

Would you believe---**Hebrews 8**

We've discussed many times about the use of the word "therefore" in scripture and what to do when you find the word. Prepare yourselves for one of the longest forms of the word, "Therefore", in history.

8 Now the main point in what has been said *is this*:

So, there you have it. He's using his previous teaching as a foundation for what he's about to say! In light of what he's just said, this is the main point of it all !

we have **such a high priest**,

What high priest is he referring to? "Such a high priest" What type of high priest was he just talking about?

Melchizedek? Aaronic priests? Let's look back in Chapter 7 to see what he is referring to:

7

²⁶For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; ²⁷who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the *sins* of the people, because this He did **once for all** when He offered up Himself. ²⁸For the Law appoints men as high priests who are weak, but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, *appoints **a Son***, made perfect forever.

So, since Chapter 5, he's been referring to Melchizedek. He's using Melchizedek as an example of how their priesthood, the Aaronic priesthood really isn't all it was cracked up to be. After all, the Bible taught a different priesthood, that of Melchizedek. And it was okay. So they shouldn't find it impossible to accept that Jesus is a mo-betta, more perfect priest. Neither came from Aaron's tribe of Levi. He was using Melchizedek as a tool, an accepted example, to pry their fingers, their minds, off their belief that the priesthood set up by Moses was the end-all, perfect, priesthood.

So he continues to explain HOW Jesus' priesthood is much better:

8 who has **taken His seat** at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, ²a minister ^[a]in the sanctuary and ^[b]**in the true** ^[c]**tabernacle**, which the Lord pitched, not man. ³For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices; so it is necessary that this *high priest* also have something to offer.⁴Now if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer the gifts according to the Law; ⁵who serve a copy and shadow of **the heavenly things**, just as Moses ^[d]was warned *by God* when he was about to erect the ^[e]tabernacle; for, "SEE," He says, "THAT

YOU MAKE all things ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN WHICH WAS SHOWN YOU ON THE MOUNTAIN.” ⁶But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on **better promises.**

Whoa! Our writer, (whoever he was) is showing again the eloquence this book is known for, packing it full of deep, profound truths, as if they're just passing thoughts, easy-peasy. Ho-hum, no big deal, just average thoughts for an average day- Ha!

First of all, before we get to the real message of this passage, let's look at the framework or assumptions of this passage.

True Tabernacle, copies, shadows, patterns, make all things according to the patterns, heavenly things, ??? What is he talking about?

Jesus said in His prayer, “Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven”.

I hate to say this, but Plato was not that far off in his allegory of the Cave which he included in his book “The Republic”. Shadows created from a fire burning in a cave, on a wall, only representations of the true object which we cannot see.

God has a true tabernacle in heaven and the Jews' earthly version is merely a copy of the true one. God warned Moses to be careful to copy the patterns he was shown. The earthly priests and their ceremonies were only pictures and representations for the people to see what God required in heaven. The part we can't see, in heaven, is the real thing, the most important thing, the substantive thing, that really gets the work done. This further shows why they needed to be willing to give up their total devotion to their earthly priests and the sacrifices they offer, over and over again.

But more than this picture or framework, there are some definite reasons he gives as to how and why Jesus is so much better than any earthly priest has ever been.

- 1- Jesus sat down, unheard of, never before, no seats in the earthly tabernacle- He's finished, His work is done, doesn't have to offer sacrifices over and over again.
- 2- Jesus is seated at the right hand, in the same throne as His Father,
- 3- Jesus is in the True Tabernacle in heaven, not in a copy of it!
- 4- Jesus' ministry is the true thing, not a copy of it as it was with Aaron and other earthly priests.
- 5- Better covenant, based, this time, on better Promises.

So, how is this new covenant better? He's glad we asked. . . Of course, in his wonderfully logical flow and style, he has the answer, from----none other than their own scripture!

⁷For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second. ⁸For finding fault with them, He says,

So here he quotes from Jeremiah 31:31-34 (remember his goal, to try to pry their fingers off the old ways, the old, former covenant, to see how God's new covenant, through Jesus is better)

Very hard, almost impossible for us, as non-Jews, to comprehend what the writer is doing to their thinking, their frame of reference, what they have based their entire lives upon. Convincing them that Jesus really is a continuation of God's plan, but is really changing, revolutionizing, the way we interact and respond to God. But it's all good, it's all from God.

"BEHOLD, DAYS ARE COMING, SAYS THE LORD,
[a] WHEN I WILL EFFECT A NEW COVENANT
WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH;
9 NOT LIKE THE COVENANT WHICH I MADE WITH THEIR FATHERS
ON THE DAY WHEN I TOOK THEM BY THE HAND
TO LEAD THEM OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT;
FOR THEY DID NOT CONTINUE IN MY COVENANT,
AND I DID NOT CARE FOR THEM, SAYS THE LORD.
10 "FOR THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL
AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD:
[a] I WILL PUT MY LAWS INTO THEIR MINDS,
AND I WILL WRITE THEM ON THEIR HEARTS.
AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD,
AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.
11 "AND THEY SHALL NOT TEACH EVERYONE HIS FELLOW CITIZEN,
AND EVERYONE HIS BROTHER, SAYING, 'KNOW THE LORD,'
FOR ALL WILL KNOW ME,
FROM [b] THE LEAST TO THE GREATEST OF THEM.
12 "FOR I WILL BE MERCIFUL TO THEIR INIQUITIES,
AND I WILL **REMEMBER** THEIR SINS NO MORE."

What a deal! Such a better relationship with God. We can each one know the Lord. No more need to go through a priest, like in the old system. God Himself will write His law in our hearts and put it in our minds. Our sins will be forgiven. Then Mr. Hebrews' writer closes with a bold slam!

13 [a] When He said, "A new *covenant*," He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is [b] ready to disappear.

So, Hebrew guys and gals, loosen your grip on the old, accepted, traditions and practices. God has got a much more exciting, everlastingly fulfilling, ultimately satisfying plan of salvation through Jesus!!

PS- Just a quick note. Notice it doesn't say God will forget our sins. God is---Omniscient, and can't forget. He is not feeble, forgetful, ignorant, or incompetent. But, when you really think about it, this is even more comforting as a promise. If God had just forgotten our sins, then He could be reminded of them, perhaps by an accuser (satan's name), or by something else,

maybe a newspaper clipping or an email to God. However, God is making a deliberate choice, a promise, wherein He **will not** remember, or bring to mind, our sins. Both in Old and New Testament, Greek and Hebrew, it doesn't say that He will *forget* our sins, but that **He will not remember them! He will never bring our sins to mind, ever again. What a deal!** That is what we are believing God to do, trusting that Jesus did for us!

Here's another example from the Old Testament that emphasizes both the new deal and that He will remember our sins no more.

Isaiah 43

- 18** "Forget the former things;
do not dwell on the past.
- 19** See, I am doing a new thing!
Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?
I am making a way in the wilderness
and STREAMS in the wasteland.
- 25** "I, even I, am he who blots out
your transgressions, for my own sake,
and **remembers your sins no more.**

Questions to discuss:

- 1- Are you beginning to see how difficult it was for Jews to release their grasp on their old views and practices to embrace Jesus and see the fullness of what He has done?
- 2- How is this different or the same, as secular, humanist non-believers, (all of us non-Jews) who must give up their own views of self-righteousness and earning their way (through works) to heaven. Is one harder than the other? Or is it just different?
- 3- Is it comforting to you to realize that God has promised to not remember, not to recall your sins? Is it okay with you that He doesn't forget them, but He chooses not to remember them? Can you trust Him with that promise?
- 4- Do you have trouble leaving your past sins behind and not be haunted by them? How can God give your heart peace and comfort and freedom from feelings of guilt?