



HEBREWS

Jesus is **GREATER THAN...SO STAND FIRM**

JESUS IS GREATER THAN...

THE LAW—CHAPTER 8

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

Having demonstrated that Jesus is **GREATER THAN...**angels, prophets, Moses, and Levitical priests in the previous chapters, the author now summarizes his point: Jesus is our great High Priest who is at God's right hand ministering and mediating the New (and better) Covenant established on better promises. This covenant is written on our hearts rather than tablets of stone and is eternal. This covenant tears down all the barriers between God and us so that we can be His people, and He our God, as He will remember our sins against us **NO MORE!!!** Praise God, Praise God, Praise God!!! Lesson over.

IMPORTANT: As always, we encourage you to begin preparing for each lesson by committing the class and the teaching to God in prayer. After this, we encourage you to dig into not only the specific chapter in Hebrews for this week (Chapter 8), but also the book of Hebrews as a whole and the Scriptures at large. As you move through your readings, jot down any thoughts that come to you and particular passages that stand out and speak to you. We assure you that these will come into play as you facilitate this discussion. It is **ONLY AFTER DOING THESE THINGS** that you should approach this lesson plan and perhaps use it as a guide. Your group is different than all the rest and so your lessons should be adapted accordingly.

PRAYER

Begin your time with a prayer asking God to open your eyes to the beauty and majesty of His eternal plan of salvation brought about by His Son through the New Covenant written on our hearts. Praise HIM!!!

FOCUS

- Jesus is our eternal High Priest.
- There are two covenants. One written on stone (temporal) and one written on our hearts (eternal).
- Recognize that **JESUS IS GREATER THAN** the Law as He bring about the New Covenant.

LESSON

Discussion Starters (OPTIONAL)

- In 1932, President Franklin D. Roosevelt launched the “New Deal” in response to the *Great Depression*. The “New Deal” was a series of programs enacted between 1933-1938 that focused on the “3 Rs” (Relief, Recovery, and Reform). The *Relief* was for the unemployed and poor. The *Recovery* was to restore the economy to normal levels. The *Reform* was in the financial system to try and prevent another depression in the future. The idea caught the imagination of U.S. citizens, as it was time for a radically new social and economic program.
- The author of Hebrews unveils God’s “New Deal” in Hebrews chapter 8. However, this “New Deal” had been God’s plan from the beginning. How is God’s “New Deal” (the New Covenant) similar to the “3 Rs” of Roosevelt’s “New Deal”?
 - RELIEF from the burden of sin forever.
 - RECOVERY from a spiritually depressed “economy” (people). Instead, the Spirit would fill the people as He took up residence in their hearts.
 - REFORM of a spiritual “financial system” that would NEVER collapse again as the temporal currency of sin was replaced by the eternal currency of GRACE!
- How does knowing that this was God’s Plan from before time began make you feel?

FROM GOD’S WORD

- 8:1-6
 - Key Points
 - The Hebrews author begins chapter 8 with his main point: Christians have a High Priest who has atoned for their sins and brought them into the presence of God in the eternal Tabernacle as He is seated at the right hand of God. WOW! Powerful!!!
 - The words “holy places” will be referred to later as “Holy Place” (9:2) and “Most Holy Place” or “Holy of Holies” (9:3) in regards to the earthly tabernacle and Jerusalem temple.
 - However, here it refers to the heavenly Tabernacle where God is seated on His throne and Christ is at His right hand. This is where Jesus resides and is minister of the New Covenant.

- This “true tent” or “tabernacle” is not the one made by man that would fade away and be destroyed. Instead, this tent is made by God and will never be destroyed. This tent is eternal and we can now join God, in His presence there, without a curtain separating us.
- Christ, as the eternal High Priest, offered Himself as the sacrifice and gift. However, Jesus had to offer this sacrifice not in the earthly tabernacle, but in the heavenly tent. *Why? Because he was not of Aaronic/Levitical lineage and therefore would not have been a High Priest according to the Law.*
- The earthly tabernacle/tent in which the Levitical priests served was only a lesser copy of the heavenly/true Tabernacle in heaven.
 - The author cites Exodus 25:40 (8:5) where Moses was instructed to make everything shown to him on the mountain from a pattern. Like a seamstress uses a pattern that has already been made, so also Moses simply erected a Tabernacle that was already made in heaven and awaited the time when Jesus would open it up for all to enter.
- From this “true tent,” Jesus mediates and is a minister of the New and Better Covenant. Why is this new covenant better than the old one, the Law? It is ordained or enacted on “better” promises.
 - See 4:1 where the author discusses the promise of rest given to the Israelites. They knew of a rest that was found in an earthly Promised Land. However, the better promise is of a rest that is eternal in the heavenly Promised Land.
 - See also 6:12-20 where the author considers the promise of Abraham being fulfilled, but never being able to see the fulfillment on earth. Instead, the better promise is that he will see the fulfillment of the promise in heaven, as Jesus (the High Priest and Anchor of our Soul) will escort us (the promised multitudes) into the inner place behind the curtain in the eternal Tabernacle.
 - Stop for a moment and ponder this. How beautiful a picture. What feelings are stirring inside you right now?
- For Discussion
 - What main point has the author been making about Jesus? Explain this in connection to 7:23-28.
 - What is the significance of Jesus being at the right hand of God? Remember our discussion from chapter 1:1-4.
 - What is Jesus’ heavenly ministry?
 - If someone were to ask you what you have hope in (in light of this discussion), what would you say?

