

Hebrews Chapter 8

by Chip Brogden

The new covenant is superior to the old covenant because it is established on better promises and provides a more excellent ministry through Jesus Christ.

Duration: 29:48

Scripture: Psalm 118:24, Hebrews 8:6-12

Topics: "Expositional"

Description

In this sermon from the book of Hebrews, the speaker discusses the flaws of the old covenant and the solutions provided by the new covenant. The old covenant relied on human effort and was limited in its ability to please God. However, the new covenant established on better promises shifts the focus to what Jesus has done, emphasizing that it is God who keeps the covenant. The speaker highlights that the Old Testament is not bad, but it served its purpose and was not intended to last forever. The new covenant, mediated by Jesus, is described as more excellent and heavenly.

Transcript

Hello again everyone, this is Chip Brogden coming to you with another edition of our weekly webcast. I'm streaming online at www.watchman.net and we are continuing our series of messages from the book of Hebrews. So if you would grab your Bible and turn to Hebrews chapter 8, we're going to pick up this week with Hebrews 8 verse 1 and why don't we go to the Lord in prayer right now as we consider the truth that is revealed here in this book of Hebrews.

Thank you Father once again for the privilege and the opportunity to come together and to study your word and to hear what the Spirit is speaking to us. I thank you that your word is truth, it is life, it is light and I pray Lord that you would open the eyes of our heart, open our understanding so that we can receive heavenly wisdom and insight and revelation into these scriptures. I thank you for all who are listening Lord and I pray that you would touch our hearts and that you would reveal Jesus to us through the pages of this powerful book, this letter to the Hebrews.

Thank you again Lord for the entrance of your word brings light and your word will not return to you void but will accomplish what you send it forth to do. So I pray Lord it would produce fruit in our lives, 30, 60 and 100 fold return. In Jesus name, Amen and Amen.

Well Hebrews chapter 8 now we've been discussing for several weeks the supremacy of the new covenant versus the old covenant and the key word I think here is superior. Hebrews 7 where we left off last time we talked about the superior priesthood that Jesus brings. This week in chapter 8 we're talking about the superior covenant.

Now you'll recall back in Hebrews 7 that it says if there is going to be a change of priesthood then there is going to also be a change of the law. In Hebrews 7.12 it says for the priesthood being changed of necessity there is also a change of the law. So we covered that extensively in our last session.

Hebrews 7 discusses the superior priesthood of Jesus Christ. Superior in every respect and since there is going to be a new priesthood there is also going to be a new covenant and that is what Hebrews 8 begins to discuss and that's what we'll delve into today. So Hebrews chapter 8 verse 1 says this.

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. A minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected and not man.

So right here again in verses 1 and 2 of Hebrews 8 we are comparing the earthly with the heavenly. And I pray that as we take this study that it would not just be another Bible study, another bit of biblical information that we glean but we don't see the application to our lives. It is absolutely applicable to us today.

It needs to be applied to us. It is very practical and what is it saying? Well in the New Testament times in the situation, the context in which this letter was written they were still struggling with trying to reconcile Judaism with Christianity. They were still trying to reconcile the old covenant that God had revealed and that God had established with this new covenant with a new high priest Jesus Christ and they were being tempted to go back into formalism.

Back into religiosity. Back into the external method of doing things. Back to an old covenant relating to the Lord.

And so Paul is endeavoring to get them to see the superiority of what we have in Christ. Now how does that apply to us today? Well it applies to us today because Christians are still being tempted, if I could use that word, they are still being tempted to go back and relate to the Lord in an old covenant mindset. In other words, they may not call themselves Messianic Jews but it is this religious mindset that tries to please God on the basis of some type of an external standard or ceremony or ritual.

And it could be a ritual such as going to church every Sunday. If that is how you judge yourself to be acceptable to God and if that is how you compare yourself to other people and say, you know, God I thank you that I am not like other men are and I am not like this publican over here because I fast twice in the week and I pay a tenth of all my possessions and look at me, I go to church and I read the Bible and I keep the Ten Commandments. If that is the way you are striving to please God, regardless of how you label it, you are still trying to relate to the Lord in a religious way and not in a spiritual way.

You are trying to gain satisfaction and contentment by way of some external method of measuring yourself. Whereas the New Covenant, hear what I am saying, the New Covenant is not so much concerned with the outward ceremony. It is not concerned with the outward form at all.

