Hebrews 8+9

Chapter 8

Verses 1-2: ***Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.***

--**(1)** ***Now this is the main point. . .*** The writer wants to sum up the main point he has been trying to get across. Our High Priest is the Person, Jesus of Nazareth, in a resurrected body, in a heavenly place, sitting on a throne **(Mt. 26:64; Acts 7:55-56)**.

--Jesus' place at the ***right hand of the throne*** is mentioned three other times: **1:3; 10:12; 12:2.** Aaron always stood as a subject in service. Jesus Christ is seated as the Son who is ever in proper communion and harmony with the throne.

--**(2)** Our High Priest is now a ***Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected. . .*** We have a greater High Priest, who serves in a greater sanctuary, and in relation to the true tabernacle made by God.

--The true tabernacle has been pitched where no man could ever set it. Scripture makes it clear that there is a literal temple structure in heaven **(Isa. 6:1-6; Rev. 4-5; 6:9; 8:3-6; 11:19; 14:17-18; 15:5-8; 16:1+17**).

*Saphir (The Epistle to the Hebrews, Vol. 2, pg. 448): *"The object of the Epistle to the Hebrews was to comfort and also to exhort the Jews whose faith was sorely tried because they were excluded from the services of the temple in Jerusalem; to confirm unto them the great truth, that they had the reality and the substance of those things which were only temporary and signs, and that the real sanctuary was not upon earth but high in the heavens, and that Jesus had gone to be the minister of the holy things, and of the true or substantial tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man."**

Verses 3-6: ***For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Therefore it is necessary that this One also have something to offer. For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law; who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, "See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain." But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.***

--**(3)** Like the Levitical high priests, Jesus also has acts of service in the heavenly temple. He offers His own blood once and for all, tends the lampstands, His prayers and ours, and purifies our spiritual praises, etc.

--**(4)** Only the human Levitical priests served in the earthly tabernacle.

--**(5)** The earthly tabernacle was an earthly representation of a heavenly reality. That much is clear **(Ex. 25:40; 26:30; 27:8).** Did Moses see it? We don't know.

--The heavenly place of service for Christ is the original of the earthly service of the Levites. The temple in Jerusalem they were leaving was the shadow **(Col. 2:17)**!
--**(6)** Christ, being who He is and where He is, officiates a better worship, leads the service of a better ministry, and is the Mediator **(1 Tim. 2:5)** of a better covenant with better promises. *As human and divine, there is no comparable Mediator!*

Verses 7-13: ***For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. Because finding fault with them, He says: "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the LORD. 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 in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more."***

In that He says, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

--**(7)** The ***first covenant*** was largely established in **Exodus 24.** The writer will show that God never meant the first covenant from Sinai to last forever.
--**(8-12)** Now he will quote **Jeremiah 31:31-34** to prove his point.
--The new covenant will be better in two ways:
1) The law will be written on their hearts instead of stone **(9-11)**.
--The people kept failing to keep their half of the covenant. To the point where God had to disregard them and judge them in various ways.
--Instead, He took His law and placed it in our hearts and minds. New birth!
Romans 8:4:** ***that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.*
--God is waiting for the day when the nation of Israel will know what we enjoy now—a personal relationship with Jesus Christ! To the point that there will be no need for evangelization! Everyone will truly know God.
--We have within us the Teacher, the light to see and know and understand **(1 Thess. 4:9; 2 Peter 1:12; 1 Jn. 2:27).** We have the mind of Christ through the Spirit of Christ.
2) Their sins will be truly forgiven **(12)**.
--The law always placed their sins before them. The sacrifices reminded them of their failures. Yet in Christ, we remember Him and His forgiveness.

