

THE COVENANT SUMMARY

## Hebrews 8

Now we have reached the zenith of the epistle of Hebrews as we close with the verses in Chapter 7 and take the first six verses of Chapter 8. The discussion on Melchisedec and the place of the high priest and his priestly work.

The first six verses give us the summary of the high priest.

V. (1) Now of the things which we have spoken this is a sum. Now this is a tremendous thought, that we have a high priest. This is the point which he has settled. He has proved and is indisputable. The word translated 'sum' leads us to believe this is the chief point. The principle object. The crowning feature - that we have such a high priest. This is cap, the climax - that we have this summarization of the entire comparison. Of the high priesthood of Jesus over and against that of Aaron.

We read that this high priest is now (seated) on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in Heaven. Where does one ever read of the Levitical priest being seated at their work. No where, for the work was never finished and every priest standeth daily in ministering and offering sacrifices but this man sat down on the right hand of God. Chapter 10:11-12. On the day of atonement when the high priest went in and brought the blood - someone committed another sin, perhaps at that very moment. Therefore, the priest's work was never done. Never finished. But here is an ever present priest in the presence of God, on the right hand. A place of affection, authority, and power. Seated. He hung on the cross for sin. It is finished. He was the one who shed his blood on this earth.

What a comforting thing this is. Do you think that there is something you can do to redeem your soul. Christ has done it all. Christ finished the task.

So the writer of Hebrews is finished describing the priesthood after the order of Melchisedec in all its glory. He has described this priesthood without beginning and without end. A priest that God has confirmed with an oath, that has been founded not because of a racial qualification but a priest that was pure. And we need to underscore that Jesus was a perfect priest.

Jesus took his seat at the right hand on the throne of majesty. Now that is the final proof of the glory of Jesus. The highest place that Heaven affords is his. It is his right - the king of kings, the Lord of Lords, and heaven's eternal light.

There can be no glory greater than the exalted Jesus.

V. 2 - He states that Jesus is a servant or a minister, of the sanctuary - that is the proof of the service of Jesus.

Jesus never looked on majesty as something to be selfishly enjoyed. He did not look upon it as something to be conferred on him for his own sake.

One of the very greatest of the Roman emperors was Marcus Aurelius. As an administrator, he was unsurpassed. He died at 59. Having worked himself to death in the service of his people. ~~When he knew~~ that he was chosen to succeed in due time to the imperial power - a historian tells us that "he was appalled rather than overjoyed." And when he was told to move to the private

house of Hadrian, the emperor. It was with reluctance that he departed from his mother's villa. And when the members of the household asked him why he was sorry to receive the royal adoption, he told them the toils which sovereignty involved. Marcus saw kingship in terms of service, not of majesty.

The motto of the prince of Wales, was "I serve".

Jesus is the unique example of divine majesty and divine service combined. He knew that he had been given his supreme position, not just to guard it in isolation but rather to enable others to obtain it and share it. He had received glory to enable others to enter into glory.

V. 3 - To Jesus, religion was access to God. The priest removed the barriers between God and man. He builds, as I have described before to you, the (bridge across) which a man can go into the presence of God. So we talk about this and we must remember that every act of Jesus was to lead men into this reality.

V. 5  
Here we have a shadow or an example of the Heavenly thing. That, as Moses built the tabernacle, there was a pattern and a shadow. In this world we walk in shadows - somewhere there is reality. And the great problem that we have is to discover the realities. The earthly temple is a pale copy of the real temple of God. The earthly priesthood is an inadequate shadow of the real priesthood. And all of these things point beyond themselves to the reality of which they are the shadows of. When Moses had received God's

instructions, about the tabernacle and all its furnishings, God said in Exodus 25:40 - Look that thou make them after this pattern which was showed thee on the mount. God had shown Moses the real and eternal pattern of which all earthly worship is the copy. So here the writer of Hebrews talks about the earthly priests having a service which is but a shadow or an outline of the Heavenly order.

A better understanding would be a sketch plan. A real reflection. That it is not just that the earthly priesthood is unreal, and cannot lead men to reality - but Jesus can lead men into reality. His was a real priesthood in this world - after the shadow.

V. 6 - Now this leads us into the idea of the mediator of a better covenant. Now this word means in the middle - the one who stands in the middle between two people and brings them together. Moses was such a man in reference to Israel. When he speaks here of a better covenant, he speaks of one that is superior to that of the old.

The word "covenant" as used in the Scripture means an arrangement or a disposition or an institution. It represents not as a contract or a bargain but it is a blessing that is to be communicated. Consisting of a deed or a granted blessing. Ordinarily a covenant is an agreement entered into by two people. The agreement is depended upon condition on which they mutually agree. And if either should break the conditions, the covenant becomes void. It is something used in that simple sense in the Old Testament.

