

The Book of Hebrews

“Jesus – The Better Way”

- Part 2 -

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I. Introduction (see Hebrews Survey Part 1).

II. Survey (Hebrews 4:14 – 13:25).

A. The Better **NAME OF CHRIST** (1:1 – 4:13) – see Hebrews Survey Part 1.

B. The Better **MINISTRY OF CHRIST** (4:14 – 10:18).

The author of Hebrews moves away from a discussion of the better *name* (person) of Christ (1:1 – 4:13), to the better *ministry* (work) of Christ (4:14 – 10:18). There are two particular ministries of Christ that the author will focus on: Christ’s superior work *as a high priest* (4:14 – 8:5) and Christ’s superior work *as the mediator of a new covenant* (8:6 – 10:18).

1. Christ *serves a better priesthood* (4:14 – 8:5). Jesus was introduced as a high priest in Hebrews 2:17 and 3:1. Here, in Hebrews 4:14 – 8:5 his high priest work is given more attention. The superiority of Christ’s high priesthood (“a great high priest”) is first seen in his elevated position and his sinless nature (4:14 – 5:10). Jesus is elevated above mankind (4:14), he is related to mankind (4:15), and he is reliable for mankind (4:16). Like the OT priests, Jesus can bear gently with others and he stands ready to help, but he does not have to offer sacrifices for himself like they did (5:1-3; this will be explained more in 7:26-28). Jesus’ superior high priesthood is also demonstrated in another way. He is superior to Aaron in that he is more than a man; he is honored as the Son of God to be a high priest (5:4-5). His priesthood, after the order of Melchizedek also provides eternal salvation to all who obey him (5:6-10).

2. The author of Hebrews takes a break at this point in his argument of superiority to encourage his readers to mature (5:11 – 6:20). He has just written about Jesus being a high priest “after the order of Melchizedek” (5:6,10). However, the author knows his readers will not be able to hear more about Melchizedek because they have not been learning and growing spiritually (5:11-14). The remedy for their spiritual immaturity is to press on to maturity past the fundamentals of salvation and not fall away (6:1-8). The readers are also encouraged to faithfully endure to the end like Abraham did (6:9-20). “Wherefore” (6:1) marks the **FOURTH** concluding statement in the book: because the readers had become dull of hearing (5:11-14), they need to press on to maturity (6:1-8) and faithfully endure (6:9-20).

3. After his encouragement to press on, the author of Hebrews now returns to the subject of Jesus’ better priesthood. The author’s main point here is that Jesus is superior

because his priesthood, like Melchizedek, is continual and unchangeable (7:1-25). First, the author will make two comparisons between Melchizedek and Jesus. Melchizedek was like Jesus with respect to his continual priesthood (7:1-3). Jesus has a permanent, continual, and unchanging high priesthood that will not pass to another (see also 7:24,28). Melchizedek was also like Jesus with respect to his better position to bless (7:4-10). Second, the author will answer a very important question: “What further need was there that another priest should arise after the order of Melchizedek?” (7:11). Jesus is not a priest after the order of Aaron, but after Melchizedek, so there must be a change in the order (7:12-25). A change in order necessitates a change in law (7:12-15). A change in order presents an unchangeable priesthood (7:16-17). A change in order implies imperfection in the previous order (7:11,18-19). A change in order provides a better hope (7:19). Third, the author will contrast the Aaronic priesthood with the priesthood of Jesus (7:20 – 8:5). The OT priests were not given an oath, but Jesus is given a divine oath (7:20-22). The OT priests were temporary due to their death, but Jesus has a permanent and unchanging priesthood due to his eternal nature (7:23-25). The OT priests had sin and infirmity, but Jesus is sinless and perfect for evermore (7:26-28; see also 5:9). The OT priests served in an earthly tabernacle set up by men which was only a copy and shadow, but Jesus serves in a heavenly tabernacle set up by God which is the true tabernacle (8:1-5; it is called the “greater and more perfect tabernacle” in 9:11).