--We may forget things, but we do not have the ability to choose to forget. God does!
--**(13)** In a manner similar to his discussion regarding the priesthood in **7:11**, the writer is going to say that the minute God mentioned another covenant, they should have known the first was temporary.
--Now the old Mosaic system was decrepit and nearly finished. The times for the Levitical priesthood and Mosaic law were over. All true worship of God is now heavenly, mediated by the risen Jesus Christ alone as an eternal High Priest after the order of Melchizedek.
*Saphir (The Epistle to the Hebrews, Vol. 2, pg. 487): *"Before the coming of Jesus, the shadows symbolized truth to believing worshippers. After the coming of Jesus it must fade and vanish before the substance. If this is true of the Levitical priesthood, which was of divine appointment, how much more fearful is the assumption of any priestly title, position, and function during the new dispensation. All Christians are priests. To imitate a revival of that which God Himself has set aside by a fulfillment perfect and glorious, is audacious, and full of peril to the souls of men. It is not even the shadow of a substance; but the unauthorized shadow of a departed shade."**
--God accepts the mediation of no man between Himself and His children other than the Son of Man and Son of God—the risen Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Chapter 9

Verses 1-5: ***Then indeed, even the first covenant had ordinances of divine service and the earthly sanctuary. For a tabernacle was prepared: the first part, in which was the lampstand, the table, and the showbread, which is called the sanctuary; and behind the second veil, the part of the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of All, which had the golden censer and the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which were the golden pot that had the manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant; and above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail.***
--**(1)** The writer is now going to describe the service in the earthly sanctuary that had been directed by God. The order of all that was involved was laid out multiple times **(Ex. 25:1-31:11; 36:2-39:43; 40).**
--**(2-3)** Most of the service of the priests took place in ***the first part***. . . or the holy place. The holy place was separated by ***the second veil*** **(Mt. 27:51)** from ***the Holiest of All*** **(Ex. 26:33-34).**
--**(4)** The Greek word for ***censer*** just means *a vessel for burning incense*—referring to the altar of incense. It is unclear whether the altar was inside or outside of the veil. It is described as being *opposite/before the veil* **(Ex. 30:6)** or *by/belonging to the inner sanctuary* **(1 Kings 6:22)**.
--Also, the ark is mentioned along with the manna **(Ex. 16:33-35)**; Aaron's rod **(Num. 17)**; and the tablets of the ten commandments.

--**(5)** All of these things have particular spiritual value but were not the writer's main point. They are valuable for us, who know so much more about Christ! *Creation is described in two chapters, but the tabernacle takes up more than fifteen!*

Verses 6-10: ***Now when these things had been thus prepared, the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing the services. But into the second part the high priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people's sins committed in ignorance; the Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing. It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience—concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation.***
--**(6-8)** The focus here is on the daily service of the Levites in the holy place in contrast with the once-a-year service of the high priest in the Holy of Holies.
--What is the summation? The continual daily service before the veil, and the yearly service behind the veil, never brought about decisive access to God.
--The Holy Spirit was speaking something through the first tabernacle.
--**(9-10)** Even the God-appointed Levitical priesthood could never truly make the worshiper's conscience clear before God. They were covered but not cleansed. The debt had been deferred but not paid.
--A ***reformation*** was needed.

Verses 11-15: ***But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.***
--**(11)** ***But Christ. . .*** puts Him in direct contrast with the old fleshly Levitical system. His High Priesthood brings to reality the ***good things*** that were promised ***to come*** by Jeremiah and all the prophets.
--**(12)** ***with His own blood. . .*** is in direct contrast with the earthly high priests who had to approach God with another's blood **(25)**.
--He has entered the true Holy of Holies ***once for all. . .*** Not once a year! He has entered and remains in the very presence of God.

--**(13-14)** If the blood of animals, signified in its highest and purest form in the red heifer **(Num. 19)**, purified the earthly temple, how much more is purified by ***the blood of Christ?!***
--What offering does He bring? Himself, without spot, in the power of the eternal Spirit. An offering of the blood of the Son of Man and Son of God **(Acts 20:28).**
--Christ's blood can cleanse our inner man. His blood, accepted in heaven, can do for the human conscience what our own works could never do.
1 Peter 1:18-19:** ***knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.*
--Where before, the worshiper was conscious of unholiness, fear, doubt, separation, and dead works that didn't ever open the veil. . . Now the blood of Christ makes us conscious of forgiveness, access, hope, and eternal redemption!
--What does a clean conscience do? Serve the living God!
--**(15)** ***And for this reason. . .*** Because Jesus offered a spotless and divine life through the Holy Spirit, and willingly shed His own blood for us. . . ***He is the Mediator of the new covenant. . .*** A Person of eternal worth has secured an eternal covenant and inheritance!
--His life and death fulfill and end the first covenant and begin and secure the new covenant. He even redeems ***the transgressions under the first covenant*** that were merely covered by the blood of bulls and goats but not paid.

