

4. How is God present with us now?
5. What are some advantages we enjoy that people living under the Old Covenant were never able to enjoy?
6. While we enjoy unprecedented intimacy with God, we will enjoy far greater intimacy in the future. How would you describe the intimacy that awaits us?
7. How should that motivate us to pursue greater intimacy with God now?

**D. I will remember their sins no more...**

<sup>12</sup> *For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.*<sup>n</sup>

*EXODUS 34:6–7 (NIV): And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, “The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, <sup>7</sup> maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin.*

1. God has always been a God who forgives wickedness, rebellion and sin (Exodus 34:6). Under the new covenant however, we see the lengths to which God will go to forgive our sin (offering His One and Only Son), and just how extensive his forgiveness really is (cleansing our conscious). How does the writer of Hebrews (see 9:13-14) describe the difference between forgiveness under the Old Covenant and forgiveness under the New Covenant?
2. Why should this be particularly encouraging to us?
3. How should this impact our attitude toward sin and personal holiness?



While Hebrews is one of the more complex books in our Bibles, at its heart, the message is very simple. The writer of Hebrews wants us to know that Jesus is far better than any of the realities anticipated in the Old Testament. He introduces his theme in the opening line and takes us ever deeper with each new paragraph. The opening lines are among the most profound and poetic in the New Testament:

*In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, <sup>2</sup> but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. <sup>3</sup> The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. <sup>4</sup> So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.*

From the outset we learn that Jesus’ revelation of God’s heart and character is better than the word spoken through the prophets. His glory is greater than that of the angels. As the narrative continues we learn: the house he is building is better than the house built by Moses; the rest he provides is better than the rest provided by Joshua; and the sacrifice he offers is far better than anything any earthly priest could ever hope to offer.

The writer of Hebrews seems to be particularly fascinated with the image of Jesus as our great high priest. He tells us, Through him “a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God. (7:19),” because “Jesus has become the guarantor of a better covenant. (7:22).”

In chapter 8, the writer of Hebrews takes us back to an Old Testament prophecy that anticipates the far better covenant we have in Christ. It is a better covenant because it comes from a better place, is based on better promises, and established by a better sacrifice.

### IT COMES FROM A FAR BETTER PLACE (vv. 1-5)

Now the main point of what we are saying is this: We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven,<sup>2</sup> and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by a mere human being.

<sup>3</sup> Every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices, and so it was necessary for this one also to have something to offer. <sup>4</sup> If he were on earth, he would not be a priest, for there are already priests who offer the gifts prescribed by the law.

<sup>5</sup> They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: "See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain."

1. How does the writer of Hebrews describe the sanctuary from which Jesus serves as our high priest?
2. What are some of the images that come to mind when we envision Christ seated "at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven?"
3. Why do you think the writer of Hebrews describes God as "The Majesty in Heaven" rather than using a more common title?
4. What are some of the images invoked by that title?
5. How would you describe the difference between the "gifts and sacrifices" every other high priest offers and the gifts and sacrifices Jesus offers?
6. How does the writer of Hebrews describe the earthly tabernacle?
7. How does it point to a far greater reality in heaven?
8. How does knowing that people, places and things in the Old Testament often prefigure Christ and anticipate far greater spiritual realities, change the way we read the Old Testament (see also Colossians 2:16-17)?
9. How does Christ's position at the Father's right hand enable him to be a far greater priest?

### IT IS BASED ON FAR BETTER PROMISES (vv. 6-13)

<sup>6</sup> But in fact the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, since the new covenant is established on better promises. <sup>7</sup> For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another. <sup>8</sup> But God found fault with the people and said:

### A. I will make a new covenant with my people...

*"The days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. <sup>9</sup> It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they did not remain faithful to my covenant, and I turned away from them, declares the Lord.*

1. How do these verses portray the faithfulness of God under the Old Covenant?
2. How do they portray the faithfulness of his covenant partners?
3. How would you describe the major benefits and drawbacks of the Old Covenant?

### B. I will write my law on their hearts...

*<sup>10</sup> This is the covenant I will establish with the people of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts.*

*DEUTERONOMY 30:6 (NIV): The Lord your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live.*

*EZEKIEL 11:19–20 (NIV): I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh. Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. They will be my people, and I will be their God.*

1. According to these passages, how will God overcome the deficits of the Old Covenant?
2. How does one get a new heart?
3. What are the benefits of a new heart?

### C. I will be their God and they will be my people...

*I will be their God, and they will be my people. <sup>11</sup> No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest.*

1. One of the amazing truths of Scripture is God's desire to be near his people and draw them into intimate fellowship with him. How is God's presence described in the creation narrative?
2. How was God present with his people in the wilderness (or the tabernacle)?