

# *Hebrews: A Bridge from the Old to the New*

## *Hebrews Chapter 8*

### **Jesus Christ: A Superior Priesthood – A Better Covenant**

#### *The Better Covenant is Ministered by a Superior High Priest (Verse 1)*

- 1 The author gives a summary of Jesus as the superior high priest by contrasting Him to the Levitical priests. Calling Jesus “such a high priest” refers back to the earlier description of His moral perfection [Hebrews 7:26](#), differing Him from the Levite priests who needed forgiveness [Leviticus 9:7-8](#). The fact that Jesus is ‘sitting’ indicates His salvation work is finished [John 19:30](#), because His blood took away the sin of the world [John 1:29](#). And, He is uniquely seated at “the right hand” of the Father in “heaven” [Psalm 110:1](#), [Romans 8:34](#), [Colossians 3:1](#).

#### *The Better Covenant is Ministered in a Better Place (Verses 2-5)*

- 2 “[Jesus] serves” (can also be translated “[Jesus] is a minister”) in the sanctuary (the Holy of Holies): the “true tabernacle” – the heavenly dwelling place of God (built by God) [Exodus 15:17](#), [Psalm 78:69](#), [Hebrews 9:11,24](#).
- 3 All priests offer sacrifices, and as discussed earlier [Hebrews 5:1](#), the gifts and sacrifices may refer to grain gifts for dedication or thanksgiving and blood offerings for sins, or both being offered for sins by the Levites. Jesus, on the other hand, offered Himself up as the complete sacrifice [Romans 4:25,5:6-8](#), [Ephesians 5:2](#), [Hebrews 2:17](#).
- 4 If He still lived on earth, Jesus would not qualify to be a priest, because He was not of the tribe of Levi.
- 5 The use of the word “copy” does not imply buildings in heaven, but that the earthly tabernacle adequately symbolized and represented the heavenly realities. This verse includes a quote of God speaking to Moses when he was on “the mountain” (Mount Sinai), and taken from the Pentateuch [Exodus 25:40](#).

#### *The Better Covenant is Founded on Better Promises (Verses 6-13)*

- 6 A priest’s main job is to be a “mediator” (an arbitrator) between man and God [1 Timothy 2:5-6](#), [Hebrews 6:19-20](#). Jesus is the priest who mediates the New Covenant [Luke 22:20](#). Not only are both Jesus as priest and the New Covenant superior to the earthly counterparts, but the promises of “grace and truth” are superior [John 1:16-18](#).
- 7 The old order was incomplete and temporary, but Jesus finished [John 17:4](#) the new (eternal) order [Hebrews 7:11](#).
- 8 These five verses <sup>v.8-12</sup> quote Jeremiah [Jeremiah 31:31-34](#) about the Lord speaking words of hope and restoration through the OT prophet, including a glimpse of the future New Covenant [Deuteronomy 29:14](#), [Isaiah 42:6](#).

- 9** God gave Moses the Ten Commandments to test the nation of Israel, demanded their obedience with the Old Covenant Genesis 17:9, Exodus 19:3-6 and the Israelites unanimously agreed to follow the covenant Exodus 24:7(3-8). However, in their fallen nature Romans 7:18, the Israelite people violated the covenant 1 Kings 19:14, Isaiah 24:5.
- As with most OT quotes in the NT, this quote was taken from the Septuagint (also known as the LXX) (Greek translation of the OT in the second century B.C.). In this verse <sup>v.9</sup>, the following phrase is not in the LXX, but is found in most other manuscripts: "though [God] was a husband to [Israel]" Jeremiah 31:32.
- 10** This verse Jeremiah 31:33, Hebrews 10:16 refers to the New Covenant God will make with Israel that will replace their legalistic hardness Romans 11:25-27 with softened hearts and a spirit Ezekiel 11:19-20. And, as a result, the Jews will have a deeper desire and ability to keep God's laws, because, instead of the law being written on the tablets of Testimony Exodus 32:15, 34:29, they will be written on their hearts Proverbs 7:1-3, 2 Corinthians 3:3.
- 11** Learning about God started by His followers listening to the Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob), the Prophets (Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, etc) and the Levitical priests (Aaron, etc); however, Jesus came with a superior process for learning, not from failed man 1 John 2:27, but by listening John 6:45 to Him (His life, His Word, His creation and His Spirit) Isaiah 54:13, John 14:26, 1 Corinthians 2:12.
- 12** In the end of times, God will restore Daniel 9:24-27 His chosen people Deuteronomy 7:6 by showing His mercy on the Israelites Micah 7:18a(18-19), forgiving the sins of the faithful Jeremiah 50:20 and blotting their sins out for His sake Isaiah 43:25. Forgiveness of sins is the glorious basis of the New Covenant Zechariah 12:10-13:1, Matthew 26:28.
- 13** Jesus was the fulfillment of all of the Old Covenant symbolism, making the old way "obsolete". Through Him, all things become new 2 Corinthians 5:17-19 by creating in His followers "...ministers of a new covenant – not one of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life." 2 Corinthians 3:6(4-6).

Many scholars believe the phrase "soon disappear" referred to the ending of the Old Covenant and priesthood being symbolized by the Temple destruction in A.D. 70 (and the end of Levitical worship).

### Scripture Readings

**Genesis 17:9** Then God said to Abraham, "As for you, you must keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you for the generations to come."

**Exodus 24:7** Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it to the people. They responded, "We will do everything the LORD has said; we will obey."

**Exodus 32:15** Moses turned and went down the mountain with the two tablets of the Testimony in his hands. They were inscribed on both sides, front and back.

**Psalms 110:1** The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool..."

**Isaiah 24:5** The earth is defiled by its people; they have disobeyed the laws, violated the statutes and broken the everlasting covenant.

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**Isaiah 42:6** I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles.

**Isaiah 43:25** I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more.

**Jeremiah 50:20** "...at that time," declares the LORD, "search will be made for Israel's guilt, but there will be none, and for the sins of Judah, but none will be found, for I will forgive the remnant I spare."

**Ezekiel 11:19-20** I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh. Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. They will be my people, and I will be their God.

**Micah 7:18a** Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance.

**Matthew 26:28** This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out ... for the forgiveness of sins.

**Luke 22:20** In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you."

**John 1:16-18** From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known.

**John 1:29** The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

**John 6:45** It is written in the Prophets: 'They will all be taught by God.' Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me.

**John 17:4** I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.

**Romans 4:25** He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

**Romans 7:18** I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.

**2 Corinthians 3:3** You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

**2 Corinthians 3:6** He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant – not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

**2 Corinthians 5:17** ...if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

**1 Timothy 2:5-6** For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men – the testimony given in its proper time.

**Hebrews 7:26** Such a high priest meets our need – one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens.

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