From all normal uses the Greek word for an agreement here is a word used for a marriage covenant or bond. An agreement between two people or an agreement

between two states.

There is another angle to consider here - that this agreement was entered into on equal terms. The parties in the agreement were on the one level and each could bargain with the other and purpose terms for the other. But God and man do not meet on equal terms and in the Bible sense, a covenant - the only approach, (the whole offer comes from God) (It is God who comes to man and offers this relationship with himself). And who states the terms on which the relationship will remain effective. (Man cannot bargain with God) according to the new covenant. Man cannot argue about the terms and conditions of the covenant. Man can only accept or reject the offer that God makes. He cannot in any way alter it or alter its terms. Now the supreme example of such an agreement is in fact a will. The conditions of the will are not made on equal terms. They are made entirely by one person. The testator. And the other party cannot alter them and could not even have made them. The will is made by one person and the other person can only accept or refuse the inheritance.

Now that is why this relationship to God is described as a covenant for the terms of which only one person is responsible. Our relationship with God is given to us through his grace.

Now this, (in the Hebrew), is described as meaning to bind or binding. The fact they had a custom of cutting an agreement in (stone). Cutting the body to obtain blood in order to seal the pack or the agreement.

There is the (mention) of some covenants in the history of God's dealing with his people. The covenant he made with Abraham - Gen. 3:15. Noah - Gen. 9:8. Abraham - Gen. 12:1. Renewed covenant with Isaac - Gen. 26:2.

Jacob - Gen. 28:1.

And in the Bible we have the exhibit of two primary covenants - the old and the new. The first and the second.

The (first or old covenant) is expressed to be that which God made with the children of Israel. He took them to be a peculiar people to himself and in the same sense, called Moses. And at Sinai a covenant was there unfolded. Now no other nations in the world had such before or since. They have been God's peculiar people. Or a kingdom governed immediately by God. Who had visible judges or rulers but they had no legislative power. The great moral code was given of God - there was a regular priesthood and divine worship, that was carried on.

Three months after God's redemption of his people, Moses led them in Exodus 19:4-7 to Mt. Sinai and God founded the covenant. Now therefore (if you will obey my voice in deed and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people. For all the earth is mine and ye shall be unto me as a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. V. 5-6.

The (second or new covenant) was instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ. Which he ratified by the shedding of his blood and this produced mercy for the sinners.

The (parties) of this covenant are God and sinners - represented in Jesus Christ. It's object is to display the divine love - the conditions of the covenant, so far as they bear upon Christ, are first - perfect obedience. And second, the satisfaction for the sins of mankind.

V. 6 - He points out that the superiority of this covenant relates to (its promises). It is a better covenant because it has better promises. The promises of the Mosaic covenant pertains mainly to the present life. They were promised promises of length of days, there was promises of increase of numbers, promises of seedtime and harvest time, promises of national privilege, promises of extraordinary peace, and of an abundance and prosperity. The faithful observants of these ceremonies and regulations in return there would be temporal blessings and for disobedience and neglect, there would be adversity.

But in the (new covenant), things were different. Because the promise of life which is now - is a promise of life which is to come. Instead of giving (earth) the prominence or the prominent point in the picture - it presents the reality of (eternity). Instead of holding out to us earthly goods, it promises us treasures where moth does not corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal.

The great promise of the new covenant comprehend all the blessings in (eternal life). That is, (God) so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believes in him, might not perish but have everlasting life. This is the promise that he has promised us eternal life.

Now he does not see that these promises are far better than those of the legal dispensation. Eternity is a long time. Heaven is higher than this earth.

The (ancient) covenant in Exodus 24:1-8 offered (a special relationship) to God and (as) long as the people obeyed the law of God, the agreement or the covenant was in effect.

V.7  
For if that first covenant had been faultless.

There would have been no reason for a second one to have been issued.

Now that first covenant, as stated here, is the covenant that the Lord made with Israel and Judah in the days that he took them by the hand and led them out of Egypt, as illustrated in V. (9). The first covenant, and therefore the covenant of the law, was a covenant of Israel.

Now the writer of Hebrews begins by pointing out that the idea of the new covenant is not something revolutionary - it is already there in the Old Testament.

V.8-9  
[Jer. 31:31-34.] These verses are quoted in full. The idea of a new covenant is not some new and strange heresay, which he has invented. It was there in Jeremiah hundreds of years ago. Further, the very fact that the Scripture itself speaks of the new covenant shows that the old covenant was not fully satisfactory. It begins by pointing out that the Scriptures looked forward to a new covenant coming into being.

