekly observance of the Lord's Supper, a reminder of His sacrificial death for us (**1 Corinthians 11:23-31**). Our "incense" is the "prayers of the saints" (**Revelation 5:8; 8:3-4**), to be offered "without ceasing" (**1 Thessalonians 5:17**), that go beyond the "veil." Christians worship every first day of the week (**Acts 20:7**) with the Lord's Supper, preaching Christ, prayers, singing (**Ephesians 5:19**) and giving (**1 Corinthians 16:1-2**).

The second part is in Heaven.

Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. (**Hebrews 9:12**)

Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh. (**Hebrews 10:19-20**)

Our prayers go beyond the veil of death to Jesus in Heaven.

The Gospel call invites all who will obey to be priests and worship God acceptably.

-----John T. Polk II