

Hebrews 8:1-13

In the next few chapters the attention of the writer of Hebrews shifts from the person of the priesthood to the work of the priesthood. In chapter 7 it was shown that the priest after the order of Melchisedec was superior to the priest from the Levitical line. In Hebrews 8-10 the writer will establish that the ministry of the Melchisedec priest is superior to the ministry of the Levitical priests in all aspects.

1 Now of the things which we have spoken *this is the sum*: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens;

The main point ("*the sum*") of the teaching so far, although many different points have been covered, is that:

- Jesus is our High Priest after the order of Melchisedec
- He has sat down ("*set*" is from the same Greek word translated "*sat down*" in Hebrews 1:3 and 10:12) and speaks of the finality of His offering.
- The work is done for eternity because He sat down in the heavens on the right hand of God.

2 A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.

Jesus ministers in the true tabernacle (true does not mean as opposed to false here but genuine, the real thing after which the earthly tabernacle was modeled).

The tabernacle Jesus serves in was made by God not man.

3 For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore *it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer*.

Gifts that were given to the priest to offer to God represented such things as personal dedication, commitment and thanksgiving to the Lord. Sacrifices were blood offerings and were for the forgiveness of sins.

Jesus' sacrifice was once for all time but He continues to function as our High priest when we come to God through worship, praise, repentance, dedication, thanksgiving, etc.

Hebrews 7:25 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.

Colossians 3:17 And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."

4 For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law:

If Jesus were on earth He would not be a priest. He was from the wrong tribe and thus couldn't function as a priest on earth.

5 Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, *that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount*.

The earthly Levitical priests served God in a Tabernacle that was just a shadow or picture of the heavenly Tabernacle - Exodus 25:8,9; Revelation 11:19

25:8 And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.

9 According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it.

11:19 And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

The ministry of Jesus as our High Priest, after the order of Melchizedek, provides not only the one final efficacious offering for sin, but an ongoing intercession for believers before a holy God.

6 But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.

There is a better covenant established on better promises.

The old covenant, the Mosaic Law, was conditional and temporal. This "new" covenant and the promises are unconditional and eternal.

7 For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.

If the first covenant could have forgiven sins no second would have been needed. Its failure to forgive sins implied that a new (better) covenant would be coming.

8 For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:

9 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.

10 For this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:

11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.

12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

- In the future there will be a New Covenant with literal, national Israel (vs. 8 [31]).

- a. House of Israel is the northern kingdom
- b. House of Judah is the southern kingdom

- Different than the Mosaic covenant (vs. 9 [32])

- a. Israel was unfaithful
- b. God was faithful

- Difference is an internal compulsion rather than an external compulsion (verses 10-12 [33-34])

- a. It will be internal (vs. 10a [33a]) as opposed to external (Exodus 31:18; Deut. 31:24-26)

"And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God."

"And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished, That Moses commanded the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying, Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee."

- b. It will produce a personal relationship between Israel and God (vs. 10b [33b]). (Joel 2:32; Isaiah 66:7-9; Zechariah 12:10-14, 13:8-9; Romans 11:25-27)

Joel 2:32 "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call."

- c. Teaching (witnessing) will be unnecessary (vs. 11 [34a]) as all will know the Lord, yet today:

Matthew 28:19 "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

Matthew 26:27-28 "And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins"

d. Sins are forgiven and will no longer be remembered (vs. 12 [34b])

- There may be as many as 17 other passages that refer to the "new" covenant:

"Everlasting covenant" - Isaiah 55:3; 61:8; Jeremiah 32:40; 50:5; Ezekiel 16:60; 37:26

- Isaiah 55:3 "Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David."
- Isaiah 61:8 "For I the LORD love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering; and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them."
- Jer. 32:40 "And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me."
- Jer. 50:5 "They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the LORD in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten."
- Ezekiel 16:60 "Nevertheless I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant."
- Ezekiel 37:26 "Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore."

