

# A Greater Covenant

Jesus is Greater #13 - Pastor Gary Combs - October 20, 2024 - Hebrews 8:1-13

**INTRO:** Good morning church! We are continuing our series entitled, “JESUS IS GREATER: An Exposition of Hebrews.” Remember our theme verse is:

Hebrews 1:4 (NLT) This shows that the Son is far greater than the angels, just as the name God gave him is greater than their names.

The last few weeks in our study of Hebrews 5-7, we’ve learned that in Christ we have a Greater Goal in life, a Greater Hope for the future, a Greater Priesthood to intercede for us with the Father, and a Greater Guarantee of eternal life. Now today, we’re diving into Hebrews 8 to see how we have a Greater Covenant. For the New Covenant in Christ Jesus is greater than the old! Indeed, the author of Hebrews tells us that the New Covenant has made the Old Covenant obsolete.

**ILL:** Have you heard of the term “planned obsolescence?” It refers to a strategy used by manufacturers where products are intentionally designed to have a limited lifespan or become outdated, encouraging consumers to replace them more frequently. This can be done by designing products to wear out quickly, by limiting repair options, or by making newer models more appealing through minor upgrades, making older versions less desirable.

A common example is smartphones. Manufacturers release new models every year with small improvements, and older models may start to receive fewer software updates, slowing performance over time. This leads users to feel pressure to upgrade to the latest version, even though their current device may still be functional. Apple has been criticized for this when older iPhone models reportedly became slower after software updates, a phenomenon some attributed to planned obsolescence. Apple later admitted to slowing down older phones, but claimed it was to preserve battery life, not to force upgrades.

**Trans:** This seems to be what the author of Hebrews means concerning the Old Covenant law. It was always meant to be temporary, ultimately fulfilled and replaced by the New Covenant in Christ Jesus.

**Need:** Everything in life seems to eventually become obsolete. Everything eventually gets old, runs down, stops working... everything loses its new car smell. Don’t wish some things would last? We all long for something better, something more permanent, something we can always depend on and trust.

**Trans:** That’s what the New Covenant in Christ offers. It will never become obsolete. It is permanent, empowering, and perfect. It is greater than the old covenant in every way!

**BODY:** In Hebrews 8, the author explained to Jewish background believers that the new covenant in Christ Jesus is greater than the old. We can understand that the new covenant in Christ Jesus is greater than the old. Why is the new covenant in Christ Jesus greater than the old? The text gives **three reasons** why the new covenant in Christ Jesus is greater than the old.

**Read text:** Hebrews 8:1-13 (ESV) <sup>1</sup> Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, <sup>2</sup> a minister in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up, not man. <sup>3</sup> For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices; thus it is necessary for this priest also to have something to offer. <sup>4</sup> Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law. <sup>5</sup> They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things. For when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God, saying, “See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain.” <sup>6</sup> But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises. <sup>7</sup> For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second. <sup>8</sup> For he finds fault with them when he says: “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, <sup>9</sup> not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. For they did not continue in my covenant, and so I showed no concern for them, declares the Lord. <sup>10</sup> For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. <sup>11</sup> And they shall not teach, each one his neighbor and each one his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. <sup>12</sup> For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.” <sup>13</sup> In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

## THE NEW COVENANT IN CHRIST IS GREATER BECAUSE...

### 1. It is obtained by a better ministry.

**EXP:** (1-6) Look at v.6. All three reasons that the new covenant is greater are summarized here. First, notice that “Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old.” The new covenant is greater because Christ has secured it by a better ministry!

“**Point**” (1) (κεφάλαιον, *kephalaion*) - from *kephalē* (“head”) the main point: Christ is a greater High priest and offers a greater covenant. He now expands on the point he introduced in Hebrews 7:

Hebrews 7:22 (ESV) This makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant.

“**Covenant**” (6,7,8,9,10,13 7x) (διαθήκη, *diathēkē*) - a testament or will; a compact, a covenant.

## A Greater Covenant

Jesus is Greater #13 - Pastor Gary Combs - October 20, 2024 - Hebrews 8:1-13

“Minister/ministry” (2, 6) (λειτουργός, *leitourgos*) - one serving in the temple as priest.

“Obtained” (6) (τυγχάνω, *tugchanō*) - Lit., “to hit the mark;” to reach, attain, obtain, get, become master of;

“Much more excellent” (6) (διάφορος, *diaphoros*) - excellent, surpassing, superior.

“Seated at the right hand” (1) (δεξιός, *dexios*) - right hand; place of authority. Another allusion to Ps.110.

