

Verse 12. The New Covenant would truly impart forgiveness. The Law of Moses couldn't impart "forgiveness" to Israel let alone to all mankind. It is only through the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus that forgiveness is possible. The Old Testament sacrifices brought a 'remembrance' of sins, not a 'remission' of sins (Hebrews 10:1-3, 18).

The statement that God would "remember no more" the sins of those forgiven under the New Covenant is repeated in ch. 10:16-17. Does this mean that our all-knowing God can actually "forget" what we have done? If God 'forgot' anything, would He not cease to be GOD?

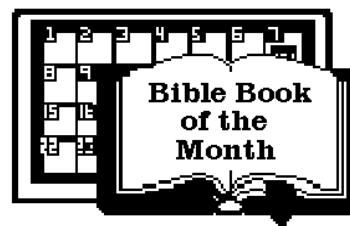
The phrase "remember no more" means to "hold against us no more." Once sin has been forgiven, it is never brought up again. It is not held against us!

One today might say, "I'll forgive, but I can't forget." Of course we may not "forget," but we can act in such a way that we don't ever hold the past against that person. We can treat them as though they never did us wrong.

Verse 13. The Law of that first covenant had been *nailed* to the cross of Christ (Colossians 2:14) and even the lingering ceremonies of it were now ready to pass from the scene forever. Those Jews walking by "sight" probably thought that their Christian friends were foolish to abandon such a "solid religion" whose priests and offerings could be seen for a "faith" that couldn't and whose high priest was in another world.

But in A.D. 70 the city of Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed by the Romans, and the Jews have not had a temple or a priesthood to serve them ever since. In fact, with the destruction of all their records, no Jew could demonstrate that he was of Aaron's line, thus that he qualified to be a priest. They have no one qualified to serve their ceremonies even if they tried to re-initiate them.

However, the New Covenant brings eternal blessings. Jesus is the author of "eternal salvation" (Hebrews 5:9) to all those who obey him. The New Covenant will never become old and disappear. The Lord is ministering today, interceding in our behalf before the throne of God.



Hebrews

Lesson #2

The Better Covenant

Text: Hebrews 8:1-13

Introduction

The first part of the Book of Hebrews is more like a sermon than a letter. In this "word of exhortation" the author shows his Jewish Christian readers how the New Covenant mediated by Christ Himself is superior to the Old.

1. It Is Ministered By A Superior High Priest 8:1

Verse 1. The "summary" of his point made in the previous paragraph (chapter 7) was that Christ being a high priest of the order of Melchisedec enjoyed a superior priesthood than the Levitical priests of Aaron's line. One proof of his superiority is seen in "where" he now sits? Christ sits on the right hand of the throne of God!

We may not recognize the full significance of this, but folk acquainted with a monarchy (and those of the writer's day) would well grasp the preeminence given Christ. The Oriental kings placed at the right hand of their throne a son whom they associated with themselves in all the prerogatives of royalty. Thus Jesus was not just a high priest, but "royal" and associated with God in His Kingdom, and "reigns" also as "King" with the Father.

And only a priest "after the order of Melchisedec" could be enthroned, for Melchisedec was both "king" and "priest" (7:1f). The "priests" of the order of Aaron were of the tribe of Levi, and the kings were of the tribe of Judah, and there was no way one could be "both" in that current system.

2. It Is Ministered In A Superior Place 8:2-5

Verse 2. The fact is that this "Priest-King" also ministers in a superior sanctuary, **in heaven** (cf. 4:14). The Old Testament was full of 'types' and 'shadows' of the **real** things that God had in store for his people. The tabernacle at Sinai with all its parts was on a 'type' of the "true tabernacle" made by God and not man.

The conclusion the readers ought to understand, is that a "superior" High Priest, ministering in a "superior" place argues the point that the New Covenant itself is SUPERIOR.

Verse 3. To be a priest means that one has something to "offer" to God. (To be a 'preacher' means that one preaches.) The High Priest entered into the Holy of Hollies once a year with the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the people.

Verse 4. At the time Hebrews was written, all the readers knew that there was real temple in Jerusalem, and in that temple were priests offering gifts and sacrifices. [Thus, Hebrews must be dated before A.D. 70.]

How tempting it would be to turn back to that which can be "seen" with the eyes, and turn away from the "real" High Priests who made the "real" sacrifice for sin in the "real" superior sanctuary.

Many of the Jewish Christians were tempted to turn back to the traditional Mosaical system. But before many years passed (see verse 13) that visible system would pass from the scene and no longer present this temptation.

Verse 5. Moses' tabernacle was a 'shadow' of the true heavenly things. The items in that tabernacle and the service rendered there were a 'type' of what was really to take place when the 'true' High Priest made the offering "once and for all" for the sins of the world.

And just as Moses was faithful in constructing his tabernacle according to the "pattern" we need to be sure that our worship and service before God today is done according to the "pattern" given to us in the New Covenant.

3. The Better Covenant Is Established on Better Promises -- 8:6-13

Verse 6-7. Moses was the mediator (go-between) of the Old Covenant in the giving of the Law (Galatians 3:19-20). The people of Israel were so frightened at Mount Sinai that they begged Moses to speak to them so that they could not have to hear God speak (Exodus 20:18-21). Sadly, this fear didn't last long; for they soon disobeyed the very Law they promised to keep.

The Mediator of the New Covenant is Jesus Christ, and He is its **only** Mediator (1 Timothy 2:5). Christ's ministry as Mediator is more excellent than that of the Old Testament priests because it is based on a better covenant, and the Lord's Covenant is founded on **better promises**.

Verse 8-9. These verses introduce the **better covenant** as the one announced by the prophet Jeremiah (31:31-34). When Jesus in the upper room instituted the "Lord's Supper" He took the cup and said, "This cup is the new testament [covenant] in My blood, which is shed for you" (Luke 22:20; Mark 14:22-24). The Apostle Paul quoted these words and applied them to the church in 1 Corinthians 11:23-27. And the writer of Hebrews states clearly that Jesus Christ in **now** "*the Mediator of the New Covenant*" (Hebrews 9:15; 12:24).

Verse 10. Parts of the first covenant were inscribed on tables of stone. Israel continued not in that covenant (v. 9) and was forsaken because of her unfaithfulness.

God planned for the New Covenant to be one not laid upon the ears to be forgotten, but in the mind to be remembered. The New Covenant is not written on stone to be broken, but to be treasured in the heart and followed. Those who are faithful to this New Covenant, says God, will be my people! And I will be their God!

Verse 11. Under the covenant mediated by Moses, the people were born into it (circumcised the 8th day) and later had to be taught it. But before one ever came into the Lord's New Covenant he would be taught, cf. John 6:44, 45.