

Hebrews

Lesson 5

Chapter 8-9:15

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Lesson 5
Hebrews 8
God's Covenants, Old and New

I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. Hebrews 8:10

Prayers

Introduction

Hebrews 5-7 describes Jesus as our Great High priest who crossed through the heavens to become man to learn perfect obedience, sympathy for human weakness, and to offer prayers and petitions for his people. He was holy and blameless, set apart from sinners to be offered as a sacrifice for sin once for all. He ascended into heaven, where he continues to offer prayers and petitions for his people. Jesus is ever approachable, welcoming us with his arms wide open in a loving embrace. Chapter 8 focuses on the New Covenant established by Christ, the High Priest.

Jesus is the great high priest, established in the order of Melchizedek because his authority is directly from God the Father. Jesus lives forever, establishing a perfect covenant with all who place their faith and hope in him.

Read Hebrews 8

Heb 8:1 The point of what we are saying is this: We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven,² and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by man.

Heb 8:3 Every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices, and so it was necessary for this one also to have something to offer.⁴ If he were on earth, he would not be a priest, for there are already men who offer the gifts prescribed by the law.⁵ They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: "See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain."

Heb 8:6 But the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, and it is founded on better promises.⁷ For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another.⁸

But God found fault with the people and said [in Jeremiah 31:31-34]:

"The time is coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.

⁹ It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they did not remain faithful to my covenant, and I turned away from them, declares the Lord.

¹⁰ This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord.

I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.

¹¹ No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest.

¹² For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

Heb 8:13 By calling this covenant "new," he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear.

Discuss

1. What does the word covenant imply?

An agreement or pledge – usually between two or more

Solemn

Contractual- binding

2. How is a covenant different from a promise?

Both are agreements, but a covenant is binding, solemn, and legal. A covenant is in force when it is agreed to. A promise infers some future action.

3. God made five covenants with his creation, four old and one new. Review the following scripture for the Old Testament covenants and discuss God's role and man's role in the agreements.

Genesis 9:7-11, Cod's Covenant Promise with Noah

Ge 8:20 Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and, taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it.

Ge 8:21 The LORD smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: "Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done. ²² "As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease."

Ge 9:5 And for your lifeblood I will surely demand an accounting. I will demand an accounting from every animal. And from each man, too, I will demand an accounting for the life of his fellow man.

Ge 9:6 "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man.

Ge 9:7 As for you, be fruitful and increase in number; multiply on the earth and increase upon it."

Ge 9:8 Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him: ⁹ “I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you ¹⁰ and with every living creature that was with you—the birds, the livestock and all the wild animals, all those that came out of the ark with you—every living creature on earth.

Ge 9:11 I establish my covenant with you: Never again will all life be cut off by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth.”

- a. What was God’s covenant promise after the flood?

God would never destroy the world again

- b. Who did God make his covenant promise with?

God made his promise to Noah, his sons, all future generations, and all living creatures. Noah was faithful in building the ark, saving life from the flood, and worshipping God, but God did not ask Noah to agree to his covenant.

- c. God destroyed humans because of their wickedness before the flood. What were people like at the time of God’s covenant with Abraham?

All life was saved through Noah’s obedience, but by the time of Abraham, there was godless. The first covenant failed because of man’s faithlessness.

Read God’s Covenant promises with Abraham

Ge 12:1 The LORD had said to Abram, “Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you. ² I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.” ⁴ So Abram left, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Haran. ⁿ

Ge 26:4 (To Isaac) I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and will give them all these lands, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, ⁵ because Abraham obeyed me and kept my requirements, my commands, my decrees and my laws.”

- a. What was God’s part of the Covenant?

Great nation. Blessings, bless all nations through Abraham’s line

- b. What was Abraham’s part of the Covenant?

leave home, faith, obedience

- c. What was the result of this covenant?

Abraham’s lineage was established - Isaac, Jacob with 12 sons, Joseph in prison in Egypt, Joseph prime minister in Egypt and saved Israel from famine. Israel falls into physical and spiritual bondage in Egypt. Israel failed Abraham’s covenant.

Eze 20:6 On that day I swore to them that I would bring them out of Egypt into a land I had searched out for them, a land flowing with milk and honey, the most beautiful of all lands.

Eze 20:7 And I said to them, “Each of you, get rid of the vile images you have set your eyes on, and do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.”

Eze 20:8 “But they rebelled against me and would not listen to me; they did not get rid of the vile images they had set their eyes on, nor did they forsake the idols of Egypt.

God’s Covenant with Moses

Ex 29:44 “So I will consecrate the Tent of Meeting and the altar and will consecrate Aaron and his sons to serve me as priests.

Ex 29:45 Then I will dwell among the Israelites and be their God. ⁴⁶ They will know that I am the LORD their God, who brought them out of Egypt so that I might dwell among them. I am the LORD their God.

Ex 24:7 Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it to the people. They responded, “We will do everything the LORD has said; we will obey.”

Ex 24:8 Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, “This is the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words.”

Dt 4:13 He declared to you his covenant, the Ten Commandments, which he commanded you to follow and then wrote them on two stone tablets. ^{Dt 4:6} Observe them carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about all these decrees and say, “Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.”

What was God’s Covenant Promise with Israel?

God would dwell among Israel. God delivered them, led, fed, fought, disciplined, and finally delivered them to the Promised Land

What was Israel’s promise to God?

The people said they would do everything the LORD commanded.

What was God’s intent for Israel?

Other nations would see how great and wise Israel was [and seek their God].

