

Hebrews Chapter 8 The New Covenant

The focus of chapters 8 – 10 is the priesthood of Jesus in relation to the old covenant, the sanctuary, and the law.

Hebrews 8:1 to 10:18 is the longest section of sustained exposition in Hebrews and contains no imperatives.

Verses 1-2

Now the main point... is this, we have such a high priest seated *at the right hand of the throne of Majesty in the heavens* – This indicates the finality and completeness of His sacrifice (Heb 10:11-12).

Verse 3

Since earthly high priests offered gifts and sacrifices, it follows that the new High Priest should have something to offer. The offering of Jesus as our high priest will be developed more in Hebrews 9 and 10.

Verse 4

Now if He were on earth... Jesus could not be an earthly high priest after the Levitical order (*according to the Law*). Note – this verse implies that the temple is still standing and the Levitical priests are still offering gifts and sacrifices.

Verses 5-6

Copy and shadow of heavenly things – Proof – In Exodus 25:40 Moses is instructed to build the tabernacle according to the pattern which had been shown to him on the mountain.

But now...

-He has obtained a more excellent ministry.

-He is the mediator of a better covenant.

-His covenant is enacted on better promises.

The themes of *mediator* and *covenant* play a key role in chapters 8-10.

Verse 7

For if that first covenant (The Mosaic Law) had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second.

Occasion sought – Literally “*no other place searched for.*” The idea is something different was being searched for while the old was in force.

Verses 8-12 – A quotation of Jeremiah 31:31-34

For finding fault with them – The people of Israel.

He says, Behold days are coming, says the Lord, when I will effect a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.

New = New in character and nature.

Verses 8-12 – A quotation of Jeremiah 31:31-34

“That God has replaced the Mosaic covenant with the new covenant suggests that the problem with the first covenant was more than just that people did not obey it. The creation of the new covenant shows that God never intended the old covenant to be permanent... there is one crucial difference: the way each covenant deals with the sin

problem.” “The Mosaic covenant was ineffective in solving the sin problem; the new covenant brought about a permanent solution to the sin problem. Thus, it would appear one cannot describe the new covenant as merely a ‘renewal’ or ‘restoration’ of the old covenant.”

David Allen, *Hebrews*

With the house of Israel and with the house of Judah - NOTE – Jeremiah 31:35-40 – God says the fixed order of the universe will change before He will renege on His covenant to Israel. Compare with Romans 11:25-29. See also Jer 32:37-40, Exek 16:60-63, 37:21-28.

Not like the covenant which I made with their fathers – The Mosaic Law given on Mt Sinai.

After those days – The new covenant has an eschatological dimension to it. For Israel this probably refers to the millennial kingdom and beyond.

Promised benefits:

-God’s laws will be put in their minds and hearts.

-They will have a special relationship with God.

-They shall all know God.

-Sins will be remembered no more.

Verse 13

He has made the first obsolete – Because Jesus, our great High Priest has been sacrificed and His blood has inaugurated the new covenant.

1 Cor 11:25 – “*This cup is the new covenant in My blood...*”

Whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear – In 70 A.D. when Titus destroyed the temple the old covenant rituals and priesthood ceased to exist. This is another hint that the book of Hebrews was written before 70 A.D.

Question? How does the church fit in the new covenant?

1 – The church becomes Israel and the promises of the new covenant are spiritualized (amillennialism, many Reformed theologians).

2 – The promises are to Israel.

A – The new covenant is with Israel only.

B – There are two new covenants, one for Israel and one for the church.

C – The church enters into the blessings of the new covenant.

David Allen writes,

“The new covenant is now in effect; its blessings are experienced by the Church, but in a future time all of the new covenant promises will be realized by Israel...together with Gentiles who are also a part of the new covenant through Christ.”

The point of Hebrews 8:

The old covenant with its sacrificial system has been superseded by the new covenant. This was by the very design of God Himself. The Law was never intended to be the final means of bringing people to God (Rom 10:4, Gal 3:21-26).