

THE TWO COVENANTS COMPARED: THE SINAI COVENANT AND THE NEW COVENANT IN CHRIST

“Look, the days are coming, Yahweh declares, when I shall make a New Covenant with the House of Israel (and the House of Judah), but not like the covenant I made with their ancestors the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of Egypt, a covenant which they broke, even though I was their Master, Yahweh declares. No, this is the covenant I shall make with the House of Israel when those days have come, Yahweh declares.

Within them I shall plant my Law, writing it on their hearts. Then I shall be their God and they will be my people. There will be no further need for everyone to teach neighbor or brother, saying, ‘Learn to know Yahweh!’ No, they will all know me, from the least to the greatest, Yahweh declares, since I shall forgive their guilt and never more call their sin to mind.” Jeremiah 31:31-34

THE OLD (SINAI) COVENANT (Hebrews 9:1-10)	THE NEW COVENANT (Hebrews 9:11-28)
Obsolete now that Christ has come Romans 10:4; Hebrews 8:13 CCC# 1963-64	A perfect covenant brought about by Christ Hebrews 7:19; 8:6-7; CCC# 1965; 1967
Originated at Mt. Sinai Galatians 4:24-25	Originated from the heavenly Jerusalem Galatians 4:26-27
Blessings and punishments were temporal: brought judgment, death, condemnation 2 Corinthians 3:7-9	Blessings and punishments are eternal: brings eternal life Ephesians 2:1-13; Revelation 20:11-21:4
Impossible to obey perfectly because of human weakness and slavery to sin Romans 8:3; Galatians 3:23-24	Fulfilled perfectly by Christ Romans 10:4; 1 Corinthians 11:25; Galatians 3:25-27; CCC# 580-81
Established in the blood of sacrifice: In animal sacrifice the blood of the animal was separated from the body and both are offered in sacrifice. Required continual daily atonement for unintentional sins. There was no remedy for intentional sin because no animal was perfect enough to forgive mortal sin. With the exception of the whole burnt offerings, other sacrifices are eaten: Exodus 2:7; 24:5-11; 29:10-18; Leviticus 1:1-13; 6:17-22; 19:17; 7:6-7; Numbers 15:27-31; Hebrews 9:7; 10:1-4;	Established in the blood of sacrifice: In the celebration of the first Eucharist Jesus separated His Body from His Blood [Luke 22:19-20]—the sacrifice must be eaten [John 6:53-56]. Christ atoned for all sin once for all time and all humanity and His sacrifice has the power to cleanse the conscience. The application of His sacrifice is on-going as He stands before the Father as both our High Priest and the perfect Lamb of Sacrifice: Hebrews 9:12; 10:2, 22; Revelation 5:5-6; CCC# 580; 1364-68
Restricted access to God Exodus 30:10; Hebrews 9:7-8	Christ opened access to God for all humanity Hebrews 9:15-16; CCC# 536; 1026
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Hebrews Lesson 6: Handout #2: SHEM VS MELCHIZEDEK
Blessed be Yahweh, God of Shem, Genesis 9:26

This Melchizedek is Shem, who became a king due to his greatness; he was the head of fourteen nations. In addition, he was a priest. He received this from Noah, his father, through the rights of succession. Shem lived not only to the time of Abraham, as Scripture says, but even to the time of Jacob and Esau, the grandsons of Abraham. St. Ephraim, doctor of the Church: Teaching on Genesis 14:18-20

The Jews say that Melchizedek was Shem, Noah's son, and, counting up the total years of his lifetime, they demonstrate that he would have lived up to the time of Isaac. St. Jerome, doctor of the Church: Hebrew Questions on Genesis 14:18-19.

After the flood Noah lived 350 years. In all, Noah's life lasted 950 years; then he died. [..]. When Shem was 100 years old he fathered Arpachshad, 2 years after the flood. Genesis 9:28-29; 10:10

According to the Jewish Oral Tradition and to Catholic theologians like Sts. Ephraim, Jerome and Nicholas of Lira, testify to the tradition that Shem is the King of Righteousness [*Melek-zedek* in Hebrew] to whom Abraham pays a tithe in Genesis 14:18-20. Shem was the righteous firstborn son of Noah in whom the covenant with Yahweh and the line of the “promised seed” of Genesis 3:15 continues. Shem is the first man in Sacred Scripture who is identified as Yahweh’s man [see quotation above from Genesis 9:26]. Abraham is Shem’s descendant according to the Biblical genealogy of Genesis 11:10-26.

