

Candlelight Christian Fellowship

Hebrews (Chapter 8)

Hebrews 8 (NKJV)

“Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, 2 a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.

3 For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Therefore it is necessary that this One also have something to offer. 4 For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law; 5 who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, “See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.”

6 But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises. 7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. 8 Because finding fault with them, He says: “Behold, the days are coming, says 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 did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the LORD. 10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 11 None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them. 12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.”

13 In that He says, “A new covenant,” He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.”

A Lengthy Introduction

The author to the Hebrews, following the lengthiest introduction in the Bible, brings to focus his primary message, *“Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man”* (vs. 1–2).

His focus is the better sacrifice (9:23), a better covenant (7:22; 8:6), better promises (8:22), a better hope (7:19), a better and enduring possession in heaven (10:34), a better resurrection (11:35), and even a better country—the heavenly (11:16). These *“better”* blessings are the result of a better priest and His better priesthood—that of Jesus the Messiah.

A Noted Time of the Writing

At the time this letter was written, the temple in Jerusalem was still standing, and the sacrifices of the Old Covenant sacrificial system were still being offered. However, it is also important to note that by this time in history Jesus had fulfilled the Old Covenant and as a result had ushered in the New.

Every Jew knew that the temple in Jerusalem was still standing and that the sacrifices were still being offered. The standing temple and sacrificial system provided a temptation to trust in and return to the Old Covenant ways. For this reason, the author continues his primary argument for the New by reminding the Hebrews that *“every [past and present earthly] high priest is appointed [under the Law] to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Therefore, it is necessary that this One [Jesus] also have something to offer”* (vs. 3). *“For if He [Jesus] were on earth, He would not be a priest [like those serving in the earthly temple], since there are [at that present time] priests who offer the gifts [sacrifices] according to the [Old Covenant] law; who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things”* (vss. 4–5a).

The Typological Nature of the Old Covenant Temple, Furnishings, and System

The earthly temple and the sacrificial system of the Old Testament/Covenant was only a type and model of the better and perfect heavenly temple and sacrifice. For this reason, the author reminds his audience that *“Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He [God] said, ‘See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain’”* (vs. 5b). For more on the *“mountain,” “tabernacle,”* and systems, see Exodus 19–31).

However, that Old Testament/Covenant system and its temporary typological nature had/has come to its end, and *“now He [Jesus, the better and Great High Priest] has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises”* (vs. 6).

The Main Point

This is the main point: The Old Covenant is fulfilled in Jesus, and a new and better way had/has been inaugurated. *“For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second”* (vs. 7).

The Old Covenant was holy, and just, and good (see Romans 7:12), but it could not save and could never make man righteous (see Romans 3:20; Galatians 2:16; 3:21). Therefore, the law was *“faulty”* in the sense that through the works of the flesh and by the deeds of the law no flesh could or ever will be justified. Moreover, *“finding fault with them”* (vs. 8a), He made a promise of a better covenant and promised that in the *“better”* and right way, through the *“better”* and right means, and at the right time, He would bring about the *“better”* covenant.

The fault in them was sin, and the Law could not take away sin(s) (see Hebrews 10:11).

Therefore, *“He says: ‘Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—not according to the [Old] 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 did not continue in My covenant [as manifested by unbelief, rebellion, disobedience and sin], and I disregarded them, says the LORD’”* (vss. 8b–9).

The author once again referenced the promise of a New Covenant and pointed to the fact that this promise had now come in, by, and through the promised Messiah: Jesus.

Continuing, he recites, *“For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother,*

saying, *'Know the LORD,' for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more*" (vss. 10–12).

The fact that God promised to write His law into the minds and on the hearts of believers further points to "the main point" the author is making: The Old Covenant is fulfilled in Jesus, and a new and better way had/has been inaugurated. The "New" does away with the "Old." The law written on tablets of stone is pushed aside, and a new and better way begins. For this reason, the author states, *"In that He says, 'A new covenant,' He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away"* (vs. 13).

It is of note to recognize that the Old and New Covenants were given to the Hebrews—and not to the Gentiles. Note that God said, *"For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD"* and *"Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah* (vss. 8 and 10).

The fact that God has allowed the Gentiles to enjoy the blessings and benefits of the "New Covenant" is the result of the Gentiles being "grafted in" to the "root and fatness of the olive tree" provided alone in Jesus the Messiah (see Romans 11).

