

Mediator of a Better Covenant

Christ's High Priestly Resume

1. **Heb 8:1-5**—“**We have such a high priest**”--in these verses, Paul is summing up what he said previously about the High Priestly ministration of Jesus Christ
 - a. We have such a high priest—
 - i. **Heb 5:2**—by nature, compassed with the same infirmities, as the fallen race
 - ii. **Heb 2:17-18**—He suffered being tempted and made in all things in the likeness of His brethren that he may be a merciful and compassionate high priest
 - iii. **Heb 4:15**—He is touched with the feelings of our infirmities; in all points tempted as we are
 - iv. **Heb 7:25**—He ever liveth to make intercession
 - v. **Heb 7:27-28**—harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, perfected forever more
2. **Christ is at the right hand of God**—this denotes a position of great power and great authority while ministering as High Priest in the sanctuary (**Zech 6:13**); He is a Priest-King after all;
3. **He is minister** of the true tabernacle in heaven which God built and not man—a minister; not just holding on to a title, but serving as a minister
4. **Somewhat also to offer**--In order to serve, he needs something to offer
 - a. Jesus could not become priest on earth because He did not have something to offer like the priests in the temple who offered gifts and sacrifices as the law demanded
 - b. A priest without a sacrifice to offer is nothing
 - c. **Heb 9:12**--Because Jesus ministers His own blood and not the blood of bulls and goats, He cannot begin to minister until He has shed His own blood and takes it to the heavenly sanctuary
5. **Example and shadow of heavenly things**—the earthly priests served as type of Christ's priesthood in a better sanctuary; the priesthood of Aaron, the sanctuary and its services were types of Christ's ministration in the heavenly sanctuary; this important bible principle needs to be grasped

A More Excellent Ministry

6. **Heb 8:6**-- "**A more excellent ministry**" --Christ's ministry is more excellent than that of Aaron for two reasons:
 - a. As the reality is more perfect than the shadow, so is Christ's ministry is “more excellent” than its type.
 - b. More importantly, because the covenant under which Jesus serves is better than that which Aaron served under; the covenant Jesus serves is better because it is established upon better promises
7. **Heb 8:7**—**the first covenant had not been faultless**—the covenant under which the Israelites served at Sinai was thought to be “faulty” and therefore needed discarding and replacing

Three Important Questions

8. This raises three very important questions:
 - a. **QUESTION 1:** Why does Paul call the covenant God made with Israel Sinai “first covenant” when another covenant came before it—the covenant God made with Abraham 400 years ago?
 - b. **QUESTION 2:** Also, why did God make another covenant with Israel, when the Abrahamic covenant was also in place? Was the Abrahamic covenant not enough?
 - c. **QUESTION 3:** Why did Paul say first covenant” had “*faults*” and therefore needed to be done away with and replaced? What could possibly be wrong or faulty with it? Why would God make something faulty and then replace it later with another thing?
9. **Answer to Question 1:** The old covenant is called first because it was ratified first, by the blood of bulls and goats; the Abrahamic covenant was ratified by the blood of Jesus, which was shed later;

Another compact—called in Scripture the “old” covenant—was formed between God and Israel at Sinai, and was then ratified by the blood of a sacrifice. **The Abrahamic covenant was ratified by the blood of Christ, and it is called the “second,” or “new,” covenant, because the blood by which it was sealed was shed after the blood of the first covenant.** That the new covenant was valid in the days of Abraham is evident from the fact that it was then confirmed both by the promise and by the oath of God—the “two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie.” Hebrews 6:18. PP 371.

10. **Answer to Question 2:** The Israelites who just came out of Egypt after 400 years of bondage were placed in the Old covenant or the first covenant because they were not ready for the Abrahamic covenant—they lacked the faith of Abraham;

But if **the Abrahamic covenant contained the promise of redemption, why was another covenant formed at Sinai?** In their bondage the people had to a great extent lost the knowledge of God and of the principles of the Abrahamic covenant. In delivering them from Egypt, God sought **to reveal to them His power and His mercy, that they might be led to love and trust Him.** He brought them down to the Red Sea—where, pursued by the Egyptians, escape seemed impossible—that they **might realize their utter helplessness, their need of divine aid;** and then He wrought deliverance for them. Thus they were filled with love and gratitude to God and with confidence in His power to help them. He had bound them to Himself **as their deliverer from temporal bondage.**

But there was a still greater truth to be impressed upon their minds. Living in the midst of idolatry and corruption, they had **no true conception of the holiness of God, of the exceeding sinfulness of their own hearts, their utter inability, in themselves, to render obedience to God’s law, and their need of a Saviour.** All this they must be taught. **PP 371.**

. . . **The people did not realize the sinfulness of their own hearts, and that without Christ it was impossible for them to keep God’s law; and they readily entered into covenant with God. Feeling that they were able to establish their own righteousness,** they declared, “All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient.” Exodus 24:7. They had witnessed the proclamation of the law in awful majesty, and had trembled with terror before the mount; and yet only a few weeks passed before they broke their covenant with God, and bowed down to worship a graven image. **They could not hope for the favor of God through a covenant which they had broken;** and now, seeing their sinfulness and their need of pardon, they were brought to feel their need of the Saviour **revealed in the Abrahamic**

covenant and shadowed forth in the sacrificial offerings. Now by faith and love they were bound to God as **their deliverer from the bondage of sin**. Now they were prepared to appreciate the blessings of the new covenant. **PP 371-372.**

11. Notice the reasons why the Israelites were not in the position to exercise faith:
 - a. they had no true conception of the holiness of God
 - b. they only saw God as deliverer from temporal things (at the Red Sea)
 - c. they had no true perception of the exceeding sinfulness of their own hearts
 - d. they thought that without faith in Christ it was possible for them to keep God’s law
 - e. they felt that they were able to establish their own righteousness by their own effort
12. **Answer to Question 3:** The Old covenant brought only **condemnation** to the sinner, no **salvation**