Shem's age	Descendants
100 years	Birth of Arpachshad
135 years	Birth of Shelah
165 years	Birth of Eber
199 years	Birth of Peleg
229 years	Birth of Reu
261 years	Birth of Serug
291 years	Birth of Nahor
320 years	Birth of Terah
390 years	Birth of Abraham
489 years	Birth of Ishmael
565 years old	Death of Abraham
600 years old	Death of Shem

Shem outlived Abraham by 35 years

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The Fathers of the Church saw Melchizedek as a type of Christ. Both Melchizedek and Jesus serve Yahweh as:

1. A righteous firstborn son.
2. Served Yahweh as priest and king.
3. Melchizedek rules in Salem /Jerusalem, and Jesus rules in the heavenly Jerusalem
4. Priestly offering of bread and wine; Jesus = Eucharist
5. Receives tithes & offerings

6. Higher order of priesthood than the Sinai Covenant Levitical priesthood: Melchizedek's priesthood, like Jesus' priesthood, is based on his firstborn son-ship and God's call.

Hebrews Lesson #6 handout: Yahweh's covenant with Aaron: *He made an everlasting covenant with him, and gave him the priesthood of the people. He adorned him with impressive vestments, he dressed him in a robe of glory. Sirach 45:7*

THE KOHEN GADOL AND HIS VESTMENTS: Exodus 28:1-43

For the glorious adornment of your brother Aaron you shall have sacred vestments made

1. The Kesones [Tunic]: made of white linen, woven all of one piece with a boxlike knit.
2. The Me'il [Robe]: made of turquoise wool. The Hem of the Me'il was of alternating pomegranates and bells. The pomegranates were of turquoise, purple, and scarlet wool and they were alternated with gold bells.
3. The Girdle or sash of variegated work
4. The Tzitz [Head-plate]: made of pure gold, inscribed with the words "Holy to Yahweh", and tied with a turquoise blue wool cord.
5. The Ephod: garment with shoulder straps and stones on the shoulders [avnei shoham stones] with the engraved names of the sons of Israel according to birth order, six on each shoulder, with a tie belt made of gold, turquoise, purple, and scarlet wool and twisted linen.
6. The Choshen [Breastplate], the breastplate of judgment: a folded pocket worn on the breast with 12 stones in 4 rows of 3, one stone for each of the 12 Tribes of Israel engraved with the name of each tribe and in which the Urim and Tumim [Thummim] are carried. The Chosen [Breastplate] is attached on to the Ephod with straps/ties
7. The Turban/ Mitre: [with embroidered sash]
8. The Linen Breeches: that went from the hips to the thighs
[Note: the priests could not wear their vestments outside of the worship service (Ez 42:14)].

The writer of Ecclesiasticus [Sirach] 45:1-22 recalls God's covenant with Aaron for a perpetual ministerial priesthood and outlines the duties of the priesthood in 45:15-17; the passage reads: *Moses consecrated him and anointed him with holy oil; and this was an everlasting covenant for him, and for his descendants as long as the heavens endure, that he should preside over worship, act as priest, and bless the people in the name of the Lord. He chose him out of all the living to offer sacrifices to the Lord, incense and perfume as a memorial to make expiation for the people. He entrusted him with his commandments, committed him to the statutes of the Law for him to teach Jacob and his decrees and enlighten Israel on his law* [New Jerusalem translation].

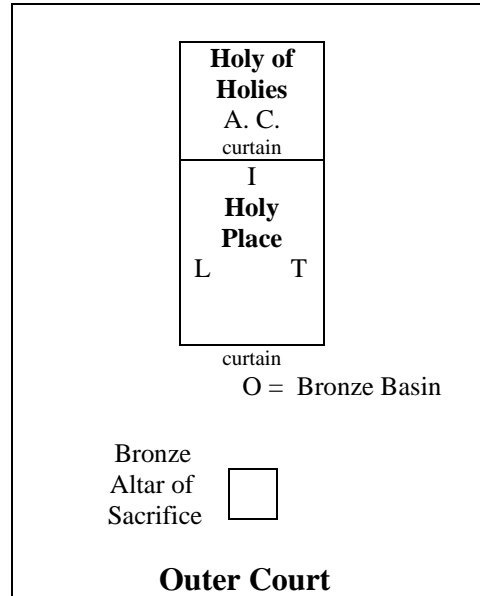
Question: In this passage from Sirach [Ecclesiasticus], what four elements identify the office of the priesthood of God's covenant with Israel?

