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## *Into Thy Word Bible Study in Hebrews*

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### **Hebrews 8:1-13: *Christ our High Priest!***

**General idea:** The main point is this: Jesus Christ is our High Priest; He sits in honor at God's right hand and ministers to us, His people. He is a God who cares and who is present in life along with us. We worship His trueness—not a human temple or building, but He who is eternal and sacred. He is our sacrifice so no human priest is needed to make atonement or sacrifice for us; He is the ultimate Redeemer. Christ does not operate under Moses or the priestly laws—He supersedes them and is far better for us to know and surrender to. These are mere representations and copies, but Christ is the real, effectual deal for us. Buildings are mere representatives and not the True Representative that Christ is. Christ supersedes and fulfills the old laws of Moses so now we can go directly to God, person-to-Person. This is a far better Covenant for us so why would we want to follow the Old Covenant? If the original covenant had been flawless and had worked, why would Christ have needed to come, die, and be raised for us? God told Jeremiah this old system would pass away and a new and better one would come and supersede it. This was the promise Adam, Moses, and the Prophets looked forward to; now that Promise has come—Christ is here! As God took the hand of His people and led them then, He will do the same with us personally and now. He will write His law in our hearts and minds, give us His Word and Spirit so we will have all we need, and lead us with His Mighty Hand. He will be our God and we will be His people; we can know Him and He will empower us to make Him known to others too. He is a God of love and forgiveness, and He speaks to us now, so make sure you are lined up to Him.

### **Context and Background:**

This passage is a summation of the previous four chapters and hammers home the significance and importance that we have a God who cares and who is our Most High Priest. The qualifications and the role of Christ had been explained to harden Jews and confused and disheartened Jewish Christians who were seeking to return to the old ways; how foolish and ineffective that would be. Now we have more insights to Him, His ministry, and the heavenly sanctuary. The Old Covenant is ephemeral and flawed, and now is superseded by Christ. This is a parallel of man's search for God by obeying His law and precepts, serving Him as priests, and building buildings and Temples to worship Him. Yet Christ is God the High Priest; He lives in the real heavenly Temple. What we have on earth is merely representative and flawed. Now that Christ has come, we have the real One to whom we can look and worship. Our earthly church buildings and Jewish temples are meant to imitate and reflect God's holiness and point people by architecture to Him (Ex. 25:8-9). Now He is The Structure and Design by which we know Him for His Work and Word, and revitalization by the Holy Spirit. The

author then quotes from Jeremiah that is a witness, as in a court of law, giving testimony to the truth and validity of Christ's coming and role, and how He supersedes and fulfills the Levitical system (Jer. 31:31-34).

### **Commentary; Word and Phrase Meanings:**

- *The point / sum.* Meaning the head or top of what is being said. This is a summary to make sure the readers knew how important it was, and also provides a recap of the previous chapters that show us Christ's qualifications.
- *Right hand.* An ancient term meaning the one who is the true and right representative and who holds the power of the King. This also means one is approved and ready. Melchizedek had this role, as did Moses and his Levitical priesthood. Now Christ does (Psalm 110:1; Heb. 5:6; 7:17).
- *True tabernacle / tent / sanctuary.* Meaning the "Most Holy Place," the "holy of holies" or holy things, referring to the Old Testament tent meetings where one met with God, the only way sinners can approach our Holy God and receive forgiveness; it was replaced by Solomon's Temple and is now replaced by Christ. Also the earthly building is an imperfect and temporary replica of the heavenly one. It is just a representation, whereas Christ is the reality. The loss of the Temple and its innermost sanctuary is, in fact, no big deal when we have the real One—Christ (Lev. 16:13-15, 34; Heb. 7:25).
- *Not by man.* The Temple was a meeting place for the priests, who made intercession, and the people who went before the presence of God, but God does not need man's buildings. Now Christ takes us from the impermanence of the old system to His permanence; He is the one who meets us where we are (1 Kings 8:27; Acts 7:48-49; Heb. 9:11, 24).
- *Something to offer.* Christ, His life, work, shed blood, death, and resurrection, are now the offering to end all of humanity's need for a temple and priestly system (Heb. 7:27; 9:12; 10:10).
- *He would not be a priest.* Meaning Jesus did not come from the Levitical order but was appointed by God in a different order that is superior (See [Hebrews 7:11-28](#) study).
- *Sanctuary that is a copy / example.* This is a philosophical term from Plato that means that the "ideal template" is in heaven and the earth's is a mere shadow. The Jewish philosopher Philo also taught this as a pattern (20 BC – 50 AD, contemporary of the N.T. writers and very influential and popular then). The meaning is that the real one is in heaven and anything that is on earth is a mere "sketch" as in a shadow or copy. This infers that Christ is Real and His presence is real, (not an idea as Plato taught; rather Christ, in biblical thought, is God in our present reality and our LORD) and the priests and

