

## STUDIES IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

### STUDY NUMBER FOURTEEN - HEBREWS 8:1-13

#### TEXT:

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,

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

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.

v. 4 If indeed therefore He 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;

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

v. 6 But now He 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.

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

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;

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; for they did not continue in my covenant, and I did not care for them, the Lord is saying.

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.

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.

v.12 For I will be merciful in the case of their wrongdoings, and 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.

## INTRODUCTION:

(Humorous Cowboy Poetry: A Knee-Slappin' Gathering edited by staff members)

Bill Jones  
Lander, Wyoming

Bill wrangles dudes, writes a column for the *Wyoming State Journal*, hosts a weekly cowboy radio show, and says, "My heroes have always been cowboys. I am living a dream." He likes the independence of the ranching lifestyle, and writes his poems based on those real-life experiences. "Little Slim' is an old story my Dad told me when I was about eight years old. A lot of my poems are classic old jokes put to verse."

### **Little Slim**

"Late again," the third-grade teacher  
Said to Little Slim.  
(When anyone was late for school,  
It usually was him.)

"It ain't my fault, Miss Addy,  
You can blame this on my Pa.  
The reason I'm three hours late?  
Pa sleeps nights in the raw!"

Now Miss Addy had taught grammar school  
For thirty-some-odd years.  
So she asked Slim what he meant by that,  
Despite her mounting fears.

Full of grin and mischief,  
In the flower of his youth,  
Slim and Trouble were ol' pards--  
But he always told the truth.

"You see, Miss Addy, at the ranch  
This here lowdown coyote  
The last few nights done et six hens  
And killed Ma's best milk goat.

“And last night when Pa heard a noise  
 Out in the chicken pen,  
 He grabbed his gun and said to Ma,  
 ‘That coyote’s back again.’

“‘Stay back,’ he yelled to all us kids,  
 ‘I wouldn’t want ya hurt!’  
 He was naked as a jaybird--  
 No boots, no pants, no shirt!

“To the henhouse on all fours he crawled  
 Like an Injun on the snoop.  
 Then he stuck the double barrel  
 Through the window of the coop.

“As he stared into the darkness,  
 With coyotes on his mind,  
 Our ol’ hound Zeke had done woke up  
 And come sneakin’ up behind.

“Then we all looked on plumb helpless  
 As Pa was cold-nosed without warnin’.  
 Miss Addy, we been cleanin’ chickens  
 Since three o’clock this mornin’!”  
 pp. 78-79

(The Finishing Touch: Becoming God's Masterpiece: A Daily Devotional by  
 Charles R. Swindoll)

Mark Twain was correct when he said, "The only one who likes change is a  
 wet baby."  
 p. 11

Our most recent studies in the book of Hebrews involve CHANGE:  
 in the PRIESTHOOD and  
 in the COVENANT.

These are the items that we are considering in our studies.

Wiersbe says:

A superior priest could never minister on the basis of an inferior covenant. To change the illustration, the most gifted lawyer can do very little if the will he is probating is inadequate. It is unthinkable that our Lord would minister on the basis of an inferior “last will and testament.”  
 p. 84

Richards observes:

As we saw, he presents the old system as inadequate and obsolete. With a change in the priesthood comes a change in the Law (7:11). Every element in that old system now is revealed by the light of Christ to have been a “copy and shadow” of the heavenly reality (8:5). With the priesthood, the sacrificial system, the festivals and holy days, the civil and the ceremonial regulations, law by commandment has also been repealed.  
 pp. 77-78

English observes:

If one were asked to select the zenith of the Epistle to the Hebrews, it strikes us that it is here, within the last six verses of chapter 7 and the first six verses of chapter 8, that the choice must fall. For in this place the high priesthood of the God-Man, our Lord Jesus Christ, is most fully extolled and explained in the only writing of the New Testament that deals explicitly with His priestly work in heaven, a most essential ministry on our behalf.  
 p. 217

Griffith Thomas points out:

Hitherto we have been considering the Person of the Priest. Now we are to consider His Work, and see that as priest He perfectly discharges the duties of His office. Melchizedek is used to set forth the Person of the priest and Aaron to set forth His Work. This is probably due to the fact that no priestly service is associated with Melchizedek in Genesis 14, but only the *fact* of his priestly office; and so, on this account, it is necessary to turn to the priesthood of Aaron to learn what the priest has to do. Melchizedek is thus employed for the minister and Aaron for the ministry.

p. 100

G. Campbell Morgan says:

We now reach the point where the writer of this letter commences to show the superiority of relationships, resulting from the superiority of the Person of the Son. In dealing with this subject it will be found that these relationships are described as better; a better hope, better covenant, better promises, better sacrifices; and indeed the word runs on in harmony with its first occurrence, when the writer spoke of the Son as “better than the angels,” and occurs in the letter altogether thirteen times. Whereas the old economy, though Divinely appointed, was now superseded by a new economy, it was every way better than the old.

p. 89

DeHaan says:

The next argument for the excellency, superiority and all-sufficiency of Christ is drawn from the construction of the Tabernacle.

p. 122

Westcott points out:

To this end he first marks the scene and the conditions of Christ’s Priestly work, the New Sanctuary and the New Covenant, a Sanctuary of heaven and not of earth, a Covenant of grace and not of works (c. viii).

p. 211

Bruce observes:

Having established the superiority of the high priesthood of Christ, our author now proceeds to relate his high priesthood to the themes of covenant, sanctuary, and sacrifice, with which the Aaronic priesthood was closely bound up. As the Aaronic priesthood gives place to the priesthood after the order of Melchizedek, so the old covenant gives place to the new, the earthly sanctuary gives place to the heavenly, and sacrifices which were but temporary tokens give place to one which is effective and of eternal validity.  
p. 181

J. Vernon McGee says excitedly:

The high watermark of this magnificent epistle is before us in this chapter--actually it began in the previous chapter at verse 25: "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." This verse is the key to this section. You see, the emphasis is upon the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ is living. He is not dead--He is not on a cross; He is not lying in a grave. He arose from the dead, and the emphasis is upon our living Christ.  
p. 557

Draper says:

That is what the writer is addressing here in Hebrews 8:1-6. He asserts that our hearts reach out for something real, something lasting, something fulfilling. Inside every man's heart, there is the desire to endure, to live on, to move into real living that has no limits, no end. Jesus Christ offers that reality to us. The purpose of Christ coming into the world was to bring us to reality. He came to give us permanence. He came to turn our hearts from earthly shadows to eternal substance and reality.  
p. 213

Hewitt says:

It has been shown that Christ has the true qualifications of priesthood and that His priesthood is superior to the Levitical because He Himself is superior to the Levitical priests. The writer now discusses the ministry of the great High Priest and the place in which this ministry is performed.  
p. 128

Pink summarizes everything when he says:

In the prosecution of this, he (1) states the sum or principal point of the whole matter under discussion--that the priesthood of Christ was real and permanent, while that of the Hebrew economy was typical, and was destined in its own nature to be temporary: vv. 1-3. (2) There was a fitness and propriety of His being removed to heaven to perform the functions of His office there--since if He had remained on earth, He could not have officiated as priest, that duty being by the law of Moses entrusted to others pertaining to another tribe: vv. 4, 5. (3). Christ had obtained a more exalted ministry than the Jewish priests held, because He was the Mediator in a better covenant--a covenant that related rather to the heart than to external observances: vv. 6-13" (Albert Barnes).  
p. 425

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,

“NOW THE MAIN POINT IN WHAT IS BEING SAID IS THIS”

You could translate this:

TO CROWN THE ARGUMENT . . .

