

- The inner room or chamber was “**behind the second curtain.**” It was “**called the Most Holy Place**” here the “**altar of incense**” and the “**ark of the covenant**” were located.
- The curtains separated God’s holiness from the people. If they did not follow the “**regulations for worship**” they would die. God’s people were able to come before God, but also realize that coming before God carried great risk.

God’s Holiness Came Out into the Open

[Hebrews 9:6-10](#) “These preparations having thus been made, the **priests go regularly into the first section**, performing their ritual duties, but into the second **only the high priest** goes, and he but **once a year**, and not without taking blood, which he offers for himself and for the unintentional sins of the people. By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into **the holy places** is **not yet opened** as long as **the first section** is **still standing** (which is symbolic for **the present age**). According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper, but deal only with food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until **the time of reformation.**”

- The author of Hebrews now explains the process of worship, after listing the parts of the Temple and the sacred elements in the Temple.
- “**Priests go regularly into the first section**” to change the lamp oil for the lampstand, the Bread of Presence, and to put incense on the fire ([Exodus 25:30](#); [30:7-8](#); [Leviticus 24:4](#)); and to offer daily offerings (Ezekiel 46:13-15 describes the daily burnt offerings, and [Numbers 28:7](#) describes drink offerings).
- Only the priests descended from the tribe of Levi could go into the first part of the Temple, called the Holy Place for their daily responsibilities. Those not descended from Levi could enter.
- “**Only the high priest**” could go into the Holy of Holies. And, he could only enter “**once a year.**” He went into the Holy of Holies for one single purpose, to offer “**blood ... for himself and for the unintentional sins of the people.**” (Leviticus 16:6, 9, 11, 15, 17). In [Leviticus 4](#) unintentional sins are distinguished from intentional sins.
- The writer of Hebrews tells us that God’s Old Covenant instructed the people to do these things because the “**holy places**” were “**not yet opened**” because “**the first section**” was “**still standing.**” The way to draw near to God was “**not yet opened**”.
 - When the curtain was torn just after Jesus died, everything changed ([Matthew 27:51](#); [Mark 15:38](#); [Luke 23:45](#)).
 - The division between God and humanity was removed.
 - Now the believers were the living temple of God, and His holiness went out into the whole world.
 - 2 Corinthians 6:16 “What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For **we are the temple of the living God**; as God said, “I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”
 - [1 Peter 2:5](#) “you yourselves like **living stones are being built up as a spiritual house**, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”
- Two different time periods are contrasted: “**the present age**” and “**the time of reformation**”.
 - This was written long ago - “**the present age**” refers to the time before Christ’s coming.
 - “**The time of reformation**” refers to the time after Jesus has come (see [Hebrews 9:11](#), [12](#), [26](#)).

Jesus claimed that His physical body was a temple: “Jesus answered them, ‘Destroy this Temple, and I will raise it again in three days ... After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken” (John 2:19&22). John tells us, “They believed the scripture.” Which verses of scripture does he mean?

I believe that both the writer of Hebrews and John tell us that the Old Testament Tabernacle and Temple foretold that Jesus would come. They showed that God wanted to draw near to His people, but God’s people needed to understand that drawing near to God could only come at a great price.

Before Jesus came, God’s people drew near to God at great risk to themselves. If they broke God’s rules they might die.

When Jesus died on the cross, however, He paid the great price for the sins of those who believe in Him. Now believers can come boldly before God with confidence and without fear (Hebrews 4:16 - ¹⁶ Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.) Why can we be so confident? Because Jesus is our high priest. He is able to “sympathize with our weaknesses” (Hebrews 4:15). He is on our side. Those who believe in Christ are the body of Christ, and they are also now the Temple of the living God (Romans 12:4&5; 1 Corinthians 6:19&20; 1 Corinthians 12:12-31).

The Earthly Holy Place (Hebrews 9:1–10)

R E G U L A T I O N S T H
B A L T A R O E C A L P B
' R P O M N N H A S R T R
F T R C P D N O C E S N E
S H E U S C A A P O E S Y
T L S R T O C A M D N L U
N Y E T A V R R L E O S G
E T N A N E V O C H I O N
T S C I D R G N I D L O H
F E E N A E I ' E D I E A
F I R S T D L S U T L V V
A R O N L Y F L C B L E I
T P V R R B R E A D C N N
S O F F E R S T T C V Y G

Now **even** the **first covenant** had **regulations** for worship and an **earthly place** of **holiness**. 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**. Behind the **second curtain** was a **second section** called the **Most Holy Place**, **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**. Above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we **cannot** now speak in detail. These **preparations** **having** thus been made, the **priests** go regularly into the **first section**, performing their ritual duties, but into the **second** **only** the high **priest** goes, and he but once a year, and not without taking blood, which he **offers** for himself and for the unintentional sins of the people. By this the **Holy Spirit** indicates that the way into the **holy places** is not yet opened as long as the **first section** is still standing (which is symbolic for the present age). According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are **offered** that **cannot** perfect the conscience of the worshiper, but deal **only** with food and drink and various washings, **regulations** for the body imposed until the time of reformation.

(ESV)

Exported from [Logos Bible Software](#).