

# CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

717 North Stapley Drive, Mesa, AZ 85203 Phone: (480) 833-7500

Website: [www.churchredeemeraz.org](http://www.churchredeemeraz.org)

**Series:** Studies in Hebrews  
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**Pastor/Teacher**  
**Gary L. W. Johnson**

## A BETTER SANCTUARY

The language of Hebrews, as Andrew Murray observed, is that of God's Kindergarten, that is, the typology of the Pentateuch. Perhaps this is related to the author's statement of 5:12, where he traces his readers' weakness to ignorance of "the first principles of the oracles of God." In other words, the understanding of the Pentateuch typologically would deliver them from their perils. The ninth chapter has been called by some, "The Holiest of All."<sup>1</sup> In it, the author draws a series of contrasts to show the infinite superiority of the reality to the type. The specific background of it is the Mosaic Law with its pictures of the Tabernacle, the priesthood, and the Day of Atonement. As Hughes has noted, "Bearing in mind that the principal focus of our author's exposition is the Day of Atonement and the fulfillment of all that is ceremonial portended in the perfect high priestly work of Christ, the appropriateness of his association of the altar of incense with the holy of holies becomes evident."<sup>2</sup>

### **I. THE SANCTUARY AND THE SERVICES** (vv. 1-10)

**NOTE:** (1) The Law was given for two primary purposes:

- (a) to convict man of his sin; to show man his utter failure in pleasing a Holy God (Rom. 2:26; 3:19-20; 7:7-13);
- (b) to serve as tutor to lead to Christ; since under the law man is shown his hopeless condition, the law therefore serves as an instrument of the Holy Spirit in leading men to Christ. (Gal 3:24).

(2) The Tabernacle of Israel was a large object lesson of the person and work of Christ;

(3) Its importance is seen in that 50 chapters are devoted to it, while only two are devoted to creation.

#### **A. The Sanctuary** (vv. 1-5)

Our author has in mind the wilderness tabernacle (cf. Ex 25-31, 35-40) and not the Jerusalem Temple (with which indeed he may have had no first-hand acquaintance).<sup>3</sup> He mentions the contents of the tabernacle, but states that he is not at liberty to go into detail presently because his emphasis is still on priesthood. Hughes observes the significance of the alignment of the brazen altar of sacrifice, the golden altar of incense, and the mercy seat, "though each was located in a different division of the tabernacle or its precincts, namely in the courtyard, the holy place, and the

holy of holies respectively, was undoubtedly an arrangement of the greatest significance. The straight line, which connected these three with each other, indicated clearly the line of propitiation and atonement by God. Accordingly, on the Day of Atonement the High Priest entered into the holy of holies bearing with him the blood of the spotless victim vicariously slain on the altar of sacrifice and also the incense from the altar of incense which, when sprinkled on the live coals, generated a sweet smelling cloud symbolical, as we have mentioned, of the prayers of the people as the atoning blood was applied to the mercy seat.”<sup>4</sup>

B. The Services (vv. 6-10)

The greatest day of the Jewish year was Yom Kippur (lit. the day of covering, or propitiation), which points onward to Calvary, the true Yom Kippur (cf. Jn. 19:30; Zach. 3:9).

1. The propitiation, cf. Lev. 16:1-16, 20-22

We will do well to give considerable thought to this great Biblical word. “To propitiate” says John Murray, “means to ‘placate’, ‘pacify’, ‘appease’, ‘conciliate’. And it is this idea that is applied to the atonement accomplished by Christ. Propitiation presupposes the wrath and displeasure of God, and the purpose of propitiation is the removal of this displeasure. Very simply stated the doctrine of propitiation means that Christ propitiated the wrath of God and rendered God propitious to his people.” Murray goes on to properly define the implications involved. (1) To love and to be propitious are not convertible terms. It is false to suppose that the doctrine of propitiation regards propitiation as that which causes or constrains the divine love. (2) Propitiation is not turning of the wrath of God into love. ... It is one thing to say that the wrathful God is made loving. That would be entirely false. It is another thing to say the wrathful God is loving. That is profoundly true. But it is also true that the wrath by which he is wrathful is propitiated through the cross. This propitiation is the fruit of the divine love. (3) Propitiation does not detract from the love and mercy of God; it rather enhances the marvel of his love. For it shows the cost that redemptive love entails.<sup>5</sup>