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The author of Hebrews opened this passage with a clear transitional statement. He wished to summarize what he had been teaching and go on to new ideas.

p. 799

The BASIC THESIS OF THIS CHAPTER is:

BECAUSE OF WHAT CHRIST OUR HIGH PRIEST HAS DONE, HE HAS A BETTER MINISTRY BASED ON A BETTER COVENANT.

Westcott does a good job in summarizing these first verses:

The eternal High-priest has a work to do corresponding with the spiritual dignity of His office in the heavenly sanctuary (1, 2). This work could not be fulfilled on earth, for there is already an earthly system of service (3, 4); but the earthly system is only a shadow of the divine archetype which is realised by Christ (5, 6).

p. 211

“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 AMAZING MIRACLE of this passage is that we have:



a SEATED PRIEST.

We are reminded of Psalm 110:1:

The Lord says to my Lord:  
 "Sit at my right hand  
 until I make your enemies  
 a footstool for your feet."

Wiersbe says:

Today our Lord is *seated* because His work is completed. There were no chairs in the Old Testament tabernacle because the work of the priests was never finished. Each repeated sacrifice was only a reminder that *none* of the sacrifices ever provided a finished salvation.

p. 84

This enthronement was the fulfillment of the Father's promise to the Son, "Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool" (Ps. 110:1). Not only did the high priest of Israel never sit down, but he never sat down *on a throne*. Only a priest "after the order of Melchizedek" could be enthroned, for Melchizedek was both king and priest (Heb. 7:1).

pp. 84-85

Montefiore in Black's commentary says:

The previous chapter contained a detailed argument concerning the superiority of the Melchisedekian priesthood, and the pre-eminence of Jesus as high priest. The reasoning was complex, and our author, instead of giving a summary of it all, underlines its salient point so that he can build upon it the next stage of his argument.

p. 132

Lane says:

Having established the eschatological superiority of the high priesthood of Christ, the writer proceeds to relate his high priesthood to the themes of sanctuary and covenant. His rhetorical training is evident in the initial phrase, “Now the crowning affirmation to what we are saying.” The expression is calculated to draw the attention of the community to the significance of the new affirmation with which the foregoing argument is crowned.

p. 204

The writer’s statement in 8:1-2 is the summit of his case. The “Crowning affirmation” is not simply that Christians have a high priest who has taken his seat at God’s right hand (v 1) but that he is the ministering priest in the heavenly sanctuary (v 2).

p. 204

MacArthur says:

A great many things have been presented and explained, but they all relate, directly or indirectly, to Christ’s high priesthood.

p. 206

As far as our salvation is concerned, He **has taken His seat**. He has accomplished all that can be accomplished, all that needs to be done. Yet, people are still trying to add to the simple, pure grace of God and salvation by faith, though it is absurd to think that the work of Christ needs anything added to it. The saving effort of our Lord cannot have anything added to it, because it is absolutely perfect.

p. 207

Kistemaker observes:

The preceding chapter delineates the surpassing excellence of Christ's priesthood in the order of Melchizedek. The author of Hebrews provides the readers with a lucid exposition of Psalm 110:4. However, he does not want them to lose sight of the first verse of that psalm. That verse portrays Jesus as king. Jesus, therefore, is the king-priest, as Psalm 110 clearly teaches. Although the writer has stressed the importance of Jesus' priesthood in the Melchizedekian order, he desires his readers to recognize Jesus' kingship, too. Hence, he writes the introductory clause, "the point of what we are saying is this," and asserts that our high priest sat down at the right hand of God and serves in the true tabernacle.

p. 215

A. T. Robertson points out:

Here we have a summary of the five points of superiority of Jesus as high priest (8:1-6). He is himself a better priest than Aaron . . . ; he works in a better sanctuary (8:2, 5); he offers a better sacrifice (8:3f.); he is mediator of a better covenant (8:6); his work rests on better promises (8:6); hence he has obtained a better ministry as a whole (8:6).

p. 388

J. Vernon McGee says:

Christ did something which no priest in the Old Testament ever did. There is not a priest in the line of Aaron who ever had a chair in the tabernacle where he sat down. He was on the run all the time. Why? Because he had work to do. All of these things are shadows that point to a finished sacrifice.

p. 557

Jesus Christ is referred to as “THE SEATED PRIEST” in  
3 OTHER PASSAGES in the book of Hebrews:

1. Hebrews 1:3

who being the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature (real being), and who is bearing up all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high;

2. Hebrews 10:12

but He, when He offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God,

3. Hebrews 12:2

fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Owen says:

The most important thing that we have stated, and the summing up of all we have stated, is that, “*We have such an High Priest.*” The words, “We have,” denote our relationship to this High Priest.

p. 136

Stedman says:

As the writer says, the point of emphasis in what he has been saying is not duration but location! The question is! Where is this kind of ministry of Jesus Christ available? Where do you find it? He answers that it comes from the risen Christ who is at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, a minister of the true sanctuary which God made and not man.

pp. 117-18

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English says:

The word translated “sum” is the Greek *kephalaion*, which would be more suitably rendered: *chief point, principal object, or crowning feature*. “Now of the things which we have spoken, *this is the crowning feature*: We have such an High Priest who is set on the right hand of the throne  
 ...”  
 p. 218

What inestimable comfort that this is to the child of God! Do not think you need to do anything toward redeeming yourself. You can do nothing. Christ has done it all. The work is finished, and He who wrought it is seated “on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.” If He is at rest about your salvation, can you not rest in His finished work also? Surely you can, for there is nothing else to do; in fact, to try by any works of your own to add to that which the Son of God accomplished is to do despite to His grace and power.  
 p. 220

Phillips says:

Yet He *is* a Priest; He is a great High Priest. He is a real Priest, a rightful Priest, a royal Priest with a lordship, a legality, and a life unsurpassed. Thus the writer concludes this section of his letter. The superior provisions of Calvary have provided us with a better Saviour, one who is both preeminent and a Priest. But if Calvary has provided us with a better Saviour, it also has provided us with a better security. This is the next great theme of the epistle.  
 p. 109

(The Hidden Price of Greatness by Ray Beeson & Ranelda Mack Hunsicker)

We don't have to be equal to the situation; we only have to know that Jesus is.  
 p. 114

(Leadership: Enhancing the Lessons of Experience by Richard L. Hughes,  
Robert C. Ginnett and Gordon J. Curphy)

The question, “Who ought to be boss?” is like asking, “Who ought to be the tenor in the quartet?” Obviously, the man who can sing tenor.

Henry Ford

p. 143

Hughes says:

Apart from its unspeakable glory, the supremacy of his priesthood is seen in that Jesus is *seated* at the right hand of the Father (cf. 1:3). His posture points to his completed work. It is the physical expression of his triumphant cry from the cross, “It is finished” (John 19:30). Because in his person he brought finite man and infinite God together, he could then do what no one else could--he could bear all our sins in a single cosmic sacrifice. Hence the heavenly song, “You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation” (Revelation 5:9).

pp. 214-15

Lange quotes Starke when he says:

Thanks be to God that we have a High-Priest who sits at the right hand of the Majesty on high, and whose sacrifice and intercession have, therefore, unlimited power.--Christ is the fosterer of His Church. He Himself communicates the holy and heavenly gift. Would that we with perfect faith might hasten to this faithful High-Priest, and from the fulness of His grace, bring forth a real treasure and amplitude of heavenly blessings.

p. 144



He also quotes Rieger who says:

We have a Priest, such as we need. The Father has prepared Him; love and obedience have drawn Him into His office; He is perfected according to all that which was written aforetime with regard to Him; He is set before us in the Gospel, and faith lays hold upon Him.  
pp. 144-5

Macaulay says:

“We have *such* an high priest” (Heb 8:1, italics added). Now, that so ordinary word “such” assumes great dignity here, for it gathers up into itself all that has been said in the epistle about our glorious Lord--His rank, His titles, His honors, His humiliation, His sympathy, His holiness, His triumphs, His office, His order, His ministry. Yes, our very common word is here carrying so great a weight of glory that we are baffled to define its content.

