

STUDIES IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

Part III

STUDY NUMBER FOURTEEN - HEBREWS 8:1-13

Mark Twain said,

“The only one who likes change is a wet baby.”

The book of Hebrews is a book of change.

It’s a change from the old order to the new.

We have a group of individuals who have a relationship with Christ but because of the persecution they are wanting to go back under Judaism.

Rather than to continue in this new relationship that they have with the person of Christ.

The author’s argument is, you have everything you need in the person of Jesus Christ when you enter into relationship with Him.

He is superior to the angels,

He is superior to the law of Moses,

He is superior to the priesthood, superior to Aaron.

We are going to learn in Hebrews chapter 8 today that the covenant that it is founded on is also superior.

We studied last week, you cannot gain acceptance into God's presence on your own, you must have an agent. You must have a court-appointed attorney. You must have someone represent you before God.

Man is sinful. God is holy.

And so the priesthood was established.

And basically the function of the priest is two-fold:

- 1. He gains acceptance in the presence of God.**
- 2. And he also gains access.**

The writer makes it quite clear that when Jesus Christ died on the cross the old priesthood was replaced. It was done away.

The question today is, who's your priest?

Who have you hired?

Who have you asked to negotiate your contract for eternal life?

Who is he?

I hope its Christ.

Now with those thoughts in mind, just two things:

- 1. The new priesthood assumes that there is an inadequacy of the old one, it couldn't do the job.**

If the old one could do the job why mess around with the new one. Bottom line, the old one was not adequate.

It could not do the job. Nobody ever gained acceptance into the presence of God by the old priesthood, by the old order, so there has to be a new one.

2. And then the other big thing that you need to remember is that the law and the priesthood go together.

Now having said that, what is the basic thesis for Hebrews chapter 8?

Because of what Christ our high priest has done for us, He has a better ministry based on a better covenant.

v. 1 Now the main point in what is being said is this: We are having such a high priest, who took His seat at the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens,

The author is saying,

This is the reason I've been writing.

This is the reason I've been saying all these things about the person of Christ.

Now the main point is this the Old Testament law and priesthood went together and they have been replaced by something brand new.

Notice the first words: "We are having."

**The author identifies with the readers and he tells you something.
He says, “We are having,” what does that mean?**

**That means you have availed yourself of what He has provided.
You have a priest.**

**“We are having,” in other words, we hired Him. We had an agent; we took our court-appointed attorney.
The negotiations are complete.
The contract has been signed.**

**The next phrase, “We are having what?”
“Such a high priest.”**

What did he do?

Look at the next phrase, “who took His seat at the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens.”

**Do you realize that nowhere in the Bible do you have priest that is sitting down?
There is no place in the scripture that you have a seated priest. Why?
Their work was never done.**

We offer sacrifices for sin today, and we’ll be back tomorrow to offer sacrifices for sin tomorrow, and it will go on day after day after day as long as we live.

And when one priest died you got a new one and they kept doing it and doing it.

But this priest Christ got the job done and He sat down.

Three times in the book of Hebrews you have a seated priest and they all refer to Jesus.

1. Hebrews 1:3

When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high;

2. Hebrews 10:12

He . . . sat down at the right hand of God,

3. Hebrews 12:2

[He] sat down at the right hand . . . of God.

Two things come to my mind when I think of my seated priest.

- 1. The work is done, there's no more to do. It is done. Finished.**
- 2. The price has been fully paid.**

v. 2 a minister in the sanctuary, and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord put together, not man.

**What do we have in verse 1?
“We are having a high priest?”**

**What do we have in verse 2?
We are having “a minister”.**

**He is carrying on a function for God and for man.
And He stands in between to bring God and man together so that man might have access and acceptance into the presence of God.**

v. 3 For every high priest is being appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices; hence it is necessary that this one also be having that which He might offer.

What does the priest do to gain acceptance in the presence of God?

He offers sacrifices to God to gain this access and acceptance.

Does our Savior have a sacrifice?

**It says, He needs to “be having a sacrifice that He might offer” and I just wrote down in great big letters
AND HE DOES.**

v. 4 If indeed therefore He [that is Jesus] were on earth, in that case He would not be a priest, since there are those who are offering the gifts according to the Law;

Did you ever think of this, Jesus never went into the Holy of Holies in the temple when He was here?

Jesus never went into the holy place where the table of showbread and the altar of incense and the seven branch candlestick were placed.

He never went in there.

