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The Superiority of the New Covenant

8: 1-6

The superiority of the New Covenant DIG: What is the most important feature about our High Priest? Why could the Levitical priest never sit down? With regard to your salvation, why is Christ pictured as sitting down? What is significance of Yeshua sitting on the right hand of God? To what does the true Tabernacle refer? What sacrifice did Christ make as a priest? In what way is Jesus ministering gifts as a high priest? Why couldn't Messiah have been an earthly priest according to the Torah? Because a shadow has no independent existence of its own, to what does it point to? Describe some of the differences between the TaNaKh and the B'rit Chadashah. What is a covenant? What is the significance of the fact that God initiates and guarantees it? What is a mediator? Why is one needed? How is the way you experience God's love and forgiveness under the New Covenant far different from the way the righteous of the TaNaKh would have experienced it?

REFLECT: Christ is seated in heaven because His work of redeeming us is complete. What about our part of accepting His redemption? What do we do to complete our part of the work in our own lives? What aspect of the New Covenant brings you the greatest joy right now? Which aspect of the covenant do you wish to experience more? Why?

At the core of Jewish discipleship was a very simple principle: retention through repetition. It was the responsibility of *the talmid* (student) to listen carefully to every word of the rabbi. The rabbi would say something, and *the talmid* would repeat it to him, verbatim. **Isaiah** describes the ideal principle: **The Sovereign LORD has given Me the tongue of those who are taught, to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens Me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen . . . and I have not been rebellious; I have not drawn back (Isaiah 50:4-5).**

It is fitting that **the One** whom Scripture calls **the Word (John 1:1)** should desire **the word** of **His Father**. **Yeshua**, as flesh and blood, needed that **word**. **He** studied it; it was **His food (John 4:34)**. In that **word He** discerned life's direction. Through that **word He** learned how to speak to **sustain the weary**. From a traditional Hebrew perspective,

nothing is more important than study. It is the one “activity” that is most heartily pursued on Shabbat. It is the source of rest and renewal for the soul.

The motto of the ancient rabbinical scholars, “search the Scriptures,” was embraced with a diligent and painstaking thoroughness. Not a *yud*, the smallest Hebrew letter (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ, to see link click Dg - The Completion of the Torah**) **was to be overlooked.** Therefore, **Hebrews 8:1** wastes no time getting to *the ikar*, the heart of the matter. Having shown that the Levitical system was **weak and useless (7:18)**, the believer’s attention is once again turned to **Him** who speaks in our defense.¹⁹³

Here is the main point of what we have been saying: we do have just such a high priest as has been described. It as if the writer is saying, “a great many things have been presented and explained, but they all relate, in one way or another, to **Messiah’s high priesthood.**” **The priesthood of Yeshua is in the Order of Melchizedek.** But as an introduction to his discussion of the **better** covenant, the writer first mentions two more indication of **Christ’s** superiority as **High Priest.**

The Levitical priest’s job was never done, because the sacrifices they offered were never permanently effective. They had to be repeated over and over again. No place was provided in **the Tabernacle** or the Temple for **the priests** to sit down. Why? Because their work was never done. First, then, **Christ** is superior because **He sits at the right hand of the Greatness** (Hebrew: *HaG’dulah*, a euphemism for *God*) **in heaven (Hebrews 8:1 CJB quoting Psalm 110:1 CJB).** When **Yeshua** offered **His** sacrifice, however, **He sat** down (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Lv - Jesus’ Second Three Hours on the Cross: The Wrath of God**). **He** accomplished in one glorious act what all the priests in the Dispensation of Torah (see the commentary on **Exodus Da - The Dispensation of Torah**) could never accomplish - forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with **ADONAI**. This should have been the most joyful news possible to the unbelieving Jews who were hesitating accepting **Yeshua** as **Messiah** (see **Bb - Once Fallen Away, It is Impossible to be Brought Back to Repentance**). Imagine, a final sacrifice, a finished work, so that the high priest could **sit** down . . . and at **God’s right hand!**

