

“Access Granted”

Session 7 – Hebrews 9:1-28

Bible Study Method:

Cross Referencing for Tabernacle Overview



Leaders Notes: In this session, we move from the Contract (Session 6) to the Construction. We are exploring the "Spatial Argument" of Hebrews 9. While the Old Covenant architecture was designed to manage distance and emphasize "Stay Back," Jesus' work is designed to provide access and say "Come In." We will use the physical, rectangular layout of the Tabernacle to show that the old system was a series of barriers that Jesus has now removed.

Note on the Tabernacle Diagram: To facilitate Section 1, we have provided a detailed Tabernacle Layout at the end of this guide. This visual is essential for understanding the "Keep Out" message of the Old Covenant architecture.

Timing Tips and Notes for Skipping:

- While the "Bible Study Method" is cross-referencing, our **goal is to move people from the fear of a "Stay Back" religion to the confidence of a "Come In" relationship.** The Jeremiah cross-reference in Section 4 should be prioritized. It is the bridge that turns a historical study into a personal assurance.
- Your most strategic place to skip is the Section 3 Reflection.
- In Section 1, if the group is struggling with the Tabernacle layout, you can skip Question 2 about "External vs. Internal" (vs. 10) to move faster to the hope found in Section 2.
- Section 4: If you have less than 10 minutes left for the final section, have the leader summarize the "Will and Inheritance" logic (vs. 15-17) and jump straight to the "Year after Year" habit question (vs. 25-26), as it is the most introspective part of the study.

INTRO – 3min

Say It: (Lead your group by reading this section aloud to them.)

Today we are moving from the 'Contract' to the 'Construction.' We are going on a tour of the Old Testament Tabernacle. But this isn't just a history lesson; it's an

architectural design lesson. We are going to look at how the very walls and curtains of the old system were a message from God saying, 'Stay Back.' Then, we will see how Jesus walked through those barriers to say, 'Come In.'

SECTION 1 – The Architecture of Separation

Hebrews 9:1-10 & Exodus 26:31-33 (2 Questions - 17min)

Read it: (Ask someone to read these passages aloud.)

- Hebrews 9:1-10
- Exodus 26:31-33

Discuss It: The “Discuss It” sections of this guide should be where you spend most of your time. The goal is 100% participation in discussion. We want everyone to feel like they are a part of the group.

- 1. Look at the tabernacle diagram. Notice the layers: The Outer Court, the Holy Place, and the Most Holy Place. In Exodus 26:33, God commands the veil to 'separate the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place.' Based on Hebrews 9:8, what was the Holy Spirit trying to communicate to us through this physical barrier?**

The people would have understood that their sin separated them from God, so the architecture preached a sermon of restriction. As long as the curtain (vs 3) remained, the way into God’s direct presence was not yet open. Verse 7 explains that even the high priest could only enter once a year. The layout was a "Keep Out" sign for everyone else. God was among His people, but He was not accessible.

- 2. In verse 10, the author calls the old rituals "external regulations" (food, drink, washings). Why is it easier for us to focus on external habits (like attending church or following a moral checklist) than on the internal conscience issues mentioned in verse 9?**

Leader’s Answer: External rules offer us a sense of control and performance. We can check off a box for washing our hands or offering a sacrifice, but we can't perform our way to a clean conscience. The author is showing that the old system could fix the ritual, but it couldn't fix the person. **External rituals can wash the hands, but only an Indestructible Priest can wash the conscience.**

SECTION 2 – The Heavenly Reality

Hebrews 9:11-14 - (2 Questions - 13min)

Read It:

- Hebrews 9:11-14 (Ask someone to read aloud.)

Discuss It: (Spend most of your time in discussion.)