O could I speak the matchless worth,  
O could I sound the glories forth  
Which in my Saviour shine!  
I'd soar and touch the heavenly strings,  
And vie with Gabriel while he sings  
In notes almost divine.

Lowell Mason

p. 109

The highest seat that heaven affords  
Is His by sovereign right:  
The King of kings, and Lord of lords,  
He reigns in perfect light.

p. 110

STEPHEN has just made his dramatic defense before the Sanhedrin in Acts 7. We pick up reading at verse 55:

But being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; and he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

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The RESPONSE by the raging, angry mob from the Sanhedrin was to stone Stephen. Jesus, his faithful High Priest, rises to His feet to welcome His SUFFERING SERVANT home.

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

In verse 1:

“We are having such a high priest.”

In verse 2:

We are having such “A MINISTER.”

He is characterized by SERVANT LEADERSHIP.

He is serving in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle, which the Lord put together, and not man.

Westcott says:

The two words in fact present the two complementary aspects of Christ's Person and Work, His divine Majesty and His infinite love. Christ serves though He reigns and reigns in serving. All that the High-priest did in figure He does absolutely. He makes atonement for men with God: He makes God known to men; and thus in both ways He fulfils their destiny.

p. 214

Pink says:

Our blessed Redeemer, in His exalted glory, still condescends to exercise the office of a public minister in the behalf of His Church. It is required that our faith should not only apprehend what Christ did for us while He was here on earth, but also appropriate what He is now doing for His people in heaven.  
p. 430

Wiersbe says:

The Jewish priests in the temple ministered with copies and shadows, but Christ in heaven ministers in the original sanctuary from which the things on earth were copied. When you trust Christ, you enter a life of reality, and you are forever finished with substitutes. Rejoice!  
p. 818

Wuest gives clarification when he says:

The word “minister” is the translation of *leitourgos* which is made up of an old adjective *leitos* meaning “belonging to the people,” and *ergon*, meaning “work.” It was used of a person in the service of the state who held public office. The word is used in the LXX and the New Testament, both of priestly service to God and of service to man.  
pp. 140-41

Lenski says:

No Jewish high priest ever *sat* when he was executing his office. He was not a king who may sit in state, and his office permitted no sitting. Our exalted High Priest is both King and Priest and thus sits at the right hand of the throne of Majesty “as ministrant of the Holy Place and of the true Tabernacle.” Throne and Sanctuary are not in conflict, nor is sitting as a ministrant.  
p. 250



Owen says:

“This man” is Jesus, the Son of God, the High Priest of the New Testament. There was an absolute necessity, that in order to His being a High Priest, He must have somewhat to offer, for without this He could not discharge the office of priesthood. What He had to offer we are expressly told further on, “He offered Himself.”

p. 139

Kistemaker says:

An effective teacher repeats his lesson often in the same words. The writer of Hebrews is no exception, for 8:3 is a virtual repetition of 5:1. Besides, the author continues his descriptive method of teaching by presenting contrast.

p. 217

#### Hebrews 5:1

For every high priest when he is taken from among men is appointed on behalf of men in things pertaining to God, in order that he may continually be offering both gifts and sacrifices for sins;

Lane says:

The concept of priesthood logically entails the concept of sacrifice. This point was made earlier in 5:1, where it was stated that every high priest is appointed “in order to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins.” Although the qualifications “for sins” does not appear in v 3, the writer regarded all sacrifice in terms of the procuring of atonement and the removal of sin (see *Comment* on 5:1; cf. 9:9, 10:11). The thought of 5:1 is repeated here to specify that it was necessary for “this man also to have something to offer.”

p. 206

Hewitt says:

The position of Christ sitting at the right hand of God speaks of one who has finished the sacrificial aspect of His ministry. This is very different from the Levitical priests who always remained standing (cf. x. 11, 12).  
pp. 130-31

Griffith Thomas says:

The essential idea of priesthood is ministry. The priest is a servant, and the specific form of service is the offering of gifts and sacrifices.  
p. 101

J. Vernon McGee says:

This verse makes it clear that at the time the Epistle to the Hebrews was written the temple in Jerusalem was still in existence and that in it priests were still going about their duties.  
p. 557

(Chicken Soup for the Soul: 101 Stories to Open the Heart and Rekindle the Spirit by Jack Canfield & Mark Victor Hansen)

### The Gift

Bennet Cerf relates this touching story about a bus that was bumping along a back road in the South.

In one seat a wispy old man sat holding a bunch of fresh flowers. Across the aisle was a young girl whose eyes came back again and again to the man's flowers. The time came for the old man to get off. Impulsively he thrust the flowers into the girl's lap. "I can see you love the flowers," he explained, "and I think my wife would like for you to have them. I'll tell her I gave them to you." The girl accepted the flowers, then watched the old man get off the bus and walk through the gate of a small cemetery.  
p. 24

Macaulay recalls these words as he wraps up this first section of chapter 8:

Not what these hands have done  
 Can save this guilty soul;  
 Not what this toiling flesh has borne  
 Can make my spirit whole.

Not what I feel or do  
 Can give me peace with God;  
 Not all my prayers, and sighs and tears,  
 Can bear my awful load.

Thy work alone, O Christ,  
 Can ease this weight of sin;  
 Thy blood alone, O Lamb of God,  
 Can give me peace within.

I bless the Christ of God,  
 I rest on love divine;  
 And, with unfaltering lip and heart,  
 I call this Saviour mine.

pp. 121-2

v. 4 If indeed therefore He 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;

The scene of our Savior's ministry is a heavenly Tabernacle.

It is the HEAVENLY one that is ETERNAL.

It is the EARTHLY one that is TEMPORAL.

Christ was ineligible to be an Aaronic priest because He was not of the tribe of Levi and did not meet the specifications of the Mosaic law.



Kistemaker says:

The sanctuary in which Christ serves as high priest is in heaven, not on earth. During his ministry on earth he could not be priest at all because he belonged to the tribe of Judah, rather than the tribe of Levi. However, the writer of the epistle does not state or imply that Christ could not bring his once-for-all offering on Calvary's cross.<sup>5</sup> He only notes that those who are part of the Levitical priesthood offered gifts that are "prescribed by the law." Jesus did not belong to the priestly clan of Levi and therefore could not serve at the altar. Instead, he serves in the true tabernacle, in the presence of God.

5. Geerhardus Vos, *The Teaching of the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), p. 113.  
p. 218

Westcott says:

The argument is directed to shew that, since Christ as High-priest must do characteristic service, the scene of His service must be heaven and not earth.  
p. 215

MacArthur says:

If the Temple were still standing, "He would not be a priest at all," thus Jesus could not minister for us on earth under the terms of the Old Covenant. During His earthly ministry, Jesus healed the sick, raised the dead, preached on the hillside and in the synagogue, forgave sins, and called Himself God's true Son. But He never claimed the right to minister in the Temple. He did not venture one step closer to the inner sanctuaries than any other Jew of His day who was not a priest. He was not of the priestly tribe, and therefore was not qualified for the old, earthly ministry.

p. 210

Bruce puts it this way:

That Jesus' high-priestly ministry must be exercised in the heavenly sanctuary is further shown by the fact that there would be no room for him to exercise it in the earthly sanctuary. In the earthly sanctuary, whether we think of the earlier tent-shrine or the later temple in Jerusalem, the high priesthood was confined to one family; and far from belonging to that family, Jesus did not even belong to the tribe from which it came.

p. 183

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

The Aaronic priesthood "ARE SERVING A COPY AND [a] SHADOW OF THE HEAVENLY" sanctuary where the Lord Jesus ministers as our faithful High Priest.