system of worship prior to Him were mere copies pointing to Him who was to come and who is here now (Ezek. 31:2-9; 42:15).

- *Jesus ...superior.* The Old Testament priesthood was flawed and imperfect and could not save anyone or truly mediate one's sin and/or life. It only pointed to Christ who is perfect and has no flaw, and is here with us both now and eternally; He is Superior. This new Way is better—better promise, better oath, and better able to meet our needs (Heb. 7:12, 22).
- *Mediator.* Refers to what is now a lawyer, or administrative judge who mediates between two disputing parties; here it is Christ who mediates between God and us (Ex. 24:7-8; Gal. 3:19-20; 1 Tim. 2:5-6; Heb. 9:14-15; 12:24).
- *God found fault.* The Law was right and holy and pointed to a Holy, Righteous God; it is only deficient because we can't live up to it. God demands holiness and righteousness, something we can't do as sinful humans, and why we need our Mediator, Christ. (Rom. 7:11-12).
- *New covenant.* God renews His relationship with His people and gives a renewed covenant; the law is still in place, but now we also have an age of grace in Christ by faith alone (Deut. 30:11-14; Psalm 37:31; 40:8; 119:11; Isa. 51:7).
- *They did not remain faithful.* The Hebrews broke the covenant by their refusal to trust and obey God; they were not living for Him nor did they care for Him. God was not in their hearts and minds, so now God has to write it down—not in stone, but in our hearts (Rom. 1).
- *I will put my laws in their minds...hearts.* Meaning God's Law and precepts will become our inner principles so we can no longer claim ignorance or remain in our sin. We will want to know God not out of obligation, but out of a response to Who He is and what He has done. This is a call to know God, obey His principles, and grow in Him. This was a prelude for the Old Testament Jews, that one day they would have a personal relationship with God, as we now have with Christ because of this new covenant. Also, it is a retort by Jeremiah that the people of his day were not concerned about God, only about their own thinking and sins. This is a call to intimately know Christ, and receive Him and His precepts so He will clear our conscience with forgiveness and a contented life in Him when we do His will; we will delight in Him. (Deut. 5:29; Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:26-27; Rom. 8:2-4; Heb. 10:26; 13:21).
- *I will be their God.* This is the King Creator of the Universe, calling to a nation in history and us as people here and now to know Him. The Prophets had this, as did Moses and many others, but it alluded most of the Jews and

peoples of the earth. A more effectual covenant was needed and Christ was it. This is also an echo of the first covenant of God to His people, the Jews: *I will be your God*. This is a commanding, yet loving promise for them to be His people. It comes with two sides. One, He will be our God; two, our part is that we must respond by faith and obedience. The difference is that now, it is easier to know Him. We have the Holy Spirit, Christ's work, His Bible, and His grace. Knowing God declaring a peace treaty with us as an agreement, (what a covenant means).