V.8  
For finding fault with them he said, behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. Now this is taken from the book of Jer. as I stated. An exposition of this passage really belongs in the commentary of Jer.

He opens with the clause of finding fault with them. The old covenant was not faultless. Moses who wrote the laws on pages of stone - came immediately back and found the people worshipping a golden calf and the tables were broken. There were many years that passed between the giving of the law and the coming of



the new covenant. And the new covenant was made obviously by God. And of course the new covenant was not going to be like the old, when the nation failed - the old covenant failed. But the new covenant was going to be different - altogether different, from the other covenant.

Now the word "new" here means that in the (point of time) A thing that was a precise copy of its predecessor. But it is new in point of time. If it had been made since the others, then it is new.

Also, in point of (quality) - a thing which is simply a reproduction of what went before - is new in the sense that it is new. But it is not new in the sense that it has a better quality. Now this covenant which Jesus introduces is not merely new in the point of time. He meant to say that the old covenant was aging - aging into decay. And now it is being wiped out so the covenant which Jesus brings is new in quality and completely cancels the old.

Now as expressed here in V. (7) and (8) - God was ever-ready and anxious to keep his part of the bargain. In regard to Israel as a peculiar treasure. But Israel failed to keep her side of the agreement. To be a dedicated priest nation.

Israel refused to enter her land of destiny. Instead of a priest nation - (evangelizing) Canaan, she was paganized by the Canannites. The book of (Judges) tells us Israel sinned - God punished Israel. Israel repented - God delivered. Israel sinned - generation after generation God sent prophets and the same thing repeated.

The basic cause of Israel's failure was due to material things. And there mission was to be spiritual. God said to Abraham, I'll bless you - material

blessings will be yours but you carry out the spiritual mission. Now Israel forgot her spiritual mission. In her mad pursuit for material and political power.

First, they wanted to be like the pagan neighbors. Instead of being a peculiar treasure unto God, they wanted to be like the others. And in terms of military conquest - they tried to conquer instead of a spiritual crusade. So they enlarged their boundaries, enriched themselves, and under Solomon's reign they had military conquest extending their borders. Now this was the short comings of the old covenant - this is why the old covenant failed.

The new covenant was to be new in its scope - it was going to include the house of Israel and the house of Judah. Hundreds of years before the kingdom had been split into two. Split into Israel with ten tribes - and Judah with two tribes. And these two sections never came again together. The new covenant is a new covenant which is going to unite that which has been divided. And it is going to close the gap. In it, the old enemies will be as one. In fact, it was going to take some of the wrinkles out.

I read in a news item that there was an injection that might soon be used to erase facial wrinkles and creases. This injection of a solution of silicone fluid and fatty acids can make the face appear younger than it actually is. Dr. Harvey Kagan of Beverly Hills said, that this new innovation was discovered when he prepared a paper for the ear, nose, and throat physicians, in plastic surgery. He said in addition to the cosmetic value, the process shows great promise of filling in arms and legs which have been deformed. The fluid was formulated some 12 years ago by a Japanese doctor. Who claims to have performed successful therapy on 72,000 persons in the past, five years. Now perhaps, Job would have welcomed some of these injections. In his grief, he said, thou hast

filled me with wrinkles. Which is a witness against me. C. 16 - V. 8.

Though these injections should remove the wrinkles from all faces of all races, we do rejoice that Jesus came forth and gave himself. That he might sanctify and cleanse the church and wash with the water by the word that he might present it to himself a glorious church. Not having spot or wrinkle. Or anything - but that it should be holy without blemish. Eph. 5:26.

So the new covenant is without wrinkles - it is a thing that abolishes this problem.

In V. 9 - He tells us that it is a new thing in its universality. All men will know God - from the least til the greatest. Now that is something quite new. The ordinary life of the Jew did not think in such terms. And there was a difference between the Pharisees and the common ordinary people in the observance of the ceremonial law. It was forbidden to have any fellowship with them, to marry one's daughter was as bad or worse than to throw her to a wild beast. It was forbidden to go on a journey with them even. But under the new there would be a place for all men - simple, great, educated, and well-known. The doors are thrown wide open.

V. 10 - The new covenant is going to be different in a fundamental way. The old covenant depended on external and on the obedience to the law. The new covenant was to be written upon men's hearts and minds. Men would obey God - not because of the terror of punishment. But because they loved God in their hearts. Men would obey God not because the law ordered them, unwilling to do so, but because there was a desire. And the law was written upon their hearts. It would not be an external law which would effect an unwilling obedience but it would come out of a man's heart.

The new covenant does not rest upon external observances but mainly spiritual in character.