Instead, it is concerned with the thoughts and the intents of the heart. It is concerned with the invisible things, not the things that are seen. It is concerned with the motivation.

It is concerned with the spirit behind something and not just what is put out in front of everybody, not what is publicly seen, not what is done to be seen of men, but what is seen by the Lord who sees all things and sees and judges the thoughts and the intents of the heart. And that is where this New Covenant is superior to the Old Covenant. It is where walking by the Spirit is superior to walking by the flesh.

And if you are religious, you are walking by the flesh, plain and simple. There is a big difference between living and moving and having our being in Christ, walking in the Spirit versus being religious and trying to relate to God on the basis of religion. And then, inevitably what happens, you begin to compare yourself to other people based upon some type of an exterior standard, some kind of an outward standard or rule or regulation, and you completely miss the spirit of this New Covenant.

So, we are called out of darkness into His marvelous light, into a New Covenant, and that is why this applies to us today. I would not give you five cents for a religious person, but a spiritual person, someone who is walking after the Spirit, that is valuable. That means something.

That counts for something in the Kingdom of God. A religious person is a Pharisee, as far as I am concerned, and as far as Scripture is concerned. The Scripture is not trying to make us religious, it is trying to get us conformed to the image of Jesus Christ, and you do that by walking after the Spirit.

You do not do it by walking after the flesh or judging according to the flesh. So, Hebrews 8, and this entire letter to the Hebrews is very applicable to us today, and that is why we are taking such time to go in depth with each chapter. So, we have a high priest, Paul says, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.

That is a powerful statement. He is a minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected and not man. So, he is saying there is a heavenly tabernacle, a heavenly sanctuary, that the Lord established, and it was not built by man.

And that is where we need to have our focus on. Focus, it says, set your mind, set your affection, set your focus on things above, not on things of the earth. And things of the earth include, according to Paul, include the tabernacle, the ark, all of these things that made up the old covenant, the Old Testament, the rituals, the sacrifices.

Paul, he is trying to get them to get their eyes off of that entire earthly system and look instead to the heavenly, to the spiritual, and see the reality of which that all those earthly things were simply representations. They were types. They were shadows.

They were designed to teach us something about the heavenly. Verse 3, For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Therefore, it is necessary that this one, Jesus, also have something to offer.

For if he were on earth, he would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law. Verse 5, now this simply confirms what I just said. Who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things.

That is what the old covenant is. That is what the tabernacle is. That is what the temple is.

All pertaining to Jerusalem, all pertaining to the old covenant, everything pertaining to the temple, and the sacrifices, and the feast days, and the holy days, and circumcision. Paul says they serve the copy and the shadow of the heavenly things. As Moses was divinely instructed, we are back in verse 5, when he was about to make the tabernacle.

For God said, See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain. Okay, so where was that pattern? That pattern was revealed to Moses as a heavenly pattern. The heavenly is the true pattern.

It is the spiritual pattern. And what we need to do, folks, is pattern our lives after the heavenly, and not after the earthly. That is the point.

Pattern yourself. Focus yourself. Set your affection on things above, on the heavenly, and don't get mired down and bogged down with the earthly things, which Paul says are only a copy and a shadow of the heavenly things.

Yet I see people trying to embrace the shadow. They try to embrace the copy. And Paul says all of that is designed to point you to Jesus, who is the substance, who is the truth.

It's pointing us to him, and it is enabling us to better appreciate and understand and participate in and walk in and benefit from this new covenant, which is heavenly, which is spiritual, which is established by Jesus Christ. So, verse 6, But now Jesus has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as he is also mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises. Praise God.

Now, we're not saying the Old Testament's bad. It's got nothing to do with saying that something's wrong with Scripture. It's that system, that old covenant, it served the purpose for which God established it.

But here's the point, folks, and this is what Scripture is saying. That old covenant was not intended to last forever. It was earthly.

It was a shadow. It was a copy of the heavenly. And because it was earthly, and because its priesthood were flesh-and-blood men, it was not intended to perpetuate itself forever.

God did not set that up with the intention of it being perpetual. It was for a season. Now, it says that Jesus has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as he is also mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.

And now it's going to tell us about this better covenant. So, my question is, if Jesus has obtained a more excellent ministry, and if he is the mediator of a better covenant, and this better covenant is established on better promises, why in the world would you cling to something when God says, I've got something better? This served the purpose for which I created it, and for the time and the place and the season and the people to which it was given, but I have something better for you. Why would you not embrace that? That boggles my mind, why people would prefer to take a step backwards and embrace a way of relating to God when Scripture says that Jesus has obtained something far better than that.

