

Hebrews 8:1-13 – A Better/Superior Covenant – Lesson Summary

You don't need to look far to see that technology is changing at a rapid rate. A computer bought today is obsolete tomorrow. Every day an article is posted online about new technological advancements. One of the unspoken trials in this reality is the law's inability to keep up. Technology changes faster than the law which is very dangerous. Without effective laws we find ourselves at risk. The author of Hebrews addresses the ineffectiveness of the Hebrew law as well. While the law provided guidance and a picture of God's holiness, it was never sufficient to save the people. It was God's covenant promises that provided true hope to the Israelites. However, as we will see in this passage, even God's covenant promises were incomplete until the life, death, and resurrection of Christ.

Having spent the last few chapters addressing Christ's role as our Great High Priest, the author transitions his focus to God's covenant promises. Due to the audience's prior Jewish faith, this would be a topic familiar to them. We must remember that the primary audience of this letter are converted Jews. Because of this, the author continually references the Old Testament. It's likely that they would be thinking back to God's covenant promises throughout Israel's history. God's covenants to Noah, Abraham, Moses/Israel, and David were all pictures of God's dedication to His people. A careful review of these covenants exposes a wonderful truth. God made these promises upon His own faithfulness, not our faithfulness to Him. Despite our repeated failures, God follows through.

If God always follows through, then how could the author refer to these covenants as insufficient? It's not that the old covenants were broken or in need of "repair", but instead that they were not complete. The author's intention is to present Christ as the better/superior covenant. What was incomplete is now completed through Christ. In order to make his point he focuses on **two aspects of Christ's role as the superior covenant**. His first focus is on **Christ our Perfect Mediator**. Because Christ was the Perfect High Priest He becomes the Perfect Mediator. Christ's declaration on that cross that "it is finished" is a declaration that the payment for sin has been made. His shed blood was the ultimate priestly sacrifice. His shed blood covers the sins of all those who profess Him as Lord.

The second point the author emphasizes is that **the covenant has been completely fulfilled in Christ**. The author sites *Jer. 31:31-34* as a reminder that God had promised a new covenant long ago. Our inability to keep God's laws, our constant sins of the flesh and heart, and our daily failures separated us from God. But through Christ, who fulfills the superior covenant, we can now enter the presence of our Heavenly Father. The curtain has been torn as God promised Adam and Eve who broke their relationship with Him in sin.

A priestly system is somewhat foreign to us today. However, to the audience this would have been a radical shift in their understanding of God's covenant promise. Because of Christ's perfect life, perfect death, and perfect resurrection we no longer need to earn God's favor. The work has been done, the covenant fulfilled, and our hearts free to worship God through His Spirit. Do you trust that God's promises have been fulfilled in Christ and that you have been set free to live for His glory? Trust in your Great High Priest, the fulfillment of God's superior covenant, and approach His throne with confidence that "it is finished"!

Discussion Questions:

- 1) What are some outdated rules or laws that you know of? Why do you think laws always need to be changing or adapting?
- 2) When you think of all of God's promises in the Bible what are some of the most surprising? How are you encouraged by them?
- 3) How do you struggle to trust that's Christ work on the cross is complete? What are some ways that you are still "working" to earn God's favor? What are some ways, you still live under the law?