

BAND of BROTHERS

SPRING SERIES 2024 – WEEK 5

Hebrews 6:13-7:28: An Anchor for the Soul

He is the kind of high priest we need because he is holy and blameless, unstained by sin. He has been set apart from sinners and has been given the highest place of honor in heaven.

– Hebrews 7:26 NLT

- **Before we begin**

- It's one thing to see **Christ** in the Old Testament
It's another thing to seek to **Christianize** the Old Testament

The Letter to the Hebrews

- This is the key to understanding this letter

“...the theme of our epistle is **the immeasurable superiority of Christianity over Judaism**. Unless the interpreter keeps this steadily in mind as he proceeds from chapter to chapter, and from passage to passage, he is certain to err.” – A. W. Pink, *An Exposition of Hebrews*

- Jesus versus Judaism
 - This is **not** about two competing religions
 - It's about...
 - ...the shadow and the substance
 - ...the old and the new
 - ...prophecy and fulfillment
 - ...the temporal and the permanent
- You can't overlook the original audience
 - Jews who have accepted Jesus as Messiah
 - But who are considering returning to Judaism
- The book is filled with Judaic references
 - Mention of the Jewish prophets
 - Repeated quotes from the Hebrew Scriptures

- The Hebrew account of creation
- Inclusion of Moses and Aaron
- Highlight of the Israelite “rebellion”
- Discussion concerning the “Sabbath rest”
- Emphasis on the high priesthood
- But there’s one that gets overlooked
 - It’s found in chapter 6:1-8
 - This passage must be read through the lens of Judaism, not Christianity

- **Leave and cleave**

Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, and of instruction about washings, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And this we will do if God permits. – Hebrews 6:1-3 ESV

*...leave the **elementary doctrine** of Christ... – vs 1*

- Could literally be translated: *...**having left** the word of the beginning of Christ...*
 - They had **already** left behind the preliminary words concerning Christ
 - Notice he uses **Christ** rather than Jesus
- Christ** – (*christos*) – Greek translation of the Hebrew “Messiah”
- It means “anointed one” (just as Messiah did)
 - He is challenging them to move beyond their **incomplete** view of the Messiah

...Direct descendent of David
 ...Conquering king and liberator
 ...Reign from David’s throne in Jerusalem
 ...Restore Israel to prominence and power
 ...Usher in the “Messianic Age”
 ...Establish Judaism as the premier religion

- But Jesus had only accomplished one
 - He **was** a descendent of David
 - But the Romans were still in power
 - The Israelites had no king
 - They were powerless and impoverished
 - And the readers were living in virtual exile
- So they considered returning to Judaism
 - Look closely at verses 1-8 again

*...let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ...**not laying again a foundation...** – vs 1*

~ Don’t go back to the A,B,C’s of Judaism
 Don’t lay again a foundation...

...of repentance from dead works
...of faith toward God
...of instruction about washings
... *the laying on of hands*
... *the resurrection of the dead*
... *and eternal judgment*

Repentance from dead works

- Pursuing righteousness through law-keeping

Faith toward God

- Measuring their faithfulness to God by their works

Washings

- External forms of ceremonial purification

Laying on of hands

- Ceremonial transfer of sin to a sacrificial animal

Resurrection of the dead

- The bodily resurrection of all deceased Jews

Eternal Judgment

- The reward of righteousness for good works

- **A better salvation**

*Though we speak in this way, yet in your case, beloved, **we feel sure of better things—things that belong to salvation.** For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do. – Hebrews 6:9-10 ESV*

- Determined by faith, not works
- Dependent upon Christ, not self
- Based on His sacrifice, not yours
- Comprehensive, not partial
- Eternal, not temporary

- **Faith in the promises of God**

*And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of **hope until the end**, so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience **inherit the promises.** – Hebrews 6:11-12 ESV*

- The author turns to Abraham as an example
- And he uses story familiar to his readers: The command to sacrifice Isaac