A better covenant established upon better promises. And again, the only conclusion I can come to is they've never read the book of Hebrews, or they don't accept the authenticity of Hebrews, or they've never read much of the New Testament. Because it's very plain and it's very clear to me, and so praise the Lord.

This is, I think, the linchpin of the entire argument. It's the primary point, I feel like, in the midst of this entire teaching and this entire message that Paul is trying to bring them. Verse 7, For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second.

It's really hard to argue against the logic here. The spirit and truth, logic and wisdom that's being revealed here. It's very hard to come against it.

Paul says, if the first covenant had been faultless, if it had been perfect, then no place would have been sought for a second. In other words, if the old covenant, if the first covenant, achieved the purpose of accomplishing the goal that God had established, if it was faultless, if it was perfect, then there would be no reason to talk about or establish a second covenant or a new covenant. But God Himself finds fault.

Verse 8, Because finding fault with them, and here's my point, and here's the point of Scripture, it's not so much that there's something wrong with the old covenant. Paul says the law is good, it's holy, it's just, it's righteous, and that's just the problem. The problem is not with the covenant, it's with the people.

He found fault with them, it says. Why? Because they could not fulfill the terms and conditions of that covenant. They simply could not do it.

And so it says that he finds fault with them. Covenant is good. Covenant is holy.

It's just. It's righteous. It's pure.

No fault there. But finding fault with them, and see, that's the weakness of the law. And that's very firmly established in Romans 6, 7, and 8. The problem is not the law.

The problem is not what God requires. The problem is my inability to meet that demand. The problem is my inability to please God on the basis of that law.

The law is perfect, but I am sold into sin. In me, that is in my flesh, dwells no good thing. And you can embrace the law of God with your mind, it says, but in your body, in your flesh, then you find another law at work, which prevents you from doing what you want to do.

And so the problem is with the person trying to keep the law. So verse 8, finding fault with them, God says, See, there you go. Why would God make a new covenant if the old covenant was sufficient? I mean, just think about it.

Why would God make a new covenant with anyone if the old covenant was sufficient, if it was faultless? The point is, it's not faultless. It's not perfect. It wasn't intended to endure forever because it is earthly.

It is fleshly. And it was only to serve as the precursor, as the type and the shadow of what God would do in Christ. So he says, Verse 8, Now he is quoting here from Jeremiah, chapter 31.

So again, we're still in the Old Testament, and he is saying that even in the Old Testament, there was provision being made and prophetic declaration being made of a new covenant to come. So that right there demonstrates and proves that the old covenant was not intended to last forever. Why? Because of the people.

The people could not keep that covenant. So God says, See, the first covenant was broken. So God says, I'm going to establish a new covenant.

It's going to be a better covenant, and it's going to be established on better promises. So let's look at what those promises are. Verse 10, What a powerful thing that is to consider that in the first covenant, God wrote his laws on tablets of stone, gave them to Moses, and then Moses came down and gave them to the people.

But he says, In this new covenant, I will personally instruct my people. I will put my laws in their mind, and I will write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

So, verse 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. Verse 12, For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins, and their lawless deeds. I will remember no more.

Hallelujah. Now, can you see that this is a better covenant, established on better promises? Why? Well, I'm going to give you three flaws of the old covenant, and then the three solutions which make the new covenant a better covenant, established on better promises. Well, the flaws are listed right here.

Number one, under the old covenant, they did not and they could not continue in that covenant. They could not obey that covenant, and they did not obey that covenant. In fact, it took how many hundreds of years? How many thousands of years for one little select group of Jews to finally achieve obedience to the letter of the law? Look at how many centuries it took for one group of Jews to finally achieve obedience to the letter of the law, and who were they? They were the Pharisees.

So, even when it works, it doesn't work. Even when you find a group of people who can keep the law, and keep it perfectly, what happens? They become Pharisees. They become religious spirits.

They can obey the letter of the law, but what happens? Even when you get a little group of people obeying the letter of the law, they become Pharisees. They become judgmental. They become hypocritical.

They were able to keep the letter of the law, but they could not keep the spirit of the law, and Jesus says, you nullify the word of God through your traditions. He was amazed, and He was angered at the hardness of their heart. Why? Because even if you can keep the first covenant, even if you can keep the law of Moses, what happens? You become a religious Pharisee.