Moses, when he was given the blueprints for the tabernacle, was warned that he must make all things according to the pattern which he was shown on the mountain by the Lord Himself.

Barclay says:

The Greeks were fascinated by this conception of a real world of which this world is only a flickering, impermanent, imperfect copy. In this world we walk in shadows; somewhere there is reality. And the great problem in life is how to pass from this world of shadows to the other world of realities. That is the idea of which the writer to the Hebrews makes use. The earthly Temple is a pale copy of the real Temple of God; earthly worship is a remote reflection of real worship; the earthly priesthood is an inadequate shadow of the real priesthood, which can really bring men to God. All these things point beyond themselves to the reality of which they are the shadows.

p. 95

v. 6 But now He 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.

The word “BUT” forms the CONTRAST to the previous and now brings us to the CONCLUSION of his argument at this point.

I feel a great deal like the Indians who were talking back and forth with SMOKE SIGNALS.

(The Finishing Touch: Becoming God's Masterpiece: A Daily Devotional by Charles R. Swindoll)

Reminds me of the apocryphal story of two parties of Indians in the desert of New Mexico talking to each other by means of smoke signals. Their conversation was moving along quietly as they released puff after puff into the clear desert sky. Suddenly a huge column of smoke appeared and began to climb rapidly some twenty miles into the air. Neither tribe had seen such a sight--nor had the world. It was exactly 5:30 A.M., July 16, 1945.

One Indian leaned over to another, shook his head, and commented, “Wow! I wish I’d said that!”  
p.363

What an incredible verse we have before us for our meditation!

Why for one minute would these Jewish believers even entertain the possibility of going back under the old order when:

in Jesus Christ they have:

One who “HAS ATTAINED A MORE EXCELLENT MINISTRY,”  
a “MEDIATOR” between them and God,  
and “A BETTER COVENANT.”

And in Jesus Christ that “BETTER COVENANT . . . HAS BEEN ENACTED ON BETTER PROMISES.”

Bruce says:

It is, then, in no earthly replica of the heavenly dwelling-place of God that Jesus ministers as his people's high priest, but in the heavenly dwelling-place itself; his ministry accordingly is far superior to any earthly ministry. And it is superior besides because of the superiority of the covenant in the power of which it is exercised--the covenant of which Jesus is himself the Mediator. He has already been called, in passing, the "guarantor of a better covenant" (7:22); the present description of him as "mediator of a better covenant" . . .

p. 185

A. T. Robertson says of this first verb in verse 6, that we have translated "HE HAS ATTAINED," it is an:

. . . old verb to hit the mark, to attain.

p. 390

Jesus Christ did not fall short, HE HIT THE MARK ON THE TARGET IN THE BULL'S EYE. He accomplished perfectly what the Father required for the salvation of sinful man.

The writer now introduces the word "COVENANT" and will pursue that in the remainder of the chapter. We will have the word "COVENANT" occur 7 TIMES in these remaining verses.

Larry Richards says:

This word *covenant* looms large in ancient and modern Judaism and in both Testaments. Its basic meaning is that of an agreement made between two parties. When only one person commits himself, it can be translated or represented as an “oath” (see Heb. 6:13-18).

Basic covenants of the Old Testament include the Abrahamic (Gen. 12; 15; 17), the Davidic (2 Sam. 7), and the New (Jeremiah 31). These three covenants are each unconditional; they state what God intends and promises to do. In the Abrahamic covenant, God promises to bless all of the family of faith. Scripture itself calls this a promise and an oath (Heb. 6:15-17). The Davidic covenant adds to the Abrahamic, promising that a Messianic King will rule over the world through a Hebrew kingdom.

The New Covenant of Jeremiah promises to change God’s way of dealing with man from that established by the Mosaic covenant, the one and only Old Testament covenant which is conditional. The Mosaic covenant, made between God and Israel, concerned righteousness. God in commandment law showed men what righteous behavior involves. And men committed themselves to do what the Law demands (Ex. 19-24, see especially 24:3). In essence, then, commandment law as a system (1) provided an external standard of righteousness, and (2) required men to obey. It is this way of dealing with righteousness that the writer of Hebrews says is “obsolete and aging” and “will soon disappear” (8:13).

p. 80

Griffith Thomas says:

It is to be noted that the thought of superiority (v. 6) is threefold: a better ministry; a better covenant; and better promises. The ministry is “more excellent” because it is heavenly not earthly, spiritual not temporal, reality not shadow. The covenant is “better” because it is absolute not conditional, spiritual not carnal, universal not local, eternal not temporal, individual not national, internal not external. The promises are “better” because they have reference to things spiritual and not to a mere earthly inheritance.

p. 103

Christ’s Mediatorship included His work as prophet, priest, and king. As Prophet, He reveals God’s truth; as Priest, He provides God’s redemption; as King, He bestows God’s power.

p. 103

Lenski raises the question:

Why should any of the readers turn from Jesus for the mere reason that he is not and can never be a high priest like those of their nation who served only in the sketch and shadow of the true Tabernacle and not perceive that this inability means that “he has obtained a more excellent ministration . . . by so much (more excellent) as he is a Mediator also of a better testament,” this being so much better “as being one that has been given legal force on the score of better promises”?

p. 257

Wuest says:

This is an important verse. It is a pivotal verse in the epistle. It closes the first major argument. The book was written to prove the following proposition: The New Testament in Jesus’ blood is superior to and takes the place of the First Testament in animal blood. The writer has proved this to be true on the basis of pure logic and the Old Testament Scriptures. Using the logical argument that a superior workman turns out a superior product, he has shown that Messiah, the Founder of the New Testament is better than the founders of the First Testament, who were the prophets, angels, Moses, Joshua, and Aaron. Therefore, the testament He brought in is superior to and takes the place of theirs.

In the light of this, we can better understand the words, “But now hath He (Messiah) obtained a more excellent ministry than they (prophets, angels, Moses, Joshua, Aaron), by how much also He is the Mediator of a better covenant (the New Testament), which is established upon better promises.”

p. 142

Lange quotes Starke as saying:

How blessed are we in the New Covenant! We have so great a Mediator, such glorious promises, such glorious possessions! Is it not our shame that we still remain under the dominion of sin?

p. 148

“BUT NOW WE HAVE ATTAINED A MORE EXCELLENT MINISTRY, BY AS MUCH AS HE IS ALSO THE MEDIATOR OF A BETTER COVENANT.”

Jesus is referred to as “MEDIATOR” in 3 PASSAGES in the book of Hebrews:

1. Here in chapter 8:6.
2. Hebrews 9:15

And for this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, in order that since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

3. Hebrews 12:24

and to Jesus, the Mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.

Westcott, speaking on the term “MEDIATOR,” says:

The use of the term suggests a point of superiority in Christ over the Aaronic High-priests. Moses was the ‘mediator’ of the Law (Gal. iii. 19; Philo *de vit. Mos.* iii. § 19; ii. 160 M.), but Christ who is the High-priest is also the Mediator of the new ‘Law.’ He combines the offices of Moses and Aaron.  
p. 218

Delitzsch says:

The “mediator” of the Old Testament was not Aaron, but Moses. The Levitical priesthood was itself a mere product of that covenant, not its basis, serving to maintain the covenant relation, and helping to remove disturbances thereof, but no more; whereas Jesus Christ is both founder and finisher as well as conservator of the New Testament, as the *egguos* and *mesites* of which He stands in an antitypical relation not to Aaron only, but also and specially to Moses.



