

Jesus is Better 7

Hebrews 8 v 1 - Chapter 9 v 10

The High Priest of a New Covenant. NB The idea of **covenant** is an Old Testament concept that has 'carried through' into the New Testament. Nevertheless Hebrews is talking about a **New Covenant** that the Old Covenant foreshadowed but that could never provide the salvation from sin that the promised Messiah could. Once again in every respect Jesus is better - by far.

I don't think we need to spend time looking in detail at the old covenant except in those brief comparisons that the writer to Hebrews makes. The whole point now is to convince the readers that there's no going back. Now where have I heard that recently?

By now I hope that all of us are avidly reading the Pentateuch (Genesis - Deuteronomy) and are so engrossed that we can't put it down. Have you asked the Holy Spirit to make the scriptures burn in your heart as I mentioned last week? What are indeed dry and complicated writings will enlighten your heart to the principle that I have been trying to instil through this series - that Jesus is better!

Hebrews 8 v 1 - 13.

Linking back to the end of chapter 7, Hebrews argues that just as Melchizedek was a great 'type' figure for the King/Priest that would come in the person of Saviour/Messiah; Jesus perfectly fulfils! He is the expectation and hope of Israel in Himself. His work is finished - He has sat down at God's right hand. What is more, the sanctuary that He occupies is not an earthly characterisation of the temple. It is the 'real thing'. I mentioned in study 3 that Stephen died (Acts 7 v 60) because he believed that the tabernacle constructed by Moses was superseded by the Heavenly tabernacle. Jesus sacrifice was superior to any that could be made under the old covenant. I love the logic of verse 7. If there was nothing wrong with the old ways - why was there a new and better way? A long quotation follows from Jeremiah 31 v 31 - 34.

The conclusion drawn from Jeremiah's words is that the old covenant would one day become obsolete. (It strikes me that with our obsession with materialism we have become used to the idea of 'built in obsolescence'!) For the readers of Hebrews this was a groundbreaking thought taken from the Old Testament as it was!

Jeremiah looked forward to a time when there would be a New Covenant based on the attitude of the heart rather than Temple ritual, sacrifice and worship. Jeremiah lived during the time of the destruction of Solomon's Temple. He looked to a time when there would be a different kind of Covenant between God and His people. For the readers of Hebrews to go back to the Old ways would be returning to something that was no longer valid. (Shortly after these words were written there would be no physical temple - that is still the case today!)

Hebrews 9 v 1 - 10.

What is more, worship in the earthly temple - which probably continued at the time of writing - would become obsolete. (Something that actually happened in AD 70 when the Temple, as well as the whole city of Jerusalem were destroyed by the Roman army under General Titus).

Jesus far outshone the regulations for worship and sacrifice that took place in the temple in Jerusalem. Without actually saying so, here we have a reminder of an event that took place as Jesus gave up Himself on the cross. The Temple curtain - THE symbol of an unapproachable holiness was 'torn in two from top to bottom' Matthew 27 v 51, thereby once and for all making access to the Father - through the Son. The old system involved lots of blood. Jesus, once and for all, shed His blood; a far superior sacrifice than that of bulls and goats. Once again we see that Jesus is better.

In what ways are you reacting to the argument that Jesus is better? Do you find this to be a comfort as you come to terms with the changes that are taking place in our society today? Jesus makes our ability to cope so much more worth while as we face up to our troubled times.