4. Christ *mediates a better covenant* (8:6 – 10:18). The need for another law or covenant was introduced in Chapter 7:12, 22. Now, in Hebrews 8:6 – 10:18, the “better covenant” (7:22; 8:6) will be explained in more detail. The “better covenant” is “enacted upon better promises” (8:6; namely, the “promise of the eternal inheritance,” 9:15). It is a “new covenant” (8:7-9) that allows all people to be in God’s family and personally know the Lord (8:10-11). It is a “new covenant” that provides for God’s mercy and complete forgiveness of sins (8:12). It is a “new covenant” supersedes and replaces the “old” covenant (8:13).

5. The work of Christ as the mediator of a better covenant is continued in Chapter 9. The author will show how the sacrificial system under the “first *covenant*” served as a type (9:1-10) of the heavenly anti-type (9:11-28). The particular point made of the type and antitype is that Christ’s death allowed him to be the mediator of the new and better covenant (9:15). His blood dedicated the New Testament (9:16-17). The author begins this section by discussing the “first *covenant*” (the Old Law) and its sacrificial system in the tabernacle (9:1-7). This continual sacrificial system under the “first *covenant*” pre-figured and foreshadowed Christ’s high priesthood and one-time sacrifice (9:8-10; see also 9:24 and 10:1). Jesus’ voluntary and one-time sacrifice on the cross “obtained eternal redemption” because it cleansed the “conscience” of mankind, not just the flesh (9:11-14). Christ’s shedding of his own blood also allowed him to be the mediator of a “new covenant” or “testament” (9:15-17). The “first *covenant*” (the Old Law) was dedicated by the blood of animals (9:18-22), but the new covenant is dedicated by the “better sacrifices” of the blood of Jesus (9:23-24). The sacrifice of Jesus is “better” because he died “once” (one time, for all time) for all people to put away sin (9:25-28; see also 9:12).

6. The author of Hebrews continues the thought of type and anti-type in Chapter 10 that he began in Chapter 9. The sacrificial system under the Old Law was a “shadow of the good things to come” (10:1). The continual animal sacrifices under the Old Law did not make the worshippers perfect and provided only a remembrance of sins each year (10:1-4). God’s remedy for this under the new law would not be more animal sacrifices, but a bodily sacrifice of Jesus (10:5-8). The sacrifice of Jesus accomplishes three things: 1) It removes the first law which was only a shadow (10:9); 2) It perfects those who before were never perfected (10:10-14); and 3) It provides full remission of sins and not just remembrance of sins (10:15-18).

C. The Better **WAY OF CHRIST** (10:19 – 13:25).

The author of Hebrews concludes the main doctrinal portion of the book at this point. He has established, from several lines of evidence, that Jesus is a “better” messenger, a “better” high priest, and a “better” mediator (1:1 – 10:18). He now turns his attention from here on to several practical admonitions for daily Christian living: “a new and living way,” or the better way of Christ (10:19 – 13:25).

1. The better way of Christ *gives an assurance of faith* (10:19-39). “Having therefore” (10:19) marks the **FIFTH** concluding statement in the book: because Jesus is “better”, Christians have a “new and living way” (10:20-21). The better way of Christ gives boldness and assurance of faith (10:19-39). The sacrifice of Christ (19-21) leads to a service for Christ (10:22-25). The readers are encouraged to “draw near” (10:22), to “hold fast” (10:23), and to “consider one another” (10:24-25). Those Christians who “sin willfully” and choose not to do these things, will be judged and punished severely by God (10:26-31). Some of the readers of the book are being reproached, persecuted, and imprisoned at this time (10:32-34). These Christians are reminded of their “better possession” that cannot be taken from them (10:34) and they are encouraged to have steadfast endurance and a “faith unto the saving of the soul” (10:35-39).

