

**2025 BIBLE STUDY SERIES**  
**THEME: "HOPE IN THE FACE OF DIFFICULTY"**

**January 22, 2025**

**FREEDOM FOUND IN FORGIVENESS:**  
**"God's Forgiveness"**  
**Hebrews 8:1-13 (8:12)**

**Topics**

- Reflection Questions
- Important Emphasis
- Key Terms
- Scripture Reference
- Outline
- Introduction
- Background and Context
- Exploring The Text
- Check For Understanding
- Life Application

**REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

- A. Our homes, communities, churches, and country are deeply divided over politics, religion, social justice, and immigration concerns. How can we support each other to stay steadfast, resilient, and faithful to Jesus and a forgiving God responding with true righteousness in such perilous times?

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- B. What items in your home or office would you consider obsolete, and for what reason do you keep them?

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## IMPORTANT EMPHASIS

Those who cooperate most fully with Forgiveness are those who dance most freely in the beauty of Redemption. ~Lysa Terkeurst~

Forgiveness is the state of being absolved or pardoned for sin **Ps. 51:1, 9**

The Old Testament gives the terms for Forgiveness and the impact of the forgiveness.

1. To expiate sin
2. To Lift; bear the weight of guilt from the conscience

We attempt to shoulder the load of our sin which places us in the disposition articulated by Ernest Becker who states, "we deal with the ceaseless condemnation of never measuring up, of never being worthy, is wiped away in a single gesture of divine kindness and grace."

Yesterday's offerings are overwhelmed by today's sins. ~Thomas Long~

Barbara Brown in that wonderful Book *The Preaching Life* tells of her days as the coordinator for Christian Education for a parish church. Congregation repeatedly told her how hungry they were for the Bible Study... She provided seminary professors to teach and the attendance was poor. They still asked for more Bible. Finally, she writes I got the message. **Bible was a code word for God.** People were not hungry for information about the Bible; they were hungry for an experience of God, which the Bible seemed to offer them.

Graphic Word pictures describe the **Divine action of Forgiveness**

- God removes human guilt from one end of the world to the other ps. 103:12
- God casts our sins behind his back Isa. 38:17
- God drowns them in the depths of the sea Mic. 7:19
- God remembers human transgression no longer Jer. 31:34
- God Blots them out forever Isa. 43: 25

Forgiveness is tied in with Jesus Death and resurrection.

Main Character of the Old Testament that leads to the fulfillment of Forgiveness in the New Testament. Melchizedek's priesthood mirror Christ

Long before Jesus served as the great high priest, the preacher claims, there was a harbinger of things to come in the form of the enigmatic figure of Melchizedek of Salem,

### Forgiveness of God (Hebrews 7:25)

- **Draw near to Him-** Hebrews 7:19
- **Death that was necessary-** Hebrew 7:26-27
- **Display of what's next-** Hebrews 8:5

### Impact of our Great Savior (Hebrews 8:10-13)

- **Mediator through Christ-** Jesus is the ultimate mediator not those priest of old but Christ.
- **Minds of Christ** – here the mind and the heart is connected because they hang out in the same neighborhood
- **Merciful to their Iniquities by Christ-** Christ did not come to condemn us but to liberate us through his tender grace and mercy!

Forgiveness is a Spiritual discipline Richard foster suggest in his book the *The Celebration of Discipline*. “The Disciplines are intended for our good. They are meant to bring the abundance of God into our lives.” ~Richard Foster~

### KEY TERMS

Better covenant  
Better promises  
Copy  
disappear  
Earth  
Egypt  
Fathers  
Fault  
Faultless  
Fellow Citizens  
God  
Hearts  
Heavenly things  
High Priest  
House of Israel

House of Judah  
Iniquities  
Jesus Christ  
Jewish Priesthood  
Lord  
Mediator  
Merciful  
Minds  
Minister  
More excellent  
ministry  
Mountain  
New Covenant  
Obsolete

Once-For-All  
Pattern  
Remember  
Right Hand of the Majesty  
Sanctuary  
Shadow  
Sins  
Sovereign  
Superior  
Surpasses  
Teach  
The Law  
True Righteousness  
True Tabernacle

**Scripture Reference (Hebrews 8:1-13 NASB 1995)**

<sup>1</sup>Now the main point in what has been said *is this*: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, <sup>2</sup>a minister in the sanctuary and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man. <sup>3</sup>For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices; so it is necessary that this *high priest* also have something to offer. <sup>4</sup>Now if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer the gifts according to the Law; <sup>5</sup>who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned *by God* when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for, "See," He says, "that you make all things according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain." <sup>6</sup>But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises. <sup>7</sup>For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second. <sup>8</sup>For finding fault with them, He says, "Behold, days are coming, says the Lord, When I will effect a new covenant With the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; <sup>9</sup>Not like the covenant which I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; For they did not continue in My covenant, and I did not care for them, says the Lord. <sup>10</sup>"For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel After those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws into their minds, And I will write them on their hearts. And I will be their God, And they shall be My people. <sup>11</sup>"And they shall not teach everyone his fellow citizen, and everyone his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' For all will know Me, From the least to the greatest of them. <sup>12</sup>"For I will be merciful to their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more." <sup>13</sup>When He said, "A new *covenant*," He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.

