

In our previous chapter, I intentionally skipped over a very important point in chapter 7 so that I could bring it out with this message today. In regards to the oath made in Psalm 110 verse 4, the author of Hebrews states, ²² *This makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant.* Hebrews 7:22 (ESV) The guarantor is the One who swears the promise will be fulfilled. It is YHWH who swears in the psalm, which is to say guarantees, that the Messiah will be a priest forever. Once again, the Scriptures are declaring that YHWH is Jesus, the guarantor. But He is also the eternal High Priest. Is Jesus saying to Himself, "You are a priest forever"? The only way to understand this is the oneness of the Trinity. The Father God, who is one with Jesus and in unity with Jesus, and Jesus both swear that Jesus is an eternal priest. LORD (YHWH) can refer to the Father or the Son or both of these two persons of the Trinity.

The new covenant, of which Jesus is a guarantor, is better than the old one made on Sinai because, as we will see in this chapter, it is made with better promises, unconditional promises, promises not based on what we do, but on what God will do for us. The promises are better because they are not rule based, but grace based, and better because they lead to relationship rather than duty and obligation. It is a better covenant because it has a better priest. The old covenant promised blessings in this life. The new promises life eternal in God's presence.

¹ *Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven,* Hebrews 8:1 Our high priest of the new covenant is at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven. That means He is in the place of power and authority. When the author says that we have such a high priest, He's referring to the previous descriptions. Working backward through the descriptions we read last week, we see that **Jesus is our perfect priest forever (7:28). His sacrifice was sufficient for all for all time (7:27). He meets our need, being holy blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, and exalted above the heavens (7:26). He is able to save completely those who come to God through Him because He lives forever to intercede for us (7:25). His life is indestructible (7:16).** We could go on with more descriptions, from earlier passages, but these are sufficient to express what the author meant by "such a high priest."

We have such a high priest! It's an honor that we often take for granted. We run to Him in our times of need, whether little of great, and He is always there, inviting us to cast our cares on Him (1 Peter 5:7). We live liberated from the crushing burden of guilt because of what He has done, while often forgetting that those who don't know Him are still bent over by that burden. We have the certainty of eternal life in His glorious presence. Think of the fear of death people have who think it is just over or that they are going to judgment and hoping for the best. We have a friend and are never alone (Hebrews 13:5). Loneliness is an epidemic in our world. We have such a high priest!

² *a minister in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up, not man.* Hebrews 8:2 Verse two is telling us that Jesus' place of ministry is the true tabernacle in heaven,

Commented [PW1]: Hebrews 7:28 (ESV)
²⁸ For the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.

Commented [PW2]: Hebrews 7:27 (ESV)
²⁷ He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself.

Commented [PW3]: Hebrews 7:26 (ESV)
²⁶ For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens.

Commented [PW4]: Hebrews 7:25 (ESV)
²⁵ Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

Commented [PW5]: Hebrews 7:16 (ESV)
¹⁶ who has become a priest, not on the basis of a legal requirement concerning bodily descent, but by the power of an indestructible life.

Commented [PW6]: 1 Peter 5:7 (ESV)
⁷ casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

Commented [PW7]: Hebrews 13:5 (ESV)
⁵ Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

not the earthly copy that Moses made. When Moses met with God on Mount Sinai, God showed Him the reality in heaven of which He was to make a copy of on earth. Several times God told Moses to be careful to make it after the pattern he had been shown on the mountain (Exodus 25:40; 26:30; 27:8; Acts 7:44).

The Lord had something built that was similar to the tabernacle in heaven, a tent that was the place where the Jews worshiped until the temple was built. This is a fascinating truth we need to understand. We see it in the New Testament in Romans 1:20. *20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.*

It is no wonder then that the Jews look at the physical world as a parallel to the spiritual world. That is one reason Jesus used parables that related to the physical world, parables such as the sower, the field, the fruit from trees, birds of the air, etc. Jews didn't separate the physical and spiritual as sharply as we so often do. The place where Jesus is always ministering to the Father on our behalf is the reality of which the tabernacle of the Jews was just a model. However, that model gives us an idea of what is going on in the spiritual realm. We'll go over that in verse 5.