He couldn't, why?

He was not a priest.

He was not from the tribe of Levi?

He was not of the line of Aaron.

So Christ is not a priest down here like those Aaronic priests.

v. 5 who are serving a copy and shadow of the heavenly things [these priests down here], just as Moses had been warned [by God] when he was about to be erecting the tabernacle; for "See," [God is saying to him] He is saying, "that you make all things according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain."

Do you remember the end of Exodus Chapters 38-40 describes how these people make all these parts of the tabernacle.

**They make the ark of the covenant and
they make the table and
they make the seven branch candlestick and
they make this altar of incense and
they make the ark of the covenant.**

**Do you remember, there must have been 13 or 14 times,
we see the little phrase
“and it was done according to the word of the Lord.”
“And it was done according to the word of the Lord.”**

**It’s like Moses is carrying a sacred set of blueprints
off of the mountain for the tabernacle with a warning.**

“This better be according to plan and design.”

**Moses probably under divine inspiration, is saying
“and it was done according to the word of the Lord.”**

So it was a very serious matter and God warned him.

Now, the highpoint of the study, are you ready?

v. 6 But now He [Jesus, our priest] has attained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises.

Why go back to something so inferior, outdated, and set aside just because it's hard, when in Christ you have a "MORE EXCELLENT MINISTRY", in Christ you have "BETTER COVENANT," and in Christ it's based on "BETTER PROMISES."

**The author is saying,
"Why would you even think for a minute of going back under law and under Judaism when you have everything you need in Christ?"**

v. 7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second.

We read last week in Hebrews Chapter 7, verse 22 these words:

so much the more also Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.

I need to help us understand that this "covenant" is not a joint venture.

When we entered into a marriage covenant, she said I do, and he said I do.

We both made a commitment to it.

In this new covenant that's not the case. The word that's used here, could be better translated "will."

James T. Draper who is a Southern Baptist minister has written a little commentary on Hebrews and he does such a good job at this point, I just want to quote him, okay?

The word used here is a word which would be better translated “will.” A will does not depend upon two people. It depends on one person. One person makes the will by saying, “This is what I am bequeathing. This is what I want to come to pass. I am going to make my will, and this is the way it is.” A person who is a beneficiary of a will is an heir of a will and only has one choice. He cannot change or alter the will. He can only accept or reject it. He can either receive what the person has bequeathed to him, or he can refuse it. That is the word that’s used here.

Many people today are approaching God as though they are on equal terms with him. They bargain with God and try to get him to agree to their conditions. It won’t work. The new covenant is a divine instrument. It is a will. God has committed himself to us. God has said to us, “I love you. I gave my life for you. I will give you eternal life. I will give forgiveness. You have to just receive it. You cannot change it.”

God has willed to replace the old priesthood. God has willed the divine pattern as to how you enter into relationship with Him and how you can win your day in court, even though you are guilty like I am.

**He has provided a seated priest.
The price has been paid.
The work has been done.**

**There are six “I will’s.”
The fine print in the contract is in the rest
of the passage.**

**v. 8 For finding fault with them, He is saying, “Behold,
days are coming, the Lord is saying, when I will
effect a new covenant with the house of Israel and
with the house of Judah;**

Now what are the “I will’s”?

1. “I WILL EFFECT A NEW COVENANT.”

**v. 9 Not 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; [when was that,
old covenant, first covenant, on Mount Sinai] for
they did not continue in my covenant, and I did not
care for them, the Lord is saying.**

**Okay, what was that original covenant?
It was a conditional one.
It was, you keep the law then the blessings
will be yours.**

There's a difference between these two covenants.

Do you remember in the old covenant when Moses would come and challenge the people, what would they say?

We will, we will.

In other words we will do it!

But what would happen?

They would go out and they didn't.

They should've been saying, we won't, we won't.

That's really the story of their lives, that was the old covenant.

For it to be effective and for the blessings of the covenant to come they had to do "we will" and they had to follow up on it but they didn't.

Now, what's the new covenant?

There's no "we will's" anymore.

No "we will's."

This is what God is going to do. I will, I will.

v. 10 For this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, the Lord is saying: putting my laws into their minds, and upon their hearts I will write them. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Here's the second one:

2. "THIS IS THE [NEW] COVENANT WHICH I WILL MAKE WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL."

Here's the third "I will" in verse 10:

3. "UPON THEIR HEARTS I WILL WRITE THEM."