*“Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and **offer him there as a burnt offering** on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.” – Genesis 22:2 ESV*

- Isaac was the child of the promise
 - God had promised to make Abraham the father of many nations

- Despite Sarah’s barrenness
- And their advanced years

*Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed and said to himself, “**Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old?** Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?” And Abraham said to God, “Oh that Ishmael might live before you!” God said, “No, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him.”*
– Genesis 17:17-19 ESV

- But Abraham obeyed God
*When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built the altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. **Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son.*** – Genesis 22:9-10 ESV

- And God responded
*“**By myself I have sworn,** declares the Lord, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, **I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring** as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.”* – Genesis 22:16-18 ESV

- **Improved but now new** (Hebrews 6:13-20)
 - Another blast from Israel’s past
 - The strange case of Mr. Melchizedek
 - Only mentioned 2X in the Old Testament
 - Genesis 14:17-24
 - Psalm 110:4
 - The author picks up the Genesis story

For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, and to him Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything. He is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then he is also king of Salem, that is, king of peace. He is without father or mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God he continues a priest forever. – Hebrews 7:1-3 ESV

- Melchizedek
 - Lived during the days of Abraham
 - Melchizedek is a title, not a name
 - It means “King of Righteous”
 - He ruled over a city called Salem (“peace”)
 - Salem later became Jerusalem

- So he was king of peace and righteousness
- But he was also a priest
Melchizedek...priest of the Most High God – 7:1

- But he was a Jebusite and not an Israelite
- Which means he wasn't a Levite
- The Levitical priesthood didn't exist yet

- **A completely different kind of priest**

...without father or mother or genealogy – vs 3

- No family tree
- No lineage given
- No birth or death dates indicated
- All we know is that he was king and priest
- But we're not told the name of his heir
- In a sense, his priesthood never ended
 - This doesn't mean he was eternal
 - He wasn't divine
 - In a book filled with genealogies, his is missing
 - He was to foreshadow another king-priest

...a different priest, who is like Melchizedek, has appeared. Jesus became a priest, not by meeting the physical requirement of belonging to the tribe of Levi, but by the power of a life that cannot be destroyed. – Hebrews 7:15-16 NLT

- Jesus restores the priesthood of Melchizedek
 - Jesus was from the tribe of Judah
 - But according to the Law, only Levites could serve as priests
 - So, how could Jesus serve as high priest?
 - He was part of a priesthood that God ordained before the law was given

For it is witnessed of him, "You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek." – Hebrews 7:17 ESV

- **A permanent and perfect priesthood**

The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. – Hebrews 7:23-24 ESV

- No more need for law-keeping
- The elimination of ceremonial purification
- The end of blood sacrifices
- A new and better priest fulfilled it all
- Fully human, yet fully divine
- A new and better kind of priest