3 For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices; thus it is necessary for this priest also to have something to offer. Hebrews 8:3 The first half of this verse is almost an exact repetition of 5:1. The Levitical priests offered animal, grain, and drink offerings on the altar. What is this eternal priest offering? The author will tell us later in this letter (9:14; 10:12). But we can also go to Paul's letter of the Ephesians. *2 And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.* Ephesians 5:2 His offering and sacrifice was Himself. Jesus told His disciples that He was going to give His life as a ransom for many (Matthew 20:28). He laid down His life as a sacrifice on the altar of the cross to pay our sin debt that we might be saved from the just wrath of God that we deserve.

What does He offer? He offers the payment of our sin, but as our mediator, He offers even more. *5 For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.* 1 Timothy 2:5-6 As our mediator, He offers up our prayers and praise. H.A. Ironside comments, "We may often be discouraged as we realize the imperfections of even our highest and best efforts to glorify God. Like Cowper, we may exclaim: 'Sin twines itself about my thoughts, / And slides into my prayers.' But it is blessed to know that nothing reaches God that is not perfect. Our Great High Priest takes out of our prayers and praises everything that is unholy or of the flesh, everything that is contrary to the nature of the God we adore. Then to what is left, He adds his own infinite perfections and thus presents all to the Father on our behalf."¹ Later in Hebrews our praise is referred to as a sacrifice (Hebrews 13:5).

4 Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law. Hebrews 8:4 This shows us that at the time the letter

Commented [PW8]: Exodus 25:40 (ESV)

⁴⁰ And see that you make them after the pattern for them, which is being shown you on the mountain.

Commented [PW9]: Exodus 26:30 (ESV)

³⁰ Then you shall erect the tabernacle according to the plan for it that you were shown on the mountain.

Commented [PW10]: Exodus 27:8 (ESV)

⁸ You shall make it hollow, with boards. As it has been shown you on the mountain, so shall it be made.

Commented [PW11]: Acts 7:44 (ESV)

⁴⁴ "Our fathers had the tent of witness in the wilderness, just as he who spoke to Moses directed him to make it, according to the pattern that he had seen.

Commented [PW12]: Hebrews 5:1 (ESV)

¹ For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins.

Commented [PW13]: Hebrews 9:14 (ESV)

¹⁴ how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

Commented [PW14]: Hebrews 10:12 (ESV)

¹² But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God,

Commented [PW15]: Matthew 20:28 (ESV)

²⁸ even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Commented [PW16]: H.A. Ironside Expository Commentary - Hebrews

Commented [PW17]: Hebrews 13:5 (ESV)

⁵ Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

was written, the temple was still standing as the priests were still offering gifts according to the law. That is important to know as these Hebrews were considering going back under a system that was about to be destroyed. The author even predicts that in the last verse of this chapter (8:13). It was prophetic, but it was also the logical outworking of the fact that the sacrifices were no longer needed.

The author is saying that if Jesus did not ascend, His priesthood would not be at work. The shadow here in the world was still functioning. Jesus' priesthood functions in the heavenly reality. God allowed the shadow to continue for one generation while graciously giving them signs that what they were doing was no longer needed. Then the Romans came and destroyed the temple and thereby the whole function of the priesthood. The law forbids sacrifices taking place anywhere other than the temple (Deuteronomy 12:13-14).

⁵ They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things. For when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God, saying, "See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain." Hebrews 8:5 This is an elaboration of verse 2 with a quote from the Torah. Copies and shadows of heavenly things is great topic for mature believers. Why do you think God would only take one chapter to describe creating the world, but give Moses many times that on instructions for the tabernacle? When we displayed a full scale reproduction of the tabernacle, we took people in showing them how it functioned, and took them out showing what the things within signified in the spiritual realm. We explained how the altar was the first large object you would see, the central object of the whole structure. It pictures for us the cross. It was made of bronze, a symbol of judgment. It is where the blood was poured out as penalty for sins. You had to go to the altar to approach God.

Only the priests were allowed to use the basin for cleansing to enter the tent which contained the Holy Place. Priesthood is available to all who have come to the cross and find their righteousness in Jesus (1 Peter 2:5). Even the psalmist tells us that those with imparted righteousness can enter the Holy Place (Psalm 24:3-5). We are washed by the water of the Word and enter God's presence with praise on our lips (Ephesians 5:26).

