

Hebrews 8:6-13 to 9:1-5

Last week, in Hebrews Chapter 8, Christ was presented as the Mediator of a new covenant.

In V 6-13, this new covenant of grace is compared to the Mosaic covenant of Law.

V 6-13 **"But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.**

⁷ For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.

⁸ For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant

with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:

⁹ Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.

¹⁰ For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:

¹¹ And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the

greatest.

¹² For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

¹³ In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away."

This new covenant was brought in by Christ's atoning sacrifice, the shedding of His precious blood.

Yes, He is **"the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises."**

It is better because it is a sure covenant, resting upon the finished work of Christ rather than man's attempt to keep the Law.

And because the writer of Hebrews makes reference to this new covenant in his letter to a New Testament church, it is natural to assume that this new covenant pertains to the church of Jesus Christ.

And this is a natural assumption, because the major characteristics of this new covenant are the same as those in the covenant of grace.

For instance, Hebrews 8:10 says **“---I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts”**---perfectly describing the teaching ministry of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Also, V 12 indicates that this new covenant settles the sin question, which again accurately describes the blessed status of the believer in Christ.

V 12 **"and their sins and their iniquities
will I remember no more."**

Therefore, this new covenant spoken of here
gives every indication of being the
covenant of grace.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

V 13 **"In that he saith, A new covenant, he
hath made the first old. Now that which
decayeth and waxeth old is ready to
vanish away."**

Because V 13 calls this covenant **"new,"** then
by definition, the covenant of Law must
be **"old."**

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

It is a fact of life that the new makes the
former old.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

And I can give you a practical illustration
of this.

My father understood this principle, and because he did, I got the name of Lloyd.

You see, when I was born, my mother wanted to call me John after my father.

But my father didn't think it would be a good idea to call their son John.

He said, "Then it will be old Jack and young Jack, and I don't want to be old Jack."

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

So, the new covenant automatically makes the other one old.

And I am convinced that this new covenant referred to in Hebrews is the one that we now know as the covenant of grace.

It is the covenant that has been purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ, and the covenant under which salvation came to the New Testament church.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

But that's not the whole story.

You see, there is another part of this new covenant that belongs exclusively to Israel, and it is that part which we will be considering today.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Last week we noticed that the new covenant recorded in Hebrews 8:8-12 is actually a quotation from Jeremiah 31:31-34, and is God's promise to Israel.

Jeremiah 31:31-32 **"Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:**

³² **Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my**

**covenant they brake, although I was an
husband unto them, saith the LORD."**

And so it continues down to V 34, and
obviously is the same covenant
mentioned in Hebrews 8.

Without doubt, these promises belong to
Israel, as the house of Israel and the
house of Judah are specifically
addressed in V 31.

Also, it was that same Israel whose fathers
were brought out of Egypt.

And it was those same fathers that God made
a covenant with after they left Egypt,
which we all know happened at Mount
Sinai.

So, clearly, these promises were given to
God's chosen people, Israel.

In fact, we would not have known that part
of the new covenant pertained to the

church at all if the writer of Hebrews had not indicated that fact in Chapter 8.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

So why did God promise that He would make a new covenant with Israel?

After all, He had already given them the covenant of Law.

Well, it is obvious from the context that God knew that Israel would not keep His laws.

Jeremiah 31:32 **"Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake---."**

Under the covenant of Law, the children of Israel had forfeited their blessings by

disobedience, and so had no claim upon
God's favour.

But God could not allow this situation to
prevail.

You see, in the past, God had made an
unconditional promise of **blessing** to
Abraham and to his seed.

And God never breaks His promises.

Abraham based his whole life on that fact.

So, the new covenant, promised in the book
of Jeremiah, was a replacement for the
old covenant of Law, and no doubt it
was a reaffirmation of the Abrahamic
covenant.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Let's look for a moment at God's original
covenant with Abraham.

First of all, the Abrahamic covenant was
unconditional.

Also, one of the blessings of that covenant specified that Israel would inherit their own land and possess it forever. It was a covenant that God made and confirmed several times throughout Abraham's life.

For example, let's look at Genesis 17:7-8:

"And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.

⁸ And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."

So God had promised Abraham that his descendants would have an everlasting

covenant and an everlasting possession
in the land.

This could not be accomplished under the
dispensation of Law.

Israel had sinned against God, and He had
scattered them to the four corners of
the earth.

So how was God to keep His promise to
Abraham?

Well, He did it by giving them a new
covenant as foretold in Jeremiah 31:
31-34.

It was a covenant not based on their ability
to keep the Law, but on the precious
blood of Christ that cleanses from all
sin.

So under the new covenant, both the earthly
seed of Abraham and the heavenly seed
of Abraham (the church) have received

God's promised blessings through Christ, and on the basis of grace alone.

Yes, under this new covenant, even the Gentiles who were "**strangers from the covenants of promise**" have been recipients of His blessings in the church of Jesus Christ.

Praise the Lord! That's us, isn't it!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Under the new covenant, both Jew and Gentile in the church of Jesus Christ are presently partakers of God's blessings. Also, in the fullness of time, when the day of Israel's blessings arrive, the new covenant will be confirmed to them, and the whole nation will be born of God. In that marvellous day, He will own them as His covenant people.