**Outline**

- I. The Heavenly Supersedes the Earthly (8:1-6)**
  - A. Supreme Sanctuary (8:1-2)
  - B. Superior Service (8:3-5)
  - C. Significant Sacrifice (8:6)
- II. The Heavenly Supplants the Earthly (8:7-13)**
  - A. Spiritual Shortcomings (8:7-9)
  - B. Sovereign Solution (8:10-12)
  - C. Secure Salvation (8:13)

## INTRODUCTION

The writer of the letter to the Hebrews had to convince the readers to settle for nothing less than God's **very best** for their lives. Jews were familiar with God's goodness and perfection. After all, they were his chosen people, and through them God had communicated his love and plan for the world. They were the recipients of the covenant, the law, the Tabernacle, and profound religious rituals, and they had been blessed with prophets proclaiming God's messages and priests doing God's work. Judaism was God's way, and it was good.

But Jesus the Christ had come, fulfilling the Law, becoming the perfect sacrifice, and initiating the new covenant. Christ was a better prophet, a better priest, and a better sacrifice. In fact, he was the ultimate **"best."** Many Jews had embraced this new way, expressing faith in Christ ("Messiah") as Savior and Lord. Yet the familiar Judaism continued to draw them back. Some returned to the old way, and others attempted to combine the old with the new, forming a hybrid of Judaism and Christianity. And so they were missing God's **best**.

Hebrews is a masterful document written to Jews who were evaluating Jesus or who were struggling with the Christian faith. The message of Hebrews is that Jesus is better, Christianity is superior, and Christ is supreme and completely sufficient for salvation.

## BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The **author of this letter** is unknown, but people have long speculated about whether or not Paul or one of his coworkers, like Barnabas or Apollos, wrote it. There is an interesting bit of information about the author in **Hebrews 2:3-4**, where the Author claims a firsthand relationship with the disciples who were around Jesus. So even if we do not know who wrote this letter, we do know that it is anchored in the teachings of the apostles.

It is also unclear who the **audience of this letter** was or where they lived. The author, however, knows them well, and also assumes they have a thorough knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures, especially the Torah. The author expects them to be familiar with the story of Abraham's family, all the details of the exodus, what happened at Mount Sinai, and Israel's journey through the wilderness. Because of this expectation, it's most likely that this letter was written to Jewish Christians, which explains the letter's title, "to the Hebrews."

We have clues from **Hebrews 10:32-34** that this community was facing \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ because of their **association with** \_\_\_\_\_ and that some in the community were \_\_\_\_\_ **the faith**. All of this explains the purpose and structure of the letter.

The letter contains a short introduction (Heb. 1:1-4), followed by four sections in which the author compares and contrasts Jesus with key people and events from Israel's history: angels and the Torah (Heb. 1-2), Moses and the promised land (Heb. 3-4), the priests and Melchizedek (Heb. 5-7), and the sacrifices and the covenant (Heb. 8-10). After all these comparisons, he challenges these Christians to follow Jesus no matter the cost (Heb. 11-13). Today's lesson will focus on **Hebrews 8:1-13**, The Superiority of Christ and the Provision of a New Covenant.

Throughout all the comparisons that make up the main body of the letter, the author has two main goals. First, he elevates **Jesus as \_\_\_\_\_ to anyone and anything else** in order to show that he is worthy of total trust and devotion. Second, he **challenges these believers to remain \_\_\_\_\_ to Jesus despite persecution and even imprisonment**. This is why each section includes a strong warning to not abandon Jesus.

Jesus is the clearest, the fullest, and the ultimate revelation of God; and he is worthy of total trust and devotion. Following Jesus, means remaining **faithful** to him despite **persecution** because God will not abandon his people. Ultimate forgiveness, deliverance, and salvation comes only from the Majesty through His Son, the Messiah, the Anointed One—**Jesus Christ**.

## EXPLORING THE TEXT

### I. The Heavenly Supersedes the Earthly (8:1-6 NASB 1995)

#### A. Supreme Sanctuary (8:1-2)

*<sup>1</sup>Now the main point in what has been said is this: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, <sup>2</sup>a minister in the sanctuary and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man.*

In Hebrews 8:1-2, the author declares that Jesus is our High Priest and is seated at God's [the Majesty's] **right hand** in heaven. This highlights the **deity** [divinity] of Jesus and his greater or **supreme** [highest, utmost, matchless, incomparable] role compared to earthly priests.

In Christian theology, Jesus being seated at **the right hand of God** signifies his exalted position of power, authority, and honor in heaven, indicating that he is now reigning as King and has complete dominion over all creation, essentially serving as God's equal partner in ruling the universe (**Hebrews 1:3-4; 13:1-2**). It emphasizes that

heaven, the true place of worship, is the eternal destination for believers, contrasting with the earthly **sanctuary**, which is a \_\_\_\_\_ of heavenly realities.

Christ, the exalted one, is a servant who ministers in the sacred tent in heaven. Jesus serves by taking his rightful place as our \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. His place in heaven secures our place there. Christ returned to the presence of God in heaven, the true place of worship that "...the Lord **pitched**.." meaning it was built by **the Lord** and not by **human hands**.

This "**true**" place of worship does not imply that the Tabernacle and Temple on earth were false but that they were \_\_\_\_\_ **shadows** of the true and \_\_\_\_\_ place of worship (8:5). Before Christ, the earthly high priest could only enter a special place, the **Most Holy Place**, to come into the presence of God.

Today, through **prayer**, we can enter the throne room of heaven and make our petitions known (**Hebrews 4:14-16**). We will one day eternally live in that presence. By extension, then, the "old" way through the Jewish priesthood no longer exists; it is replaced by Jesus Christ, whose ministry (service) is **superior** to that of earthly priests, involves his **serving** in heaven and securing the believers' place there.

### CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING

1. According to **Hebrews 10:32-36**, what two difficulties were the Hebrew community facing because of their association with Jesus? (**See the Background and Context section above on this worksheet**).

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2. Because of the difficulties that the Hebrews faced, what were some in the community doing? (**See Background and Context section above on this worksheet**).

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3. What does it mean that Jesus Christ has “taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven”? **(8:1-2)**

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4. What does it mean that Jesus was a minister in the heavenly sanctuary and the true tabernacle that the Lord ‘pitched’? **(8:2)**

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## EXPLORING THE TEXT

### B. Superior Service (8:3-5)

*<sup>3</sup> For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices; so it is necessary that this high priest also have something to offer. <sup>4</sup> Now if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer the gifts according to the Law; <sup>5</sup> who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned by God when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for, “See,” He says, “that you make all things according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain.*

Elsewhere in the Letter to the Hebrews, Jesus is described as a priest of the highest stature. He is declared to be “a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek” (Heb. 5:6); “designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek” (Heb. 5:10); and “...He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek” (Heb. 6:20).

Who was Melchizedek? Melchizedek is a priest and king who is presented as a type of Christ in the book of Hebrews. The writer of Hebrews uses Melchizedek as a type to show that Christ's new priesthood is superior to the old Levitical order. He is first mentioned in Genesis 14:18-20 as King of Salem and a priest of God Most High (El Elyon). Abram encountered Melchizedek after he won a battle where he collected significant spoils. Melchizedek offered Abram bread and wine and blessed him. In return, Abram gave Melchizedek a 10<sup>th</sup> of all the spoils he had collected.



Hebrews 8:3-5 highlights **Jesus Christ's superior role as a high priest**, offering a **new covenant** with **complete forgiveness** and a **deeper relationship with God**, contrasting with the repeated sacrifices in the old system. His [Jesus] one-time, all-sufficient sacrifice surpasses the continual offerings of Levitical priests.

In the Jewish system, priests were from the **tribe of Levi**, performing daily sacrifices for sin forgiveness. Jesus, from the **tribe of Judah**, couldn't be a priest under this law. The present tense suggests the book predates the a.d. 70 destruction of the Jerusalem Temple, which ended those sacrifices. Jesus' perfect sacrifice made priests and sacrifices unnecessary.

God gave Moses **the pattern** for the **Tabernacle**, and Moses was warned to follow it carefully, having been warned to make everything according to the design God had shown him (see Exodus 25:40). This earthly sanctuary was meant to **reflect**, however imperfectly, the **heavenly Tabernacle**.

### C. Significant Sacrifice (8:6)

*<sup>6</sup> But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises.*

Although the priests descended from Aaron possessed a job of high honor and dignity, the ministry Jesus has received **is far superior to the ministry of those who serve under the old laws**.

The ministry of Jesus and the new covenant are superior for several reasons:

- they completely fulfill and replace the priests' ministry and the old covenant;
- they last for eternity because Jesus is High Priest forever;
- they require no further sacrifices;
- they accomplish what all the other sacrifices could not do—truly atone for sin;
- they provide sinful humanity the opportunity to have a personal relationship with God (see 8:10-11).

This **better covenant** is **based on better promises** (see 8:10-12).

**CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING**

4. To whom does the author of the Letter to Hebrews compare Jesus? **(Heb. 5:6, 5:10, and 6:20)**  

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5. Why would Jesus not be a High Priest on earth? **(8:4-5)**  

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6. How do earthly priests serve versus how Jesus serves? **(8:5)**  

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7. Jesus obtained a more excellent ministry because He is also mediator of what? **(8:6)**  

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8. What is the "better covenant" enacted on? **(8:6)**  

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**EXPLORING THE TEXT****II. The Heavenly Supplants the Earthly (8:7-13)****A. Spiritual Shortcomings (8:7-9)**

*<sup>7</sup> For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second. <sup>8</sup> For finding fault with them, He says, "Behold, days are coming, says the Lord, When I will effect a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; <sup>9</sup> Not like the covenant which I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt;*

*For they did not continue in My covenant, and I did not care for them, says the Lord.*

The first covenant given to Moses and Aaron was not flawed but **preparatory** for the new covenant. It was replaced because it could not provide an **eternal solution** to **sin** or a **true relationship with God**. The Israelites repeatedly broke this covenant by disobeying God's laws, so God introduced a new covenant.

This **new covenant** focused on **internal spiritual change** rather than external laws, as prophesied by Jeremiah (31:31-33) and Ezekiel (36:25-27). Despite their disobedience and **failure to remain faithful**, **God promised** a better arrangement through Jesus' sacrifice and the Holy Spirit's role in transforming believers' hearts. Although God allowed consequences for their sins, He never abandoned His people and offered hope for faithfulness (Jeremiah 29:11).

### CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING

9. What does it mean that the "first covenant" was not faultless?

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10. Why did the Lord say He would create a new covenant with the Houses of Israel and Judah? (8:8-9)

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### EXPLORING THE TEXT

#### B. Sovereign Solution (8:10-12)

<sup>10</sup> *"For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel After those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws into their minds, And I will write them on their hearts. And I will be their God, And they shall be My people. <sup>11</sup> "And they shall not teach everyone his fellow citizen, and everyone his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' For all will know Me, From the least to the greatest of them. <sup>12</sup> "For I*

*will be merciful to their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more."*

Under God's **new covenant**, **God's law is inside us**. It is no longer an external set of rules and principles. The **Holy Spirit reminds us** of Christ's words, activates our consciences, influences our motives and desires, and makes us want to obey. Now **we desire to do God's will** with all our heart and mind.

This new covenant has four provisions:

1. The new covenant provides ***inward change***: **"I will put my laws in their minds . . . I will write them on their hearts."**
2. The new covenant provides ***intimacy with God***: **"I will be their God, and they will be my people."**
3. The new covenant provides ***knowledge of God***: **"Everyone, from the least to the greatest, will already know me."** The new covenant brings a new relationship between people and God, making each believer a priest (1 Peter 2:5, 9).

**Of course, there will still be the need for teachers, but every believer will be able to know God not just priests or a select few.**

4. The new covenant provides ***complete forgiveness from sins***: **"I will forgive their wrongdoings, and I will never again remember their sins."** People of the old covenant had forgiveness of sins (see Exodus 34:6-8; Micah 7:18-20), but they had experienced an **incomplete, non-lasting forgiveness** as demonstrated by the never-ending need to make sacrifices for sins.

All four of these characteristics bring about a **true righteousness** that could not be known under the old covenant.

### C. Secure Salvation (8:13)

<sup>13</sup> *When He said, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.*

Introducing a **new covenant** means that God **has made the first one obsolete**. The old one was fulfilled by Jesus Christ and completed by him; therefore, it was no longer needed. **Old systems, old sacrifices, and the old priesthood now have no value in securing God's approval.**

### CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING

11. What four changes did God say would occur when He established a new covenant? **(8:10-12)**

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12. What will be the effect of the four changes outlined in Hebrews 8:10-12?

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13. What is God's response to sin under the new covenant? **(8:12)**

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14. What became of the old covenant when the new was introduced? **(8:13)**

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### LIFE APPLICATION

**Think about it—**

- Are there any areas in your life where you might still be clinging to old patterns or understandings that are not aligned with the new covenant?
- How does understanding the new covenant affect your relationship with God, particularly in terms of your confidence in forgiveness and your ability to approach God directly?

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## RESOURCES

Adult Questions for LESSONMaker

Jamieson-Faust Brown Bible Commentary. A Commentary: Critical, Experimental, and Practical on the Old and New Testaments.

Life Application New Testament Commentary.

The Moody Handbook of Theology