- 1. Verse 11 says Jesus entered a "greater and more perfect tabernacle" that wasn't made by human hands. God's presence is now in Jesus Himself, no longer tied to a physical building or a "holy place." How do you think this would have encouraged these overwhelmed and struggling Hebrews who were tempted to return to Judaism?**

It reminded them that in Jesus, they had access to God all the time, wherever they were. It moved worship from a destination to a relationship. In their past, they had to travel to the tabernacle to be near God. Now, because Jesus is our "more perfect tabernacle," we don't seek a place; we seek a Person. Access to God is as close as a prayer. Jesus is the place to seek and experience God's presence. He is the better tabernacle. **We don't have to go to a building to find God; we go to the Savior who brought God to us.**

- 2. Verse 14 says the blood of Christ cleanses our consciences from "acts that lead to death" (dead works). What is the difference between "doing chores" to make God happy (dead works) and "serving the living God" because we are already loved?**

This is "Identity over Performance". Dead works are driven by fear and the need to "earn" a spot. Serving the living God is driven by love because Jesus has already done the work of forgiveness.

SECTION 3 – Reflection (Optional 5min)

Reflect on It: (Optional Activity) Give your group a few minutes to quietly reflect on what God might be trying to say to them and specifically how He might want them to respond to His Word this week.

Say It: (Lead your group by reading this aloud to them.)

The old High Priest entered the Most Holy Place behind the curtain with a rope around his ankle in case he died and had to be pulled back out, but when Jesus breathed His last breath, Mark 15:38 says, "The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom." Because of Jesus' sacrifice, you have been invited to enter that same 'space' with the confidence of a child running to the loving arms of a parent. Consider the layout of the tabernacle. Imagine yourself standing outside that thick curtain. Now, visualize the moment Jesus died and that curtain was torn from top to bottom. What is one "internal barrier" (a past shame or a current 'dead work') that makes you feel like the curtain is still closed? Take a couple of minutes to reflect on this, to pray, and enter God's presence. Draw near to Him.

SECTION 4 – The Once for All

Hebrews 9:15-28 (3 Questions 20min)

Read It:

- Hebrews 9:15-28 ([Ask someone to read this passage aloud.](#))

Discuss It: ([Spend most of your time in discussion.](#))

- 1. Verses 15-17 say Jesus died so that we could receive a "*promised eternal inheritance*," but many of us live with a debtor's mindset—constantly feeling like we owe God more effort or better behavior just to stay in His good graces. How would your stress levels or your self-talk change this week if you truly believed you were an heir receiving a gift rather than a debtor trying to pay back a loan?**

[An heir rests in the work of the one who provided the inheritance; a debtor is never finished working. Jesus' death legally released the gift. We don't work for it; we live from it.](#)

Say It: ([Lead your group by reading this aloud to them.](#))

In session 6, we looked at the promise of the New Covenant in Jeremiah 31. In that promise God says, "*I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.*" (Jer 31:34) Now, here in Hebrews 9:22 we read that "*without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.*"

- 2. When you compare the physical blood and high cost in Hebrews 9 with the promise in Jeremiah 31, why is it important to see that our forgiveness wasn't**

just a pardon—it was a payment? Does this make the “once for all” finality of verse 26 feel more secure?

Jeremiah promised the result (no more remembering sin), but Hebrews delivers on the promise and shows the receipt (the blood). Jeremiah gave them hope, but Jesus delivered.

If God simply ignored sin, we might wonder if He'd change His mind later, but because a death occurred the forgiveness is legally permanent. **The cost was high so that our confidence could be even higher.**

3. The High Priest had to return "year after year" (vs 25) because the job was never finished. However, verse 26 says that Jesus appeared "once for all." We often feel like we have to "re-earn" God's approval every time we fail. What habits do you find yourself performing "year after year" like the priests did? What ways do you try to prove yourself and how does Jesus' "once for all" sacrifice bring you comfort?

Here are a couple of ways we deal with this:

Emotional Repayment. When we fail or hit a spiritual low, we spend the next few days punishing ourselves with guilt, thinking that if we feel bad enough for long enough, we've somehow paid for the mistake. We are essentially acting like the old priests—offering up our own sorrow as a sacrifice to cover our sin because we don't feel clean yet.

Extra Holy. We try to prove we are worth the grace we've received by being hyper-productive or extra holy after a setback. We treat God's approval like a subscription that expires every time we sin, and we think we have to re-subscribe through better behavior.

