



# Jesus is Greater

What you believe to be true about Jesus is the most important thing about you. It matters more than your name, your career, your achievements, or anything else. Why is that? Because what you believe to be true about Jesus dictates your eternity. But what you believe to be true of Jesus must also dictate every other aspect of your life.

## WEEK THREE

Jesus is a better promise and sacrifice

**Message Passage:** Hebrews 8:1-13

**Small Group Passage:** Hebrews 10:1-18

### TEACHING AND VIDEO NOTES

What you believe to be true about Jesus is the most important thing about you. It matters more than your name, your career, your achievements, or anything else. Why is that? Because what you believe to be true about Jesus dictates your eternity. But what you believe to be true of Jesus must also dictate every other aspect of your life.

**Hebrews 8:1-2** *Now the main point of what we are saying is this: We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, **2** and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by a mere human being*

Last week, we talked about how Jesus is our greater High Priest. He can empathize with our weakness as a priest could, but his service is perfect and eternal. Like the great high priest, he ministers in a sanctuary/tabernacle. But he ministers in the true tabernacle in Heaven.

**Hebrews 8:3-5** *Every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices, and so it was necessary for this one also to have something to offer. **4** If he were on earth, he would not be a priest, for there are already priests who offer the gifts*

prescribed by the law. **5** They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: "See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain."

This is why the book of Exodus is so meticulous in its description of the temple. This helps remind us why the Old Testament is not a throwaway, even the parts we may not be that fond of. The parts of the Old Testament that are so meticulous are so for a reason.

**Bible reading rule:** Whenever you read through the Old Testament, ask, "How does this point to Jesus?" How does this genealogy point to Jesus (P.S., they all do)? How does this story/account of people's sinfulness point towards the need for a savior? Doing this helps us see the purpose behind all of Scripture.

**Hebrews 8:6-7** *But in fact the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, since the new covenant is established on better promises. **7** For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another.*

The Old Testament has many covenants (Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses & David). In each one, God made a promise. Each time God kept his promises. **Jesus has ushered in a better covenant!** The New Covenant. People hear this and assume that this means that the Old Covenant(s) and, therefore, the Old Testament get cast aside. But Jesus warned us against just that in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:17-19).

So why did we have the Old Covenants, especially the Mosaic/Levitical Covenant that is the focus here?

- **For their Good:** The law was for Israel's good because it guided them how to be a people that acted in justice and gave them principles by which they could live out the greatest commandments to love their God fully and love their neighbor as themselves (Deut 6:5 & Lev 19:18)
- **Proven sin:** Through the law, Israel was guided in how to live a holy life and thus reflect the holiness of their God (Leviticus 11:44, 19:2, and 20:26). But Israel failed at this time and time again. Why? Because it was through the law that the sinfulness of man was made abundantly clear (Rom 7:7). The Old Testament Law acted like a mirror that allowed us to see ourselves as we truly are, sinful and in need of a savior. This is what Paul meant when he said the Law served as a "tutor" or "guardian" (Gal 3:23-24).

**Hebrews 8:8-9** *But God found fault with the people and said:<sup>1</sup> “The days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. 9 It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they did not remain faithful to my covenant, and I turned away from them, declares the Lord.*

The Old Covenant provided external Law. But that external law did not lead to a righteous life, at the individual or national level. So much of the Old Testament proves this reality, chapter after chapter. If enough law was what they needed, the Pharisees would have gotten it right. What they needed was internal transformation. They needed Christ to do a work in their lives that would empower them to obey God's commandments. That is what the New Covenant provides.

**Hebrews 8:10** *This is the covenant I will establish with the people of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.*

The Old Covenant was written on stone (the Ten Commandments). The commandments were good and lasting. But the people had hearts of stone that could never obey God. What the people needed was for the law to be written on their hearts. They needed to trade in their hearts of stone for a heart of flesh (Ezekiel 36:26). The New Covenant offered what they needed.

**Hebrews 8:11-13** *No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, ‘Know the Lord,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. 12 For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.*

**13** *By calling this covenant “new,” he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and outdated will soon disappear.*

Through the New covenant we have an eternal relationship with God. We can truly know and make him known. We can have this relationship because we are forgiven. God remembers our sins no more because of the blood of Jesus Christ.