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Draper says:

In this passage, he is the one who introduces both parties to that agreement. The word “mediator” means “to stand in the middle between two parties to bring them together.” That is what Jesus does. He is a mediator. A mediator cannot compel either side. The mediator stands available and willing to bring both together.  
p. 217

MacArthur says much the same thing:

**Mediator** means someone who stands between two people and brings them together, a go-between in a dispute or conflict. He must represent both parties. In religion a priest is the mediator between God and men. Many false religions have priests, whose ministry is claimed to do just that--reconcile men with God, or with the gods. These, of course, are all pseudo-mediators because, though they may represent men to some degree, they do not represent God at all.  
p. 211

1 Timothy 2:5, 6

For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony borne at the proper time.

Ray Stedman says:

When Christians gather about the Table of the Lord, the leader takes the bread and breaks it and distributes it. Then follows the cup. Using the words Jesus used as He instituted this supper, the leader says, *This cup is the new covenant in my blood* (1 Cor. 11:25). Jesus speaks of this as the new arrangement, the new agreement, the new constitution, from which the life of all who know Him will be lived.  
p. 124

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

After proving the superiority of Christ's priesthood, the author is now going to prove the superiority of the covenant and sacrifice on which the new priesthood rests.

He picks up "COVENANT" from chapter 7:22 and gives it further consideration:

Hebrews 7:22

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

"FOR IF THAT FIRST COVENANT [that is, the law] HAD BEEN FAULTLESS, THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN NO OCCASION SOUGHT FOR A SECOND."

This is very SIMILAR LOGIC to what we saw in our previous study in chapter 7:

Hebrews 7:11

Now if perfection was through the Levitical priesthood, for on the basis of it the people have received the Law, what further need was there for another priest to be arising according to the order of Melchizedek, and not being designated according to the order of Aaron?

2 Corinthians 3:6

who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

Draper says:

The writer confronts us in Hebrews 8:7-13 with the new covenant. He has already alluded to it in passing, but now he describes and demonstrates it.

p. 219

In biblical terms, marriage was an agreement by which two people agreed to give themselves to each other. The success of their agreement, the fulfilling of their agreement, depended on both of them.

That is not the word used here. The word used here is a word that 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 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.”

p. 221

(Only Angels Can Wing It: The Rest of Us Have to Practice by Liz Curtis Higgs)

Larry Eisenberg has the right idea: “For peace of mind, resign as general manager of the universe.” Why not, the job has already been filled!

pp. 204-5

Hewitt says:

The weakness of the Israelites and the imperfection of the old covenant are the reasons given for the inauguration of the better covenant which is established upon better promises. By the promise of forgiveness of sins man's deepest spiritual need is met (12). By the promise of an inward power man's weakness is overcome (10). By the promise of possession security is assured (10). By the promise of a fuller and deeper revelation direct fellowship with God is guaranteed (11).

p. 135

Griffith Thomas observes:

Since there is a new priesthood there must also be a new covenant, for the two go together, and the two references to the covenant (7:22; 8:6) are now elaborated by showing wherein the new is "better" than the old.

p. 104

Bruce says:

But indeed, the covenant of which Jesus is Mediator may be inferred to be a better covenant from the simple fact that it is a *new* covenant. If the old covenant had been perfect, it would not have needed to be superseded by a new one. And the new one must be better, for there would have been no point in replacing the old covenant by another no better than itself.

p. 186

Hession says:

So now we come to the new covenant of which Jesus, our heavenly High Priest, is both Surety and Mediator. It was prophesied long before in the Old Testament, even in the days when the old covenant was still in force. It was as if God sighed and said, "If My purposes for Israel and the world are to come to pass, they will never be realized this way; they will only come to pass as a result of an entirely new covenant on an entirely new basis."

p. 78

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;

Beginning here at verse 8 and going down through verse 12 is the STATEMENT OF THE NEW COVENANT from Jeremiah 31:31-34.

The purpose of quoting Jeremiah 31 is to prove that the prophets anticipated the abandonment of the old covenant on which the old priesthood rested and the introduction of a new covenant on which this new priesthood might be founded.

The FIRST of 6 "I WILL'S" occurs here in verse 8:

1. "I WILL EFFECT A NEW COVENANT."

(Living in the Lions' Den Without Being Eaten by William Carr Peel)

A reporter once asked Albert Einstein's wife if she understood the theory of relativity. She replied, "No, but I know Albert, and he can be trusted." Can you and I say the same thing about God? "No, I don't understand what God is doing in my life right now. But I know God, and He can be trusted."

p. 65

Macaulay says:

The fault of the old covenant is corrected in the new. The insupportable burden which the former laid upon the people is removed. What the Law demanded, grace undertakes. The terminology changes from "Thou shalt" to "I will." The inability of man having been demonstrated, God is now free to make full proof of His grace. "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

p. 124

Phillips says:

Five clear references to the new covenant are in the New Testament (Lk 22:20; 1 Co 11:25; 2 Co 3:6; Heb 8:8; 9:15). There are also six other incidental references to it (Mt 26:28; Mk 14:24; Ro 11:27; Heb 8:10-13; 12:24). The important thing to clarify is the relationship between the new covenant--appealed to by the writer of Hebrews--and the promise of the new covenant in Jeremiah 31:31-34.

p. 113

The Christian believer participates in the spiritual promises of the new covenant but not in the earthly blessings it also entails. We enjoy those provisions of the covenant which promise salvation, the forgiveness of sins and the ministry of the Holy Spirit. We have no share in those clauses concerning the land, rest from persecution, and material prosperity.

p. 114

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; for they did not continue in my covenant, and I did not care for them, the Lord is saying.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The new covenant differs from the previous one. The opening statement in verse 9 makes this clear: "not like the covenant that is of the law which I made with their fathers."

Wiersbe says:

The emphasis in the New Covenant is on God's "I will." The nation of Israel at Sinai said, "All the words which the Lord hath said will we do" (Ex. 24:3). But they did not obey God's words. It is one thing to *say* "We will!" and quite another thing to do it. But the New Covenant does not depend on man's faithfulness to God but on God's faithful promise to man.

p. 91

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Oswald Chambers: Abandoned to God by David McCasland)

It is never 'Do, do and you'll be' with the Lord, but 'Be, be, and I will do through you.' It is a case of 'hands up' and letting go, and then entire reliance on Him.

p. 87

(Be Myself: Memoirs of a Bridgebuilder by Warren W. Wiersbe)

If God wants you to leave, He has the place for you; but if He wants you to stay, He has the grace for you. Let Him tell you what to do.

p. 111

Owen says:

These words, "*took them by the hand,*" compriseth all the grace, mercy, and patience which God exercised towards that people, while He wrought out their deliverance by lifting up His hand against their adversaries. It was a great day when God so magnified His name and power in the sight of all the world. And therefore did God engrave the memorial of it on tables of stone: "I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."

p. 148

Isaiah 41:13

For I am the Lord, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you.

Psalm 73:23, 24

Yet I am always with you;  
you hold me by my right hand.  
You guide me with your counsel,  
and afterward you will take me into glory.

Larry Richards says:

The faultiness in commandment law is not located in the Law itself but in man. God revealed righteousness, but “they did not remain faithful to My covenant.”

p. 82

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.

We come now to the 2ND “I WILL.”

