

"The Better Priest of a Better Covenant"

Hebrews 8:6-13

April 28, 2024

Preliminary Explanation – a Biblical covenant is a formal bond between God and His people that is founded on God's promise to them and their obligation to receive and believe those promises.

I. Christ has a clearly superior priesthood because the covenant He mediates is based on better promises.

- A. Since Moses, Israel had been under the Mosaic Covenant.
- B. In Heb. 8:8-12, Hebrews' author quotes God's promise of a 2nd covenant from Jer. 31.
- C. What were the better promises of this 2nd covenant?
 - 1. The promises of v. 10? It's hard to say...
 - a. An *internal* relationship with God vs. a purely *external* one?
 - b. Yet some in the Old Covenant era already had a true, internal walk with the Lord (Ps. 119; Ps. 37, Heb. 11, etc.)
 - 2. The about the promises of v. 11? Almost certainly...
 - a. No teachers at all? But is that really the case today?
 - b. V. 11 actually promises the end of the teaching ministry of the Levitical *priests*.
 - i. In the Mosaic Covenant, the priests were the official teachers:

Deuteronomy 33:10 - They shall teach Jacob your rules and Israel your law; they shall put incense before you and whole burnt offerings on your altar. (also 2 Chron. 15:3, Neh. 8:8)

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Malachi 2:7 - For the lips of a priest should guard knowledge, and people should seek instruction from his mouth, for he is the messenger (angel) of the Lord of hosts.
 - ii. The priests had a unique relationship to God (Num 3:12).
 - iii. Compared to them, all other Israelites were "strangers" to the Lord who did not know Him like the priests.

- c. Thus, one of the better promises of the New Covenant is that *all* will have the access to the Lord that, until then, only the priests had.
- d. The promise of full forgiveness of sins in vs. 12 confirms this:
 - i. Jesus once-for-all sacrifice provided this forgiveness.
 - ii. That same sacrifice also cancelled the *need* for a continuing priesthood with unique access to God.

II. Christ has a clearly superior priesthood because the covenant He mediates is not obsolete.

- A. The author of Hebrews continually refers to the Mosaic covenant as old and obsolete (as had the Lord through Jeremiah).
- B. In v. 13, he says the Old Covenant was ready to vanish away.
 - 1. He knew this because Christ's self-sacrifice had inaugurated the New Covenant.
 - 2. He almost certainly knew that Christ had prophesied the temple's destruction in that generation (Matt. 23-24; Luke 21; Mark 13).
- C. The Old Covenant and its priesthood truly vanished away in the 1st century, while Christ's ever-new priesthood endures forever.