

Tusculum Hills Baptist Church  
Paul Gunn, Pastor

Sermon Title: The Tabernacle Was Partial, the Church is Permanent, Hebrews 9  
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**INTRODUCTION:** We're going to discuss the tabernacle versus the Church, and my points are:

1. Everything about the tabernacle was partial.
2. Everything about the Church is permanent.

**First, EVERYTHING ABOUT THE TABERNACLE WAS PARTIAL.**

**SCRIPTURE:** Hebrews 9:1-5 <sup>1</sup>*Now the first covenant had regulations for worship and also an earthly sanctuary. <sup>2</sup>A tabernacle was set up. In its first room were the lampstand and the table with its consecrated bread; this was called the Holy Place. <sup>3</sup>Behind the second curtain was a room called the Most Holy Place, <sup>4</sup>which had the golden altar of incense and the gold-covered Ark of the Covenant. This ark contained the gold jar of manna, Aaron's staff that had budded, and the stone tablets of the covenant. <sup>5</sup>Above the ark were the cherubim of the Glory, overshadowing the atonement cover. But we cannot discuss these things in detail now.*

The tabernacle of worship was very different than how we worship today. No one just went to church. There was advance preparation. There was no socializing as we know it — no piano, no choir, no Sunday school, no announcements, no worship service as we know it. It was a completely different experience than what we experience at worship today.

The prescriptive rules were so detailed, and no one dared break them. Probably there is not one of us here today who would be ready to worship in the tabernacle. And, it was male dominated. Women were excluded from most things.

A lot of times in the church people come up with ideas to express their own creativity, or they volunteer to paint, fix things, or mow the grass. And, through the

years, I recall people donating things to the church they no longer wanted. Some of those things were OK; some of them not so great.

People didn't donate their castaway things to the tabernacle.

None of these things happened during the days of the tabernacle.

**SCRIPTURE:** Numbers 1:48-51 As I've told you several times, the Levites were in charge of the tabernacle: <sup>48</sup>"For the LORD had said to Moses, <sup>49</sup>'Do not include the tribe of Levi from the census; do not include them when you count the rest of the Israelites. <sup>50</sup>Put the Levites in charge of the Tabernacle of the Covenant, along with its furnishings and equipment. They must carry the Tabernacle and its equipment as you travel, and they must take care of it and camp around it. <sup>51</sup>Whenever the Tabernacle it is time for the Tabernacle to move, the Levites will take it down. And when it is time to stop, they will set it up again. But any unauthorized person who goes too near the Tabernacle must be put to death'" (Numbers 1:48-51 NLT).

**EXPLANATION:** So, there wasn't any room for non-Levites to participate.

Now let's get back to Hebrews.

**SCRIPTURE:** Hebrews 9:6-10 <sup>6</sup> When everything had been arranged like this, the priests entered regularly into the outer room to carry on their ministry. <sup>7</sup> But only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance. <sup>8</sup> The Holy Spirit was showing by this that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still functioning. <sup>9</sup> This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper. <sup>10</sup> They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings—external regulations applying until the time of the new order.

**EXPLANATION:** The priests of this day had to be well rehearsed for their work. They did not tell jokes. They did not tell stories. They did not visit anyone. They had one reason for living, and that was to be a mediator between sinful man and a holy God.

Only the high priest could enter the inner room. The high priest performed specific functions, and he had to do it perfectly. The high priest entered the Holy of Holies, and he wore bells so people could hear him move around. The priest had a rope tied around him because if he did not do a task just like he was supposed to, the bells would quit ringing, indicating he had died. This way, they could drag him out without entering the Holy of Holies.

Some of you have probably sat through long services where you wish you had a rope to drag out the preacher when he went too long.

Now this tabernacle and the rituals in it were only shadows of things to come. People who participated knew they were looking forward to the coming Messiah.

This is difficult for us to wrap our heads around. They did something while hoping for something in the future. But, none of them knew when the time of Christ would come.

**ILLUSTRATION:** It would be a like couple who gets engaged to be married, stays engaged forever, and rehearses the wedding but never sets a wedding date.

Verse 9 is a curious verse.

