

### ➤ Read Hebrews 8:1–13.

“In the first half of the book, the writer has placed the emphasis on the *person* of Jesus Christ.... In chapter 8, the author switches the emphasis to the *ministry* of Jesus Christ.”<sup>1</sup>

1. The writer tells us that the “main point” of what he’s been saying is that we have “such a high priest” (v. 1). Review Hebrews 7:20–28 and jot down some of the characteristics of Jesus, our unique high priest.

2. What two things does the writer add about this high priest in 8:1–2? Fill in the blanks below:

We have a high priest...

“who \_\_\_\_\_” (v. 1)

and

“who \_\_\_\_\_” (v. 2).

*“Sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven”  
(v. 1)*

This description is easy to gloss over, but each element of it is meaningful:

- “‘The Majesty in heaven’ is a reverent way of referring to God.”<sup>2</sup>
- “Sitting down at the right hand of the supreme king was an image of the ultimate honor and alludes to Psalm 110:1”<sup>3</sup>; Jesus is enthroned in glory at the right hand of God the Father, the Supreme King.
- The fact that Jesus is seated at God’s right hand shows that he has completed his work of “provid[ing] purification for sins” (1:3). Donald Guthrie adds, “The fact that our high priest sits at God’s right hand enhances his status compared with that of Aaron’s line, whose priests could only stand in God’s presence, their task never finally completed.”<sup>4</sup>



3. What is the relationship between the earthly tabernacle or sanctuary and the “true tabernacle” (v. 2), which is the heavenly sanctuary? (vv. 4–5)

Which is greater, and why? (v. 2; 9:11)

### *The Earthly Tabernacle*

To get a sense for the detailed instructions God gave Moses concerning the construction and furnishing of the tabernacle, take a look at Exodus 25–27, 30.

What does this superiority suggest about the one who serves there?

4. As a high priest, Jesus needed to have “something to offer” as a sacrifice (v. 3). But while the work of the earthly priests was never done—they had to sacrifice animals year after year, both for their own sins and for the sins of the people—Jesus offered a better, one-time sacrifice. What was it? (7:27; Rom. 3:25a; 1 Pet. 1:18–19)
5. We have been learning how Jesus the high priest is superior to earthly high priests. What else is superior? (v. 6)
6. What were the basic terms of the old covenant? (Deut. 26:16–19; \* Deut. 29:9–28)
7. What was the problem with the old covenant?  
v. 9c ( Ps. 106)

7:18–19a; Rom. 8:3

8. According to verse 6, what role does Jesus play in the establishing of the new covenant?

### *Jesus and the New Covenant*

What does it mean that Jesus is the mediator of the new covenant? A covenant is a contract between two parties, and “the mediator is a go-between whose task is to keep the parties in fellowship with one another.”<sup>5</sup> The word translated “mediator” here also has the sense of “one who acts as a guarantee’ so as to secure something which otherwise would not be obtained”<sup>6</sup> (compare 7:22).

9. What are the “better promises” on which the new covenant is based (v. 6)? (vv. 10–12)

10. How are God’s laws put in believers’ minds and written on their hearts (v. 10)? (Rom. 8:1–10)

11. What does the ultimate fulfillment of the promises in verses 10b–11 look like? (Rev. 21:2–3, 22–23; 22:3–4)

12. What is the final word on the old covenant? (v. 13)

### *The Old Covenant*

The old covenant was not a failed first attempt at rescuing fallen humanity; it was never meant to be the final plan of salvation. Rather, it was a temporary covenant which prepared the way for the new covenant: “it was... designed to teach that the way of atonement was the way of sacrifice and substitution and to arouse the hope that in due course God himself would send the perfect victim for the removal of all sin (cf. Jn. 1:29)”<sup>7</sup>; furthermore, “the law of God is the standard of holiness required” of the One who presented himself as the perfect sacrifice.<sup>8</sup> Once the old covenant had served its purpose, it became “obsolete and outdated” (v. 13).

13. Reread this week's passage. Summarize the big concepts in your own words as if you were trying to communicate them to a child.

14. How is your life different because you live under the new covenant and not under the old covenant?

\*📖 For further study

<sup>1</sup> Walter A. Henrichsen, *After the Sacrifice: A Practical Study of Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), 101.

<sup>2</sup> Leon Morris, *Hebrews*, in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary with the New International Version of the Holy Bible in Twelve Volumes*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol.12 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 74.

<sup>3</sup> Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2014), 640.

<sup>4</sup> Donald Guthrie, *Hebrews: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, ed. Leon Morris, vol. 15 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1983), 173.

<sup>5</sup> Guthrie, 176.

<sup>6</sup> W. E. Vine, *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, s.v. "Mediator," [studybible.info/vines/Mediator](http://studybible.info/vines/Mediator).

<sup>7</sup> Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1977), 281.

<sup>8</sup> Hughes, 301.