Inside the Holy Place on the right is the table of the bread of the Presence. Twelve fresh loaves were placed there each week, and only the priests were to eat them. ³⁵ *Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."* John 6:35 He is the bread of the Presence.

On the left was the candelabra with its seven candles. It illuminated the Holy Place. ¹² *Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."* John 8:12 Jesus illumines the place where we minister to the Lord.

In front of the curtain separating the Most Holy Place is the altar of incense. It pictures the prayers of God's people going up as a fragrant offering to God. And as we have already seen, Jesus is the One who presents them to God (Hebrews 7:25).

Commented [PW18]: Hebrews 8:13 (ESV)

¹³ In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

Commented [PW19]: Deuteronomy 12:13-14 (ESV)

¹³ Take care that you do not offer your burnt offerings at any place that you see,

¹⁴ but at the place that the LORD will choose in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all that I am commanding you.

Commented [PW20]: 1 Peter 2:5 (ESV)

⁵ you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Commented [PW21]: Psalm 24:3-5 (ESV)

³ Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place?

⁴ He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully.

⁵ He will receive blessing from the LORD and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

Commented [PW22]: Ephesians 5:26 (ESV)

²⁶ that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,

Commented [PW23]: Hebrews 7:25 (ESV)

²⁵ Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

Inside the Most Holy Place is the ark of the covenant. It is made of acacia wood covered in gold (Exodus 25:10-11). Jesus became flesh but His life was utterly holy (John 1:14). The lid separates the manifestation of God's presence, the Shekinah, from law on stone within (Exodus 25:21-22). It is there that the blood of animals was sprinkled, pointing forward to Christ's own blood that would come between a holy God and His law that condemns us. No wonder it is called the mercy seat. The blood of Jesus paid the debt we owe for breaking God's commandments (Romans 3:25).

Within are three items. There is the Ten Commandments, which is the Word of the Lord. Jesus is the Word made flesh (John 1:14). There is a golden bowl of manna. Jesus said He is the true manna from heaven (John 6:32). And finally, Aaron's rod that blossomed and budded. By its resurrection to life it proved Aaron was God's choice to be the high priest, just as Jesus' resurrection from death proves He is God's choice to be our eternal high priest. There is much more in the structure and its materials. But that is enough to give us an idea of the copy and shadow of heavenly things that is referred to in this verse.

⁶ But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises. Hebrews 8:6 While the shadow in which the priest served was instructive and ordered by God, it all pointed to the reality, which is Christ. The author was clarifying to the Hebrews that they were thinking of leaving the reality to return to the shadow which would soon cease to exist. It would be like accepting a map for the reality of the road. It won't get you anywhere. It just points the way. The tabernacle and the priesthood was a map. Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:6).

How is His ministry more excellent than the Levitical priests? While the priests followed the laws delivered to Moses, they were just acting out a picture of what was really needed. None of their sacrifices really made a person right with God. Faith in the coming reality behind the shadows is what saved the Old Testament saints (Romans 4:3). By faith they looked forward to the cross through the sacrifices. By faith we look back to the cross. It is faith in God's provision that saves a soul in any time period. God hasn't changed. The way of salvation hasn't changed. It has always been Jesus. It will always be Jesus. It is Jesus' death that makes salvation possible for those who never heard of Him but who repent of their sins and trust God to save them. For by grace are we saved through faith, and that is the gift of God (Ephesians 2:8).

Jesus' ministry is more excellent in that it is for every nation. It is more excellent in that it is for all time. It is more excellent in that it accomplishes what the Levites could only point to. It is more excellent in that it is everywhere, not just in one physical location. It is more excellent in that it is always available.

And how is the new covenant better than the old? The new covenant is better than the old in that it guarantees salvation. It provides forgiveness for every sin, including intentional sins. It is better chiefly because, as I mentioned earlier, it is based on what

Commented [PW24]: Exodus 25:10-11 (ESV)

¹⁰ "They shall make an ark of acacia wood. Two cubits and a half shall be its length, a cubit and a half its breadth, and a cubit and a half its height.

¹¹ You shall overlay it with pure gold, inside and outside shall you overlay it, and you shall make on it a molding of gold around it.

Commented [PW25]: John 1:14 (ESV)

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Commented [PW26]: Exodus 25:21-22 (ESV)

²¹ And you shall put the mercy seat on the top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the testimony that I shall give you.

²² There I will meet with you, and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim that are on the ark of the testimony, I will speak with you about all that I will give you in commandment for the people of Israel.

Commented [PW27]: Romans 3:25 (ESV)

²⁵ whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.

Commented [PW28]: John 1:14 (ESV)

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Commented [PW29]: John 6:32 (ESV)

³² Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven.

Commented [PW30]: John 14:6 (ESV)

⁶ Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Commented [PW31]: Romans 4:3 (ESV)

³ For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness."

Commented [PW32]: Ephesians 2:8 (ESV)

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,

is done for us, not on what we are able to do. It is better because it is eternal, whereas the old passed when it was fulfilled in Jesus.

The word “enacted” is a compound word in Greek that is always used concerning the Torah (*nenomotheteta*), which tells us that the Gospel is the Torah made explicit. This wording puts the Gospel on par with God uttered words to Moses, the highest authority. It is not superseding the Torah but fulfilling it (Matthew 5:17). By implication, rejecting the new covenant would be to reject God’s Torah (teaching). This wording would speak powerfully to the Hebrew readers. The only other place the word is used is in 7:11, the receiving of the Torah. This also implies that Gentiles are entering into the promises to the Jews when they receive Jesus as their Savior.

Finally, what are the better promises on which the new covenant was given as Torah? The author will lay those out for us in the rest of the chapter. Let me give you a few of the better promises we have that were either not clear or not included in the old covenant. Forgiveness of sins for all time is mentioned (Psalm 103:12), but in the new it is clearly promised for all who believe (Acts 2:38). Eternal life was a vague concept in the old, but the new covenant tells us it is ours in Jesus (John 3:16). We have the promise of being conformed into the image of the Son of God (Romans 8:29). We have the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit (John 7:39). And as is frequently mentioned in this letter to the Hebrews, we have access to the throne of God. We can come before Him at any time and boldly present our petitions (Romans 5:2; Hebrews 10:19-22).

There is much more, and we’ll see some of those promises predicted in the old covenant next week. But in closing, let us consider what a great privilege we have living in this day and this time. We have the new covenant with its better promises. We have so many devotionals. We have the full Word of God in print, or on our Bible programs. We have an abundance of praise music. We have resource materials to help us understand and learn more about God’s Word. We have the testimonies of so many who have gone before us in faith and seen God do great things throughout history.

What will we do if we face the persecution that the Jews were facing? Will we try to blend in with the world? Or will we stand on the promises of God and realize all we have in Jesus is more than enough to see us through? Will we be like the Jews of old who looked at circumstances instead of God’s faithfulness? Will we stand on the promises and live the new covenant, or seek an escape? Will we trust God?

Questions

- 1 Why is Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant?
- 2 Why is the new covenant better?
- 3 How did the author describe our high priest?
- 4 What is a copy and shadow?
- 5 How does that apply to the world we see?

- 6 What does Jesus offer to God the Father?
- 7 How were saints of old saved?
- 8 How is Jesus’ ministry more excellent than that of Levites?
- 9 What are some of the better promises?
- 10 What do we have at hand to help us in our walk?

Commented [PW33]: Matthew 5:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.

Commented [PW34]: Hebrews 7:11 (ESV)

¹¹ Now if perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need would there have been for another priest to arise after the order of Melchizedek, rather than one named after the order of Aaron?

Commented [PW35]: Psalm 103:12 (ESV)

¹² as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.

Commented [PW36]: Acts 2:38 (ESV)

³⁸ And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Commented [PW37]: John 3:16 (ESV)

¹⁶ “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Commented [PW38]: Romans 8:29 (ESV)

²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

Commented [PW39]: John 7:39 (ESV)

³⁹ Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Commented [PW40]: Romans 5:2 (ESV)

² Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Commented [PW41]: Hebrews 10:19-22 (ESV)

¹⁹ Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus,
²⁰ by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh,
²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God,
²² let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.