- *They will all know me /shall all know me...* meaning access to God's presence was restricted, something that only a few like Moses and the prophets had; now we all can enter His inner sanctum, He offers us wisdom as well as forgiveness, and holiness that we can all have when we are in Christ (Heb. 9:7-8; 10:19-22).
- *First one obsolete / old / decayeth*. Referring to the First covenant, and that it was merely temporary and insufficient waiting for and pointing to Christ. It could not force obedience or inspire people to love or live for God. The faith of the Old Testament people looked forward to Christ; we look backward to what He has done, and now we partake in Him (Heb. 4:8 7:11).
- *Soon / about to disappear*. The early Church was already in the New Covenant, but the Old was still there too; the temple was still standing and priests offered sacrifices to God to appease His wrath and atone for sin. The Temple would soon be destroyed, as would the old Levitical system. All that the Jews knew to know God will be discontinued and gone in 70 AD, just a couple of years from when this letter was written and received. Some of the first century Jewish groups, such as the Essenes, did not depend on the Temple; they looked to His Word and faith, and this would become the new system for the Jews as a people of faith, and as they looked to Torah and not to Temple. They also looked for a coming Messiah; yet that One had already come—Jesus Christ, Lord and Savior.

### **Devotional Thoughts and Applications:**

This text, quoted from Jeremiah, tells us that the Hebrews did not remain faithful and they did not honor or trust in God, catapulting themselves into distress and captivity. This paved the way for Christ's way; now faith would be personal and more effectual. The point is that God wants to make sure we honor and live for Him and do not break His commands or betray His trust by living foolishly or in sin! Christ intervenes into our deepest recesses to save us, then molds, shapes, and uses us for our betterment and His glory. He makes intercession; the question is, *how are we responding?* Does our faith touch us so deeply that we can be mediators and intercessors in the lives of others as well? Or, are we so focused on our hurts and circumstances that we only see ourselves and have no gratitude for Christ and no application of our faith to

others? Take a look at your life and your circumstances; how do you see them in the Light of His love and Word? Are we affected by our happenstances, or by Christ as Lord over them and us?

**The Essential Inductive Questions** (for more Inductive questions see Inductive Bible Study):

1. What does this passage say?
2. What does this passage mean?
3. What is God telling me?
4. How am I encouraged and strengthened?
5. Is there sin in my life for which confession and repentance is needed?
6. How can I be changed, so I can learn and grow?
7. What is in the way of these precepts affecting me? What is in the way of my listening to God?
8. How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?
9. What can I model and teach?
10. What does God want me to share with someone?

***Additional Questions:***

1. What does it mean to you that God calls you personally to know Him and grow in Him?
2. Did you know that even though God does not need man's buildings, such as a church structure, it is also a representative of God? How does your church building show others who God is? How should it?
3. How does it make you feel that Christ is a God who cares and who is here in life with you? How does this get you through life with joy? How can He be more a part of you?
4. How can you do a better job at worshiping Christ, who is eternal and sacred, and His trueness?
5. What made you realize that Christ was the real effectual deal for you? If you have not realized this yet, what will it take to show you His Impact?
6. How is our New Covenant far better for us today versus the old system of Law and Sacrifice? Why would these Jewish Christians want to go back and follow the Old Covenant?
7. Do you feel you have all you need to grow in Christ and live a triumphant life? You have His Word and Spirit plus His Mighty Hand that leads you. What more can we need?

8. Do you feel it is easier to know Christ and share Him in this present church age with all of our resources than it was then?
9. Considering non-Christians and weak or new Christians, what does it take nowadays to inspire people to love and live for God?
10. What do you need to do to make sure you are lined up to Christ as Lord?
11. How can your church imitate and reflect God's holiness and point people, by architecture, to Him and still be attractive to those who do not know Him? Why would this be important?
12. What does Christ need to do to intervene into your deepest recesses to first save you, then mold, shape, and use you for your betterment and His glory? What will your life look like if you let Him do this even more?

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