

THE MEDIATOR OF A BETTER COVENANT

Hebrews 8:1–6 — *"Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.*

"For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount. 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."

These seven chapters that we have gone through in the Epistle to the Hebrews lead us from a magnificent opening about the greatness of Jesus Christ the Son of God, to how all of that greatness makes Him a *Great High Priest*.

But we should not stop with Jesus Christ **the** great high priest. The importance is that He is **our** Great High Priest.

THE SUM OF THE MATTER

When we read "now of the things which we have spoken", it is a good time to review what those things which we have spoken are. Since we are talking of the Lord Jesus Christ as the High Priest, let's review what has been said to this point.

- 1:3, *"when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high"*
- 2:17–3:1, *"Wherefore it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted.
Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus."*
- 4:14-16, *"Seeing then that we have a Great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."*
- 5:1–10
- 6:19–7:28

A priest that can come to God in His tabernacle on earth is a great blessing to the people of God. That people was the people of Israel that God called out of Egypt. He called them out because He

remembered His covenant with their fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Notice how many times in God's interaction with Moses in Exodus chapter 3 that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are mentioned.

There was a covenant that God made with Abraham (Abram when He made it), which extended to his son Isaac, then to his grandson Jacob. His children coming from Jacob became this great people that was called out of Egypt and called to be God's people. Because they were God's people by covenant, yet still the sons of Adam by birth, they were still born in sin just as the rest of us. The proof that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob all had that same relation to Adam as the rest of us is that they died, Romans 5:12-14. They were called because of God's choice to call them. But because of their inherent sinfulness as the sons of Adam, the law was placed on top of their lives as God's people. In Galatians 3:17-25, the Apostle Paul makes it clear the relation of the law to the covenant with Abraham. He also speaks of how the law was temporary and has an end:

Romans 10:4 — *“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.”*

But even in that time where the law was imposed, the priesthood that was part of that law made a way for the called out yet sinful inherently and by way of deeds to approach the Holy God. As we spoke previously, that priest was also called specially from the people by way of birth. Aaron was the first of those priests and the priesthood continued exclusively through his progeny.

But even though called out as special and sacred because of calling, they too were inherently sinful, because they too were the sons of not just Aaron, but of Adam. Because of this, they had to offer for their own sins before they could do their job of offering for the people in things pertaining to God.

But there is now a priest of a different order and a different calling, whom we have seen and should be settled at by now is so much better than all that came before. We understand as Christians, ~2000 years removed from when this is written, of the greatness of Christ. It is in Him who we are, and in Him that we are called. Most of us in this room, probably all of us, cannot identify as this people of God called in Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob by birth and conditioned in covenant under the law and the Aaronic priesthood. We're the "Ephesians 2 people". We understand this by revelation of Jesus Christ, Galatians 1:12.

The people who were under that covenant also needed to understand that. WE HAVE A GREAT HIGH PRIEST WHO IS SET ON THE RIGHT HAND OF THE THRONE OF THE MAJESTY IN THE HEAVENS.

This is true of us as Gentiles, formerly strangers, etc., and it is true of the "circumcision in the flesh made by hands" Ephesians 2:11.

At the right hand of the majesty in the heavens brings us back to 1:3, where we review the awesome truth that He by Himself purged our sins and sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. This was at the call and request of the LORD God of Heaven Himself, for

“The LORD said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand...”, Psalm 110:1.

We learn something else in this chapter that was latent under the law but not really understood as far as we can tell the importance of it. The things fashioned on earth were patterned after things in heaven. There was a pattern shown to Moses that he was told to make the tabernacle and all things in it according to. The people had a tabernacle model on earth. It was certainly a real physical tabernacle, but it was a representation of the tabernacle of God in Heaven. The sanctuary on earth was certainly a

real sanctuary, and if anyone did not believe that to be so, see what would happen to one who entered it!

But the true sanctuary is in the heaven of heavens, the abode of God. This also brings to mind here some other patterns of things in the tabernacle, particularly the mercy seat.

In Exodus 25, Moses is given his orders for the manufacture of the ark. On the ark was the mercy seat.

Exodus 25:21–22 — *“And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And I will meet with thee, and commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.”*

Here it is said there is a place where the God of Heaven will meet with and commune with Moses, His servant. This was then the designated place where the priest would minister, but we know that it had great restrictions. It is important to know that this too was a pattern of better things later to be revealed.

Romans 3:25 — *“Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of Him which believeth in Jesus.”*

That mercy seat of Exodus 25 was a type of the propitiation that is found permanently in Jesus Christ as crucified for us sinners. He is the place where God will meet with the sinner, and it is His shed blood which makes the permanent propitiation for the sinner that the mercy seat of the Old Testament could only temporarily address, and had to be repeated year after year after year.

The priests under the law (Old Covenant) were temporary priests who all died. The New Covenant Priest, Jesus Christ, is the eternal Priest. He is a surety of a better testament, Hebrews 7:22.

In 8:6, it is said plainly that the ministry of our Lord as High Priest is not a continuation of the Old Covenant, or Old Testament priestly ministry. It is a “more excellent ministry”. As everything about Him is better than what came before, so is His priesthood. If we have not yet settled on that, do settle on that now.

The New Covenant that is in Christ’s blood carries with it a better promise. In the next section of this chapter, we will go to God’s declaration of a new covenant to be established with the houses of Israel and Judah. This covenant has in it better promises, because, for beginners, it is established on the foundation of the “precious blood of Christ”, 1 Peter 1:19, and it is made possible by the blood of Christ as the propitiation through faith in His blood.

How does this New Covenant with the houses of Israel and Judah come to the Gentiles who are strangers to the covenants of promise (Ephesians 2:12)?

The Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 1 said of his revelation from the Lord that he delivered to the Corinthians, written for all of us as God’s revelation to us, he said speaking concerning the Lord’s supper:

“This cup is the new testament in my blood”, 1 Corinthians 11:25.

Back in Ephesians 2, now verse 13, we have this:

“But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.”

Our relation to this new covenant is our relation to the blood of Christ.

When we read in Romans chapter 11 of the olive tree, throughout understand the olive tree metaphor as the new covenant, and see if this makes it to come together. See if also we can solve the dispensational theology/covenant theology rift, at least in our own minds. Understanding the New Covenant should help that. We’re not going to fix other people’s thinking, but we should fix ours. The Dispensationalist will chide the Covenant Theologian that he does not take the prophets to mean what they say. The Covenant Theologian will say back that the Dispensationalist does not take Paul to mean what he says. Herein lies the dilemma, so how about we take both to mean what they say? It is possible!