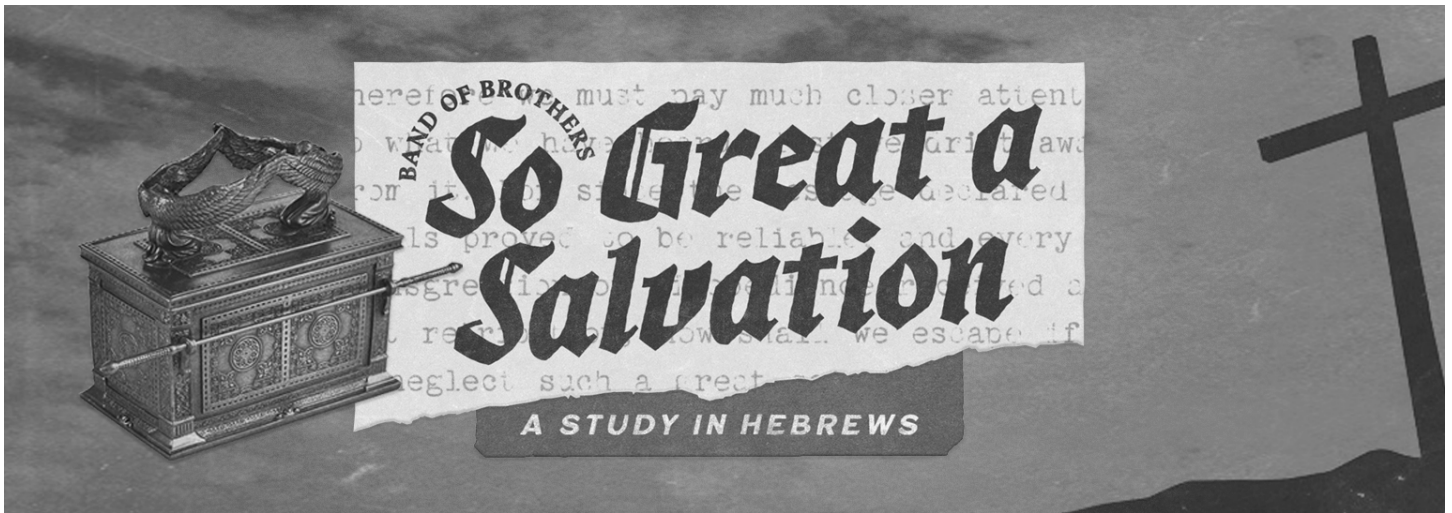
For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself. 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. – Hebrews 7:26-28 ESV

- **Discussion questions**

These closing verses are meant to provide us with encouragement. Do they? How?

What difference does it make that Jesus is holy, innocent, sinless, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens?

Why would a return to Judaism (legalism) be so detrimental to their faith (and ours)?



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SPRING SERIES 2024 – WEEK 6 HOMEWORK

WEEK 6 – Hebrews 8:1-13: Better in Every Way

Because Jesus is the better high priest, He presides over a better covenant. In this chapter, the author strives to point out the many ways in which Jesus is better in every day. Everything associated with the old covenant, including the priesthood, sacrificial system, and the Tabernacle itself, was intended to be a foreshadowing of something greater to come. This chapter juxtaposes the old and the new covenant, clearly establishing the latter as superior in every day.

- Read Hebrews 8:1-13. Write down any thoughts that jump out at you from these verses.
- Over the week, read pages 47-52 of Ken's Devotionalary™ on Hebrews.
- In preparation for this week's homework, read Jeremiah 31.
- In the first 1-4 of chapter 8, the author revisits His description of Jesus as the kind of high priest we need. Look back at chapter 7, verses 26-27 and write down all the characteristics of this "great high priest."
- Read through Leviticus 16 and jot down some of the non-negotiable requirements God placed on Aaron, the high priest of Israel.

Now make a list of the various sacrifices he was required to offer each year on the Day of Atonement?

Read Hebrews 10:1-14. What was the sacrifice that Jesus offered and how does this differ from actions of the earthly high priest recorded in Leviticus 16?

- In Hebrews 8:4-6, the author emphasized that Jesus would not have been qualified to serve as a priest during His earthly life. How does this make His membership of the order of Melchizedek so vital?
- In verse 7, the author infers that the first covenant, which included the law and the sacrificial system, was somehow flawed (not flawless). Why would this be true? Go back and look at Hebrews 10:4 for some insight into this question.
- Now, focus your attention on verses 8-12 of Hebrews 8. Compare it with Jeremiah 31:31-34. What similarities do you find?

What does God promise to do for His chosen people? (Don't forget that Jeremiah 31 was written to the Israelites and Hebrews was written to Israelite Christians).

Why would these promises have struck a chord with the author's original audience?

He puts a lot of emphasis on the "new covenant." What do you think he is referring to?

Look at Luke 22:20. What does Jesus describe as the key to the new covenant?

Read the following passages and write down what they teach you about the new covenant.
Hebrews 9:15:

Ephesians 2:13-14: