



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



The Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews

Chapter 8

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Introduction

- St. Paul proved in the last chapters the uniqueness of Christ as the superior high priest
- Starting from Hebrews 8 till Hebrews 10:18, St. Paul will draw a very important conclusion based on his previous arguments
- In these chapters, St. Paul will explain the role of Christ as our High Priest in the True, Heavenly Sanctuary



Heavenly Sanctuary (8:1-5)

- Christ as the high priest and the Son sat *at the right hand* of the throne of the Majesty in heavens (Psalm 110:1), (Hebrew 1:3)
- Minister (*leitourgos*) referring to His activity as a high priest not to His status
- Sanctuary is used to refer to the Holy of Holies



Heavenly Sanctuary (8:1-5)

- True Tabernacle because:
 - ❖ Heavenly
 - ❖ Erected by the Lord
 - ❖ Genuine and authentic (not just an imitation) (V.5)
- This reflects on the superiority of Christ and the high priest and the superiority of the True Tabernacle over the earthly one



Heavenly Sanctuary (8:1-5)

- As a high priest, He has to offer gifts and sacrifices (Himself)
- If this was an earthly sanctuary, He would not be even a priest since He is not from the tribe of Levi
- The earthly sanctuary is a copy and shadow of the heavenly sanctuary (Exodus 25:9 and 40)



Better Covenant (8:6-13)

- Since He has obtained a more excellent ministry (Heb 8:1-5) → He is a Mediator of a better covenant with better promises
- Mediator explains His role as a high priest
- The relationship between God and us is a covenant relationship
- Death is the penalty of breaking a covenant



Better Covenant (8:6-13)

- The covenant was established by:
 - ❖ A promise (Adam)
 - ❖ Then with a sign from nature, Rainbow (Noah)
 - ❖ Then with a sign in the flesh, circumcision (Abraham)
 - ❖ Then with the blood of animals (Moses)



Better Covenant (8:6-13)

- The first covenant was based on the righteousness of the law
- Why was the first covenant not faultless?
- Because He found fault *with them* and He disregarded them
- So there was a need for a better covenant and better promises (Jeremiah 31:31-34)



Better Covenant (8:6-13)

- “The days are coming” are the “days of Christ”
- The New Covenant has the same formula: I will be their God and they shall be My people
 - ❖ The law of God will be implanted in the minds and hearts of His people
 - ❖ They will all know the Lord personally
 - ❖ They will be forgiven from their sins



Better Covenant (8:6-13)

- Through the sacrifice of Christ the dwelling of the Holy Spirit in us was possible and thus we were given a new heart and a new spirit (Ezekiel 36:26-28)
- God is known personally to us now since the veil is broken and the way into the Holy of the Holies in Heavens is opened
- The New Covenant is based on the righteousness of Christ



Better Covenant (8:6-13)

- These are the better promises of Hebrews 8:6
- They reveal the obsolete nature of the old covenant (V.13)
- This does not mean that the Old Testament is obsolete
- He just quoted 4 verses from the Old Testament



Better Covenant (8:6-13)

- Rather the relationship that is based on the righteousness of men and not based on the three foundations of the New Covenant
- This also refers to the end of the Levitical priesthood and the sacrificial system of the earthly tabernacle



Conclusion

- In what sense is Jesus Christ the "mediator" of a new covenant? What did He do to mediate this?
- What are the stages of the covenant?
- Why did the Old Covenant fail?
- What are the primary promises of the New Covenant as prophesied in Jeremiah 31:31-34?
- What was made obsolete by the New Covenant?