

## *Valley Bible Church - Sermon Transcript*

### The Superiority of the New Covenant Hebrews 8:7-13

We are once again returning back to our study of the Book of Hebrews written to a group of struggling Hebrew believers, who under a great persecution, were being tempted to turn away from Christ and return back to Judaism.

So how did the author of this book counter this danger that was facing this vulnerable congregation? Having set forth the superiority of Christ to prophets, to angels, and to Moses the author then set out to show the superiority of Christ's priesthood over all other **priesthoods** (Hebrews 5:1-10:18).

This lengthy section of scripture can be divided into two main segments.

The first main segment we entitled: The Son's appointment as high priest according to the order of **Melchizedek** (Hebrews 5:1-7:28). This is the segment that we just recently completed.

The second main segment, that we have just recently begun, we have entitled: Christ's superior high priestly **offering** (Hebrews 8:1-10:18).

This segment dealing with the superiority of Christ's high priestly offering can be divided into **three** parts.

The last time we were together we dealt with the first of those three parts: The superiority of Christ's high priestly **ministry** (Hebrews 8:1-6). This first part went from **Hebrews 8:1-6**.

So how did this author in **Hebrews 8:1-6** establish the superiority of Christ's high priestly ministry? The author in Hebrews 8:1-6 established the superiority of Christ's high priestly ministry by pointing out to his readers that Christ's present high priestly ministry at the right hand of God's throne, is taking place in the "**true tabernacle**" and not in the earthly tabernacle of Israel, which was only a copy or a shadow of the true tabernacle.

And what was the author's point? It was this: Christ conducting His ministry in the true tabernacle or in other words in the superior tabernacle was the evidence of His superior ministry as high priest which in turn would imply that Christ is a mediator of a better covenant built on better promises.

## *Valley Bible Church - Sermon Transcript*

This implication was clearly stated by this author in **verse 6** and was used by this author to prepare the way for what he wanted to say next and this brings us to the second part of this three part section that will begin in **Hebrews 8:7** and will continue down to **Hebrews 8:13**.

### **MESSAGE**

So what is this second part dealing with? This is what it is dealing with: The superiority of the **New Covenant** over the Old Covenant (Hebrews 8:7-13). If Christ's priesthood is superior, and His ministry is superior then the covenant over which He is now mediating, which is the New Covenant, must also be superior over that covenant that had preceded it or in other words the Old Covenant. And this is what our text will be dealing with this morning. But before we begin to examine this text I would like to make this comment:

The superiority of the New Covenant over the Old Covenant should not be for us just simply an intellectual concept. For if we by faith have received Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior and have therefore become a participant in the New Covenant then all the benefits of God's New Covenant promises should have become our reality and the blessedness of that reality should now be filling us with thanksgiving and praise.

So should the superiority of the New Covenant be just merely an intellectual concept? No! If we are true believers, the superiority of the New Covenant needs to go beyond an intellectual concept to an experiential level for we have been saved not just simply to understand the new covenant but to experience it. And I would hope that our examination of this text this morning will confirm this truth for us.

So let us now read **Hebrews 8:7-13** as we begin to consider the superiority of New Covenant over the Old Covenant. And what do these verses say? They say this, "**For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second. (8) For finding fault with them, He says, 'Behold, days are coming, says the Lord, when I will effect a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the House of Judah; (9) Not like the covenant which I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; for they did not continue in My covenant, and I did not care for 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 into their minds, and I will write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. (11) And they shall not teach everyone His fellow citizen, and everyone His brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' For all will know Me from the least to the greatest of them. (12) For I will be merciful to their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no**

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*Valley Bible Church - Sermon Transcript*

**more." (13) When He said, 'A new covenant,' He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear."**

So did these verses we just read, deal with the superiority of the New Covenant over the Old Covenant? Yes! Absolutely! In fact this point was established at the very beginning of this passage in **Hebrews 8:7**.

How did **verse 7** begin? It began like this, "**For if that first covenant**" or in other words, if that conditional covenant that had been made with Israel through Moses at Mount Sinai, which people commonly refer to as the Old Covenant "**had been faultless**" or in other words had been able to provide acceptability and thus accessibility for the people of God to the throne of God then "**there would have been no occasion sought for a second**" or in other words for a "**second covenant.**"

But there was an occasion for a second covenant because the first covenant or in other words the Old Covenant had in fact failed to provide that acceptability and accessibility for the people of God to the throne of God.

This author knew this and the author wanted his readers to be convinced of this as well. And this brings us to what the author said next in **verse 8**.