Comfort is found in verse 26. If Jesus appeared 'once for all' to 'do away with sin,' then the debt isn't just covered; it's cancelled. We don't have to 're-earn' a seat at the table because Jesus never left His seat at the right hand of God. The work is finished, which means we are free to **stop auditioning and start living.**

DO IT: 5min

Ask your group members to choose one or two options to practice this week. Talk about your plan and encourage them to share their goals with one another. Plan to discuss their choices again next week. Create a little accountability within your group.

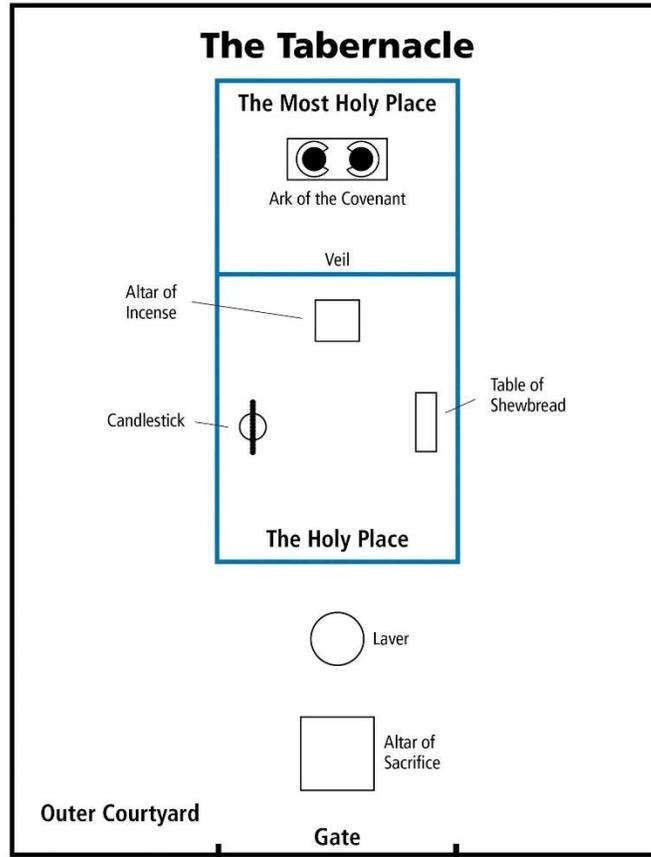
- **The "Curtain" Audit:** Whenever you feel a sense of distance from God this week, visualize the rectangular Tabernacle diagram. Consciously remind yourself that the curtain has been torn and you are already standing in the Most Holy Place because of Jesus.
- **Stop the "Emotional Repayment":** If you fail or hit a spiritual "low," catch yourself if you start "punishing" yourself with guilt to pay for the mistake. Stop the cycle by speaking verse 26 aloud: *"He has appeared once for all... to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself"*.
- **Identify a "Dead Work":** Choose one religious activity you do out of duty or fear of losing God's approval (an "extra holy" habit). Try to perform that same action this week while explicitly thanking Jesus that you are already loved and accepted, moving from Identity over Performance.
- **The Inheritance Reminder:** Write the word "Heir" on a sticky note for your mirror or workspace. Every time you see it, take 30 seconds to shift your mindset from a debtor trying to pay God back to an heir simply resting in a gift that has been legally released to you.

PRAY IT: 2min

Prayer: [\(Lead your group by praying this prayer this aloud with them.\)](#)

Lord Jesus, thank You for being our greater and more perfect tabernacle. We thank You that we no longer live in an architecture of separation, but in a relationship of constant access. Forgive us for the times we try to sew the curtain back together through our own dead works or guilt. Help us to walk this week not as debtors trying to pay an impossible price, but as heirs resting in Your finished, 'once for all' work. We stop auditioning today, and we start living in Your presence. Amen.