"New heart" or **"new spirit"** - Jeremiah 32:39; Ezekiel 11:19; 18:31;36:26;

- Jer. 32:39 "And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them."
- Ezekiel 11:19 "And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh."
- Ezekiel 18:31 "Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"
- Ezekiel 36:26 "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh."

"Covenant of peace" - Isaiah 54:10; Ezekiel 34:25; 37:26

- Isaiah 54:10 "For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee."
- Ezekiel 34:25 "And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods."
- Ezekiel 37:26 "Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore."

"A covenant" or **"my covenant"** - Isaiah 42:6; 49:8; 59:21; Hosea 2:18-20

- Isaiah 42:6 "I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles."
- Isaiah 49:8 "Thus saith the LORD, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages."
- Isaiah 59:21 "As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever."
- Hosea 2:18-20 "And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely.
And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies.
I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD."

13 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.

The first covenant has been antiquated - done away.

Hebrews was written just before the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D. With the destruction of the Temple all vestiges of the "old system" did vanish.

QUESTION: How does the statement that there is no need to teach (witness) people about the Lord fit in with the command today that we are to teach (witness) people about the Lord (Matthew 28:19) in light of Jesus' shed blood being tied in with the New Covenant (Matthew 26:27-28)?

THOUGHTS ON THE FULFILLMENT OF THE NEW COVENANT AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO BELIEVERS TODAY AND ISRAEL IN THE FUTURE

1. Seventeen references in the N.T.: Nine actual mentions - Matthew 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:25; 2 Corinthians 3:6; Hebrews 8:8, 13; 9:15; and 12:24 and eight references - Romans 11:27; Hebrews 7:22; 8:6, 7, 10; 10:16, 29; 13:20.
2. The setting of the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34) is eschatological.
 - A. "I will be their God and they shall be my people" is eschatological - Zechariah 13:7-9
 - B. The Gospel accounts of the Last Supper and the New Covenant are related to an eschatological setting: Luke 22:18; Matthew 26:29; Mark 14:25 (cf. Exodus 6:6-7 and the fourth cup of Passover)
 - C. In 1 Corinthians 11:26, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." It seems that the Lord's Table is temporary - "until he come." When "He comes" the New Covenant is fulfilled and the picture of it (the Lord's Table) is no longer needed.
3. Because a covenant has been "cut" doesn't mean it is fully operational. God "cut" a covenant with Abraham regarding the land promise to Israel (Genesis 15) which has not been fully realized.
4. The mention of New Covenant in 2 Corinthians 3 and Hebrew 7:6 (and the contrast between law and spirit) may be understood as a contrast between a ministry based on works and self-effort and a ministry dependent on the Spirit of God (Paul says he has been made "sufficient as ministers of the New Covenant" - vs. 6).
5. Hebrews mentions the New Covenant in chapter 8; 9:15; 10:16-17; 12:24.

Hebrews 8 emphasizes the mediator of a better covenant (vs. 6) and is saying that Jeremiah understood at his time that the O.T. actually spoke of the temporary nature of the Aaronic priesthood and the Mosaic Law and that even now (in Jeremiah's time) the Mosaic Covenant was "growing old" and "ready to vanish."

Hebrews 9:15 & 12:24 points to Jesus as the mediator of this covenant and not that it is being fulfilled now.

Hebrews 10:16-17 needs to be understood in the context (verses 14-17) where the "perfecting forever" would seem to point to the glorification of believers and ties in well with the eschatological thinking of the covenant promises found in the gospels and 1 Corinthians 11.
6. Believers in this age don't demonstrate a greater obedience of faith than did the Old Testament saints living under the Mosaic Law.
7. The great commission's command "to teach" is hard to reconcile with the new covenant's promise that they would not need to "teach" under its blessings (Jeremiah 31:34).

CONCLUSION: It would seem that the New Covenant should be understood in an eschatological framework. The church is united to the mediator of the New Covenant and at best partakes in some of the blessings of this covenant and does not fulfill it. It would seem that the best one could do is argue that the New Covenant is being partially fulfilled today in the church receiving the spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3) of the Covenant.