The 1st was back in verse 8:

1. “I will effect a new covenant”

and here,

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

The Bible Knowledge Commentary outlines verses 10-12 in the following way, calling it:

. . . the superior accomplishments, or enablements, of the [new] covenant. These are: (1) an inner inclination to obey, (2) a firm relationship with God, (3) the knowledge of God, (4) the forgiveness of sins. These are the “better promises” alluded to in verse 6.

It is clear that all these benefits belong, in fact, to all the regenerate of every age since the Cross. . . . it is clear that Christians of the present time also stand under its blessings. . . . The New Covenant is God’s appointed vehicle for fulfilling the Abrahamic blessings to Israel. But the Abrahamic Covenant also promised universal blessing, so the New Covenant becomes as well God’s vehicle of salvation for believers since the Cross.

p. 800

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This reminds us of John 4:22 when Jesus is speaking to the WOMAN AT THE WELL:

"You worship that which you do not know; we worship that which we know, for salvation is from the Jews.

Salvation is through the cross and the blood of the new covenant.

Barclay says:

The old covenant depended on obedience to an externally imposed law. *The new covenant was to be written upon men's hearts and minds.* We may put it in another way--men would obey God, not because of the terror of punishment, but because they loved God in their hearts. Men would obey God, not because the law ordered them unwillingly to do so, but because the desire to obey Him was written on their very hearts. It would not be an external law which would effect an unwilling obedience. The desire to obey would be in a man's own heart.

p. 101-2

Bruce says:

The implanting of God's law in their hearts means much more than their committing of it to memory.

p. 189

When first they heard the covenant-law they said: "All that Yahweh has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient" (Ex. 24:7). But they did not have the moral power to match their good intention. Hence the necessity arose of repeatedly returning to their God and his covenant, only to turn aside to their own ways once again. The defect did not lie in the covenant-law; it was good in itself but, to borrow Paul's language, "it was weakened by the flesh" (Rom. 8:3)--by the inadequacy of the human material which it had to work upon. What was needed was a new nature, a heart liberated from its bondage to sin, a heart which not only spontaneously knew and loved the will of God but had the power to do it.

p. 190

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Thomas says:

. . . it is very important to observe the four blessings associated with the covenant: (1) God's law is to be put in the heart (v. 10); (2) The people are to be possessed by God as His own (v. 10); (3) They are to have a full knowledge of God (v. 11); (4) They are to have entire forgiveness of sins (v. 12). If these four realities are reversed, it will be seen that they represent in the order of experience the four chief blessings of divine grace: (1) pardon; (2) fellowship; (3) consecration; (4) obedience. Thus the covenant as expressed in these terms may be regarded as the realization of the "better promises" of verse 6.  
p. 105

Hession says:

The law of God is no longer to be an exterior code of ethics to which we pledge obedience, but it is going to be something put within us, written in the heart and put into the mind, made a part of a person, so it is not merely something he feels he *ought* to do, but what he *wants* to. In other words, holiness and love are going to be principles that are native to us.  
p. 79

Note this repeated phrase about the in-working of God in the heart of a believer. In other words, *grace puts into us what God wants out of us*. If God wants holiness, love for others, gentleness, sacrificial service out of me, He will have to put them all into me, because they are just not there naturally-- but this is just what is promised. If sometimes you come to a place where God is asking out of you what is not in you, just confess that fact to Him and do so in confidence that He is pledged to work it in you.  
p. 80

Ezekiel 36:26, 27

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

Philippians 2:12, 13

So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

Hebrews 13:21

equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

(Women of Honor: God's Incredible Plan for Fulfillment by Jeanne Hendricks)

As engaged couples do, we discussed sex and marriage, future dreams all interlocked with the tidy idealism that erects castles in the air. My memory refuses to play back an exact recording of his statement, but he told me with high-voltage intensity how much he honored and respected and loved one person--me. That statement, now reinforced with almost a half-century of knowing him intimately, propelled me into a flight pattern in which I still soar. No other human experience quite equals the certainty that you are the one and only lifetime choice of your partner.

p. 32

(Our God Is Awesome by Tony Evans)

God is not into suggestions. He's big on commandments.

p. 196

The 3RD "I WILL" is in the latter part of verse 10:

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

The 4TH "I WILL" is in the next phrase:

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.

Hosea 4:6

my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. "Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priests; because you have ignored the law of your God, I also will ignore your children.

Hosea 6:6

For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings.

Bruce says:

But now it is not simply a national acknowledgment of God and his covenant that is envisaged, nor yet such acknowledgment on the part of those in positions of high responsibility. It is a personal knowledge of God such as marked Jeremiah himself, a personal knowledge of God to be possessed by each individual member of the covenant community, because of the new heart received by each. Such knowledge of him by whom they are known, increasing until it attains its consummation in knowing even as they are known, is of the essence of that "perfection" to which our author invites his readers to press forward.

p. 191

Philippians 3:8

More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ,

Philippians 3:10

that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; . . .

Daniel 11:32

With flattery he will corrupt those who have violated the covenant, but the people who know their God will firmly resist him.

(As Iron Sharpens Iron by Howard & William Hendricks)

For our purposes, it is enough to consider the advice of a tall Texan I ran into shortly after I moved to Texas many years ago. He listened to me quote the old saying that “you can lead a horse to water, but you can’t make him drink.”

“You’re wrong about that, son,” he replied. “You can always feed him salt.”

p. 217

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.”

Bruce says:

Here, then, are the “better promises” on which the new covenant is established: (a) “I will put my laws in their mind”; (b) “they will all know me”; (c) “I will remember their sins no more.” The covenant at Sinai involved divine promises, but not promises like these. The fulfilment of such promises gives a new meaning to the ancient covenant-words: “I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”

p. 192

Barclay says:

Under the old covenant a man could keep this relationship to God only by obeying the law; that is, he must keep it by his own efforts. Now everything is dependent, not on man's efforts, but solely on the grace and the love and the mercy of God. The new covenant puts men into relationship with a God, who is still a God of justice, but a God whose justice has been swallowed up in His love. The most tremendous thing about the new covenant was that it made man's relationship to God no longer dependent on man's obedience. It became entirely dependent on God's love.

p. 102

Hughes summarizes the new covenant by saying:

Its glories are these:

- A sublime *inwardness*--God's Law written in the minds and hearts of his people.
- A sublime *relationship*--he has given himself to us--"I will be their God," and he has taken us to himself--"and they will be my people."
- A sublime *knowledge*--they all know him. There is no need to say, "Know the Lord."
- A sublime *forgiveness*--he cannot remember their sins. Total forgiveness!

p. 220

### Standing Before the Judge

A criminal who had often come before the courts was scheduled to appear once more. He was greatly relieved when he heard that a man who had been his lawyer on previous occasions was to be the magistrate. But his attitude changed when his former counsel declared, "When I was your attorney, I defended you, but now I am your judge! I will hear the evidence, and then I must deal with you according to the oath I have taken to administer justice."

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

### God's Kind of Forgiveness

A young nun once claimed to have had a vision of Jesus. Her bishop decided to test her truthfulness and ordered that the next time she had a vision she should ask Christ what the bishop's primary sin had been before he became a bishop.

Some months later, the nun returned and the bishop asked if she had asked Christ the question, to which she affirmed that she had.

"And what did He say?" the bishop asked apprehensively.

"Christ said . . ." and the nun paused a moment . . ." He said, 'I don't remember.'"

[Lutheran Witness, Jan 1992. Page 2.]