Verses 16-22: ***For where there is a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives. Therefore not even the first covenant was dedicated without blood. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water, scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, "This is the blood of the covenant which God has commanded you." Then likewise he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry. And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.***
--**(16-17)** The language shifts here because the Greek word for ***covenant*** used throughout also includes the meaning of ***testament***, or as we would call it, a will. With the idea of an ***eternal inheritance*** in mind, he uses the dual meaning of the word to add to his point.
--We know the writer does not have animals in mind because he uses the Greek word *nekros* for ***dead*** in **17,** which is always used of the death of men and not animals.
--Also, the reference to a ***testator*** is masculine and singular. A reference to the death of animal sacrifices would be neuter and plural.
--The writer is simply making the point that even a human will doesn't become active until the maker of the will dies. The inheritance follows death.

--**(18-21)** What is depicted here is given to us in **Exodus 24.**
--The combination of water, scarlet wool, and hyssop is found in relation to cleansing from death **(Num. 19)** and leprosy **(Lev. 14)**.
--**(22)** ***almost all things. . .*** The writer acknowledges a few ceremonial exceptions. Some things were cleansed with fire or water, and the poor could offer other sacrifices if they could not afford a lamb **(Lev. 5:7+11).**
--That said, the general law was ***without the shedding of blood there is no remission.*** The blood made atonement **(Lev. 8:15; 17:11).**
--The penalty of the law had to be carried out. Blood needed to be shed. Blood in the body was life, but blood shed—blood shown outside the body—was proof of life given.
Luke 22:20:** ***"This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you."*

Verses 23-28: ***Therefore it was necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another—He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.***
--**(23-24)** Despite the theological problems people have with it, the writer's reasoning here is clear. If blood was required for sinful men to dwell with God on earth, with two veils between them no less, what will it take for us to dwell with God veilless in heaven?!
--Atonement was needed for us to be perfected in the higher place, the true temple of God!
--Theologians don't like the idea that the locality of the heavens, where God's throne and a temple are, needed some type of cleansing. Still, the Scriptures are clear on the issue: **Lev. 16:16; Job 4:18; 15:15; 25:5; Eph. 6:12; Col. 1:20; Rev. 12:7-12**.
--The angels sinned. Satan accuses the brethren. War will break out in heaven, and Satan will be cast out once and for all. We will dwell with God!
--What is the good news? Christ is now ***to appear in the presence of God for us!*** Our sins no longer ascend to heaven and accuse us before the throne of God. The Son of God and Son of Man stands in our place to make sure nothing can be laid to the charge of God's elect.
--In this section we also have the three appearances of Jesus Christ. Each Greek word for ***appear*** is different and lends a unique slant to the timing of His work.
--**(24)** The word for ***appear*** has the sense of *shining.* In this context, we have Christ's Advocacy. He now appears in heaven for us as our eternal High Priest.

--**(26)** The word for ***appear*** has the sense of making *manifest.* In this context, we have Christ's Atonement. He put away our sin once and for all.
--**(28)** The word for ***appear*** has the sense of *becoming visible.* In this context, we have Christ's Advent. He will come again as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.
--**(25-27)** Again, Aaron and the Levitical high priests all brought the ***blood of another*** as they approached God. Jesus Christ offered His own blood once and has put away sin once and for all.
--If one offering wasn't enough, Christ would have had to die over and over again from the beginning of the world—since sin has been present from Adam on. Nothing else needs to be offered to pay for our sins, whether past, present, or future.
--The Hebrews would sin and bring a sacrifice each time. We sin and remember the one offering of the Lamb of God. And offering of such value it deals with all sin in one payment.
--*Nothing in my hands I bring, Simply to Thy cross I cling!*
--Man is not called to judgment before God at every moment. Unsaved men will be judged after death. Saved men have already been judged in the death of Christ!
John 5:24: *"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life."*
--**(28)** Now we wait for Him to appear a second time, ***apart from sin, for salvation.*** What does that mean? Apart from dealing with the issue of sin, and the work of atonement. When He shows up again, it will not be as High Priest but as High King of heaven and earth!