2. The better way of Christ *requires an obedience of faith* (11:1-40). The author of Hebrews has mentioned “fullness of faith” in 10:22, “live by faith” in 10:38, and “faith unto the saving of the soul” in 10:39. He now turns his attention to a divine *definition of faith* in 11:1 and several Old Testament *demonstrations of faith* in 11:2-39. Faith is “substance” and “evidence” (11:1, KJV). The OT elders had this kind of faith (11:2) and we must have this kind of faith regarding God’s creation (11:3). The author of Hebrews lists several OT examples of saving faith that are both active and obedient: Abel (11:4), Enoch (11:5-6), Noah (11:7), Abraham (11:8-10), and Sarah (11:11-12). These OT individuals lived and died in faith and looked for their reward – a “better *country*”, a heavenly city (11:13-16). The list of OT examples of faith is resumed: Abraham (11:17-18), Isaac (11:18-20), Jacob (11:21), Joseph (11:22), Moses (11:23-28), the Israelites (11:28-30), and Rahab (11:31). Chapter 11 closes with more OT examples of named and unnamed heroes of faith (11:32-39). The author reminds his readers that they have “some better thing” (fulfilled promises in Christ) as Christians (11:40).

3. The better way of Christ *demands an endurance of faith* (12:1-13). “Therefore” (12:1; see also “Wherefore” in 12:12) marks the **SIXTH** concluding statement in the book:

because Christians have great OT examples of faith to follow, they should run with endurance the race that is before them (12:1). The better way of Christ demands endurance of faith (12:1-13). The Christian's race requires: discipline, desire, determination, and direction (12:1-2). Jesus endured (12:2-3) and the readers are encouraged to endure like him even though they are disciplined along the way (12:4-11). The readers are also encouraged not to give up, but rather lift up each other during difficult times (12:12-13).

4. Finally, the better way of Christ *encourages a daily service of faith* (12:14 – 13:25). Christians should follow after peace and live in sanctification (12:14). They should live carefully and not in bitterness or fornication (12:15-17). Because Christians have better privileges than those of the OT period (12:18-24), they should listen to God and serve him with reverence and awe (12:25-29). Christians should not only have a right relationship with God, but also a right relationship with others, in and out of the church (13:1-25). They should love their brethren (13:1), show hospitality to strangers (13:2), remember those who are imprisoned (13:3), remain sexually pure (13:4), be content (13:5-6), remember and imitate their leaders (13:7), remain faithful to Jesus and avoid strange teachings (13:8-9), bear the reproach of Christ (13:10-14), offer sacrifices of praise (13:15), do good and share (13:16), obey their leaders (13:17), pray for others (13:18-19), do God's will (13:20-21), accept the word of exhortation (13:22-23), and greet their leaders (13:24). The author closes his book with a typical benediction (13:25)

III. Applications For Today (Hebrews 4:14 – 13:25).

- A. Let Us Hold Fast Our Confession and Let Us Draw Near to Our High Priest in Prayer (4:14-16; 7:25).
- B. Jesus is the Author of Eternal Salvation to All Who Obey Him (5:9).
- C. You Ought to Be Teachers By Reason of Experience and Use (5:12).
- D. Press On to Maturity, Don't Fall Back, and Faithfully Endure to the End (6:1-12).
- E. It Is Important to Follow the Pattern of God's Word (8:5).
- F. Christians Live Under A New and Better Covenant, Not the Old Covenant (8:6-13; 10:9).
- G. Christians Have Their Sins Cleansed by the Blood of Jesus in Baptism (9:14; 10:22).
- H. Christians Serve A Living God (9:14; 12:28-29).
- I. We Need to Be Ready For the Judgment Day After Death (9:27).
- J. We Have Boldness, So Let Us Draw Near, Hold Fast, and Consider One Another (10:19-25).
- K. It Is A Fearful Thing to Fall Into the Hands of the Living God (10:31).
- L. Do Not Cast Away Your Boldness or Shrink Back to Perdition (10:21-39).
- M. We Need An Active, Obedient Faith to Be Pleasing to God (11:6).
- N. God Has Prepared A Better Country and Heavenly City For the Faithful (11:16).
- O. Christians Need to Endure and Stay Focused On Jesus (12:1-2).
- P. Discipline Is Hard But It Helps Us (12:11).
- Q. Be Peaceful and Sanctified, Not Bitter and Immoral (12:14-17).
- R. Do Not Refuse to Hear God's Word, He Is A Consuming Fire (12:25,29).
- S. Remember to Fulfill Your Duties to Others, Both In and Out of the Church (13:1-25).