Answer:

1. His dignity and responsibility as God's representative
2. The purpose of the spiritual side of his priestly mission which is to act on behalf of the covenant people in their relationship with God, instructing them in the Law of God and in living lives of holiness
3. The purpose of priestly service to God and the people in the liturgy of covenant worship
4. To offer sacrifice for the atonement of sin and the restoration of communion with God

Handout Hebrews Lesson 6
PLAN OF THE TABERNACLE

WEST



EAST

Outside the “Tent” = profane and unclean

Tent of Meeting Outer Court = sacred and clean

- Bronze Altar of Sacrifice
- Bronze holy water basin for purification

Holy Place = sacred and clean

- L = Golden Lampstand (menorah)
- T = Golden Table containing the Bread of the Presence
- I = Golden Altar of Incense in front of the curtain separating the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies (which side?)
- ___ = “curtain” separated the Outer Court from the Holy Place

Holy of Holies: = most sacred and clean

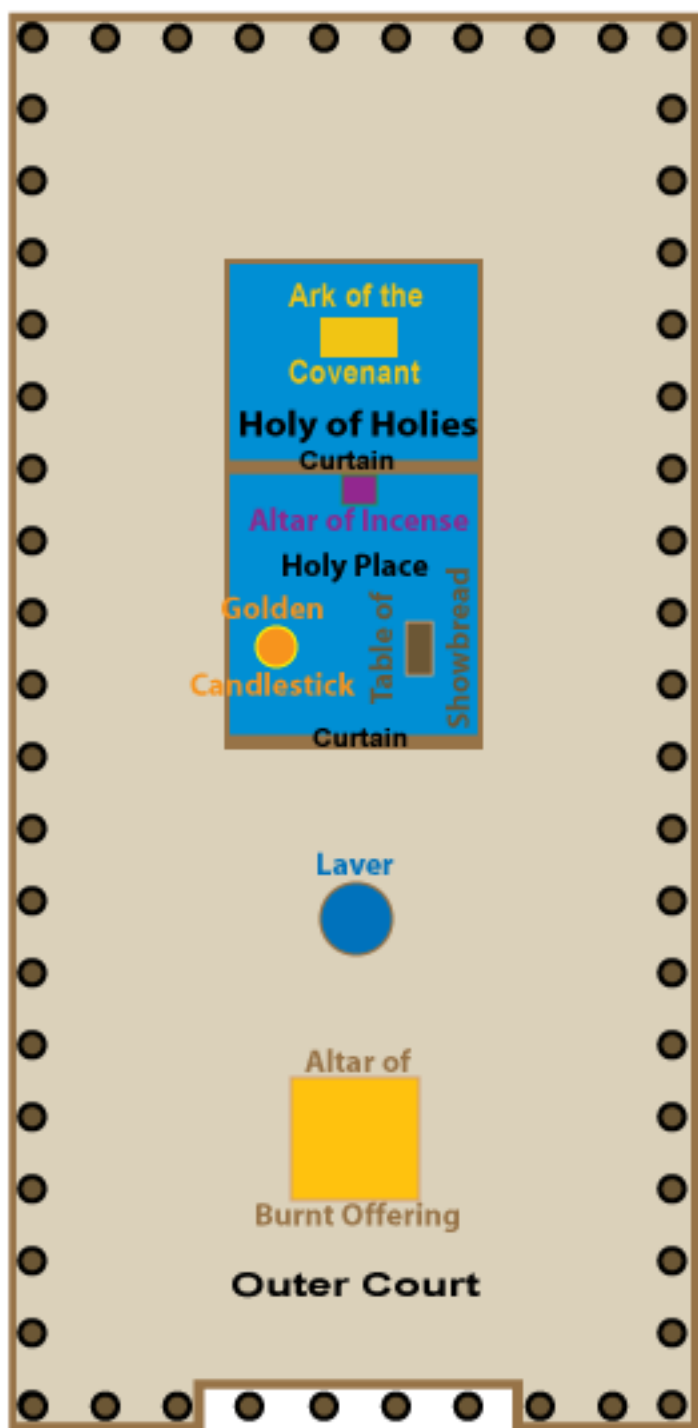
- ___ “curtain” separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies
- A.C. = gold covered Ark of the Covenant covered with the gold covered Mercy Seat, the footstool of God joining heavenly and earthly liturgy

Notice the 3 section division of the Tabernacle which, from the New Covenant prospective, suggests the 3 persons of the Divine Trinity while the arrangement of the furniture forms a cruciform, foreshadowing the altar of the Cross and the site of the final and perfect sacrifice.

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N



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