So now let me begin to read this verse for you. And what does it say? It says this, "**For finding fault with them ...**" or in other words "**finding fault with the children of Israel**", which would have been the natural by-product of the first covenant's failure to deliver acceptability and accessibility to God's throne, the author then went on to say in **verse 8** "**He says....**"

These two words "**He says...**" introduced a quotation from **Jeremiah 31:31-34** that extended all the way down to **Hebrews 8:12**. And what was the significance of this quotation? It prophetically anticipated the failure of the first covenant or in other words the "Old Covenant," which would then lead to its replacement by the second covenant or in other words the "New Covenant," which would be the superior covenant. It would be the superior covenant because it would, unlike the Old Covenant, provide individuals the opportunity through faith in Christ to gain ongoing acceptability and accessibility to God's throne or in other words a personal relationship with God along with all of its accompanying blessings.

So let us now consider this quotation and see how it anticipated the failure of the first covenant and its replacement by the second.

## *Valley Bible Church - Sermon Transcript*

The quotation from Jeremiah 31:31-34 that was quoted by this author in Hebrews 8:8-12 has **three** parts. So let us take a look at the first part:

In the first part of the quotation the Lord promised that He would make a **new** covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah (Jeremiah 31:31 cf. Hebrews 8:8).

So let us look at **Jeremiah 31:31** as quoted in **Hebrews 8:8** and see if this is not so. And what does it say? It says this, "... **behold days are coming, says the Lord, when I will effect (or in other words make) a new covenant with the House of Israel and with the House of Judah.**" So based on **Jeremiah 31:31** and as quoted in **Hebrews 8:8** did the Lord promise that He would make a New Covenant with the House of Israel and with the House of Judah? Absolutely!

And who is the House of Israel and the House of Judah? The house of Israel refers to the northern tribes of Israel and House of Judah refers to the southern tribes of Israel, which when put together, form the 12 tribes of the nation of Israel.

So after the Lord gave this promise to the nation of Israel in **Jeremiah 31:31** what did the Lord say next? This brings us to the second part of the quotation.

In the second part of this quotation the Lord made it clear that because the New Covenant was not like the Old Covenant that God's response to them under the New Covenant would be far better than it was under the Old Covenant (Jeremiah 31:32 cf. Hebrews 8:9).

So let me read for you **Jeremiah 31:32** as quoted in **Hebrews 8:9** and see if this is not so. And how does it begin it begins like this, "**Not like the covenant which I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the Land of Egypt...**" So based on this portion of the verse what is the Lord saying here about this New Covenant that He was going to "effect" or to "make" with the nation of Israel? This is what the Lord was saying: The New Covenant that He was going to make with them was not going to be like the Old Covenant or in other words the covenant that He made with Israel on Mount Sinai after He had led them out of Egypt.

And in what way would this New Covenant not be like the Old Covenant? Let us continue to read the verse, "**For they did not continue in My covenant, and I did not care for them, says the Lord.**" So what does this mean?

## *Valley Bible Church - Sermon Transcript*

The Covenant that God made with Israel on Mount Sinai or in other Old Covenant was a conditional covenant, which is spelled out for us in great detail in **Exodus 19-25**. In this covenant God PROMISED that if they obeyed the Laws contained within the covenant they would be blessed. But He also PROMISED them that if they did not obey the laws contained within the covenant they would be cursed. These blessings and curses were spelled out for the nation of Israel in **Deuteronomy 28**.

So did the nation of Israel obey the laws as contained in the Old Covenant as they had declared they would? No! **Verse 32** as quoted in **Hebrews 8:9** makes this very clear, "**For they did not continue in My covenant.**" And what was the result of this? Let us continue to read and what does it say? It says this, "**and I (or in other words the Lord) did not care for them**" or we could say it this way, "**Because they did not continue in the Lord's covenant rather than blessing them His response was to curse them just as He had promised them that He would do under the Old Covenant.**" Obviously this was not the response that Israel would have wanted from God but it was the response they got from God. Why? It was because of the conditional nature of the Old Covenant and the promises of God upon which that covenant was based.

So should the nation of Israel or any participant in the New Covenant expect the same kind of scenario under the New Covenant? No! This is not what they should expect, for the New Covenant is not like the Old Covenant and therefore God's response to those under the New Covenant will prove to be a far better response than to those who were under the Old Covenant.

So what is so different about this new covenant that would make God's response to those under the New Covenant so much better? This question brings us to the third part of this quotation. So what is the third part?

In the third part of this quotation the Lord identifies the better **promises** upon which the New Covenant is based (Jeremiah 31:33,34 cf. Hebrews 8:10-12). It is these better promises found in this part of the quotation from **Jeremiah 31:33-34** and quoted by this author in **Hebrews 8:10-12** that made the New Covenant so different from the Old Covenant and God's response so different from the Old Covenant. So now let us look at these better promises and what is the first one?

God has promised all those within the New Covenant that **He** would place His laws in their minds and write them on their hearts (Hebrews 8:10). Let me read for you **Hebrews 8:10** and see if this is not true. And what does it say? It says this, "**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 into**

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## *Valley Bible Church - Sermon Transcript*

**their minds, and I will write them on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be as My people."** So what in essence does this mean?

