

GREATER THAN

A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF HEBREWS

HEBREWS

8:1-13

A GREATER COVENANT

1Now the main point in what has been said is this: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, **2**a minister in the sanctuary and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man. **3**For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices; so it is necessary that this high priest also have something to offer. **4**Now if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer the gifts according to the Law; **5**who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned by God when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for, "SEE," He says, "THAT YOU MAKE all things ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN WHICH WAS SHOWN YOU ON THE MOUNTAIN." **6**But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises.

7For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second. **8**For finding fault with them, 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;

9NOT LIKE THE COVENANT WHICH I MADE WITH THEIR FATHERS ON THE DAY WHEN I TOOK THEM BY THE HAND TO LEAD THEM OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT; FOR THEY DID NOT CONTINUE IN MY COVENANT, AND I DID NOT CARE FOR THEM, SAYS THE LORD.

10"FOR THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: I WILL PUT MY LAWS INTO THEIR MINDS, AND I WILL WRITE THEM ON THEIR HEARTS. AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.

11"AND THEY SHALL NOT TEACH EVERYONE HIS FELLOW CITIZEN, AND EVERYONE HIS BROTHER, SAYING, 'KNOW THE LORD,' FOR ALL WILL KNOW ME, FROM THE LEAST TO THE GREATEST OF THEM.

12"FOR I WILL BE MERCIFUL TO THEIR INIQUITIES, AND I WILL REMEMBER THEIR SINS NO MORE."

13When He said, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.



DIGGING IN

Read Hebrews 8:1-13

DISCUSS

- What is legalism?
- What were the limitations of the old covenant (the Law)?
- What has Jesus accomplished as our High Priest?
- In our careers, effort often translates to reward. Overtime gives us extra pay. High performance earns promotions. We can easily apply our performance-based mindset to our relationship with God. For example, we might think that being a “good Christian” will earn us earthly blessings or answered prayers. On the other hand, we may feel like spiritual under-performers, too sinful or unworthy of God’s love. **What grade do you think you’d get on your spiritual performance report card?**
- What sorts of rewards do you think you have earned from your good behavior?
- What do you think it will take for God to be happy with you?
- Relying on our own work to prove ourselves to God is a broken way to view our relationship with God. Instead of trusting in Jesus, we think as if we are under the Old Testament Law, needing to make sacrifices and offerings to please God. We don’t make animal sacrifices like they did back then, but many of us still feel the need to pay for our own sins. **What do you think about yourself after you sin?**
- In what ways do you feel like you need to make up for what you have done?
- The Law was good but could not save anyone. It was given to God’s people so that they could see their sinfulness, recognize their need for forgiveness, and point to the hope of a savior. In other words, the Law was a road sign leading us to Jesus, who came to pay for our sins, offer us lasting forgiveness, and reconcile us to God.
- The Purpose of the Old Covenant: Today, Christians are no longer under the Law, or the old covenant God made with his people (Galatians 3:23–29; Romans 6:12–14). But that does not mean the Law is bad or that it is irrelevant. The Law was and is good, but it leads us to something greater.
- What do you think of when you think of the Law? What questions do you have?
- God first gave Moses the Law after leading the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt. It revealed God’s good character (Lev. 19:2; 20:7–8), set Israel apart from other nations (Ex. 19:4–6), and gave the Israelites civil, ceremonial, and moral laws for everyday life. But the purpose of the Law was not merely to change the behavior of the Israelites.
- Read Deuteronomy 5:28–33.
- The Law was not a cold, detached set of rules. God saw his people living in sin apart from him and hoped to change both their actions and their affections. **In verse 29, what is God’s purpose for giving his people the Law?**
- What is the intended result of following the Law in verses 32–33?
- God did not give the Law as a distant taskmaster, but as a loving father. It was a gift of love meant to turn people’s hearts toward God, to give them a standard for right living and right worship, and to bless God’s people. **In what ways does the purpose of the Law differ from the way you think about spiritual rules?**