And what did they do? Well, they killed everyone who disagreed with them. Or at least they tried. Who stoned Stephen? Who turned Jesus over to be crucified? And that is the result of people who keep the law.

And you still see that Pharisee spirit today. They're so willing to criticize and condemn those who do not keep the outward letter of the law. And I'm not saying they have to be Jewish.

They can be any kind of religious. A religious fundamentalist, or a mainline denomination, or a house group, or a non-denominational group. It doesn't matter.

A religious spirit is a religious spirit. And the point being, even if you're able to keep the letter of the law, it is impossible, according to the Lord, for them to keep the spirit of the law. It says He found fault with them.

So the first major flaw is they cannot keep the covenant. That's a major flaw of the old covenant. Nobody can keep it.

And the ones who do keep it become Pharisees. So even if they keep it outwardly, they can't keep it inwardly. And that brings us to the second major flaw of the old covenant.

The laws were written on tablets of stone, and they were not written in the heart and in the mind of the person. And so we've already seen, and all of these thousands of years is meant to teach us that laws written in tablets of stone, trying to regulate someone's behavior from the outside, it can only go so far. So that's one of the problems of the old covenant.

And that's why God never intended for it to endure forever. Number three, third major flaw, is that you could not really know God personally. You could not really have a relationship with the Lord in the old covenant.

You had to do it by way of the high priest. It was the high priest who went into the presence of the Lord once a year. We'll talk more about that in Hebrews 9. But the average, everyday, local yokel, Joe Public, did not have access to the Lord directly.

So those are the three major stumbling blocks, the three major flaws in the old covenant. And so now, a new covenant, a better covenant, established on better promises is here, and it gives us solutions to those three major issues. God would bear the brunt of keeping this covenant.

So in this new covenant, established upon better promises, three solutions. First of all, God would do most of the covenant Himself. He would keep it Himself.

The emphasis in the new covenant is what Jesus has done, not on what I can do. In fact, it assumes that I cannot please God and serve God in my flesh. It automatically assumes that I cannot save myself and therefore I have to trust in the life of the Lord to do what I can't do.

And what I can't do is anything. I can't do anything apart from Jesus. Apart from me, He says, you can do nothing.

So whereas in the old covenant, you're striving, trying to do better. In the new covenant, you throw up your hands and you say, I can't do it. I trust in Jesus to save me.

I trust in Jesus to live His life in me and through me. Therefore, it's no longer I who live. It is Christ who lives in me.

So in this new covenant, God does most of the work. And we simply cooperate and enter into a finished work. That's profoundly different from the old covenant.

Second of all, He has put the law into our hearts. How does He write the law in our heart and in our mind? By placing His Spirit within us to teach us all things. So that's a major improvement over the old covenant.

And thirdly, whereas in the old covenant, you really didn't have access to the Lord. You didn't really have a personal relationship with God. In this new covenant, He makes us all kings and priests.

And now we have access to the Father through Jesus Christ and He has put away the barriers. And He has made it possible for us to approach Him directly, to approach Him without fear, and to have a relationship with Him that is not based on a geographic location. It's not based on an earthly priesthood or an earthly tabernacle.

Instead, we become the temple of the Holy Spirit. We become the tabernacle of the Holy Spirit. And our spirit, our heart, becomes the Holy of Holies where God Himself lives.

Hallelujah! Can you not see this is a better covenant established on better promises? And I wish more people saw it. I pray as you continue to go through this book of Hebrews, you'll begin to see it and you'll begin to appreciate it and walk in this reality, this new covenant reality. Now verse 13, as we close out, in that He says, a new covenant, He has made the first obsolete.

So Paul says, by establishing a new covenant, he is making the first covenant, the old covenant, obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away. And keep in mind, folks, that when he wrote this letter to the Hebrews, just a few years after this, Titus came and destroyed the temple and that was the end of Judaism as far as the temple in Jerusalem is concerned.

So again, this is a very prophetic passage and what is it saying? It is saying that the old covenant is obsolete because a new covenant is here established upon better promises with a high priest who is seated at the right hand of the throne in the majesty of the heavens and his ministry endures forever because he is a son of God and he is the heavenly high priest of this new covenant. Praise God. I am excited about that and I hope that you are as well.

This is Chip Brogdon streaming online at www.watchman.net Thank you so much for listening. We will pick up with Hebrews chapter 9 next week. God bless you.

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