Based on a parallel passage in **Ezekiel 11:19** it means that all those under the New Covenant WILL receive a new heart. Let me read for you **Ezekiel 11:19** and this is what it says, "**And I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them. And I will take the heart of stone out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh**" or in other words under the new covenant God would take from them their hearts of stone, or in other words, their unresponsive hearts and replace them with "hearts of flesh" or in other words with "responsive hearts."

So if we have by faith accepted Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior and have become a participant in the New Covenant what has happened based on God's New Covenant promise? He has placed on our minds and written on our hearts His Law or in other words He has given us a heart that will want to respond to His Law and WILL want to live in light of His Law. This desire will be built into us. And hopefully this is exactly what we are experiencing.

So what is the second New Covenant promise? This is the second promise: God has promised that all those within the New Covenant will **know** Him as a matter of personal experience (Hebrews 8:11).

So let me now read for you **Hebrews 8:11** and see if this is not so. And what does it say? It says this, "**And they shall not teach everyone his fellow citizen, and everyone his brother, saying 'know the Lord,' for all will know Me, from the least to the greatest of them.**"

So when God through Jeremiah promised that under the New Covenant that all would know Him, what was He communicating? Was He communicating that under the New Covenant all would know about Him? No!

All of Israel already knew about Him for He had revealed Himself to them. But though He had revealed Himself to them they did not know Him in the way that they would come to know Him under the New Covenant or in other words they did not know him in a personal experiential way whereby they would be able to continuously enter into His presence and enjoy the blessedness of His presence from the least to the greatest.

If we by faith have accepted Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior and have therefore become a participant in the New Covenant we WILL not have a distant relationship with God but rather we WILL have a personal and intimate relationship with God whereby we can at any time enter into His presence and enjoy the blessedness of His presence.

## *Valley Bible Church - Sermon Transcript*

So what is the third promise? God has promised that all those within the New Covenant will have all their sins **blotted** out (Hebrews 8:12).

So now let me read for you **Hebrews 8:12** and see if this is not so. And what did the Lord say through Jeremiah in this verse? This is what He said, "**For I will be merciful to their iniquities and I will remember their sins no more**" or in other words I will blot their sins out.

The introductory "**for**" in this verse shows that the basis of the preceding promises of receiving this "**new heart**" and being able to "**know**" God in a personal experiential way as a participant in the New Covenant was based on the blotting out of sins, which the Lord also promised.

So if we have by faith accepted Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior and have therefore become a participant in the New Covenant we can therefore KNOW that all our sins have been blotted out, which would not have been true under the Old Covenant, for under the Old Covenant sacrificial system only unintentional sins could be atoned or blotted out, which is clearly in **Leviticus 4:2,22,27; 5:15-18** and **22:14**.

So after the author had quoted **Jeremiah 31:31-34**, which established the superiority of the New Covenant over the Old Covenant by highlighting the better promises of the New Covenant, what did the author do next?

The author concluded that if God called the superior covenant "a New Covenant" it would mean that when it came into effect then the Old Covenant would be rendered **obsolete** (Hebrews 8:13) or in other words "useless."

So now let me read for you the first part of **Hebrews 8:13** and see if this is not so and what does it say? It says this, "**When He said, 'A new covenant,' He has made the first obsolete.**"

This is significant for the author is pointing out to his readers from that moment in time when the Lord first spoke these words through Jeremiah, the nation of Israel should have been viewing the Old Covenant as "obsolete" or in other words as something that was in the process of passing away and no longer serving any good purpose.

So let us now continue to read **verse 13** and see if this is not so and what does it say? It says this, "**... but whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.**" And this is the way the nation of Israel should have been viewing the Old Covenant as soon as the Lord spoke these words through Jeremiah the prophet in Jeremiah 31:31-34.

## *Valley Bible Church - Sermon Transcript*

And has the Old Covenant now disappeared? Yes! And when did it disappear? It disappeared when Christ offered Himself up to death on the cross of Calvary as the once for all sacrifice for sin that was when the Old Covenant disappeared and the New Covenant with better promises was instituted.

And what was that new covenant? This is the new covenant: If we would by grace through faith embrace Christ as our Lord and Savior then all the promises of the New Covenant will become our reality. Our sins will be blotted out, our hearts will become new, and our relationship with God will be changed.

### CONCLUSION

The superiority of the New Covenant over the Old Covenant should not be for us just simply an intellectual concept. For if we by faith have received Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior and have therefore become a participant in the New Covenant then all the benefits of God's New Covenant promises should have become our reality and the blessedness of that reality should now be filling us with thanksgiving and praise.

If that is not our reality either we are not saved or we are for some reason not choosing to live in light of God's promises to us. So in light of these possibilities...

May God give us the grace to experience the reality of the New Covenant **promises** and may the blessedness of that reality fill our hearts with thanksgiving and praise.