

Hebrews 8:1-6. *Our High Priest oversees a superior relationship with the Lord God Jehovah.* Here's the bottom-line... We do have such a High Priest; i.e., One who is holy, blameless, pure, and exalted in heaven! Our High Priest has sat down, and done so and on the right hand of Majesty Himself. He serves in a sanctuary (σκηνης, skay-nays, a tent, tabernacle, dwelling place, mansion), a true tabernacle, made/pitched not by men,<sup>24</sup> but by the Lord God Himself.

Every high priest has been appointed to provide gifts and sacrifices. But what has Christ, the new High Priest, given and what sacrifice has He offered?

Well, if He were still on earth, he would have nothing. There are already high priests on earth to provide the gifts prescribed by the Law. And, they serve in a temple which a mere shadow, a lousy copy of the tabernacle in heaven. Remember, Moses warned us—“See that you build it according to the pattern shown you by the Lord God Himself!”

BUT... the ministry to which Jesus the Christ has been called, is superior. He is a mediator to a new and superior covenant. This covenant is found on *better* promises.

Q Why has Christ as High Priest *sat down* at Majesty's throne?

Q How is the tabernacle the Lord God created superior to the tabernacles we created? So? [Hint: see John 1:14; the Greek for “made his dwelling” is connected with the word for “tent/tabernacle;” the use of this word would have reminded believers with a pre-Christ background of the Tent of Meeting, which was *filled by the glory* of God, Exodus 40:34-35.]

**HEBREWS 8:1-6**

The point of what we are saying is this: We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven,<sup>2</sup> and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by man.<sup>3</sup> Every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices, and so it was necessary for this one also to have something to offer.<sup>4</sup> If he were on earth, he would not be a priest, for there are already men who offer the gifts prescribed by the law.<sup>5</sup> They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: “See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.” [Exodus 25:40]<sup>6</sup> But the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, and it is founded on better promises.

<sup>24</sup>It was this assertion by Stephen which got the Sanhedrin riled up, so much that they were able to kill him legally. Stephen had insulted the “temple” by saying it was not the Temple God had in mind. Only for temple desecration did Rome allow capital punishment. Here are the words which incensed his accusers and got him stoned—

“The Most High does not live in houses made by men... and you stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist Holy Spirit! Was there ever a prophet your fathers did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered Him—you who have received the Law that was put into effect through angels but have not obeyed it.”

- Q In what ways are the temples we built inferior to the sanctuary created in heaven for us? Is this sanctuary available now, or is this a sanctuary waiting for us when we get to heaven?
- Q What gift and sacrifice has the new High Priest given and offered?
- Q What makes the ministry of Christ, the new covenant, and the promises superior to the old ministry of priests, covenant, and former promises? [Hint: You don't have the answer yet; that's why the Hebrews writer quotes the Lord God in Jeremiah 31.]

Hebrews 8:7-13. *Our God saves by becoming part of us*. If the previous covenant was not problematic, there would have been no logical reason for another covenant. BUT... the Lord God found fault in us, the believers for whom He created the covenant. Here's how He told us a long time ago, about what was to happen when we failed to faithful...

Listen up! I will make a new covenant with *all* the children of Abraham<sup>25</sup>—including, Israel and Judah. This new covenant is different than the one which let believers out of Egypt yet did not stop us from becoming unfaithful. In that case, I turned away from them,<sup>26</sup> wanting to destroy them and start over (Exodus 32:10).

This covenant? It is different for My character (as reflected in My laws) will become part of who they are—in their minds, and make My will part of their *raison d'être*.<sup>27</sup> I will be their God and they will be My people.

No longer will people be dependent upon others to teach them about Me, for I will be in them; all will know Me, from the least to the greatest. I do not abide within the wicked. So, most importantly, I will forgive their wickedness and remember their sins no more.

So, when the Lord God called this covenant “new,” He made the old one obsolete and what is obsolete and aging? It will soon disappear.

### HEBREWS 8:7-13

For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another.<sup>8</sup> But God found fault with the people and said through Jeremiah His prophet:

“The time is coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.<sup>9</sup> It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they did not remain faithful to my covenant, and I turned away from them,” declares the LORD.

<sup>10</sup>“This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.”

<sup>11</sup>“No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest.<sup>12</sup> For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”

[Jeremiah 31:31-34]

<sup>13</sup>By calling this covenant “new,” he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear.

<sup>25</sup>Remember the “descendants of Abraham” are no longer those who can (Judah, Levi, Benjamin) or might be able to (diaspora) trace their ancestors to Abraham. Then, as today, “descendants of Abraham” are determined more accurately; to wit, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.” –Galatians 3:28-29

<sup>26</sup>The Hebrews writer is using the LXX (Septuagint) version of Jeremiah 31.

<sup>27</sup>Sounds similar to a fulfillment of the Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4ff), does it not?

- Q What caused the first covenant to fail? Why didn't the Lord God make the old one with a guarantor like the new covenant?
- Q What makes this new covenant superior to the old? Will people still reject the freedom from slavery offered by the Lord God? To what extent is the freedom from "Egyptian slavery" any better than slavery to the Lord High God?
- Q How will the Lord God "write His laws" on our minds and our hearts? [Hint: see Ezekiel 37 and John 16:12ff]
- Q How do you reconcile the words of the Lord God in Jeremiah 31:34 (Hebrews 8:11) and the words of the Lord God in Matthew 28:20?
- Q Why would the Lord God remind us that the greatest *and* the least will know Him?
- Q What allows the Lord God to dwell/tabernacle/pitch His tent with us?
- Q When did the old covenant disappear? See Hebrews 8:13 for the reason for the question.

