

*Second Baptist Church of Doylestown*

*Bible Study Notes: Book of Hebrews*

*7/6/16*

*Hebrews Chapter 8*

**The High Priest of a New Covenant**

Now the main point of what we are saying is this: We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven,<sup>2</sup> and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by a mere human being.<sup>3</sup> Every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices, and so it was necessary for this one also to have something to offer.<sup>4</sup> If he were on earth, he would not be a priest, for there are already priests who offer the gifts prescribed by the law.<sup>5</sup> They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: "See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain."<sup>6</sup> But in fact the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, since the new covenant is established on better promises.<sup>7</sup> For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another.<sup>8</sup> But God found fault with the people and said: "The days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah.<sup>9</sup> It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they did not remain faithful to my covenant, and I turned away from them, declares the Lord.<sup>10</sup> This is the covenant I will establish with the people of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.<sup>11</sup> No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest.<sup>12</sup> For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."<sup>13</sup> By calling this covenant "new," he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and outdated will soon disappear.

**8:4** Under the old Jewish system, priests were chosen only from the tribe of Levi, and sacrifices were offered daily on the altar for forgiveness of sins (see 7:12-14). 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.

The use of the present tense, "there are already priests who offer the gifts" indicates that this book was written before A.D. 70 when the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed, ending the sacrifices.

**8:5** The pattern for the tabernacle built by Moses was given by God. It was a pattern of the spiritual reality of Christ's sacrifice, and thus it looked forward to the future reality. There is no tabernacle in heaven of which the earthly one is a copy, but rather the earthly tabernacle was an expression of eternal, theological principles. Because the temple at Jerusalem had not yet been destroyed, using the worship system there as an example would have had a great impact on this original audience.

**8:8-12** This passage is a quotation of Jeremiah 31:31-34, which compares the new covenant with the old. The old covenant was the covenant of law between God and Israel. The new and better way is the covenant of grace—Christ's offer to forgive our sins and bring us to God through his sacrificial death. This covenant is new in extent—it goes beyond Israel and Judah to include all the Gentile nations. It is new in application because it is written on our hearts and in our minds. It offers a new way to forgiveness, not through animal sacrifice but through faith. Have you entered into this new covenant and begun walking in the better way?

**8:10** If our hearts are not 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). With new hearts, we find that serving God is our greatest joy.

**8:10-11** Under God's new covenant, God's law is inside us. It is no longer an external set of rules and principles. The Holy Spirit reminds us of Christ's words, activates our consciences, influences our motives and desires, and makes us want to obey. Now doing God's will is something we desire with all our heart and mind.

**8:13** Some of the Jewish believers were clinging to the obsolete old ways instead of embracing Christ's new covenant. All the joy of newfound faith and all the relief of fresh forgiveness had given way to a kind of boredom that was never supposed to be. Growth had stopped. What should be done if this happens to you? Realize that life in Christ is never complete. Heaven promises completeness; until then, growth is the normal pattern. Growth often endures seasons of drought and drabness. That's also normal. Think about what you are doing that might be spiritually ineffective or obsolete. The key to growth includes daily devotion to Christ through Bible study and prayer. Perhaps you need to intensify your study and find helps that provide more substance. Perhaps you need to grow by engaging in new areas of service that express your faith. Seek God for how he would have you keep growing in your faith.

## THE OLD AND NEW COVENANTS

**Hebrews 8:3-12** Like pointing out the similarities and differences between the photograph of a person and the actual person, the writer of Hebrews shows the connection between the old Mosaic covenant and the new Messianic covenant. He proves that the old covenant was a shadow of the real Christ.

**8:3-4 The Old Covenant under Moses:** Gifts and sacrifices by those guilty of sin - **The New Covenant in Christ:** Self-sacrifice by the guiltless Christ Application: Christ died for you

**8:5-6, 10-12 The Old Covenant under Moses:** Focused on a physical building where one goes to worship - **The New Covenant in Christ:** Focuses on the reign of Christ in believers' hearts. God is directly involved in your life.

**8:5-6, 10-12 The Old Covenant under Moses:** A shadow - **The New Covenant in Christ:** A reality. Not temporal, but eternal.

**8:6 The Old Covenant under Moses:** Limited promises - **The New Covenant in Christ:** Limitless promises. We can trust God's promises to us.

**8:8-9 The Old Covenant under Moses:** Failed agreement by people - **The New Covenant in Christ:** Faithful agreement by Christ. Christ has kept the agreement where people couldn't.