

Hebrews Chapter 8

Verses 8:1 – 1:18 This entire section is an exposition of the New Covenant promised (in Jer. 31:31-34), and its contrast to the Old Covenant of Law.

Verses 8:1-5: A brief description of Jesus' priesthood in the heavenly sanctuary, which is better than Aaron's because He serves in a better sanctuary (verses 1-5; 9:1-12).

Hebrews 8:1 "Now of the things which we have spoken [this is] the sum: We have such a high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens;"

"Of the things": Here the writer arrived at his central message. The fact is that "we have" (current possession), a superior High-Priest, Jesus Christ, who is the fulfillment of all that was foreshadow in the Old Testament.

As we said, in the last lesson, The Tabernacle in the wilderness was a model of the one in heaven. The heavenly Tabernacle was not made with human hands. Moses had been warned of God that every detail must be exact as the one God had shown Moses. Our High Priest is Jesus Christ, who carried His precious blood to the throne of God.

We mentioned that Jesus is seated at the right hand of God the Father, because His work is done. His 6 hours on the cross, was His 6 days of work, for all of mankind. He said "It is finished", and went to heaven to be with the Father. Jesus is our representative before the Father. He is our Advocate, because He pleads our case.

Revelation 3:21 "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

This statement, in Jesus' own words is in red in my Bible. By this, I know this is Jesus speaking.

Hebrews 8:2 "A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man."

"Minister": This is the same word used of the angels (in 1:7). In (Jer. 33:21), it was used of the priests.

"Sanctuary": (9:3). The holiest place where God dwelt (Exodus 15:17; 25:8; 26:23-24; 1 Chron. 22:17).

"True tabernacle": The definition is given in the phrase "which the Lord pitched, not man," as well as (in 9:11, 24; and 8:5). It refers to the heavenly dwelling place of God.

We must not fear problems of this earth, because we have a promise of a better life in heaven with Jesus.

2 Corinthians 5:1 "For we know that if our earthly house of [this] tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

Hebrews 8:3 "For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore [it is] of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer."

The duties of the high priest; as we have said before in these lessons, is to be the link between God and man. He is to represent God to the people, and to represent the people to God. The high priest was the only one permitted to go into the most holy place. He carried blood into the most holy place for the sins of the people and for himself.

God spoke to the heart of the high priest through the Urim and Thummim worn over the heart of the high priest. The high priest was in authority over the other priests. Besides being in charge of matters of religious importance, he was also in charge of civil matters as well. If we look at the high priest of these Israelites as a type of Christ, we will be able to see many similarities.

Our great High Priest (Jesus Christ), represents us before the Father, He carried His own precious blood to atone for our sin, to the Throne of God. God spoke to all believers through His Son Jesus Christ. I could go on and on, but you get the picture.

Titus 2:14 "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

Hebrews 8:4 "For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law:"

“Not be a priest”: Jesus was not qualified to be a Levitical priest because He was not of the tribe of Levi. Because of its use of the present tense, this verse indicated that the Levitical system was still in operation at the time of writing, indicating it was before the destruction of the temple (in A.D. 70).

Jesus would not have been a high priest under the law, here on earth, because He was not of the Levitical tribe. Another good reason that He would not have been a high priest here on the earth, is that the high priest on earth is of the law, Jesus was not of the law, but of grace.

Hebrews 8:5 "Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, [that] thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount."

The quote (is from Exodus 25:40).

“Example and shadow”: This does not mean that there are actual buildings in heaven which were copied in the tabernacle, but rather that the heavenly realities were adequately symbolized and represented in the earthly tabernacle model.

The entire Tabernacle was patterned after the real thing in heaven. We see in the next verse that Moses truly was warned for it to be exactly as God had shown Him. I believe this whole thing was so that mankind could understand the heavenlies a little better. Almost everything in the tabernacle was symbolic of Jesus.

Jesus is the Bread, Jesus is the Light, Jesus is the Lamb Sacrifice. Here again we could go on and on, but our point is made. This earthly high priest and the earthly Tabernacle were to show us a little glimpse of heaven and how it works.

Exodus 26:30 "And thou shalt rear up the tabernacle according to the fashion thereof which was showed thee in the mount."

Hebrews 8:6 "But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises."

“Mediator”: (9:15). The word describes a go-between or an arbitrator, in this case between man and God (1 Tim. 2:5; Gal. 3:19-20).

“Better covenant ... better promises”: (verses 7:19, 22; John 1:17-18). This covenant is identified as the “new covenant” (in verses 8, 13; 9:15).

Jesus did not do away with the law; He fulfilled it. The law had to be fulfilled before the more excellent ministry of grace could be in effect. When Jesus said (It is finished), it brought the end to the law and ushered in grace.

2 Corinthians 3:6-11 "Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." "But if the ministration of death, written [and] engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which [glory] was to be done away:" "How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?" "For if the ministration of condemnation [be] glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory." "For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth." "For if that which is done away [was] glorious, much more that which remaineth [is] glorious."

You see, the law condemned, but Jesus brought hope through grace. Grace is so much better; you would not be able to find anyone who would want to go back to the law. Mediator (in verse 6 above), means a go between.

Verses 7-13: Many important truths can be gleaned from this passage regarding the “new covenant” (quoted from Jeremiah 31:31-34). First, during Jeremiah’s day it was future and was something new. Second, it will be established “with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah”.

This statement is very precise. It involves the Jewish people at a time when they will again be united. When Jeremiah revealed this prophecy, Israel was scattered throughout the Middle East, and Judah had just recently begun its exile in Babylon.

This new covenant made with the Jewish people would come after they were regathered to Israel (Jer. 30:1-3), and after a time of severe tribulation identified as “the time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jer. 30:7). Third, it is unlike the covenant God made with Israel at Sinai (verse 9). It is different in that the old covenant had been conditional.

When Israel abandoned it, God also abandoned them. The new covenant is a promise. Fourth, this new covenant is based upon an inner, spiritual change. It is not written on stone, but “in their hearts” (Ezek. 36:26-27; 2 Cor. 3:6-8). Its followers are those who “know the Lord”.

The relation of the new covenant to the Gentile, church-age believer is viewed in one of several ways. First, amillennialists believe that the church replaces Israel and so this covenant is fulfilled by the church. A second view proposes that this covenant (as Jeremiah 31 suggests), is for the nation of Israel alone. The third view suggests that two new covenants exist: one for Israel and one for the church.

The fourth (and probably the best view), is that there is one new covenant which God will one day fulfill with Israel and in which the church participates soteriologically today. In other words, though the covenant is not fulfilled, Christ’s death has initiated its present benefits for those who will someday share in its ultimate blessings when it is fulfilled with Israel.

This view allows the witness of both the Old and New Testaments to stand. Further, nowhere does Scripture speak of two new covenants, any more than it speaks of two old covenants. Paul was a minister of this new covenant to the churches (2 Cor. 3:6). The ordinance of the Lord’s Supper which has been given to the church is based upon the sacrifice of the new covenant, Christ’s death.

Many references to the new covenant within the New Testament clearly relate it to the church (12:23-24; 1 Cor. 11:25; 2 Cor. 3:6), and others also relate it to Israel (verse 10; 12:23-24; Rom. 11:27). As heirs of Christ’s kingdom, the church partakes of the new covenant’s spiritual blessings today and will in the future share in its fulfillment with Israel.

Hebrews 8:7 "For if that first [covenant] had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second."

The same argument (as in 7:11). The older covenant, incomplete and imperfect, was only intended to be temporary.

The fault was not actually in the law, but in man's ability to keep the law.

Galatians 3:21 "[Is] the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law."

As I said, it was just too much for man to keep. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Praise God we are saved, not because we are worthy, but because Jesus loves us and paid in full for our sin.

Romans 3:23 "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;"

When we accept Jesus as our Savior and Lord, we do so by simple faith in Him. This alone makes us righteous in the sight of God.

This entire lesson is saying to us that our great High Priest (Jesus Christ), has done all of the work for us. He has paid our debt to the Father in full. He has washed us in His precious blood and made us pure. He has become sin for us that we might become His righteousness.

He even fulfilled the law that we might be saved by the new covenant God made with man, through His son. Our Creator became our Savior.

Hebrews Chapter 8 Questions

1. Where is our High Priest?
2. Who pitched the true Tabernacle?
3. What had God warned Moses of, regarding the Temple?
4. Why is Jesus seated at the right hand of the Father?
5. Jesus is our representative before whom?
6. Every high priest is ordained to do what 2 things?
7. Who was the only one allowed to go into the most holy place in the Temple?
8. Who did the high priest carry the blood into the most holy place for?

9. Show some similarities between the earthly high priest and our great High Priest, Jesus Christ.
10. Give two reasons why Jesus was not high priest on earth?
11. What does the author think is the reason for building the Tabernacle in the wilderness?
12. Name a few things in the Temple that were symbolic of Jesus.
13. What is grace that Jesus brought to us called in Hebrews 8:6?
14. In the same verse as above, what is Jesus called?
15. Did Jesus do away with the law? Explain.
16. When was the end of the reign of the law, and grace entered?
17. Finish this statement; The letter killeth, but the Spirit _____.
18. Why could the Israelites not look on the face of Moses?
19. 2 Corinthians 3:11 says what about law and grace?
20. Which would you rather live under, law or grace?
21. What really was the fault of the law?
22. We are saved, not because we are worthy, but why?
23. Who did all the work for us to be saved?
24. He became sin for us, that we might become ____ _____.
25. Our Creator became our _____.