**SCRIPTURE:** Hebrews 9:9 <sup>9</sup> *This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper.*

**APPLICATION:** Think about this verse. If you've asked for forgiveness for your sins...today we can say Jesus paid the penalty for your sin. If you are haunted by your past, look at Verse 9, and think about how much more haunted people were, knowing their sins would be forgiven outwardly, because of the animal sacrifices, but knowing that someday, perhaps many years after they died, a Messiah would pay the price for their sins.

Everything about the tabernacle was partial, but—

**Second, EVERYTHING ABOUT THE CHURCH IS PERMANENT.**

**SCRIPTURE:** Hebrews 9:11-14 <sup>11</sup> *But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that are now already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not made with human hands, that is to say, is not a part of this creation.* <sup>12</sup> *He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption.* <sup>13</sup> *The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean.* <sup>14</sup> *How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!*

I just mentioned Verse 9, where the animal sacrifices didn't really relieve the consciences of the people, but here in Verse 14, we see the sacrifice of Jesus Christ cleanses our consciences.

I want everyone to try to understand this as best you can.

- Today we have the hope of forgiveness from the Messiah who came years ago.
- In the Old Testament, the people had the hope of forgiveness for the Messiah who had not come yet.
- I am so glad I live on this side of it all, because having hope in a Messiah who has already passed through this earth is easier than having hope in a Messiah who will come someday.

Now—think of this: the Second Coming of Christ is something we look forward to. We do not know when exactly, just like the Old Testament people did not know when he would come the first time.

They were given signs to look for his first coming. We are given signs to look for his second coming.

**SCRIPTURE:** Hebrews 9:15 <sup>15</sup> *For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.*

**EXPLANATION:** So, the Old Testament people were forgiven of their sins, in a sense, but not completely. They were forgiven because they followed the rules about sacrifices, but they weren't totally forgiven until the time of Christ.

A ransom is paid for someone who is held captive. So, under the old covenant people were held captive for their sins until Christ set them free.

Now, did these Old Testament people go to heaven? Yes, they did, on the promise that Jesus would pay the penalty of their sins.

Revelation 13:8 tells us the Lamb, meaning Jesus, was slain before the world was created. One writer said this: *The reality is this. The blood of Jesus was shed for us before the creation of the world, but was only revealed to us when Jesus was crucified on the cross, died and rose again.*

I've done my best in the last few months to preach all this to you in understandable terms. I hope everyone here has a basic, working understanding of the work of Christ.

As a Christian you should have a basic, working understanding of these things:

1. You should know the Old Testament Law and its purpose for its day.
2. You should know how the Law pointed out man's flaws.
3. You should know how the people yearned for a Messiah to save them from their sins and all those laws.
4. You should know how the work of Christ changed everything.

Earlier I talked about the tabernacle. The church is so much more than the tabernacle. It's open to everyone, not just men. It's even open to non-believers who want to come and hear. It's a place of joy, music, instruments, and Sunday School.

**ILLUSTRATION:** A few years ago, I remember there was a boy in church who was full of energy. Like many little boys, he ran down the hall. He wasn't hurting anything. He was just being a boy. A man commanded in a booming loud voice, "DO NOT RUN IN GOD'S HOUSE."

I do not know exactly what the man meant. God does not live in the church like he did in the tabernacle. God's house is in the hearts of people. Perhaps he meant "Do not run inside the building."

The church is a place of freedom today. And, yes, if there is plenty of room and nothing will get hurt, you can run in the building. If I were with the boy today, I'd take him to an empty hallway and tell him to run back and forth until he's tired of running.

We don't have the tabernacle today. We have the Church. A very different place, and for that, I am most grateful.

- The tabernacle was good. The Church is better.
- The old covenant was good. The new covenant is better.
- The Law was good. Jesus is better.

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I use the NIV translation of scripture because of its conversational nature. Feel free to go to Bible Gateway and copy and paste whichever translation you want to use. This transcript has been edited to an outline format that improves readability and therefore may not exactly follow the video edition.

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Thanks to Judy Andrews and Nancy Claire Smith for their editing assistance.

Sincerely, Paul Gunn  
Tusculum Hills Baptist Church  
Nashville, Tennessee  
USA