Then His laws will be instilled into their minds and written on their hearts, and they will render to Him glad and happy service!

Not in order to make themselves worthy of covenant blessing, but because of the gladness of their souls when they know Him as their God, and realize that they are His ransomed people.

The days of their blindness will have gone for ever.

The veil will have been taken away from their hearts.

No longer will they need human instruction, for they shall all know the Lord from the least to the greatest in that wonderful day when He will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and will

remember their sins and iniquities no more.

But how can He remember their sins and iniquities no more if He is a righteous God?

He can on the same basis that He remembers the sins and iniquities of the church no more.

He can because of the shed blood of Jesus Christ.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

However, their blessing is for the earth and on the earth.

It will be a wonderful blessing shown to a nation who had at one time rejected their king, and had taken part in the crucifixion of the Lord of glory.

Their blessing will be wonderful, but it will not rise to the full height of the Christian's blessing.

The new covenant for Israel says nothing of entrance into the Holiest as we know it today; nothing of being raised up together and seated together in the heavenlies in Christ; nothing of union with Him as members of His Body.

Yes, the church is allowed, even at this present time, to enter the Holiest by Christ, while Israel and Judah are still dispersed among the Gentiles, waiting for the day when the new covenant will be confirmed to them.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

So the church is presently living under "**A new covenant,**" and the very expression

"A new covenant" makes the former covenant null and void.

Hebrews 8:13 **"Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away."**

It served its purpose up to the cross, and then vanished.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

*♪Free from the law oh happy condition!
Jesus has bled, and there is remission;
Cursed by the law and bruised by the fall,
Grace has redeemed us once for all.*

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

It is sad to see how little some Christians enter into this, or understand how the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ has freed them from the Law.

Many who have trusted in God's grace for salvation are still far from enjoying the liberty that is theirs in Christ.

Our relationship to God is one of pure
grace.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

And these wondrous gifts lead the writer of
Hebrews to stress the church's special
blessings in the chapters ahead.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

So let's begin Chapter 9 which is the very
heart of the book of Hebrews.

Chapter 9

V 1 **"Then verily the first covenant had also
ordinances of divine service, and a
worldly sanctuary."**

The sanctuary that is in view here is the
tabernacle in the wilderness, not the
temple that came later.

It is a **"worldly sanctuary,"** not in the
sense of being evil, but only because

it was located on this earth, and was made of the materials of this world. So it was a "**worldly sanctuary**" that was a type or picture of heavenly things. It was a temporary dwelling place for God, and it was a movable sanctuary for a wandering people.

Just as the cloudy pillar hovering over that tabernacle led the children of Israel, so today, the Holy Spirit leads God's people through the wilderness of this world, and on to the rest that remains for the people of God.

In one sense, the tabernacle was a relatively simple structure.

On the inside, it was a box-like structure made of boards which were covered with gold.

And its dimensions were not really
breathtaking.

The tabernacle was about 45 feet long, 15
feet wide, and 15 feet high.

Over this structure, several coverings were
spread, which we cannot consider in
today's lesson.

The tabernacle is a study in itself that
would cover many lessons.

Indeed, every one of its many parts are
beautiful foreshadowings of the Son of
God and His work.

If you are interested, C. H. Mackintosh's
books on Exodus and Leviticus give an
amazing and detailed study of the
tabernacle and the priesthood.

But in the simplest terms, let me say, the
tabernacle was divided into two rooms.

The first was called the Holy Place, or the sanctuary, and the second was called the Holy of Holies, or Holiest of all. I will be interchanging these names in the lessons ahead, so don't let that confuse you.

The two rooms were separated by a veil or curtain.

And that is the basic layout of the tabernacle.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

These two rooms were furnished with very special pieces of furniture.

V 2 **"For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary."**

So on one side of this sanctuary stood a candlestick, or lamp stand.

In it were oil lamps which were always burning, and which provided the only light available, as there were no windows in the tabernacle.

Actually, this dark and shadowy room was a picture of the old dispensation of Law. Under the Law, their only light was lamplight, in comparison to the fullness of light in Christ.

John 8:12 **"Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."**

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Then we have the table with show bread set upon it.

This table was placed directly across the room from the candlestick.

Among other things, it speaks of fellowship and sustenance.

As believers, our fellowship with each other in our daily lives and at the Lord's Table should be lived in the light of Jesus Christ.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

However, as we look around the sanctuary, we find that there is something missing.

Looking at the description in Exodus, we would notice that there is another piece of furniture in the sanctuary that is not mentioned here in Hebrews.

Some have thought to find fault with Scripture on this point, but, actually, this difference only shows the precise accuracy of God's Word.

In Exodus, you will find that there is an altar of incense standing in the sanctuary over against the veil.

This incense altar speaks of prayer.

No sacrifices were ever offered upon it.

The purpose of its fire was to cause the incense put upon it to ascend to God.

But where is this altar in the account in Hebrews?

It is nowhere to be seen in the sanctuary.

Let's read on.