The First Covenant (Old Covenant)

13. Let’s examine the circumstances during which the first covenant or the Old covenant was established:
 - a. **Exodus 19:1-8**—God enters into a covenant with Israel at Sinai;
 - i. **Verse 8**--the people promise to keep the covenant
 - b. **Exo 20-23**—God rolls out the terms of the covenant which basically boils down keeping he 10 commandments
 - c. **Exodus 24**—The covenant is affirmed and ratified
 - i. **Verse 3**—the people promises to keep the covenant again
 - ii. **Verse 4-6**—the covenant is written down and ratified with the blood of bulls
 - iii. **Verse 7**—the people promises to keep the covenant for the third time
 - d. **Exo 23:20-23**—interestingly, this particular covenant excluded the possibility of forgiveness in case of a breach

First Covenant (The Old Covenant)	Abrahamic covenant (The New Covenant)
A covenant of works	A covenant of faith
The people promised 3 times to keep the terms of the covenant through their own effort three times; (Exo 19:8; Exo 24:3, 7); this would be acceptable if they had faith	Abraham obeyed God’s commands by faith, in the strength God gives him (Gen 15:5-6; Rom 4:19-22; Heb 11:8-9, 17-18)
God does not promise to great things for the people like He promised Abraham when He entered into a covenant with him (Exo 19:5, 22);	God promised to do great things for Abraham because of his faith (Gen 12:1-3), none of which Abraham could accomplish by his own effort
Brought fear to the people (Exo 20:18-20)	“Abraham saw my day and he was glad”
This covenant ratified by the blood of animals (Exo 24:5-8)	Covenant ratified by the blood of Christ

Everlasting covenant	Lasted only 40 days
Covenant of grace	Most seriously, this covenant excluded the possibility of forgiveness (Exo 23:20-23)
Based on the Law that is written in the heart (Heb 8:10-12)	Based on the Law that was written in tables of stone
Called the everlasting covenant	Called old and ready to vanish away (Heb 8:13)
Mediated by Jesus (Heb 8:6)	Mediated by Moses (Exo 24:27-28)

Where Was the Fault?

14. This old covenant is what Paul referred to as the “first covenant” which was “faulty” (**Heb 8:7**), necessitating the emplacement of a second covenant (**Heb 8:9-12**):
- a. Similar line of argument Paul makes in **Heb 7:11**—the Levitical priests could not bring perfection to the people
 - a. The fault lay with the people, not in the covenant itself; “*they continued not in my covenant. . .*”
 - i. **Exo 23:20-23**--The old covenant or first covenant offered no forgiveness for sin, only condemnation and death
 - ii. The old covenant was not “sinner friendly”
 - iii. The old covenant made no accommodations for shortcomings and defective service

The law of God, spoken in awful grandeur from Sinai, is the utterance of condemnation to the sinner. It is the province of the law to condemn, but there is in it no power to pardon or to redeem. It is ordained to life; those who walk in harmony with its precepts will receive the reward of obedience. But it brings bondage and death to those who remain under its condemnation. **1SM 236-237.**

The terms of the “old covenant” were, Obey and live: “If a man do, he shall even live in them;” but “cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them. **PP 372.**

15. **Rom 8:3**—what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh. . .
16. **Last Question:** So, why even make this covenant with Israel if it was “*faulty*”?
- a. The “old” or “first” covenant was established for the sole purpose of:
 - Helping them see their sinfulness,
 - Feel their need of forgiving grace and empowering grace,
 - That they might be brought to feel their need of the Saviour revealed in the Abrahamic covenant and shadowed forth in the sacrificial offerings. (“*Abraham saw my day and he was glad. . .*”)
 - That faith and love may spring up and bind them to God as their deliverer from the bondage of sin.
 - To prepare them to receive and appreciate the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant.

A Brilliant Covenant Allegory

17. **Gal 4:21-27**—The old covenants and the new covenants contrasted through an allegory

- a. **Covenant of works**→symbolized by birth of a son of a slave woman (Hagar) because it results in continuous disobedience to God’s law and bondage to sin; human promises and human effort of themselves are inadequate to keep the Law of God with all its broad in its demands and inadequate to overcome sin
 - b. **Covenant of faith**→symbolized by the birth of a son (Isaac) of a free woman (Sarah) because results in obedience to the commandments of God and therefore freedom from the bondage of sin
18. The old covenant *gendereth to bondage*--The Hebrew Christians professed faith in Christ but were still adhering to the Old covenant or ceremonialism
 19. **Rom 6:14**—Meanwhile, those living under the bright light of the new covenant can have victory after victory over sin because they are living under the umbrella of God’s forgiving grace and empowering grace!
 - a. **Empowering grace**--Those who have faith in Christ’s ministration in the heavenly sanctuary receive grace to help in time of need (**Tit 2:11-12; Heb 4:15-16;**)
 - b. **Forgiving grace**—those who have faith in Christ as atoning sacrifice and High Priest have their sins atoned for and forgiven (**Heb 2:17; 1 John 2:1**)
 20. The Hebrew Christians still adhered to the Old covenant ceremonialism while professing faith in Christ; as such were enslaved to sin and becoming spiritually barren. . .
 21. **Heb 8:13**—As the old covenant was ready to vanish away, it was time for the Hebrew converts to step into the blazing light of the new covenant or the Abrahamic covenant through faith in Christ. . .
 22. Because we have such a great High Priest, there is no reason why anyone should be missing out on the great benefits of His ministration in the heavenly sanctuary. . .