Psalm 110:1 (ESV) “The LORD says to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.”

“Tent” (2, 5) (σκηνή, *skēnē*) - tent, tabernacle. The 1st being the “true tent” (2) in heaven of which the 2nd, which Moses erected, is only a “copy and shadow” (5). Jesus’ ministry is from a better “seat” and sanctuary!

“Offer” (3) (προσφέρω, *prosphero*) - to bear, present, offer. If Christ is a high priest, He must offer sacrifice.

“If he were on earth” (4) - Christ is from tribe of Judah, not Levi. His priesthood is order of Melchizedek.

“Copy” (5) (ὑπόδειγμα, *hypodeigma*) - representation, figure, copy; an example: for imitation.

“Shadow” (5) (σκιά, *skia*) - shadow; an image cast by an object and representing the form of that object

“Pattern” (5) (τύπος, *typos*) - a figure formed by a blow or impression, a pattern. Moses saw the original on Mount Sinai (a quotation of Exodus 25:40).

**ARG:** The ministry of Jesus is greater than the ministry of Moses because of what it obtained.

John 1:17-18 (NKJV) For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

**Christ’s ministry is greater because the sacrifice He offered is greater.**

Hebrews 9:12 (HCSB) He entered the most holy place once for all, not by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood, having obtained eternal redemption.

**ILL:** Have you ever heard the phrase, “You get what you pay for”? It was another saying of my Dad’s.

**APP:** The new covenant in Christ Jesus is greater because it was obtained by a better ministry. Moses gave God’s law to obey. He ministered a conditional covenant: Obey and be blessed; disobey and be cursed. But Christ obeyed God’s law on our behalf. He fulfilled the law and offered His own blood “once for all” obtaining our eternal redemption. His ministry obtained an unconditional covenant that is received by faith.

## 2. It is enabled by a better Mediator.

**EXP:** (6-9) Look at v.6 again: “the covenant he mediates is better.” Actually, “Mediator” as the NKJV: translates it: “He is also Mediator of a better covenant.” Christ is Mediator of a better covenant because the old covenant as we learned last week was “weak, useless, and made nothing perfect” (Heb. 7:18-19).

Hebrews 7:18-19 (NLV) <sup>18</sup> God put the Law of Moses aside. It was weak and could not be used.

<sup>19</sup> For the Law of Moses could not make men right with God. Now there is a better hope through which we can come near to God.

“Mediates” (6) (μεσίτης, *mesitēs*) - Lit., “a go-between.” a medium of communication, arbitrator; a reconciler (intercessor). One who helps ratify a covenant between two parties. Jesus brings us near to God. He mediates from a better “seat” (“right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven” -v.1) and from a better sanctuary (“a minister in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up, not man” -v.2).

“Faultless” (7) (ἄμemptος, *amemptos*) -“In this context, the term “faultless” does not imply that the old covenant was sinful, but that it was insufficient. It could not accomplish eternal salvation nor bring about perfect righteousness. It was adequate for what it was meant to do—to serve as a standard and reminder of human sinfulness (Rom. 7:7; Heb. 10:3) and to hold back wickedness among God’s people until the coming of the Messiah (Gal. 3:19). However, as a means of bringing everlasting righteousness, it was insufficient.” — Swindoll, *Insights on Hebrews*, 126

## A Greater Covenant

Jesus is Greater #13 - Pastor Gary Combs - October 20, 2024 - Hebrews 8:1-13

Besides, it was always a temporary covenant with planned obsolescence, to be upgraded with a greater one. But such a claim as this required the author to give evidence from the Old Testament. This he does by quoting directly and at length from Jeremiah 31:31-34 in verses 8-12.

**“Fault with them” (8)** (μέμφομαι, *memphomai*) - to blame, find fault. “Not “with it,” but with those through whom the covenant had failed.” — *Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*

**“Days are coming” (8)** - “The time is coming.” “...the times of the Messiah.” — *Barnes' Notes on the Bible*

**“New covenant” (8)** (καινός, *kainos*) - new; of a new kind. New as it relates to the “old” covenant.

**“Did not continue” (9)** (ἐμμένω, *emmenō*) - did not remain in nor persevere in obeying the old covenant.

**“So I showed no concern” (9)** (ἀμελέω, *ameleō*) - to neglect. God no longer led them “by the hand.”

**ARG:** **The fault with the old covenant was it could not set us free from the flesh (sin nature).**

Romans 8:1-4 (ESV) <sup>1</sup> There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. <sup>2</sup> For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. <sup>3</sup> For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, <sup>4</sup> in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

**There is only one Mediator: Christ Jesus.**

1 Timothy 2:5 (ESV) For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus

**ILL:** In my international mission travels, finding a good interpreter is critical. Pastor George and Pastor Johnson are really great. They interpret both my message and my emotive tone. They preach my message for me!