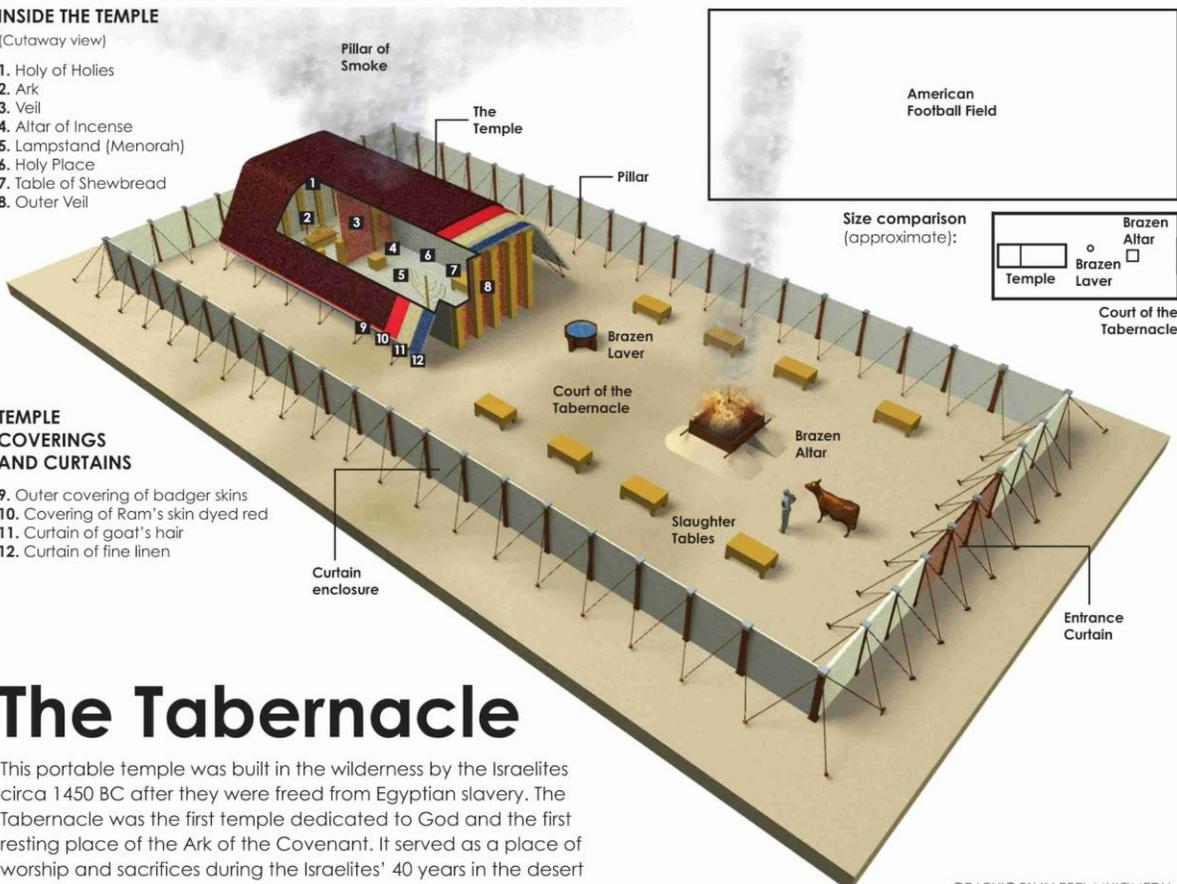
TOTAL TIME: 65min



INSIDE THE TEMPLE

(Cutaway view)

1. Holy of Holies
2. Ark
3. Veil
4. Altar of Incense
5. Lampstand (Menorah)
6. Holy Place
7. Table of Shewbread
8. Outer Veil



TEMPLE COVERINGS AND CURTAINS

9. Outer covering of badger skins
10. Covering of Ram's skin dyed red
11. Curtain of goat's hair
12. Curtain of fine linen

The Tabernacle

This portable temple was built in the wilderness by the Israelites circa 1450 BC after they were freed from Egyptian slavery. The Tabernacle was the first temple dedicated to God and the first resting place of the Ark of the Covenant. It served as a place of worship and sacrifices during the Israelites' 40 years in the desert while conquering the land of Canaan.