Now the fourth one:

4. "AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE."

v. 11 And they shall not teach each one his fellow-citizen, and each one his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' because all shall know me, from the least to the greatest of them.

They will know Him by personal experience.

v. 12 For I will be merciful in the case of their wrongdoings, and I will remember their sins no more."

The 5TH and 6TH “I WILL’S” are here in verse 12:

5. “I WILL BE MERCIFUL IN THE CASE OF THEIR WRONGDOINGS,”
6. “I WILL REMEMBER THEIR SINS NO MORE.”

v. 13 When He said, “A new covenant,” He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is near to destruction.

In 60 A.D. Titus came in, rolled into Jerusalem and destroyed the temple and the whole sacrifice system.

The new one makes the old obsolete.

The old system was temporary and transitory, the new is eternal and it’s permanent.

Ruth Meyers has a little book, it’s called *31 Days of Praise* I want you to hear her prayer of commitment as we conclude our study.

Lord, I’m Yours. Whatever the cost may be, may Your will be done in my life. I realize I’m not here on earth to do my own thing, or to seek my own fulfillment or my own glory. I’m not here to indulge my desires, to increase my possessions, to impress people, to be popular, to prove I’m somebody important, or to promote myself. I’m not here even to be relevant or successful by human standards. I’m here to please You.

I offer myself to You, for You are worthy. All that I am or hope to be, I owe to You. I'm Yours by creation, and every day I receive from You life and breath and all things. And I'm Yours because You bought me, and the price You paid was the precious blood of Christ. You alone, the Triune God, are worthy to be my Lord and Master. I yield to You, my gracious and glorious heavenly Father; to the Lord Jesus Christ who loved me and gave Himself for me; to the Holy Spirit and His gracious influence and empowering.

All that I am and all that I have I give to You.

I give You any rebellion in me, that resists doing Your will. I give You my pride and self-dependence, that tell me I can do Your will in my own power if I try hard enough. I give You my fears, that tell me I'll never be able to do Your will in some areas of my life. I consent to let You energize me . . . to create within me, moment by moment, both the desire and the power to do Your will.

I give You my body and each of its members . . . my entire inner being: my mind, my emotional life, my will . . . my loved ones . . . my marriage or my hopes for marriage . . . my abilities and gifts . . . my strengths and weaknesses . . . my health . . . my status (high or low) . . . my possessions . . . my past, my present and my future . . . when and how I'll go Home.

I'm here to love You, to obey You, to glorify You. O my Beloved, may I be a joy to You!

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

LESSON #1: Christ's priesthood and covenant are both superior to the law of Moses and the priesthood of Aaron.

LESSON #2: Our High Priest is seated because His work is done.

LESSON #3: Our High Priest sits upon a throne because He is a King-priest.

LESSON #4: Our High Priest ministers in a heavenly sanctuary, not an earthly one.

LESSON #5: Christ was ineligible to be an Aaronic priest because He was not of the tribe of Levi.

LESSON #6: Christ has attained a more excellent ministry. He is a mediator of a better covenant and acted on better promises.

LESSON #7: If the Law had accomplished its purpose, there would have been no need for a new covenant.

LESSON #8: The focus of the new covenant is upon our hearts and our relationship, our knowledge and our forgiveness.

LESSON #9: When the Lord forgives, He really forgives because He will remember our sins no more.

LESSON #10: The promise of the new covenant made the old one obsolete and passing away.

LESSON #11: Christ's priesthood is better because it rests on a better covenant with better promises.

LESSON #12: Instead of Christ's priesthood being temporary and transitory as the Levitical order was, it is eternal and it's permanent.

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PART II

STUDY NUMBER FOURTEEN — Hebrews 8:1-13

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v. 11 And they shall not teach each one his fellow-citizen, and each one his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ because all shall know me, from the least to the greatest of them.

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QUESTIONS:

- 1. Read Hebrews 8:1-13 and summarize in your own words what Paul is saying in this section.**
- 2. What is the main point, according to verse 1?**
- 3. How was Moses warned, according to verse 5?**
- 4. What has Jesus attained and what kind of Mediator is He, according to verse 6?**
- 5. What is the Lord saying in verse 8?**
- 6. What are the contents of the new covenant, according to verse 10?**
- 7. Why will it not be necessary to teach each other about knowing the Lord, according to verse 11?**
- 8. What promise does the Lord make in verse 12?**
- 9. What verse in the study has meant the most to you?**
- 10. What lesson have you learned from this study?**

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