**APP:** The new covenant in Christ Jesus is greater because it is enabled by a better Mediator. Christ enables us by His Spirit to fulfill the righteous requirement of the law by faith in Him.

### 3. It is enacted on better promises.

**EXP:** (6, 10-13) Look at v.6 again: “it is enacted on better promises.” The new covenant has better promises!

**“Better promises” (6)** (κρείπτων ἐπαγγελία, *kreittōn epangelia*) - a better, best... pledge, promise. God gave the prophet Jeremiah four ways the new covenant would be enacted on better promises:

**1) The new covenant will transform our minds and hearts from the inside out.** “I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts” (10).

**2) The new covenant will change our relationship to God.** “I will be their God, and they shall be my people” (10).

**3) The new covenant gives the indwelling Spirit to teach us that we might know God.** “they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest” (11).

**“They shall not teach” (11)** (διδάσκω, *didaskō*) - to teach, instruct. “But the sense is, that men should not only teach, but the Spirit of God should teach with them.” — John Gill

1 John 2:27 (ESV) But the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie—just as it has taught you, abide in him.

**4) The new covenant offers mercy and forgiveness.** “I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more” (12).

**“Obsolete” (13, 2x)** (παλαιόω, *palaiōō*) - to become old, worn out; of things worn out by time and use.

**“Growing old” (13)** (γηράσκω, *gēraskō*) - to grow old; to fail from age, be obsolescent

**“Ready to vanish away” (13)** (ἀφανισμός, *aphanismos*) - destruction, disappearance, i.e. “to vanish.”

## A Greater Covenant

Jesus is Greater #13 - Pastor Gary Combs - October 20, 2024 - Hebrews 8:1-13

**ARG:** Jeremiah wasn't the only prophet to foretell these better promises:

Ezekiel 36:26-27 (ESV) <sup>26</sup> I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup> And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

**The better promise of the new covenant is that in Christ, we are made new!**

2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV) Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

**ILL:** In the early days of the church we were portable. I bought an old 1984 Chevy Beauville van to transport our sound equipment, musical instruments, nursery furniture, etc. I paid \$3400 for it. I was constantly having to work on it to keep it running. It had a bad starter that I would crawl under the van and hit with a hammer to get it working. It backfired so bad that one time it blew the exhaust pipe off. We had to unload the stuff into my garage after church because it was my vehicle during the week.

Then, the church grew to where it could afford a new trailer. So nice. You could leave the stuff locked up in it. No maintenance. Just hitch it up and go.

Finally, after 19 years, we bought this building. So much better to have a permanent home, so much better to have a lasting solution, rather than a temporary fix.

**APP:** The new covenant in Christ Jesus is greater because it is enacted on better promises. It will never become obsolete. It is God's permanent solution for our sin and separation from Him. The New Covenant offers us a new and permanent home with Christ forever!

**CONCLUSION:** As we reflect on Hebrews 8, we can see that the new covenant we have in Christ is indeed greater.

1) It is obtained by a better ministry, where Christ, our High Priest, offered Himself as the ultimate sacrifice, securing our redemption once for all. This is not merely an upgrade; it's a transformation—a radical shift from a temporary system of laws and sacrifices to a perfect, eternal solution.

2) It is enabled by a better Mediator. Jesus stands as the go-between who reconciles us to God, offering us direct access to the Father. We're not bound by the inadequacies of the old covenant; we are empowered by His Spirit to live according to His will. With Christ as our Mediator, we have confidence that our relationship with God is secure and intimate.

3) Finally, the new covenant is enacted on better promises. God has made a commitment to us that is everlasting. He promises to write His laws on our hearts, to be our God, and to offer us forgiveness and mercy. This covenant is not just a set of rules to follow; it's a living relationship with our Creator.

So, as we leave today, let's carry this truth in our hearts: We are part of a covenant that is vibrant, lasting, and full of hope! Whatever may fade away in this world—our possessions, our circumstances, even our relationships — the new covenant we have in Christ is greater. It will never become obsolete. It is permanent, empowering, and perfect. It is greater than the old covenant in every way!

Let us rest in the assurance that in Christ, we have everything we need. As we face our week ahead, may we walk in the light of this new covenant, sharing the love and hope we have found in Him with others.

Do you know this Jesus who offers such love and hope and commitment?

Let's pray.