The Gentiles are therefore recipients of the promises made to Israel and Judah in the New Covenant without the Hebrews being disallowed. This should remind the careful student of Scripture to guard against anti-Semitism and Replacement Theology.

Unbelief will therefore withhold the blessings found in the New Covenant to Jew and Gentile alike.

Several Key Points

It is of note to recognize several key points in the citation the author used from Jeremiah (cf. Jeremiah 31:31–34).

Permanent Cleansing of Sins

First, we should note that God will cleanse the believer from all sin and unrighteousness—remembering their sins no more (vs. 12). This kind of forgiveness would be uncommon to the Jewish mind—moreover, impossible during the Old Covenant era. Sins in the Old Covenant were covered and forgiven not taken away. Furthermore, sins were remembered year by year when the Children of Israel observed continual sacrifices and, in particular, when they observed the Day of Atonement (see Leviticus 16 and Hebrews 10:1–4). The blood of bulls and goats could never take away sins. However, in Jesus the Messiah, all sins are forgiven—and forgotten forever. The author reiterates this in greater emphasis in chapter 10 where we read, *"'Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.' Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin"* (Hebrews 10:17–18 NKJV).

The abrupt revelation of this transition is mentioned by John the Baptist when introducing Jesus: *"[He] saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world'"* (John 1:29 NKJV). The revelation of "takes away" was and is life changing.

The Law of the Spirit of Life in Jesus the Messiah

Secondly, we must note that when the believer is effected by the law written in their minds and on their hearts, God will “cause” His people to walk in His ways. This too is a revolutionary change.

Ezekiel communicated this fact as a prophetic utterance from the Lord.

“Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying: ‘Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own ways and deeds; to Me their way was like the uncleanness of a woman in her customary impurity. Therefore I poured out My fury on them for the blood they had shed on the land, and for their idols with which they had defiled it. So I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed throughout the countries; I judged them according to their ways and their deeds. When they came to the nations, wherever they went, they profaned My holy name—when they said of them, “These are the people of the LORD, and yet they have gone out of His land.” But I had concern for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations wherever they went.

Therefore say to the house of Israel, “Thus says the Lord GOD: ‘I do not do this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for My holy name’s sake, which you have profaned among the nations wherever you went. And I will sanctify My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I am the LORD,’ says the Lord GOD, ‘when I am hallowed in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God. I will deliver you from all your uncleannesses. I will call for the grain and multiply it, and bring no famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruit of your trees and the increase of your fields, so that you need never again bear the reproach of famine among the nations. Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good; and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities and your abominations. Not for your sake do I do this,’ says the Lord GOD, ‘let it be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel!’

“Thus says the Lord GOD: ‘On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will also enable you to dwell in the cities, and the ruins shall be rebuilt. The desolate land shall be tilled instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass by. So they will say, “This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden; and the wasted, desolate, and ruined cities are now fortified and inhabited.” Then the nations which are left all around you shall know that I, the LORD, have rebuilt the ruined places and planted what was desolate. I, the LORD, have spoken it, and I will do it.’

“Thus says the Lord GOD: ‘I will also let the house of Israel inquire of Me to do this for them: I will increase their men like a flock. Like a flock offered as holy sacrifices, like the flock at Jerusalem on its feast days, so shall the ruined cities be filled with flocks of men. Then they shall know that I am the LORD’” ” (Ezekiel 36:16–38 NKJV).

The inner working of the permanently indwelling person of the Holy Spirit enables the “causation” of the believer’s life and walk. This is unique to the believer in the New Covenant relationship.

God said, *“Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh”* (Ezekiel 11:19 NKJV), and *“I will put My*

Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken it and performed it” (Ezekiel 37:14a NKJV).

“For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us. Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee” (2 Corinthians 1:20–22 NKJV).

“In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise” (Ephesians 1:13 NKJV). “And...you were sealed for the day of redemption” (Ephesians 4:30b NKJV).

Everyone Will Know the Lord?

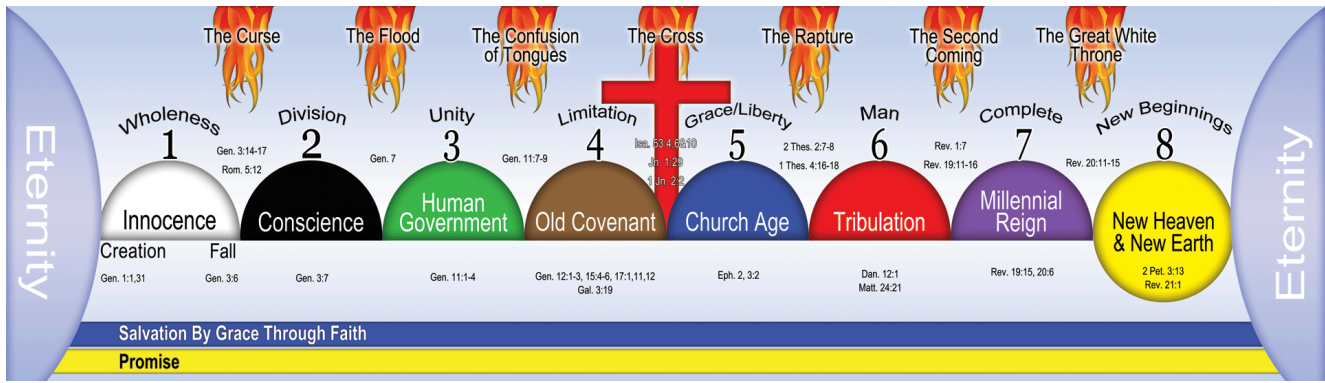
Thirdly, everyone will know the Lord when Jesus returns to reign in Jerusalem. Therefore, we must understand the timeline and the levels of fulfillment associated with this promise.

It is clear that the Old Covenant has been fulfilled and is obsolete, *“In that He says, ‘A new covenant,’ He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away” (Hebrews 8:13 NKJV).* Therefore, we must recognize the fact that Jesus has inaugurated the New Covenant but that its fullness and fruition has yet to be fully realized.

We know that the New Covenant has begun by a simple examination of Jesus’ words at the last supper. For Jesus *“took the cup after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you’” (Luke 22:20 NKJV).* However, we should not understand this to mean that the future literal fullness of this prophecy has come in its fullness. There is a future literal, physical Kingdom that will bring about all prophesied in the passages cited. Believers today have received forgiveness of sins and are permanently indwelt by the Holy Spirit (as noted above in Ephesians 1:13 and 4:30). God is writing His laws in our hearts and is causing us to walk in His ways (see also Titus 2:11–14). However, this is not true of all the Hebrews at present—but will be in the days to come (see Romans 11:25–27). Moreover, at present, it cannot be said that *“None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them” (vs. 11).* However, the days are coming when we who believe will see all these things come to pass. Everyone will know the Lord *“from the least of them to the greatest”* for Jesus will be physically present on the earth, reigning from the throne of David in Jerusalem during His 1000-year reign (also known as the “Millennial Reign” of Jesus the Messiah).

After Those Days?

The timeline in reference declares that *“this is the covenant that [God] I will make with the house of Israel after those days...” (vs. 10),* and a careful examination of the Scriptural timeline will show that the days in view are days of judgment—namely, and in this case, the Tribulation (see Zechariah 12:10–13:2). Therefore, Israel and Judah (as are referenced in the prophecies) will not fully know the Lord as described until the Millennial Kingdom. (Please see the dispensational graphic below.)



Out with the Old and In with the New

“In that He says, ‘A new covenant,’ He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away” (vs. 13).

The Hebrews—and all others—who wish to cling to the Old Covenant and its ways miss the main point the author is making.

Questions:

True or False: At the time this letter was written, the temple in Jerusalem was still standing, and the sacrifices of the Old Covenant sacrificial system were still being offered.

True or False: The earthly temple and the sacrificial system of the Old Testament/Covenant was only a type and model of the better and perfect heavenly temple and sacrifice.

True or False: The Old Covenant was holy, and just, and good, but it could not save and could never make man righteous.

True or False: The Old Covenant is fulfilled in Jesus, and a new and better way has been inaugurated. However, believers must still observe the Old Covenant systems and laws.

True or False: Unbelief will withhold the blessings found in the New Covenant for the Gentile but not the Jews.

True or False: God cleanses the believer from all sin and unrighteousness—remembering their sins no more.

True or False: When the believer is effected by the law written in their minds and on their hearts, God “*causes*” His people to walk in His ways.

True or False: It is not important to understand the biblical timeline and the levels of fulfillment associated with the fullness of the New Covenant promise.

True or False: Israel and Judah will know the Lord at the inauguration of the Millennial Kingdom.

True or False: The Hebrews—and all others—who wish to cling to the Old Covenant and its ways miss the main point the author is making.

Notes: