

Hebrews

Chapter 8:1-13

September 17, 1995

A covenant is a solemn bond, sovereignly administered, with attendant blessings and curses.

- **Hebrews Outline:**

- Chapter 1 Christ is greater than the prophets and the angels.
- Chapter 2 Christ's message is greater than the angel's.
- Chapter 3 Christ is greater than Moses.
- Chapter 4 Christ is greater than Joshua and His rest is superior.
- Chapter 5 Christ's High Priesthood is greater than the Aaronic Priesthood.
- Chapter 6 God's faithfulness to Abraham and his descendants is confirmed by an oath.
- Chapter 7 Christ is a Priest in the order of Melchizedek and Christ is greater than Abraham.
- Chapter 8 Christ is Mediator of a new covenant.

- **Introduction & Review**

After completing the difficult instruction on Melchizedek the author spends the next three chapters comparing the priesthood of Christ to the Levitical priests. In this chapter he compares the different covenants mediated by them, in chapter nine he compares the different tabernacles that they served at and in ten, he compares the sacrifices they offered.

Before we begin the study of the new covenant, we should explore the prophetic verses and promises of God which predicted this new covenant.

Jeremiah 31:31-34

31 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 -- 32 "not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. 33 "But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 34 "No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more." (NKJV)

- In the section we are covering in Hebrews, we have the introduction of the New Covenant which was prophesied in the above verses by Jeremiah. There are a number of characteristics of this covenant to note; first, it won't be like the one previously made. Secondly, the law will be written in their mind and hearts. Thirdly, God will forgive their sins. The most distinct difference between the covenants is that the new brought with it an internalization of the law. It moved from being written on stone to fleshy hearts.

Jeremiah 32:36-41

36 Now therefore, thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning this city of which you say, 'It shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence': 37 'Behold, I will gather them out of all countries where I have driven them in My anger, in My fury, and in great wrath; I will bring them back to this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely. 38 'They shall be My people, and I will be their God; 39 'then I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me forever, for the good of them and their children after them. 40 'And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me. 41 'Yes, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will assuredly plant them in this land, with all My heart and with all My soul.' (NKJV)

- Here the Lord prophesied through Jeremiah that Judah (the southern kingdom) would be conquered by Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon. This was a judgment from the Lord for their sins of idolatry. Then the Lord tells Jeremiah to purchase a piece of land which was a picture of God's promise to restore them to land that He had promised to their forefathers. The promise here states that when they are restored to the land, they will be able to once again buy fields for silver. It is fascinating to see the ties of this prophesy with the purchase of land with Judas' 30 pieces of silver given to him by those who sought to kill Christ. This was a sign that this promised new covenant was being fulfilled.

Jeremiah 33:14-18

- Throughout the Old Testament, there have been many promises made by God to various people. But clearly God has had a central purpose with regard to mankind and that is the redemption of the elect. Here we see the promise to David that he would always have someone from his posterity sitting on the throne. This was clearly accomplished by Christ completing His work and sitting down at the right hand of the Father.

2 Corinthians 3:1-18

- Paul understood that he was a minister of this new covenant and understood the internalization of the law. Even though he had been trained and raised under the old covenant, he knew that the glory was in the new covenant. Here he compares the glory which shone on Moses' face when he received the things of the old covenant and was fading away with the glory of the new which brings life, removes the veil which hides the glory in their heart and is transformed into a glorious image.
- **Exposition**

Hebrews 8:1-13

1 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.

- As the author pointed out in the previous chapter, a High Priest as he describes would be fitting for us. Such a High Priest would fit our needs perfectly. The author now goes on to say that his whole purpose in explaining the Melchizedekian priesthood of Christ is that He is the priest who meets our needs.

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.

- Christ could not have been an "earthly" priest because He was not a Levite and there were Levites available to perform the sacrifice. But Christ, as we have learned, is of a different, superior priesthood and has a superior sacrifice to offer. He also became Mediator of this new covenant which had better promises. These promises being the writing of the law on our hearts rather than stone; the provision of the perfect sacrifice rather than bulls and goats; the indwelling of the Spirit as a deposit guaranteeing what is to come and the ability to approach the throne boldly without the aid of an earthly priest.

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. (NKJV)

- There is a mistake here to be made by thinking that the need for a new covenant was because the old failed in God's purpose for it. It did not fail. The reason for a new covenant is that God wanted to save the elect. The elect could not be saved by observing the old covenant. The law collided with the sinful heart of man and only served to condemn and point out man's sinfulness. It could not, and was never intended, to save people, rather, it was intended to point the elect to grace. The old covenant did not change the heart of man. But the new, which does give the man a new heart does not set aside the law or change the definition of sin. The new covenant fulfills all the prior covenants by actually bringing salvation to the elect.
- The author provides a warning that the old covenant is not only superseded by the new, but is also poised to be brought to a close most likely in the destruction of Jerusalem. This was God's public closing ceremony on the old covenant.