- 8:7-13
 - Key Points
 - The first covenant, the Law, was weak and ineffective (read 7:18-19). Why?
 - Does that mean God created something wrong or imperfect? *NO, because while the Law may have been good and perfect, those under the Law were NOT! Therefore a new and better covenant was needed. Ratified by one who was good and perfect and would bear the guilt for others.*
 - The Law was weak and ineffective because it could not make people perfect. So, why have the Law (old covenant)?
 - God wanted to inform His children of His moral law.
 - God wanted to convict His children of their sin (10:1-3).
 - READ Galatians 3:15-29
 - The Law came 430 years after God's promise. Our inheritance from God comes by promise, not law.
 - The Law was intended to be our "guardian" until Christ came. It was to convict us of our sin and help us realize that WE NEED A SAVIOR!
 - However, the offspring of the promise (Jesus) had to come in order for the promise to be fulfilled.
 - The Law does not bring life, but death (the consequence of our sin). The Law imprisoned everything under sin, but the promise of God is life by faith in Christ.
 - This points out that we are not justified by works of our own through the Law, but by faith in Christ as Abraham's offspring (through Jesus) and heirs according to the promise. PRAISE GOD!!!
 - God wanted to establish a pattern of sacrifice, priesthood, and promise of salvation so that we could recognize its fulfillment in Christ. GOD HAD A PLAN!
 - The inability of humans in their sinful nature to fulfill the Law and achieve perfection required the promise of a "better" covenant that would demonstrate the fullness of God's grace through Christ.
 - This proved the ineffectiveness of the first covenant by the sinfulness of man, but also proved the effectiveness and power of the second covenant by the grace of God.
 - The new covenant, GRACE, makes the first one obsolete. The author uses Jeremiah 31:31-34 to emphasize this point and demonstrate God's original plan (this is why the OT is important!).

- The quote from Jeremiah 31:31-34 supports several of the author's points in Hebrews:
 1. The "second" covenant (8:7) comes after the Mosaic covenant (the Law) ("the days are coming...when I will establish a new covenant" 8:8)
 2. The second covenant is established by God (8:8, 13)
 3. It is a NEW COVENANT (8:8, 13)
 4. It is unlike the former covenant (8:9, 13)
 5. The Mosaic covenant failed because of Israel's sin (8:9)
 6. The NEW COVENANT requires an inner transformation of the individual as it is written into their minds and on their hearts. Why? So they will know HIM! (8:10-11; 10:8-17)
 7. The NEW COVENANT bring forgiveness of sins forever (8:12; 10:12-18)
- The former Law/Covenant is growing old and obsolete. In comparison to the NEW COVENANT, well...there is no comparison. The former was but a shadow and pattern for the better covenant.
- For Discussion
 - Do you function better under Law (external restraint) or Grace (inner constraint through the power of the Spirit)? Why?
 - Do you struggle with the point that God will remember your sins no more? Do you like to hold on to your sin and the memory of it? Why?
 - Can we keep God from writing His NEW COVENANT into our minds and on our hearts? How? Why do we do this? How can we change it?

REFLECTION

- Has this study helped you understand God's plan of redemption better? Why or why not?
- How does understanding the NEW COVENANT make you feel?
- What does being known as God's people/children mean to you?

PRAYER

LESSON OUTLINE – Here are the lessons we will be studying the weeks to come.

- INTRODUCTION (January 5)
- JESUS IS GREATER THAN...Angelic Beings–Chapter 1 (January 12)
- JESUS IS GREATER THAN...Angelic Beings–Chapter 1 (January 19)
- JESUS IS GREATER THAN...But Still Human–Chapter 2 (January 26)
- JESUS IS GREATER THAN...Moses–Chapter 3 (February 2)
- JESUS IS GREATER THAN...The High Priest–Chapter 4 (February 9)
- JESUS IS GREATER THAN...The High Priest–Chapter 5 (February 16)
- THEREFORE, Don't Fall Away–Chapter 6 (February 23)
- JESUS IS GREATER THAN...Melchizedek–Chapter 7 (March 2)
- JESUS IS GREATER THAN...The Law–Chapter 8 (March 9)
- JESUS IS GREATER THAN...The Tabernacle –Chapter 9 (March 16)
- JESUS IS GREATER THAN...Sacrifices–Chapter 10 (March 23)
- THEREFORE, Have Faith–Chapter 11 (March 30)
- THEREFORE, Stand Firm–Chapter 12 (April 6)
- THEREFORE, Offer Acceptable Sacrifices–Chapter 13 (April 13)
- CONCLUSION (April 27)