V 3-5 " **And after the second veil**(that's the veil that divides the two rooms), **the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all;**

⁴ **Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod**

that budded, and the tables of the covenant;

⁵ And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly."

Many Bible scholars believe that the golden altar of incense and the golden censor spoken of here are one and the same.

So then the golden altar of incense has been moved from the sanctuary into the Holiest of all.

And by the way, the Holiest of all, or Holy of Holies, is a type of heaven where God's throne is.

The Holy of Holies was not readily accessible in the old economy.

It was barred to all except the high priest, and even he was only allowed to enter once a year on the Day of Atonement to

offer a sacrifice for himself and for the nation.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

So why is the altar of incense now standing within the veil?

To find the answer to that question, we must first of all answer another question.

What does the veil itself symbolize?

Well, we don't have to go far to find that out.

Please turn to Hebrews 10: 19-22: **"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh."**

So, the veil represented Christ's body.

And what happened when Jesus completed the work of salvation on the cross of Calvary?

Matthew 27:50-51: **"Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.**

⁵¹ **And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom;**-- And the way into the very throne room of God has been made available through Christ ever since.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

I am sure that the Old Testament priests did not move the incense altar into the Holy of Holies, as they were not allowed to enter that most holy place.

And besides, once the veil had been repaired, for no doubt they did repair it, the priests would still need access

to the altar of incense in order to maintain it.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Just think of the situation then on the day that Christ was crucified.

The golden altar of incense was standing in its usual place just outside the veil and in the sanctuary.

Suddenly, when the veil was rent in twain, the sweet incense would drift through the opening and into the Holy of Holies.

Symbolically, the sweet presence of Christ and the prayers of the saints would fill the throne room of God.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

In the book of Hebrews, the Holy Spirit places the incense altar squarely inside the Holy of Holies, and that's

where it should be, because that is
where our Great High Priest is today.
Yes, the golden incense altar also speaks of
Christ in His intercessory ministry.
It is here that the sweet incense of
Christ's loveliness ascends to His
Father.

And it is here that the saints offer their
prayers and praises made acceptable by
Christ.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

But where are so many believers today?
True, they have passed the brazen altar,
which speaks of Christ's sacrifice on
the cross.

If they had not gone that far, they would
not even be believers.

But Christians need to realize that each
believer is a priest, and therefore

should be engaged in the worship of the Father.

So the proper place for all believers is at the golden altar of incense.

It is our privilege and our responsibility. There we lift up the work and person of Christ, which is always sweet and acceptable to the Father.

Even the feeblest exultation of Christ in the life or worship of a saint is an odour of sweet smell in which God is well pleased.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

V 3-5 **"And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all;**

⁴ **Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden**

pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant;

⁵ And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly."

The Holiest of All represents heaven itself. In fact, everything in the tabernacle was a type and shadow, except, of course, the true Shechinah glory that shone above the mercy seat, indicating the presence of God.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

First we see the ark of the covenant overlaid with pure gold, and we are told what it contains.

There was the "the golden pot that had manna."

This was a memorial of God's miraculous provision for His people in the wilderness.

In type, it speaks of Jesus Christ, the One who is the bread of life and the sustainer of His people.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Then there was "**Aaron's rod that budded,**" and thereby showed that God had chosen Aaron, his sons, and tribe of Levi for His service.

This rod that budded speaks of the death and resurrection of Christ, because it was a dead rod, and life came into it.

And this was the rod of God with which Moses and Aaron wrought so many wonders.

This speaks of Christ also.

Christ is "**the branch**" by whom God has wrought wonders for the spiritual

deliverance, the defence, and the supply of His people.

And Christ is "**the branch**" that has destroyed the power of our enemy.

And the rod is also a type of divine judgment.

Christ, the Rock, was smitten by the rod of God, and from Him the cool refreshing waters of life flowed into our souls.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Then there were "**the tables of the covenant;**"-- the tables upon which the Ten Commandments were written.

Above this, and completely covering the top of the ark, was the mercy seat.

We can only visualize it as a flat plate, as there was no height given in its dimensions.

Exodus 25:17 **"And thou shalt make a mercy seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof."**

It is here that the blood was placed on the Day of Atonement, and because of the blood, the throne of God is now a mercy seat.

Without the blood, it would be a throne of judgment, for **"without shedding of blood is no remission."**

Yes, the mercy seat was of pure gold, and it was as long and as broad as the ark in which the tables of the law were laid.

This is a beautiful type of Christ, Who has fulfilled the Law perfectly in His own life, and has put away all the transgressions of His people by interposing Himself between the

Shechinah glory of God and the transgressor of the Law.

"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

And, finally, **"the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat,"** representing the angels that surround the throne of God.

The angels attended Christ at His birth, in His temptation, under His agonies in Gethsemane, at His resurrection, and in His ascension, and will accompany Him at His second coming.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

V 5 **"And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly."**

The writer must leave the study of the
tabernacle and go on to the study of
the priesthood itself.

And this is where we must leave off our
study for today.

Much is still ahead, and all will help us to
understand the Person and work of our
Great High Priest in a more perfect
way.

I look forward to what the Holy Spirit has
for us.