



“The Better Promises of the New Covenant” (Hebrews 8)

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Intro: Hebrews is written to a Jewish audience with the intent of proving that the new covenant instituted by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross is superior in every way to the covenant of Law received by Moses. The covenant of Law was mediated by angels, so the writer in chapter one quotes seven Old Testament passages proving that Jesus, the sole mediator of the new covenant, is greater than the angels. Chapter three shows that Jesus is greater than Moses. Then we had a quite lengthy section telling us that Jesus is our great high priest after the order of Melchizedek, that mysterious priest/king who met Abraham after the defeat of the kings who had kidnapped his nephew Lot. Melchizedek was King of Salem and King of Righteousness. He brings out bread and wine for Abraham, he blesses Abraham, and Abraham gives him a tenth of all the spoils from the victory. He is without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life. He is an eternal priest/king. Psalm 110:4 prophesied that Messiah (Jesus) is a priest in the order of Melchizedek. This of course means that Jesus is greater than Abraham, and greater than any of the priests under the covenant of Law. That's about as brief a summary as I can give to help get us back into our study today. Now, for a final bridging the gap from where we were two weeks ago to where we're headed today, pick it up with me in Hebrews 7:23.

THE TEXT

v.1 This one verse is loaded with meaning! Under the old covenant, a priest would never sit. See Hebrews 10:11-12. The right hand signifies the seat of honor, but it has another meaning as well. In Israel there was a ruling body of 70 men known as the Sanhedrin. These men were responsible for making judgments. They were technically the Jewish house of judgment. There were always two scribes before the judges of the Sanhedrin. One scribe sat on the right hand, and the other scribe sat on the left hand. It was always the business of the scribe who sat on the right hand to write the acquittals. And it was always the business of the scribe on the left hand to write the condemnations. The Bible says that Jesus came not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved (John 3:17). Hence His place is never on the left hand, but always on the right hand, where He writes pardons for those who put their trust in Him as Savior and Lord.

v.13 Despite the clarity of the Word of God, there are movements today that seek to put us back under the covenant of Law. One of these is called “The Hebrew Roots Movement,” and some who have been connected with our fellowship here at Calvary Chapel have been affected by it. I know of one person who has jumped into this movement with both feet, and it grieves me deeply. The bottom line of their teaching is their belief that we are grafted into Israel, and as a

result we must assume Jewish customs if we are going to mature spiritually and by pleasing to God. They adhere to a kosher diet, observe the Sabbath, as well as Jewish festivals and holidays. They do this despite the clear teaching of the Word of God, such as the passage we have before us today. Now, let me just quickly give you a couple of absolutely clear Scriptures on this point, then we'll look more closely at Hebrews 8. See Rom.7:4, 6; Col.2:13-14. Now note with me once again Heb.8:7.

WHAT WAS **WRONG** WITH THE FIRST COVENANT (LAW)? Note that the “wrongness” is not with the Law itself, but rather what it was unable to accomplish for us (Rom.7:7-8a, 12, 14).

1. It could never declare us righteous (Heb.8:8-9; Rom.3:20).
 - See Jeremiah 11:1-8; 31:31-34.
2. Regular reminder of sin (Heb.10:3a).
3. The regulations were external (Heb.9:10; kosher diet, etc.).
4. The ceremonies and feasts were shadows of greater realities (Col.2:16-17).
 - Passover (Jesus the Passover Lamb); Firstfruits (Christ, the firstfruits); Unleavened Bread (purging of sin/purity; he purged us); Tabernacles (He is our shelter as we wander in the wilderness of this world); Day of Atonement (He is our atonement!). New Moon Celebrations connected with agriculture (fruitfulness); Sabbath Days (Rest, Trust).
5. Inferior priesthood
 - Had to sacrifices for their own sins.
 - Never completed their mission (Heb.10:11-12).
6. Inferior sacrifices
 - Never cleansed of sin, cleared the worshipper's conscience, brought peace with God.
7. Exclusive
 - Some had greater privileges than others (Priests, Levites, Jews, Gentiles, Women).
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8. Temporary (Heb.8:13; Gal.3:23-25; Rom.10:4)

THE BETTER PROMISES OF THE NEW COVENANT

1. Declares a person righteous based on Christ's obedience/sacrifice (II Cor.5:21; Rom.3:21-24; 4:1-3, 6-8; 8:3-4a; Eph.2:8-9; I Cor.6:9-11).
2. Regular reminder of righteousness (Phil.3:9).
3. Clear conscience, peace with God (Heb.10:22; Rom.5:1).
4. Internal regeneration by the Holy Spirit (Heb.8:10a; Titus 3:5).
 - New minds, new heart
 - Dr. Christian Barnard was the first surgeon to ever perform a heart transplant. Once he asked a patient, Dr. Philip Blaiberg, "Do you want to see your old heart?" The next evening Dr. Barnard brought in a glass container with Dr. Blaiberg's old heart. For a moment there was stunned silence, he was the first man in history to hold his own heart in his hands. For ten minutes he plied Dr. Barnard with technical questions. Then he turned to take a final look at the contents of the container and said, "So this is my old heart that caused me so much trouble."
5. All inclusive (Heb.8:10b-11; Eph.2:14-18).
 - Red, yellow, black, white, rich poor, etc. etc.
 - Everyone has a personal relationship with God (Heb.8:10b).
6. Superior priesthood, perfect sacrifice (Heb.10:11-12).
7. No longer any sacrifice for sin (Heb.10:18).
8. Eternal covenant (Heb.13:20-21; 7:18-22).

THE KEY TO THE BENEFITS OF THE NEW COVENANT: FAITH

- Rom.3:28; 5:1; 1:17; Gal.2:15-16; 3:1-3,10-14

A BIBLICAL RESPONSE TO THE TRUTH OF THE NEW COVENANT

- Offering ourselves to the Lord (Rom.12:1)
- Praise (Heb.13:15)
- Doing good, sharing (Heb.13:16)
- Thanksgiving (Col.2:6-7)
- Singing (Col.3:15-16; Eph.5:19-20)

CONCLUSION

- If the enemy has been taking you back to the weak and inferior principles of the covenant of Law, turn back to Jesus and the better promises of the New Covenant by faith, and let the Holy Spirit, through the truth of the Word of God, cleanse your conscience, grant you peace, and fill you with overflowing joy!
- If you've never entered into the New Covenant, do so today by believing the gospel, and receiving Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior.