

Bible Study March 22, 2023

Better Ministry, Better Covenant HEBREWS 8 – ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION (ESV)

Jesus, High Priest of a Better Covenant

¹ Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven,

The writer gives us a summary statement, because he is about to transition, from the point that Jesus is a better priest based on his qualifications to the point that he performs a better ministry and mediates a better covenant.

Location of the High Priest: Jesus is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in Heaven.

- He is seated in heaven. The earthly tabernacle doesn't have a chair. The tabernacle had a door, a table, a lamp stand, but no chair, no place to sit because the work was never done.

Better ministry:

² a minister in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up, not man. ³ For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices; thus it is necessary for this priest also to have something to offer.

- Where is Jesus' ministry? In the heavens, the holy places, in the true tent the Lord set up.
- What do ministers do? They offer gifts and sacrifices.
- What gifts did Jesus offer? He offered his own body and his own blood. (John said behold the lamb that takes away the sins of the world)

Jesus is minister he is one who serves in worship.

Every minister has something to offer? We are a Royal priesthood? What are you offering, what are you giving up, where is your sacrifice? Are you willing to give up your dreams, your personal ambitions for the kingdom of God? Will you give up a little bit of your weekend to serve, Will you give up TV time to pray for a friend? Are you willing to call and check on a friend?

⁴ Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law.

Under the old Jewish system, only those from the tribe of Levi were priests, and sacrifices were offered daily on the altar for forgiveness of sins. If you were not from tribe of Levi, you couldn't be a priest according to the law.

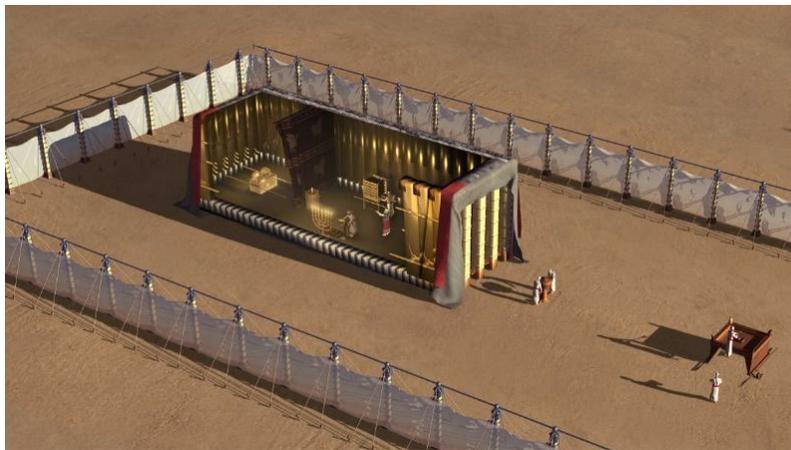
This covenant had limitations!

This system would not have allowed Jesus to be a priest, because he was from the tribe of Judah. But his perfect sacrifice ended all need for further priests and sacrifices.

So, while they were still making sacrifices on the earthly temple my God had taking away the sins of the whole world.

The use of the present tense— “there already are priests who offer the gifts”—indicates that this book was written before AD 70, when the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed, ending the sacrifices.

⁵ They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things. For when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God, saying, “See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain.”



In the earthly tabernacle each of the items are a type or shadow that points to activity of Christ in Heaven.

One Way in:

- **John 14:6 (ESV)** ⁶ *Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*

Altar of Burnt Offering: This is where sacrifices were made, and a lamb was offered in the morning and evening. Peace offerings, Sin Offering, Burnt offerings.

- **John 1:29 (ESV)** ²⁹ *The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!*

Laver: Place of washing for the priests. Purification washes:

- **Psalm 51:2 (ESV)** - ² *Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!*
- **1 John 1:9 (ESV)** - ⁹ *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

Table of Showbread: This was a place that showed the provision and fellowship that God has with his people. 12 loaves for the 12 tribes.

- **John 6:35 (ESV)** ³⁵ *Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.*
- **Matthew 4:4 (ESV)** *But he answered, “It is written, “ ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’ ”*

Golden Lampstand: This was the only source of light in the Holy Place.

- **John 8:12 (ESV)** ¹² *Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.*
- **Revelation 1:12-13 (ESV)** ¹² *Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³ and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. We see Jesus Standing in the midst of the lights which are the churches.*

Alter of Incense – These are the prayers. It was to be always burning and the fragrance of the anointing oil filled the tabernacle.

- **Psalms 141:2 (ESV)** *Let my prayer be counted as incense before you, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice!*
- **Revelations 8:3-4 (ESV)** ³ *And another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer, and he was given much incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar before the throne, ⁴ and the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose before God from the hand of the angel.*

⁶ ***But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises. ⁷ For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second.***

“More Excellent”: The Covenant was a good covenant, it was a covenant of blessing, prosperity, victory in battle, increase in children.

Better Covenant:

This better covenant was promised years ago. By Jeremiah 31:31-34 This prophecy was given to the people that would be taken into captivity in Babylon, But God gives them hope of a future restoration.

⁸ ***For he finds fault with them when he says:***

***“Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord,
when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel
and with the house of Judah,***

**⁹ not like the covenant that I made with their fathers
on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt.
For they did not continue in my covenant,
and so I showed no concern for them, declares the Lord.**

**¹⁰ For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel
after those days, declares the Lord:
I will put my laws into their minds,
and write them on their hearts,
and I will be their God,
and they shall be my people.**

If our hearts have not been changed, following God's rules will be unpleasant and difficult. We will rebel against being told how to live. The Holy Spirit, however, gives us new desires, helping us want to obey God (see Philippians 2:12-13).

**¹¹ And they shall not teach, each one his neighbor
and each one his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,'
for they shall all know me,
from the least of them to the greatest.**

**¹² For I will be merciful toward their iniquities,
and I will remember their sins no more."**

This passage quotes Jeremiah 31:31-34, which compares the new covenant with the old. The old covenant law was given by God to Israel. Now God has provided a new and better covenant, one of grace, in which Christ offers to forgive our sins and bring us to God through his sacrificial death. This new covenant reaches beyond Israel and Judah to include all people. Because it is written on our hearts and in our minds, it works at a deeper level to guide and transform us than any system of external rules and regulations could. It offers a new way to receive forgiveness—not through animal sacrifices, but through faith.

¹³ In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

Some of the Jewish believers were clinging to the obsolete old ways instead of embracing Christ's new covenant.

Until heaven, growth is the normal pattern. Do you feel stale and stuck in your relationship with Christ? If you feel you have plateaued, remember that heaven offers complete rest and renewal. Intensify your Bible study, find help that provides more substance than you've had up until now, and engage in meeting needs in new areas of service. Seek God, asking how he wants to add new vitality to your journey.