

(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; (2) A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. Here we begin the final point in showing the superiority of Jesus' priesthood over the Levitical system. This is evident by Jesus making one sacrifice good for mankind for all time, and then he sat down at the right hand of God in heaven. Chapter 10:11-14 expands this idea. He does this work throughout the entire Christian age without ever being replaced.

Verse 2 tells us that he is a minister of the sanctuary. **Minister** in this verse means priest. Jesus is the high priest in the true tabernacle. As He sits on the right hand of God, His work as high priest is interceding for Christians and taking the prayers of the saints to God. **Sanctuary** and **True tabernacle** are other names for heaven. True tabernacle is the same as the saints' everlasting rest in chapters 3&4. It is the same as the better country and well-founded city of chapter 11:10, 19. It was made by God himself, not man; therefore, heaven is everlasting.

(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. (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:

We are reminded in v3 that the work of the high priest is to offer gifts and sacrifices; therefore, Jesus must do this. The writer does not define what Jesus offered; however, in Hebrews 7:27 he reveals that Jesus offered himself on the cross as the sacrifice for the sins of the world. Jesus does not continually offer sacrifices; instead he offered himself once for all.

Christ could not be a priest on earth under the Mosaic Law because those priests were of the tribe of Levi and he was of the tribe of Judah (Numbers 18:1-7). However, Jesus is the High Priest in heaven, which is a superior priesthood. He is a priest after the order of Melchizedek who was both a king and high priest. Hebrews chapter seven proves this is a superior priesthood.

(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

Chapter 8

Levitical priest served as the copy or shadow of the real thing. **Shadow** indicates events or happenings in the Old Testament which pointed to the real thing of the New Testament. Just as a shadow is similar to that of which it is a shadow; it is vastly inferior to the real thing. Therefore, the Levitical priesthood and the tabernacle were a shadow of the real priesthood and real sanctuary.

Moses was commanded to make it exactly **according to the pattern** so that it would correctly represent that to which it was a type or shadow. Moses built the tabernacle exactly as God commanded (Exodus 39:42-42). An understanding of shadows helps one to better understand the real thing. Without an understanding of the Levitical priesthood, one could hardly understand the priesthood of Christ.

(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. Here we begin a discussion on the new Law of Christ. Jesus is not only our priest but he is also the mediator of a better covenant which has better promises. A **mediator** is a go between, one who stands in the middle and is an arbitrator. He has to stand on neutral ground to bring the two parties together. In the Old Testament, Moses was the mediator. Under the new covenant Jesus is the mediator. Since Jesus is far superior to Moses, he is a far superior mediator. He not only mediates the new covenant, he guarantees the fulfillment of it.

Beginning in verse 7 and continuing thru chapter 10:18 we see the superiority of the New Covenant over the Old Covenant. *Hebrews 8:7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.* In the Christian age, Jesus is not only a superior high priest, He is also the mediator of a better covenant with better promises. If the first covenant could have provided salvation, there would have been no need for a second covenant. Since the first covenant could not provide salvation, God promised through Jeremiah in 600 B.C. he would make a better covenant. The author of Hebrews quotes Jeremiah 31:31-34 to prove this point. Since the new covenant is now in effect, the old covenant is not needed and has been taken away.

The first covenant had its tabernacle (and temple) as a place for worship. But that system could not forgive sins. These were to suffice until the coming of Jesus Christ as to make a greater and better covenant. He did what the blood of bulls and goats could not do. He offered himself (his own blood) once for all for the eternal redemption of man.

Chapter 8

The blood of Christ did what the blood of animals was unable to do, wash away the sins of man. For this reason, Jesus is the mediator of the new covenant.

(7) For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. If the first covenant (the law of Moses) could have forgiven sinners and brought them into a right relationship with God, there would have been no need for a new covenant. However, it could not. The Law of Moses showed men what sin was and brought them to a knowledge and sense of sin; however, it could not save them. It showed men they could not save themselves. Men needed a Savior. In this way, the old covenant brought men to Christ. ***Galatians 3:24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.***

The author of Hebrews now quotes from Jeremiah 31:31-34. The book of Jeremiah was written around 570 B.C. The Israelites were in Babylonian captivity because of their sins; however, God gave them hope. At this time the Northern Kingdom had been destroyed one hundred fifty years previously; however, God's new covenant is going to be for all mankind. ***(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.***

In making a new covenant with his people, God said that it would not be like the Law of Moses given at the time he led them out of Egypt. It will not be a warmed over Law of Moses, but a new covenant completely. Because they did not continue in his covenant, God rejected them. "And I regarded them not" is from the Septuagint translation of Jeremiah 31:32. Jeremiah reads "I was a husband unto them."

(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: God will make a new covenant which will be inward and spiritual. Instead of tables of stones, the law would be in their hearts. The meaning of this is found in Ezekiel 11:19 where he says, ***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:***

This does not mean they will just memorize the new law as they were told to do in the

Chapter 8

Old Testament (Deuteronomy 6:6-9). The promise that God **will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people** is true in the new covenant as it was in the old covenant.

(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. Under the old covenant, one was born into the Jewish nation. As the child grew up, he had the law taught to him. An Israelite became a child of God by physical birth. Under the new covenant, one is a child of God by spiritual birth. *John 3:5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.* A person becomes child of God when he hears the gospel, believes the gospel and obeys the gospel. In the new covenant knowing about God and believing in him comes before one becomes a child of God; therefore, everyone, from the least to the greatest, who becomes a Christian shall know God. This does not mean there will be no more to learn. There is much more to learn. However, everyone in the family of God (the church) must know God and believe in his Son, Jesus Christ, before he can become a child of God. He is taught first and then added to the family when he obeys the gospel. After he becomes a child of God, he is to continue to study and grow in knowledge and faith.

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

God will forgive sinners of their sins when they believe in Jesus and obey the gospel. He will treat them as though they had never sinned (Romans 5:9). This forgiveness is possible because of the sacrifice of Jesus once for all on the cross. Those under the old covenant did not have these assurances.

One cannot be under two laws. When the new covenant was given, the old covenant had been done away with. When Jeremiah wrote, the new covenant was in sight and the old covenant had its days numbered. The old covenant was nailed to the cross.

Invitation