The book of **Hebrews** repeatedly reminds us that **Messiah** is at the right hand of **God**. I think the purpose of these reminders is to assure those who were deprived of the Temple services in Jerusalem that they didn’t need to fear losing out on what was going on in the symbolic, temporary Most Holy Place. They had the true, perfect, eternal **High Priest** in the real, **heavenly** Most Holy Place, of which the earthly one was only a poor and soon-passing

picture. In **the heavenly** one, **Jesus Christ** was ministering and interceding for them.¹⁹⁴ Thus, **Messiah**, as **High Priest**, is seen in every way to be **better** than Aaron, and **the New Covenant that He** inaugurated is superior to the First Covenant under which Aaron officiated.¹⁹⁵

Secondly, **There He serves in the Most Holy Place, that is, in the true Tabernacle (Revelation 15:5), the one erected not by human beings, but by ADONAI (8:2 CJB).** The earthly **Tabernacle** that Moshe made was simply a copy of **the Tabernacle** already existing in heaven. As would be expected, the **better High Priest** ministers in a **better** sanctuary. When the book of **Hebrews** was written, **the Tabernacle** had not been used for a thousand years, and Herod's Temple would be standing for less than five more years. But **Yeshua's** sanctuary **is in the true Tabernacle** that can never rot or crumble or be destroyed.

The word **true** here is not used as the opposite of false. **The** true Israelite **Tabernacle** is not to be contrasted with the false tabernacles, or temples, of her pagan neighbors. Nor is the idea that **the** Israelite **Tabernacle** itself was in anyway false. It was temporary and inadequate, but it wasn't false. **True** is used here as opposed to the shadowy or unreal. The comparison is between the type and the temporary and the real and the permanent. **The Ruach ha-Kodesh** is **showing us that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as earthly Tabernacle was functioning, which is an illustration for the present time (9:8-9a).** The First Covenant with all of its rituals and ceremonies, altars and sacrifices, and **the Tabernacle** and Temple, actually did serve a temporary purpose; but were merely shadows and types (the commentary on **Exodus Eq - Christ in the Tabernacle**), of the realities of **the New Covenant**. Earthly worship, even the most sincere and godly, is only a remote reflection of what worship will be like in heaven, and the earthly priesthood is only an inadequate shadow of the real priesthood.¹⁹⁶ **Messiah** is, therefore, superior to Aaron since **He** serves in a **better** sanctuary, and because **He** is superior to Aaron, **the New Covenant that He** inaugurated is **better** than the First Covenant under which Aaron served.¹⁹⁷

Verse three begins to take the writer's argument from the general to the specific. Exactly what **Jesus** has **to offer** will be discussed in detail later (see **Bu - A Better Sacrifice**). The question would come up at some point, "If **Messiah** has finished **His** work, and **He** is seated in heaven, does **He** have nothing to do now? Is all **His** priestly work finished?" The answer is no. Emphatically no! **His** sacrifice is finished, **His** atoning work is finished, but all of **His** priestly ministry is not finished. **For if every High Priest (Hebrew: *cohen gadol*) is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices; so this *cohen gadol* too has to have**

something to offer (8:3 CJB). He is truly a ministering a ministering **choen gadol**.

Yeshua has already offered the one final blood sacrifice that is sufficient for all people for all time. This sacrifice of **His** is completely finished, because there is no need, and there will never be a need, for any additional sacrifice for the cleansing of sin. However, the need for us to come to **Him** for **the forgiveness of our sins (First John 1:8-10)**, praise and thanksgiving is not over. **He** continues to minister on our behalf before **His Father**.

None of us can praise **God**, worship or serve **Him**, apart from **Jesus Christ**. Just a no Israelite could offer a sacrifice and seek forgiveness from **YHVH** except through a priest, so believers today cannot do so except through their **High Priest**. We cannot confess our sins and seek forgiveness apart from **Messiah** any more than we could have come to **the Father** apart from **Christ**. Anything of any value or consequence we do as believers must be done through our **Lord. Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father (Colossians 3:17; Ephesians 5:20)**.

It is obviously necessary, then, for **Jesus** to continue to minister in our behalf. **He** continually brings the gifts - the worship, the praise, the repentance, the dedication, the thanks - of the hearts of **His** people before **the Father**.¹⁹⁸ **Now if He were on earth, He wouldn't be a cohen at all, since there already are priests (Hebrew: cohanim) offering the gifts required by the Torah (8:4 CJB)**. There is no conflict between **the Levitical priesthood** established by the Torah of **Moshe** and that of **Yeshua** as predicted in **Psalm 110**; it is not necessary to think of **Messiah's** priesthood as superseding the Levitical one. **The Torah** says that earthly **cohanim** must be descendants of Levi, and **Numbers 25:12-13** speaks of **ADONAI's** covenant of an **everlasting priesthood** with **Phinehas**, son of Aaron. But since **Yeshua** serves **in heaven, He** can be from the tribe of Judah (**7:13-14**), and can also have an eternal ministry (**7:23-25**).¹⁹⁹

Not only is **Christ Himself better** than **the Levitical priest**, but the work of **Yeshua** has been given to do is far **superior** to **theirs**, since the place where **they serve is only a copy and shadow of the heavenly original (8:5a)**. A **shadow** has no substance in itself. It has no independent existence. It merely is proof of the fact that there is a reality back of it. It is not real of solid. Just so, **the earthly Tabernacle** gave proof of the fact that there was a real one, **the heavenly one** where **God Himself** dwells, and where **Messiah** officiates as **High Priest**. The descendants of Aaron, **the Levitical priesthood**, performed **their priestly** rites in the representation of **the heavenly Tabernacle**.²⁰⁰

For when Moshe was about to erect the Tabernacle, God warned him, "See to it that

you make everything according to the pattern you were shown on the mountain” (Hebrews 8:5b CJB quoting Exodus 25:40 CJB). That there is a true **Tabernacle** in heaven is proved by this passage. **The Tabernacle** constructed in the wilderness (see the commentary on **Exodus Et - The Call to Build the Tabernacle**), long before there was any thought of a Temple, demonstrated that **YHVH** dwells with **His** people. Why then should anyone be satisfied with a copy when we could have the real thing? Why should those hesitating Jews be satisfied with **a weak priesthood and useless sacrifices (7:18)**, which are only copies and **shadows** of forgiveness and reconciliation - when they could have real forgiveness and true reconciliation in **Yeshua Messiah**?

Verse six is an important verse. It is a pivotal verse in the letter to the **Hebrews**. It was written to prove that the blood of **Yeshua** in the Dispensation of Grace is **better**, and take the place of the blood of bulls and goats in the Dispensation of Torah. Using the logical argument that **a better workman** turns out a **better** product, the writer has shown that **Messiah**, the founder of **the B’rit Chadashah**, is **better** than the founders of the First Covenant, who were the prophets, angels, Moses, Joshua, and Aaron. Therefore, **the New Covenant He** brought in is superior to and takes the place of their covenant.²⁰¹

In light of this, we can **better** understand the words: **But now the work Yeshua has been given to do, is far better than their work, just as the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34) that He mediates** (see **Bo - Proof of the Superiority of the New Covenant**) **is far better than their covenant.** Any covenant made between **God** and mankind demands **a mediator**. Moshe was the mediator of the First Covenant and Aaron was the priest. However, **Yeshua** is both **the Mediator** and **the Priest** of **the B’rit Chadashah**. **Jesus** also has a **better priesthood** because of the **better** basis on which it rests. **For this New Covenant has been made Torah** (see the commentary on **Second Corinthians Av - A Glory Transformed**) **on the basis of better promises (8:6 CJB).** For example, **God’s** Covenant with Moshe was based upon **the Torah**. It brought blessing for obedience, but it also brought cursing and even death through disobedience. In contrast, **the B’rit Chadashah** is based upon grace, and it is able to impart righteousness and provide the empowerment of **the Ruach Ha’Kodesh** to keep its demands. It is **the New Covenant** that is the basis for **Messiah’s** high priestly ministry in a **better** sanctuary.²⁰²

Who can you trust? Who can you count on in this world? Parents? Spouse? Brothers? Sisters? Grandparents? Friends? What does it mean to you that **Yeshua** never breaks **His** promises? Never. **He is the Promise Keeper.** Going through a tough time in your life? Know someone who is? Then cling to the promises of **God** and **call upon the LORD. For the LORD is my Rock and my fortress and my deliverer. My God, my Rock, in whom**



I take refuge; my shield, the horn of my salvation, my stronghold (Psalm 18:2).