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

### Quiet Down!

An absent-minded professor fell down a flight of stairs. He struggled to his feet, picked up his glasses from the floor and put them on. Brushing off his clothes, he looked up the stairs and remarked, "I wonder who made all that noise?"

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

### Lest Ye Forget

Sign on a psychiatrist's office: "Amnesia patients must pay in advance."

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

## Elephantine Memory

One day a large elephant saw a turtle near a water hole. The elephant lumbered over and deliberately squashed the turtle under its huge foot. A jackal who witnessed the murder ran over to the elephant and asked, "Why did you do that?"

The elephant replied, "That was the same turtle that bit off the tip of my trunk 17 years ago, when I was trying to get a drink out of the river."

The jackal's eyes widened. "The same one? You must have an incredible memory!"

Raising its head proudly, the elephant said, "Turtle recall."

A good memory is fine--but the ability to forget is the true test of greatness.

<Unknown>

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

Sometimes we have to let go of the past in order to enjoy the present, and be able to dream of the future.

--A Hallmark Card

(From Parson's Bible Illustrator 1.0)

I received a Christmas card that had a special significance for me. I'd like to summarize it for you:

"If our greatest need had been information, God would have sent us an educator. If our greatest need had been technology, God would have sent us a scientist. If our greatest need had been money, God would have sent us an economist. But since our greatest need was forgiveness, God sent us a Savior."

(From Parson's Bible Illustrator 1.0)

At a dinner party one night Lady Churchill was seated across the table from Sir Winston, who kept making his hand walk up and down--two fingers bent at the knuckles. The fingers appeared to be walking toward Lady Churchill. Finally, her dinner partner asked, "Why is Sir Winston looking at you so wistfully, and whatever is he doing with those knuckles on the table?"

"That's simple," she replied. "We had a mild quarrel before we left home, and he is indicating it's his fault and he's on his knees to me in abject apology."

-- *The Romance Factor*, by Alan McGinnis

(From Parson's Bible Illustrator 1.0)

(Our God Is Awesome by Tony Evans)

We're often like the little boy whose father told him to pick up a heavy rock that was in their way. The boy tried, grunted, and said, "Daddy, I can't lift it."

His daddy said, "Yes, you can."

The boy tried again. "Ughhhh. Daddy, I can't lift it."

"Yes, you can."

The boy went back again. Same result. "Daddy, I can't lift it!"

This went on two or three more times, the boy insisting that he was using all his strength. Finally, the father put his arm around the boy and said, "Son, you don't understand. You did not use all your strength. You did not ask me."

God can pick up the rocks in your life, but you've got to ask Him. He can move the heavy rocks in your marriage, your job, or your family, but you've got to ask Him. He doesn't want your grunting and groaning in your own strength because He already knows, "Without Me, you can do nothing."

God is able. He is omnipotently able!

p. 174

(The Tribute by Dennis Rainey with David Boehi)

Children begin by loving their parents. After a time, they judge them. Rarely, if ever, do they forgive them.

--Oscar Wilde

p. 140

Hannah More once wrote, "Forgiveness saves the expense of anger, the cost of hatred, the waste of spirits."  
p. 145

Philip Yancey writes, "Forgiveness . . . does not settle all questions of blame and justice and fairness; to the contrary, often it evades those questions. But it does allow relationships to start over."  
pp. 146-7

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.

I am reminded of a few weeks ago when we finally had to take Pearl's 10-year-old Oldsmobile down to the dealership and have it replaced because it was not only becoming obsolete, it was growing old and was near expiring somewhere on the roadway.

Montefiore in Black's commentary says:

The new age had begun, and the old age was ending. The old covenant was still in existence, but it had already been superseded. It was not merely old; it was **antiquated** and decrepit. Because it was *passé*, it would soon pass out of existence.  
p. 142

English says:

Our chapter now concludes with what might be termed a divine comment upon Jeremiah's prophecy: "In that He saith, A new covenant, He hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away" (vs. 13). It is God who has supplanted the old covenant with the new. The very fact that the Lord said, "I will make a *new* covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah," predicates the abrogation of the old covenant. But where has it gone? It is dissolved. It no longer holds. It does not exist any more.  
pp. 234-5



Lane says:

At this point the writer shows no interest in the promises attached to the new covenant. He focuses all attention upon the implications of the key word of the cited text, . . . “new” (cf. v 8). The argument that by designating the covenant “new” God declared the covenant concluded at Sinai to be unserviceable and outmoded carries the corollary that God himself has canceled its validity. He intends to make no further use of the old covenant and the forms through which it operated to achieve his redemptive purpose for his people. Consequently, the old arrangement is on the point of disappearing. The principle that a new act of God makes the old obsolete (cf. 7:11-12) reflects an eschatological outlook that perceives the Mosaic and Levitical institutions as fulfilled and superseded by Christ.  
p. 210

J. Vernon McGee says:

So, my friend, we are not under the Mosaic system. God says that it is an old model and He has brought in a new model. That New Covenant He has made through the Lord Jesus Christ who is our Savior. Let me repeat, He did it, not because there was something wrong with the old covenant, but because there is something wrong with us. I feel sorry for folk today who have come back to the old covenant. They try to keep the Sabbath day and they try to keep the Mosaic Law. Oh, my friend, if they will really study it and are honest, they *know* they are not keeping the Mosaic system. They come short. All of us need to come to God for *mercy*, and accept in His New Covenant the provision of a Savior.  
p. 561

Barclay says:

In point of fact the writer to the Hebrews uses two words to describe the old covenant. He says that it is *geraskon*, which means, not only *ageing*, but *ageing into decay*. He says that it is near to *aphanismos*. Now *aphanismos* is the word that is used for wiping out a city, obliterating an inscription, or completely abolishing a law. It indicates a complete obliteration or wiping out. So the covenant which Jesus brings is new in quality and it completely obliterates and cancels the old covenant.

p. 100

Bruce says:

And if the covenant of Moses' day is antiquated, our author further implies, so must be the Aaronic priesthood, the earthly sanctuary, and the Levitical sacrifices, which were all established under that covenant. The age of the law and the prophets is past; the age of the Son is here, and here to stay.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>75</sup>. See J. de Vuyst, *Oud en Nieuw Verbond in de Brief aan de Hebrëeën* (Kampen, 1964).

p. 195

Wiersbe says:

However, the New Covenant brings eternal blessing. Jesus Christ is the Author of "eternal salvation" (Heb. 5:9) and "eternal redemption" (9:12). The New Covenant can never get old and disappear. The Greek word translated "new" means "new in quality," not "new in time." This New Covenant is of such quality that it will never need to be replaced!