What was the result of the Mosaic covenant from Moses to the Judges, Samuel, and the next covenant with David?

The first generation to enter the land with Joshua was faithful, but the next generations fell into idolatry. God’s covenant was broken over and over by this people’s failure to obey his commands, especially worshipping other gods and idols. God raised up Judges to protect Israel from enemies and to call the people to repentance. Finally, God raised up a prophet - Samuel, to lead his people, but the people asked for a king as an act of rejecting God.

God's Covenant with David and the Kings of Israel

^{2Sa 7:8} "Now then, tell my servant David, 'This is what the LORD Almighty says: I took you from the pasture and from following the flock to be ruler over my people Israel.

^{2Sa 7:9} I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men of the earth. I will also give you rest from all your enemies.

^{2Sa 7:12} When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom.

^{2Sa 7:13} He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

^{2Sa 7:14} I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with the rod of men, with floggings inflicted by men. ¹⁵ But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you.

^{2Sa 7:16} Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever."

^{1Ki 11:38} If you do whatever I command you and walk in my ways and do what is right in my eyes by keeping my statutes and commands, as David my servant did, I will be with you. I will build you a dynasty as enduring as the one I built for David and will give Israel to you.

- a. What were God's Covenant promises to David and the Kings of Israel –

God promised rest from enemies, your house and lineage will endure forever, lineage on the throne forever

- b. What was David's part in the Covenant?

David – would walk in God's ways, keep commands, and repent.

What happened with the kings after David and Israel?

Other Kings and Israel – Solomon and other kings practice idolatry.

All of Israel practiced idolatry. The kingdom split, the southern kingdom's capital was Jerusalem, northern kingdom's capital was Samaria.

Assyria obliterated the Northern kingdom,

The Southern kingdom was given time to repent (under some kings they did, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joash, Uzziah, Hezekiah, and Josiah). On the whole, the idolatry of Judah was as bad as Israel, so the Babylonians destroyed Judah, but God preserved his people.

That brings us to the new covenant.

4. Jeremiah 31:31-34 refers to the promise of a new covenant and is quoted in Hebrews 8:8-12. What happened in Jeremiah's time to prompt God to promise a new covenant to his people?

Jeremiah was a priest in the temple of Jerusalem and also a prophet to Judah during the time of the Babylonians. He warned Israel they would fall and be taken into captivity

because of their idolatry. He remained in Jerusalem after its fall and was given protection by the Babylonians. The promise of a new covenant was due to the cancellation of the old covenant - God was not going to protect Israel from their enemies due to their idolatry.

5. What did God promise and desire in His new covenant? See Jeremiah 31:31-34/Hebrews 8:8-12:

“The time is coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.

⁹ It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they did not remain faithful to my covenant, and I turned away from them, declares the Lord.

¹⁰ This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. ¹¹ No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. ¹² For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”

- a. What was God’s Promise in the new covenant?

God would write his laws in the minds and hearts of his people – He will give his abiding Spirit

He will be our God

We will be his people

He will forgive our sins

- b. Why did God need to establish a new Covenant?

The old covenants did not change people’s hearts, and they did not obey his commands

6. The passage in Jeremiah tells us about God’s intent for the new covenant but does not provide additional details. References to the new covenant are found in Luke, Corinthians, and Hebrews. Refer to the following verses and compare the Old with the New.

^{Heb 9:11} When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation.

^{Heb 9:12} He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption.

^{Heb 9:13} The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean.

^{Heb 9:14} How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

Heb 9:15 For this reason, Christ is the mediator of a **new covenant**, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance —now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.

- a. What is God's part of the new Covenant?
Christ – the fulfillment of the Promise to Abraham, Moses, David, and the new covenant
He will be our God, and we will be his people
One perfect blood sacrifice for all sin for all time
Cleansing of his people
His abiding Spirit would write his laws on our hearts and minds.
- b. What is our part (verse 14)?

Faith in Christ (God's gift), loving and worshipping God, loving and serving our neighbor.
Our obedience flows out of love and devotion to Christ.

7. A second illustration of the new covenant is in Luke 22:19-20 and 1 Corinthians 11:25-6. What is our part in the new covenant?
Lk 22:19 And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me."
Lk 22:20 In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the **new covenant** in my blood, which is poured out for you. 1Co 11:26 For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Our role in the new covenant? – we take communion in remembrance of Christ's sacrifice for the forgiveness of our sins and our salvation.

8. A third illustration of the new covenant is found in 2 Corinthians 3:6. What is another of our roles in the new covenant based on 2 Corinthians 3:6?
2Co 3:6 He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant —not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

We are God's ministers or priests. A minister is like a public servant who is under the direction of another – Christ.

As priests, we serve both God and man. A name for a priest in Greek is a dispenser or through-put. The image is a big water pipe delivering cool refreshing water - the living water promised by Christ.

Another aspect of this verse is that God makes us competent (also translated as able, worthy, or sufficient) to be his minister through his life-giving Spirit.

9. Faith and obedience were part of all God's covenants and are also part of the new covenant:

Eph 5:3 But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people.

Eph 5:4 Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving.

^{Eph 5:5} For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a man is an idolater — has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

What is God's provision for our failure under the new covenant?

We all fail, but Christ is our all in all. Christ is our wisdom from God, our righteousness, holiness, and redemption, in whom we find complete forgiveness for our sins. Even if we sin for the 1000th time, we repent, ask for forgiveness, and ask the Holy Spirit to renew our hearts and minds.

Closing Prayer and Blessing