

8:1 - "Now of these 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;"

That Jesus Christ is the believer's high priest and dwells in the presence of God has been proven in Chapter 7. This is the conclusion or summary which the author will build upon. The author stresses the fact that, 'we have such an 'high priest'. The King/Priest Messiah is no longer a prophecy, but has become a reality. After thousands of years men now had access to God. God's plan had now been fulfilled and revealed. The perfect high priest was now ministering in an everlasting priesthood. (Heb. 4:14) This fact they must understand and act upon. (Heb. 2:3)

In the old covenant the people saw and interacted with the priests, but Christ dwells in heaven constantly in the presence of God. The priests of the old covenant, being human and sinful, entered into the tabernacle, offered the sacrifice, and quickly departed. Christ offered himself, was exalted, and remains in the presence of God. (Heb. 10:12)

"Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places. Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave to him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all." Eph. 1:20-23

8:2 - "A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man."

Christ is performing his priestly functions in God's presence. He ministers in a far superior tabernacle made by God himself. As the priesthood and law had undergone change so did the priestly duty and location. (Heb. 7:12) Christ ministers in the heavenly temple which the Levitical system only could imperfectly represent.

"In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings: with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried to another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory." Is. 6:1-3

(See also Rev. 4:1-11 and Rev. 5:5-14).

The heavenly sanctuary brings together the functions of King and Priest in one location. The Jewish people had a visible high priest whom they could physically interact with. This system was in effect for over 2000 years. Understanding everything presented so far, the readers probably had difficulty answering such questions as: Where is your high priest? Where is your temple? What does this priest offer? To successfully answer these challenges they must understand the priestly duties of Jesus Christ, how he fulfilled the Levitical system and how he ministers in the new system.

8:3-5 - "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 a 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."

The function of a priest is to offer gifts and sacrifices. The act of representing another by an offering in that persons behalf, is what makes a priest, a priest. A priest is a mediator or go-between. Christ, being a priest needed something to offer for those whom he represented. what Christ offered was himself. (Heb. 9:11-14)

"And walk in love, as Christ hath also loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour." Eph. 5:2

The author reminds his readers that the Levitical priesthood, being an earthly priesthood, was only an image or shadow of the heavenly system. Moses was commanded to make copies of the heavenly things according to God's instructions.

"And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it." Ex. 25:8-9

Christ being a fulfillment of what the old system represented, could not be an earthly priest. He was not of the tribe of Levi, but had a superior calling. The earthly priests offered gifts according to the law, while the priesthood of Christ fulfilled the law.

The gifts which the Levitical priests offered were meat offerings. They represented commitment and thanksgiving. Christ directly takes the gifts of the believer to God. He ministers in the believers behalf, offering thanksgiving, praise, repentance, and worship.

"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." Col. 3:17

"Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;" Eph. 5:20

8:6 - "But now hath he ordained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises."

Jesus Christ is appointed to a complete and unchangeable ministry, a ministry which the Levitical system could only point to. He is the mediator of a better covenant in that it is the fulfillment of the old. What was described in the old system as a shadow, has now come to light and is given detail in the new.

Covenants and Promises

- 1) Both the old and the new covenants are covenants of grace, in that after the fall mankind should have justly been destroyed.
- 2) The underlying promise of both covenants is mankind's eventual reconciliation to God. There are not two different promises.
- 3) In the old covenant man was justified by grace through faith. God by his grace provided the priesthood, rites, and observations. By belief and participation in this God ordained system, men were justified. To them the promises were based on obedience to the system.
- 4) They were not justified by the system or the sacrifices, but by what they pointed to. The old system pointed to Jesus Christ who would be the fulfillment of the underlying promise of reconciliation with God.
- 5) Salvation having been accomplished in Jesus Christ, the covenant is now better in that it is fulfilled. It is clearer and the full benefits of

reconciliation with God are now available. The promises have taken on reality and are thus better. The promises are not better from God's point of view, but from man's.

- 6) The author showed that the priesthood changed, the law changed and here shows man's relationship to God has changed. In every instance this change is better.

8:7 - "For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second."

The author again reminds his readers that the scriptures provided for this new covenant. This proved that the old covenant was not perfect, permanent, and unchangeable as was the common belief among the Jews.

8:8-12 - "For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."

Having shown in chapter 7 that the scriptures proved the priesthood and the resulting law would change, the author now provides further scriptural support from the prophet Jeremiah showing that man's relationship to God was also destined to change under a coming new covenant. (Jer. 31:31-34)

The scripture clearly states that a new covenant would be enacted. It would fulfill and supersede the old covenant made with Israel. This covenant involves both Jews and Gentiles.

"Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached

before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham."
Gal. 3:7-9

"And if ye be Christ's, then ye are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."
Gal. 3:29

Those whom God makes partakers in this new covenant he will change. Instead of external laws and ordinances, those of the new covenant will be internal and personal. God's laws will be a part of the man, they will rule his conscience. His desire will be to please and obey God.

"And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and I will give them an heart of flesh: that they may walk in my statutes, and keep my ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God."
Ezek. 11:19-20

"Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him, but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."
John 14:17

The indwelling Spirit teaches and guides the believer through the word of God. Spiritual understanding and discernment comes from within. God calls, trains and appoints his ministers. Brand new believers are greatly used of God, having a wisdom unknown to the world. The way of salvation has been revealed and been made simple and clear. This was not true under the old covenant of laws and ordinances.

"But the natural man receiveth not he things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ."
I Cor. 2:14-16

"For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world. For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."
1 Cor. 1:19-21

Grace and mercy are freely given. The old system temporarily covered sins, for the old system only pointed to Jesus Christ. Now what had been

foreshadowed has been accomplished. Sins are forgiven and forgotten and man has true access to God.

8:13 - "In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away."

God himself declared there would be a new covenant, a new system. This very fact makes the old covenant obsolete. At the time this letter was written the old system still physically existed. The sacrifices were being offered daily and the priests still ministered. God was no longer present within the system, it was no longer divinely protected and would pass away.

"Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent:"
Matt. 27:50-51

The destruction of the temple approximately 5 years after this letter was written put a physical end to a system once ordained by God, and by his word became obsolete and vanished.