

Hebrews Study #4: Hebrews 8:1-10:18
Jesus Is Superior to the Old Testament Ministry

Intro: How are the concepts of “new,” “improved” and “better” used in advertising? Why are they effective?

Christ’s ministry is superior to the old covenant ministry. The Old Testament was an impersonal, external legal code written on tablets of stone and given to a nation that merely provided for the temporary covering of sin. The new covenant, on the other hand, promised an internal law written on the hearts of individuals. It provided full and final forgiveness of sin. And more importantly, it also provided a new power for individuals to live as they ought. Christ’s ministry is seen to be superior to the old covenant ministry in three ways: in its covenant, in its sanctuary, and in its sacrifice.

After a brief introduction of all three aspects (8:1-16), the author begins by contrasting the old covenant with the new (8:1-13). The adequacy of the old covenant is demonstrated by scripture (8:7-9), and likewise the adequacy of the new covenant is so demonstrated (8:10-13). The new covenant involves knowing God internally because of the indwelling Spirit rather than having a revelation of God’s will externally.

Read Hebrews 8:7-13

Question #1: How does this chapter demonstrate the superiority of the new covenant over the old covenant?

Question #2: Do you function better under external restraint, the law, or inner constraint, God’s Spirit (v. 10)? Why?

Then the two sanctuaries are contrasted (9:1-14), in terms of imperfection versus perfection and original pattern versus replica.

Read Hebrews 9:1-14

Question #3: Contrast what Jesus did (vv. 11-14) with the old system (vv. 1-10). Why was the old system inferior?

Question #4: What does this passage have to say to a Christian who struggles with a guilty conscience, and is therefore afraid to approach God or to a Christian who has no sense of guilt before God?

This portion of the epistle concludes with contrasting the old sacrifice with the new (9:15–10:18). Though both sacrifices required blood (9:15-22), Christ’s sacrifice is better because it has purified the original, heavenly sanctuary (9:23-28), and it was done once for all (10:1-18).

Read Hebrews 10:1-18

Question #5: In what ways was the old testament sacrificial system only a copy and shadow of the true heavenly sacrifice?

Question #5: Why is it important to distinguish between our position in Christ and our daily practice regarding God's forgiveness?

Reflection:

How are you growing in relationships that will help you to demonstrate that you have new life in Christ?