

## Study #8: Good, Better and Best

We're nearing the home stretch of Hebrews. So far we have followed a carefully chosen twisting path. We began with Jesus the Messiah—higher and more honorable than servant angels, worthy of worship. He is the first true human being, nominated to lead the way in ruling over all creation. We are on a journey, like Israel was, toward God's rest, where his kingdom reigns, and we must press on in faith toward that goal. Jesus is our true High Priest, a new kind of high priest hinted at in the OT references to Melchizedek.

We're beginning to put these pieces together in one coherent picture.

*Read Hebrews 8*

1. What, according to 8:1, is the main point of what the author is saying?
2. What would this "main point" mean to 1st century Jews? What does it mean to us?
3. Verse 5 says the Temple is a "copy and shadow" of the "sanctuary in heaven." (Unlike Plato's ideal world, heaven is a real place where people can live—Jesus already does.) What is the point of this contrast?
4. Tom Wright says there are three great contrasts in this passage: between the OT priests and Jesus our great high priest, between the Temple and the sanctuary in heaven, and between the old covenant and the new. Each one is a contrast between the good and the best. Which one means the most to you?
5. How does Hebrews describe the difference between the old covenant and the new? (verses 10-12)
6. The images of "high priest" and "sanctuary" fit together rather easily. How do they fit with the new covenant—with the Law etched on the heart, and a personal relationship with God?
7. Can you combine these three "bests" with the meaning of entering God's rest?
8. Verse 13 says that the old covenant has become obsolete. What are the implications for 1st-century Jews? How would they feel about it? What kind of encouragement would they need?
9. Do we have anything comparable to the old covenant to hold us back from embracing the new? How does this 1st century message apply to us?

## Hebrews 8 New International Version

### The High Priest of a New Covenant

8 Now the main 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, 2 and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by a mere human being.

3 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. 4 If he were on earth, he would not be a priest, for there are already priests who offer the gifts prescribed by the law. 5 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.”[a] 6 But in fact the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, since the new covenant is established on better promises.

7 For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another. 8 But God found fault with the people and said[b]:

“The days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. 9 It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors 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. 10 This is the covenant I will establish with the people 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. 11 No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, ‘Know the Lord,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. 12 For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”[c]

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

### Footnotes

Hebrews 8:5 Exodus 25:40

Hebrews 8:8 Some manuscripts may be translated fault and said to the people.

Hebrews 8:12 Jer. 31:31-34