

## Hebrews 8 - A Tale of Two Covenants

1. “Now this is the \_\_\_\_\_ of what we have been saying...”

[The writer now moves to an explanatory summation of his argument resumed in chapter 7, namely the superiority of the high priesthood of Jesus.]

2. “We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ and of the \_\_\_\_\_ which the \_\_\_\_\_ erected, and not \_\_\_\_\_.”

[After making the case for the superior nature of the high priesthood of Jesus verses that of Aaron, the author now begins a case for the superior work of Jesus’ high priesthood over the Aaronic. This superiority is first noted in regard to Jesus’ superior relationship to God (at his right hand), the superior location of His work (in the heavens), and the superior nature of the tabernacle in which He serves (erected by the Lord and not by man).

A couple of thoughts here on verse 2. First, the reference to the “true tabernacle” should not be misunderstood as the author somehow implying that the first tabernacle was untrue. The first tabernacle was ordered and commissioned by God Himself in Exodus 26. The reference to the “true tabernacle” is a reference from Old Testament to New Testament typology. The first tabernacle is the type, the new tabernacle is the anti-type (cf 1 Pet 3:21).

Second, the reference to the tabernacle erected by the Lord speaks to the spiritual and eternal nature of the church verses the physical, fleshly, and thus temporal nature of the Mosaic tabernacle. This harkens back to our discussion in chapter 3 where we noted the author was not disparaging Moses or Aaron in order to build up Christ, but was making a simple and straightforward comparison.]

3. “For every high priest is \_\_\_\_\_ to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Therefore it is \_\_\_\_\_ that this One also have something to offer... since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law, who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things.”

[The high priest was not chosen as a mere figurehead; he had specified duties to discharge. Since Jesus is also a high priest, it is necessary likewise for Him to have specified duties.]

4. “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 \_\_\_\_\_ shown you on the mountain.’”

[As the Aaronic priesthood served God according to a pattern, and as there was a specified pattern given for the construction and transport of the tabernacle, so also Christ and His high priesthood are given according to a pattern.

One of the great pariahs among those who initiated and promoted the change movement in the Lord's church are those who advocated what the left derisively termed "pattern theology." These rejected all norms and forms of worship and service to God in the name of their still undefined "new hermeneutic." Fortunately, their influence over the church is not nearly what it was in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, but they nonetheless remain a danger and threat the church.

It bears noting that God has always demanded pattern worship. Consider, Cain's offering (his worship) was rejected while Abel's was accepted. The difference between the two was that Abel's was according to the pattern set forth in God's word (cf Heb 11:4). God obviously demanded pattern worship in the Mosaic dispensation (cf Ex 25:40). Finally, God demands pattern worship today (cf Acts 2:42, 1 Cor 16:1-2.)]

- 5. "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."
  - a. How is Jesus' ministry better? \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. How is Jesus' covenant better? \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. How are the new covenant's promises better? \_\_\_\_\_

- 6. "For if that \_\_\_\_\_ covenant had been \_\_\_\_\_, then no place would have been sought for the \_\_\_\_\_."

[The faults of the Mosaic covenant were many, among them the inability to make anything perfect (cf 7:19), including the sacrifice offerer and the one for whom it was offered (10:1).]

- 7. "For finding fault with \_\_\_\_\_, He says, 'Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a \_\_\_\_\_ covenant with the house of \_\_\_\_\_ and the house of \_\_\_\_\_...'"

[Consider the language and implications of verses 7-8. Twice we are reminded of the faults of the Mosaic covenant. Also, there is a second covenant, a new one, that God was putting in place along with the high priesthood of Jesus. The presentation of a new covenant necessarily implies a complete replacing of the former. Not a reforming of the old, nor a new version of the old, but a total replacement. Hebrews 7:22 is the first mention of the word "covenant" in the epistle, but Hebrews 8:6 begins a deluge of 18 more appearance through the remainder of the book. Among the adjectives used to describe this covenant in addition to "new" is "everlasting" (Heb 13:20).

The use of the phrase, “finding fault with them” is interesting. While the covenant is under consideration in the immediate context, “them” does not agree in person or gender. “Covenant” is in the feminine singular, while “them” is in the masculine plural.

Thus, “them” could be a reference to the Israelite people, who could never be made perfect under the provisions of the first covenant (Heb 7:19, 10:1), or it might be a reference to the priests or high priests mentioned in verses 1-6, including their associated gifts and sacrifices (vv 3-4).