It is controlled by the inner man - by his heart. It describes few external rights. And it writes them on the tables of the mind and of the heart. It engraves them upon the soul. It plants the principle of obedience in the heart. Nor is it a very difficult task for us to specify the difference here. When we even think of the Ten Commandments we are sure of a holy day - a Sabbath Day. It is a delightful memory in our hearts. Not because it is just the law. We are sure about our reverence to earthly parents to honor them. We are quite sure that there should be kindness and that thou shalt not kill. It is the nature of a Christian to do right. The new nature leads him in the path of right. Because this is in his heart.

V. (11) - Says and they shall ~~not~~ teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me. It is superior in its efficiency. Now this passage tells us that this will be efficient. The manner in which their knowledge of God was obtained. And effectual under the old covenant they spoke no public instruction before the erection of the synagogue. All worship was at the tabernacle or the temple. And when the synagogue was established, then they did read the law. And there was scarcely any public ministry being carried on except the ministry of John The Baptist. So the new covenant presents the Scriptures in the clearest form. The Revelation - the son of God. And these will be so that every man teaches his neighbor.

V. (12) - The new covenant is superior in its mercy. Be merciful to their unrighteousness and to their sins. And their iniquities will I remember no more. The new relationship is based entirely on the love of God. Under the

covenant it was based on the relationship of a man obeying the law. That is, he must keep it. By his own efforts. Now everything is dependent upon not one's man's effort, but solely on the mercy, love, and grace of God. It puts men into relationship with God. Who is still a God of justice. But a God whose justice has been swallowed up in his love. Mercy was not the crowning point in the old covenant. It was true that it contemplated pardon and arrangements were made for it. But the entire arrangement is one for the pardon of sin, in a manner consistent to the claims of the law and justice.

God is merciful to the unrighteousness of men and the sins are not remembered again. Not that God literally forgets that men are sinners. He has made a provision by which his grace through which he treats them as if they had never been sinners. Their transgressions are thrown into the shade.

V. 13 - He declares that the new is not temporary but eternal. It is not ready to vanish away but here is the promise of an everlasting covenant. That the sun, the moon, and the stars shall fail from before the Lord rather than his covenant not stand. Jer. 31 & 32.

How desirable then is the new covenant. It rights the law of God in the mind and on the heart.

This new covenant brings to us a God who we can call ours. Jesus is the perfect sacrifice and is superior to the old covenant.

Let me illustrate this mercy which God shows us. Following the Civil War, Ira Sankey became famous for Gospel singing. In 1875 on a calm scarlot December evening, he was traveling by steamboat up the Delaware River. Many passengers

were on the deck. Sankey was asked to sing. And as always, he consented. As he stood, he raised his eye brows to the Heavens in quiet prayer. He wanted to sing a Christmas song. But somehow, against his will, he was driven to sing the Shepherd's Song - (Saviour Like A Shepherd Lead Us.) After the song had ended, a man with a rough weather-beaten face came up and asked, did you ever serve in the Union Army. Yes, replied Sankey. In the Spring of 1860. Can you remember if you were doing picket duty on a bright moonlight night in 1862.

Yes, replied Sankey, very much surprised. So do I, said the stranger. But I was serving in the (Confederate Army) when I saw you standing at your post. I thought to myself, that fellow will never get away from here alive. I raised my gun, took aim, I was standing in the shadows. While the full bright light of the moon was shining upon me. At that instant, just as a moment ago, you raised your eyes toward Heaven and (began to sing.) I took my finger off the trigger and let you sing your song to the end. I said to myself - I can shoot him afterwards. He is my victim and my bullet cannot miss. But the song you sang then was the one you sang just now. When I heard it, I heard the words perfectly. "We are thine, do thou befriend us. Be the guardian of our way. Keep thy flock from sin, defend us. Seek us when we go astray."

Those words stirred up many (memories) in my heart. I thought of my childhood and my God fearing mother. I had heard her sing that song many times. When you finished your song, it was impossible for me to take aim at you again. I thought the Lord who was able to save that man from certain death, surely must be great and mighty. My arm of it's own accord dropped limp at its side. I remembered it all as I heard you sing just now. And your song has wounded my heart. Now I wish that you would help me find a cure for my sick soul. Deeply moved, Sankey threw his arms around the man, who in the days of the war had been his enemy. That Christmas Eve the two went to Bethlehem's manger. And on to Calvary's

cross. There the stranger <sup>found</sup> ~~from~~ the Saviour - the Good Shepherd. Who seeks his lost sheep until he finds it. His faith became that proclaimed in the song. "Thou has promised to receive us. Poor and sinful though we be. Thou has mercy to relieve us. Grace to cleanse and power to free."

Jesus the mediator of the new covenant came to seek and to save that which was lost. All may come to him for pardon and peace.