The blood of sheep and goats could never leave us forgiven and blameless before God (Heb 10:4). But it was through these Old Testament sacrifices that people first understood that our sin was real, had dire consequences, and required a sacrifice (Heb 9:6-10).

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<sup>1</sup> This section is a quotation from Jeremiah 31:31–34

**Key Idea:** Remember, our doctrine is not simply academic knowledge. What we believe to be true and sound doctrine, especially what we believe to be true of Jesus, must be the driving force behind how we live our lives as followers of Jesus.

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**Segway to Small Group:** What then does it look like to live as if we are a part of the New Covenant that has set us free and left us redeemed?

### SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Whenever we read a passage in the Old Testament, one of the most important questions we should ask is, "How does this point to Jesus?" What are some Old Testament passages that come to your mind that clearly point to Jesus?

**Leader Note:** Many people in your group may be new to the Bible. That is okay. Give room in this question for people who don't have an answer to still learn from others who may. There is no shame in that. That is part of the ministry of small groups.

**Leader Note (Answers):** Old Testament passages "point" to Jesus in a variety of ways.

- Many passages prophecy the coming of Jesus. An example of this is the prophecy of the seed from Eve, who crushed the serpent's head in Genesis 3:15. The servant song in Isaiah 52:13–53:12, which we studied earlier this year, is another.
- Other passages establish our deep need for a savior by highlighting human sinfulness. The Account of the creation of the Golden Calf at the base of Mount Sinai in Exodus 32-24 is a great example.
- At other times, we see what is called a typology. This is when a person's role or action points towards what Jesus would one day do. Sin entered the world through one man, but was defeated by one man as well, Jesus (Rom 5:12). Much of Hebrews, especially chapter seven, shows how the Priest-King Melchizedek (Gen 14:18–20) pointed to Jesus' role as both priestly mediator and King of Kings.
- Lastly, we see examples of Jesus appearing in the Old Testament. This is known as a Christophany. An example of this would be the fourth man in the fire in Daniel 3:24-26

2. What is the danger in throwing away the Old Testament or treating it as if it does not matter as followers of Christ?

**READ:** Hebrews 10:1-18

3. Vs 2 & 8: It was right for the Israelites to offer sacrifices according to the Old Testament Law (Vs 8). Yet, the sacrifices of bulls and rams could never cleanse the conscience of those who offered them (vs 2). Likewise, we today seek out forgiveness and a clean conscience in things that do not deliver. What are some of these things?

**Leader Note:** So many people falsely believe that Jesus' mercy and forgiveness can be functionally bought, even if they do not use those words. They may believe that their church attendance, morality, Bible reading, or serving is a sort of sacrifice that merits God's mercy. Nothing could be further from the truth (Eph 2:8-9). It is not until we realize that mercy is truly a gift that we will fully understand and value the Gospel.

4. In verse 10, we see that "we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." How should the fact that we are forgiven once and for all shape how we live?
5. Vs 17, As part of the New Covenant, our sins are so fully forgiven that God remembers our sins no more. However, we still remember them very much. At times, we may even be ashamed of them. How should the truth that God no longer remembers our sins shape how we respond to our worst sinful mistakes?

**Leader Note:** When it comes to some of our worst sinful mistakes, we will likely never forget them. But just because we remember them does not mean that we have to live in shame. Paul tells us in Colossians 2:14 that "our sins were nailed to the cross." Leave them there! We show our gratitude for God's mercy by pursuing Jesus and showing mercy to others (Col 3:12-13). We do not show our gratitude for God's mercy by constantly shaming ourselves and viewing ourselves through the lens of our worst mistakes.

6. Vs 18, further sacrifices are no longer necessary. The good works in our Christian faith are now done in response to God's mercy. They are never done as a means to seek out God's mercy. Why is this distinction so important?

**Leader Note:** If you would like to make this question conversational, you can ask your group when in their lives they first learned the difference between the two and why it mattered so much.

**PRAYER TIME**

**DISMISS**