Note also the express mention of Israel and Judah and God’s intent to join them again under this new covenant. The author quotes the prophecy as it is given without regard to unfaithfulness or fault on Israel’s part. The author also speaks of Israel and Judah’s equality in speaking of their common fathers in verse 9, and as equally guilty of refusing to faithfully follow the first covenant, thus invoking God’s wrath upon them both. Finally, in verse 10 God speaks of Israel and Judah as simply “Israel,” uniting them together as one under the new covenant.]

8. What covenant did God make with Israel when He led them out of Egypt (Ex 19:3-9)?

\_\_\_\_\_

a. Did this covenant include the Ten Commandments (Ex 24:12)? \_\_\_\_\_

b. Which covenant makes Israel the people of God in the Christian/Gospel Dispensation: the first or the second (v10)? \_\_\_\_\_

9. “None of them shall \_\_\_\_\_ his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, ‘\_\_\_\_\_ the Lord,’ for \_\_\_\_\_ shall know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them.”

a. How did one become one of God’s people under the first/Mosaic/old covenant? \_\_\_\_\_

b. How does one become one of God’s people under the new covenant? \_\_\_\_\_

[The gist of this verse is as follows: Under the Old Law, one was an Israelite, one of God’s people and a kingdom member by reason of birth. Then he had to be taught the precepts of the covenant afterward. Under the new covenant, one must first be taught (John 6:45), then be born again (John 3:1-5; 1 Peter 1:22-25) in order to be one of God’s people (Romans 2:28-29, Colossians 2:11-12) and a member of the kingdom (Colossians 1:13).]

10. “For I will be merciful to their \_\_\_\_\_, and their \_\_\_\_\_ and their \_\_\_\_\_

I will \_\_\_\_\_ no more.”

[The reality of forgiveness will become a common theme as we move forward. In chapters 9-10, we will see the connection between the insufficiency of the blood of animals within the first covenant contrasted with true forgiveness received through the blood of Jesus in the second.

It should also be noted that the phrase “remember no more” does not have reference to God “forgetting” that we sinned previously. Instead, to “remember” means to “call to mind.” God “remembered Noah” when he was on the ark (Gen 8:1). This means God did not forsake or forget Noah and his family. In like fashion, God “remembered Abraham” when He removed Lot away from Sodom and the cities on the plain just before He destroyed them (Gen 19:29). God does not forget that we sinned. Rather, those sins that have been forgiven through the blood of Jesus will not be recognized or brought to remembrance at the Judgment.

Jesus spoke to this very thing in instituting the Lord’s Supper as recorded in Matthew 26:28, when He said, “This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” It was to this principle that David wrote Psalms 32:1-2, “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit” (cf Rom 4:5-12).]

11. “In that He says, ‘A new covenant,’ He has made the first \_\_\_\_\_. Now what is \_\_\_\_\_ obsolete and \_\_\_\_\_ old is ready to \_\_\_\_\_ away.”
- a. When a man writes a new will, what happens to the force of the first? \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. When does a will begin to take effect? \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Can changes be made to that will after it comes into effect? \_\_\_\_\_

[The language of this verse is worthy of close observation. First is the obsolescence of the first covenant. Being obsolete, no one should clamor for its validity. Yet, we find many professed gospel believers continuing to uphold and clamor for the Ten Commandments. Why should this be if these things are a part of what has been taken away (cf 2 Cor 3:7-11)?

Also note the language indicating a gradual taking away of the old covenant. Though Jesus did take it out of the way (Eph 2:14-16, Col 2:14), of necessity it would have had to continue until the gospel could be preached to the whole world. One should not think that a faithful Jew who died in the first days following Pentecost of Acts 2, and 1000 miles from Jerusalem, would have been lost for failure to obey the precepts of the Great Commission (Mark 16:15-16). Neither would the same be said of a conscientious Gentile who died under those same conditions.

As the gospel made its way throughout the whole world, the authority of the Old Law and the Patriarchal Age waned in direct proportion. As prophesied by Jesus in Matthew 24:14, the gospel of the kingdom was preached to the whole world within a generation (40 years) of Pentecost (cf Col 1:6, 23; Rom 10:16-18). When this was accomplished, both Judaism and Patriarchy were completely abolished, making all men forever amenable to the gospel of Jesus Christ.]