Yes, our Lord *is* ministering on the basis of a better covenant, a New Covenant that makes us partakers of the new nature and the wonderful new life that only Christ can give.

p. 95

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

From the Old Testament prophecy he had just quoted, the writer then drew the justifiable conclusion that the Old Covenant was **obsolete** (Matt. 24:1, 2). Probably fulfilled soon after Hebrews was written. If so, it was a dramatic confirmation of the writer's thesis about the old covenant.  
p. 800

Macaulay says:

This is the covenant, the new covenant, before which the former, ineffective and broken by a faulty and rebellious people, becomes old, decays, and vanishes away. This is the covenant promised to Israel, extended to the whole world, to be consummated in the golden city of God, whose sky will never be darkened with the remembrance of sin, where law is love and love is law, where God and His people dwell in perfect communion, where "we shall know fully, even as we are fully known" (see 1 Cor 13:12).  
p. 127

Lenski says:

For his readers, who are thinking of throwing away the new testament and its Mediator in the heavenly Holy of Holies and going back to the old national testament, the writer selects only this one decisive point from the quotation: **In saying a new one he has declared the first one old. Now the thing declared old and becoming aged (is) near to vanishing away.**

Do the readers intend to go back to such a thing? The writer lays his finger on just the one word "new" which was used in v. 8. This one word is all-decisive for his readers: God himself has declared the first testament old when about 600 B. C. he said "a new one." Jesus did not make it old. It was old when God spoke centuries ago and certainly has not grown younger during all the following centuries.  
p. 271

Delitzsch says:

The meaning, therefore, of our verse will be, that God, in promising a “new” covenant, has marked that mediated by Moses with the character of obsolescence: it is henceforth a *palaioumenon*, that which is daily becoming more and more antiquated, and *geraskon*, daily growing older and feebler, losing more and more its former life and energy; but that which is thus becoming antiquated and lifeless . . . drawing ever nearer to that final point where its very existence and right to exist will have come to an end. That final point has, according to the sacred writer, been reached already.  
p. 45

The old covenant is virtually dead, and the new occupies its place. The temple service, though to continue it may be a few years longer in outward splendour, is only a bed of state, on which a lifeless corpse is lying; the humble forms of worship of the New Testament church enshrine a vigorous, heaven-aspiring life.  
p. 46

MacArthur says:

By His merely saying that a new covenant was coming, God rendered the old one **obsolete**, no longer valid. In fact it would disappear. The human writer of Hebrews could not have known how literally this truth would be fulfilled within a few years of his writing. When Titus destroyed Jerusalem, he destroyed the Temple--which had been completed only for a short time. Without the Temple, there was no altar, no Holy of Holies. There could therefore be no sacrifices, and no ministering priesthood. And without a priesthood and its sacrifices, there could be no Old Covenant. It was finished. When verse 13 was written, the **obsolete** covenant was **ready to disappear**. In less than five years, it had completely disappeared.  
p. 217

Draper says:

The old covenant is fading out of sight. It is passing off the scene. The new covenant will continue on for all eternity. The old covenant has been replaced, but the new covenant will never be replaced. It is eternal. It is permanent. How wonderful that is for us who live in a day when we long for permanence. God says that he has a covenant that is eternal.  
p. 226

In SUMMARY we can say:

**CHRIST'S PRIESTHOOD IS BETTER BECAUSE IT RESTS ON A BETTER COVENANT WITH BETTER PROMISES.**

Instead of being:

TEMPORARY or TRANSITORY (as the Levitical order was),

it is:

**ETERNAL and PERMANENT.**

(The Message: Psalms by Eugene H. Peterson)

## Psalm 23

Yahweh, my shepherd!  
 I don't need a thing.  
 You have bedded me down in lush meadows,  
 you find me quiet pools to drink from.  
 True to your word,  
 you let me catch my breath  
 and send me in the right direction.

Even when the way goes through  
 Death Valley,  
 I'm not afraid  
 when you walk at my side.  
 Your trusty shepherd's crook  
 makes me feel secure.

You serve me a six-course dinner  
 right in front of my enemies.  
 You revive my drooping head;  
 my cup brims with blessing.

Your beauty and love chase after me  
 every day of my life.  
 I'm back home in the house of Yahweh  
 for the rest of my life.

pp. 33-34

CONCLUSION:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

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 has been finished.

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, 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 was eternal and permanent.



(The Hidden Price of Greatness by Ray Beeson & Ranelda Mack Hunsicker)

**Steps to Spiritual Greatness**

- ◆ Repent of your past life.
- ◆ Reject the temptation to remain rooted in your past.
- ◆ Respond to God's grace by maximizing your potential.
- ◆ Repair your relationships with others as much as it depends on you.
- ◆ Restructure your life through discipline and accountability to other Christians.

p. 28

(They Walked with God by James S. Bell, Jr.)

It will be terrible to those who refuse the gospel even to remember the preacher of it, but infinitely more so to see the face of Him who bled and died and loved unto the uttermost. Oh, to think, "I would not have Him! I would not be saved by Him! I preferred to trust to myself, or not to think at all, and now here I am!" Assuredly the flames of hell will be more tolerable than the sight of His face. The bitterest wail of Tophet is this--"Hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne!"

Ye sinners, seek His face, whose wrath ye cannot bear. God help you to seek it now. He says, "Seek ye my face." May God the Holy Spirit lead you to obey the call! Amen.

Charles H. Spurgeon

06/11

## WAITING ON DEATH ROW

Rusty Woomer was waiting on death row just 11 days before his execution when he received a visit from Chuck Colson. He was not afraid to die, but he told Mr. Colson that a sense of fear came over him when he thought about meeting God.

He was not worried about being punished for his sins, because he was confident that Christ had forgiven him. But he was awed at the thought of meeting the One who possesses a power, a radiance, a purity, and a love beyond anything we can imagine.

Rusty Woomer lived his final days knowing the precise date of his death and exactly how it would occur. Chuck Colson commented that even though few of us know when and how we will die, we are all on death row. Unless Jesus comes, even the most devoted Christian will have to pass through the valley of the shadow of death. This is a solemn thought.

When we contemplate what God is like, we tremble at the thought of meeting Him. Yet we can also rejoice. Because Jesus Christ died for our sins and rose again, death is defeated. It can't hurt us.

Rusty's testimony as he faced death is thrilling. He died rejoicing. So can we. --HVL

*What awe engulfs our sinful soul  
To col[n]template God's purity!  
We could not bear such holy love  
Were not Christ's death our surety. --DJD*

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THOSE WHO FEAR GOD NEED NOT FEAR DEATH.

(From *Our Daily Bread*, Friday, August 11, 1995)

(Halftime: Changing Your Game Plan from Success to Significance by Bob Buford)

Well, Kami took me at my word. He announced that we could not put together an honest plan for my life until I identified the mainspring. “I’ve been listening to you for a couple of hours,” he said, “and I’m going to ask you what’s in the box. For you, it is either money or Jesus Christ. If you can tell me which it is, I can tell you the strategic planning implications of that choice. If you can’t tell me, you are going to oscillate between those two values and be confused.”

No one had ever put such a significant question to me so directly. After a few minutes (which seemed like hours,) I said, “Well, if it has to be one or the other, I’ll put Jesus Christ in the box.”

It was an act of faith, and it was a daunting challenge to me to be open to change and adventure. Even more than that, *it was a commitment to do something about the faith I already had*. By acknowledging Christ as my guiding light, I had invoked the promise that he would direct my paths, no matter where they took me.

p. 51

There is great comfort in Psalm 89:33, 34

Nevertheless my lovingkindness I will not utterly take from him, nor allow my faithfulness to fail. My covenant I will not break, nor alter the word that is gone out of my lips.

Numbers 23:19

God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?

**OUR AGENT HAS WORKED OUT AN INCREDIBLE CONTRACT AND IT HAS BEEN NOTARIZED IN THE BLOOD OF OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST!**

(31 Days of Praise: Enjoying God Anew by Ruth Myers)

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 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 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!  
pp. 155-7

Ray Stedman says:

Listen to the way Horatius Bonar puts it,

“I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
 ‘Behold, I freely give  
 The living water; thirsty one,  
 Stoop down and drink, and live.’  
 I came to Jesus, and I drank  
 Of that life-giving stream;  
 My thirst was quenched, my soul revived,  
 And now I live in Him.”

***“Our Father, thank you for this look at the ministry of our great High Priest, a ministry that so many times we have simply ignored, never taken at face value, never taken seriously, but rather looked about in all the broken cisterns of earth to try to find something as a substitute. God forgive us, and help us to claim our heritage in Him, this new agreement for living.***

***We pray in His name,  
 Amen.”***

pp. 126-7