2. The pardon cf. Lev. 16:5-10, 20-22

Aaron was to take two goats; one was to be slain as a sin offering for the people; and second goat, called the scape-goat (Heb. AZAZEL), Aaron was to lay his hands on and confess the sins of the people, and the AZAZEL was to be released into the wilderness, which signified the removal of their sins far away, both from the people, and out of God’s sight, or from the place of His presence with Israel. A grand expositor many years ago wrote, “Nor must we fail to take in the blessed truth so vividly symbolized in the second part of the ceremonial (the scape-goat). When the blood of the sin offering had been sprinkled in the Holiest, the sins of Israel were then, by the other goat of the sin offering borne away. Israel stood there still a sinful

people; but their sin, now expiated by the blood, was before God as if it were not. So does the Holy Victim in the Antitype, who first by His death expiated sin, then as the Living One bear away all the believers' sins from the presence of the Holy One into a land of forgetfulness.”<sup>6</sup>

3. The participation, cf. Lev. 16:29-34; 23:26-32

It is stated that on that day, Israel was to be clean from all their sins before the Lord - and they shall have rest for their affected souls.

**CONCLUSION:**

Note the expression in 9:8 - *The Holy Spirit indicates* (ESV). The KJV has *The Holy Spirit signifying*. The Gk word DELOUNTOS means to "make plain" or "make known" and conveys the idea of unfolding. The purpose of which, as Pink has written, was to make evident that "the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest." How did He thus "signify" this fact? By the very framework of the tabernacle: that is, by allowing the people to go no farther than the outer court, and the priests themselves only into the first compartment. "For things in His wisdom were thus disposed, that there should be the first tabernacle whereinto the priests did enter every day, accomplishing the Divine services that God required. Howbeit in that tabernacle there were not the pledges of the gracious presence of God. It was not the especial residence of His glory. But the peculiar habitation of God was separated from it by a veil, and no person living might so much as look into it on pain of death. But yet, lest the church should apprehend, that indeed there was no approach, here, nor hereafter, for any person into the gracious presence of God; He ordained that once a year the high priest, and he alone, should enter into that holy place with blood. Hereby he plainly signified, that an entrance there was to be, and that with boldness, thereinto. For unto what end else did He allow and appoint, that once a year there should be an entrance into it by the high priest, in the name of and for the service of the church? But this entrance being only once a year, by the high priest only, and that with the blood of the covenant, which was always to be observed whilst that tabernacle continued, he did manifest that the access represented was not to be obtained during that season; for all believers in their own persons were utterly excluded from it"<sup>7</sup> What the 53<sup>rd</sup> chapter of Isaiah is to Christ in His Messianic prophecies that, we may truly say, is the 16<sup>th</sup> of Leviticus to the whole system of Mosaic types - the most consummate flower of the Messianic symbolism. All the sin offerings pointed to Christ, the great High Priest and Victim of the future.<sup>8</sup>

**ENDNOTES**

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew Murray, *Holy in Christ*, (rpt. Bethany House, 1967)

<sup>2</sup> Philip Hughes, *Hebrews* (Eerdmans, 1973) p. 313

<sup>3</sup> F.F. Bruce, *Hebrews*, (Eerdmans, 1964) p. 182

<sup>4</sup> Hughes, *op. cit.*

<sup>5</sup> John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, (Eerdmans, 1955)

<sup>6</sup> S.H. Kellogg, *The Expositor's Bible*, ed. W.R. Nicoll, (Scribner & Sons, 1892) vol. 1 p. 306

<sup>7</sup> A.W. Pink, *Exposition of Hebrews* (rpt. Baker, 1954) p. 477

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 305