

## On Earth As It Is In Heaven – Hebrews 8

1. Remember last week: we needed a special high priest, one of a kind. We needed one that was sinless because the weight of our sins was just piling up generation after generation. We needed a priest who could bring us safely before God.
2. The name “Melchizedek” appeared again and again in the arguments leading up to this chapter...and it won't be mentioned again. We have been brought to a high priest now that we are ready to give our full attention to. For this high priest is not just able to bring our sins to the Father so that He may forgive them...He IS God and sits at the right hand of the Father. [Hebrews 8:1,2]
3. We need to take a side road for a moment: there is something exceptionally powerful and important going on here that Jewish readers and hearers would immediately get. We who are not Jews by blood and culture need to play catch up. We'll start with the prayer our Savior gave us.
4. There is a line here that is easy to read, nod, and say we understand...but we really don't. [Matthew 6:10] Jews understood that what they did on earth was to mirror that which was being done in heaven. The tabernacle and temple were mirrors of heaven. There was a single entry, a journey, a washing, an offering, and an acknowledgement of the holiness of God.
5. In cathedrals, this was purposefully and skillfully modeled: minor saints, then major saints, apostles, Mary, and then, at the front, three windows for the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Orthodox Church is, in my opinion, the most intentional about this. Every movement, every action is to mirror that which takes place in heaven.
6. (If you are confused about incense, prayers, sacred singing, etc. in the Catholic churches – Roman and Orthodox – read Revelation. It is an attempt to mirror heaven and, by mirroring heaven, bring the people closer to God. We also have ways of mirroring heaven in worship and life...but we'll get there later in this series)

7. Remember that Jesus used that belief when he said this [Matthew 16:13-19] The writer of Hebrews will now speak of that mirroring – on earth as it is in heaven. [Hebrews 8:3-6]
8. There are those who lift “do everything according to the pattern” and lift that out to justify a legalism, a precision obedience that they say is required by God. No – this was using the tabernacle and temple worship as a model to show what Jesus did and does for us. Besides, the writer then immediately states that we are not under the covenant that had that rule – we are under a better one.
9. Everyone needs to hear what the writer says next – but Christians should pay closer attention than anyone else. [Hebrews 8:7-9] Many Christians, throughout history, have read this passage and starting puffing up a bit, thinking that we are better, we have a better covenant, the Jews and their ways are done...we win! Nothing could be further from the truth.
10. First, note in verses 4 and 5 that this writer says that the Jewish priests are still offering sacrifices for the people, so Jesus doesn't need to be doing that on earth. He doesn't speak ill of those priests or say that their days are over.
11. Second, note that the something “wrong” with the first covenant was not the covenant but the people – humanity. “God found fault with the people” and so brought them a new covenant – and that covenant was specifically given to the Jews. We, the Gentiles, are added to it but it was God's gift to the Jews. Read that again: [Hebrews 8:7-9]
12. What is this new covenant we have been added to? What is this covenant that God has given us, fully aware of our weaknesses and our inability to keep the covenant He gave to the people from on top of Mount Sinai? Here, the writer of Hebrews gives us the longest quotation from the Book of Jeremiah to be found in the New Testament: [Hebrews 8:10-12]
13. The old law was written in stone. This one will be written in our hearts. Why? Because following a legal code is not something we are very good at and it doesn't help us mirror heaven very well. You can

drive the speed limit and put on your seat belt because it is the law, but seething against the law the whole time...or you can drive the speed limit and wear your seat belt because it is good and right and safer that way. It is written on your heart.

14. He will put His law in our minds and here, friends, is where we feel the breeze of the Holy Spirit. He reminds us, guides us, corrects us, not by a legal code, but by our consciences if those consciences have been sprinkled with the blood of the Lamb – baptized, in other words, immersed in the Spirit (check out Romans 8 for more).
15. This will not be a faith that you are born into. Those faiths require a time when the children are gathered and told who their God is. No, this is a religion that we enter as adults, fully aware of who God is. This is a temple that we walk into on purpose.
16. And because we keep His law of love in our hearts and because He knows us, He forgives us. [Hebrews 8:12]
17. As we close, we need to take a careful look at Hebrews 8:13. Does this mean Christians win and Jews lose? Not at all. The closer we come into contact with Jesus, the more we are open to the Spirit of God, the more we live our lives to mirror the working of heaven, the less we need laws and regulations. God is doing something new.
18. Every day, He is doing something new. At the birth of every child, He is doing something new. As we take our next breath...He is doing something new. Be aware of that. Invite that. And let Him take you to a new place, a new life that draws you closer into the work of heaven.