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By Dan Maines

Hebrews 8

Hebrews 8:1

Now the main point in what has been said is this: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.

† Christ is not standing like the Levitical priests who never finished their work, but sitting, His sacrifice was final. The throne at God's right hand shows majesty, authority, and completion.

† Psalm 110:1 prophesied this enthronement, and the apostles applied it to Christ (Acts 2:34-36).

† Chrysostom (Homilies on Hebrews 14) stressed that "sitting" means His sacrifice was complete. The old priests never sat down in the holy place.

Hebrews 8:2

A minister in the sanctuary and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord set up, not man.

† Christ's ministry is not in the earthly shadow but in the true heavenly sanctuary. The earthly tabernacle was only a copy.

† Philo (On the Migration of Abraham 102) wrote of a heavenly archetype beyond human hands. Hebrews shows Christ as minister there.

† The Dead Sea Scrolls (11QTemple) attempted to model a perfect earthly temple, but Hebrews shows the true temple is only in heaven.

Hebrews 8:3

For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices; so it is necessary that this high priest also have something to offer.

† Christ's offering was not the blood of animals but Himself. This sacrifice was once for all, surpassing all the offerings of the Law.

† Irenaeus (Against Heresies 4.18.2) insisted that Christ alone fulfilled all sacrifices in Himself.

Hebrews 8:4

Now if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer the gifts according to the Law.

† Christ's priesthood was heavenly, not earthly. Earthly priests were still ministering until the temple's destruction.

† Josephus (Wars 6.93) records that sacrifices continued until

the Romans destroyed the temple. Hebrews shows their futility since Christ's offering was already complete.

Hebrews 8:5

Who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned by God when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for, "See," He says, "that you make all things by the pattern which was shown to you on the mountain."

† The tabernacle was a copy, a shadow. Moses was told to follow the pattern, but it was never the true reality.

† Philo (Allegorical Interpretation 3.102) said the earthly things were shadows of the heavenly. Hebrews applies this to show fulfillment in Christ.

† Origen (Homilies on Exodus 13) explained that the earthly tabernacle was a shadow, but Christ fulfilled the pattern.

Hebrews 8:6

But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, to the same extent that He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises.

† Christ's covenant is superior. It is not a patch on the old but a new creation altogether.

† Tertullian (Against Marcion 5.11) argued that if the covenant of Christ were not superior, there would be no reason to replace the old.

† Seneca (On Benefits 4.31) said true promises are those that cannot be broken, a fitting contrast to the broken promises of the old covenant.

Hebrews 8:7

For if that first covenant had been free of fault, no circumstances would have been sought for a second.

† The very existence of the promise of a new covenant proves the first was temporary. It served its purpose but could not

perfect.

† Philo (On the Decalogue 2.5) admitted the Law trained outwardly but did not heal inwardly.

Hebrews 8:8-9

For in finding fault with the people, He says, "Behold, days are coming, says the Lord, when I will bring about a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers on the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; for they did not continue in My covenant, and I did not care about them, says the Lord."

† Jeremiah 31 foresaw a new covenant, different from Sinai. The old covenant failed because the people broke it. The new covenant would be unbreakable in Christ.

† The Targum on Jeremiah 31 confirms the expectation of a new covenant in Jewish tradition.

† Justin Martyr (Dialogue with Trypho 11) argued that this prophecy proved the Law was temporary and that Christians inherited the new covenant.

Hebrews 8:10

"For this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says 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."

† Unlike Sinai, where the Law was written on stone, the new covenant is written on hearts. This is internal, spiritual, and eternal.

† Ezekiel 36:26 promised a new heart and spirit, fulfilled in Christ.

† Origen (Homilies on Jeremiah 18) said that in Christ, the Law is engraved in the soul by the Spirit.

Hebrews 8:11

"And they will not teach, each one his fellow citizen, and each one his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they will all know Me, from the least to the greatest of them."

† In the new covenant, all God's people know Him directly. There is no class of mediating priests or teachers.

† Clement of Alexandria (Stromata 2.6) saw this verse fulfilled in the Spirit's universal teaching within the church.

Hebrews 8:12

"For I will be merciful toward their wrongdoings, and their sins I will no longer remember."

† Forgiveness under the old covenant was temporary, repeated every year. Under the new covenant, forgiveness is final.

† Mishnah (Yoma 8.9) admitted that Yom Kippur atoned only year by year. Hebrews declares forgiveness once for all.

† Augustine (On the Psalms 103.12) said God's forgetfulness of sin is the mark of the gospel covenant.

Hebrews 8:13

When He said, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is about to disappear.

† At the time Hebrews was written, the old covenant was obsolete, decaying, and ready to vanish away. This found visible fulfillment in AD 70 when the temple was destroyed.

† Josephus (Wars 6.300) described the destruction of the temple, confirming Hebrews' statement.

† Origen (Against Celsus 2.8) pointed to the temple's destruction as God's judgment and the establishment of the new covenant.

† Eusebius (Ecclesiastical History 3.7) explained that the destruction of Jerusalem marked the end of the old covenant

order.

Application For Us Today

† Hebrews 8 proves the old covenant is obsolete. Any system that tries to revive temple worship, Levitical priesthood, or sacrifices denies the new covenant in Christ.

† The new covenant is written on hearts, not stone. It is internal and Spirit-led, not external and ritualistic.

† Forgiveness is complete and final in Christ. No repetition, no yearly atonement, no further sacrifice.

† Futurism contradicts Hebrews 8 by expecting another temple, priesthood, or sacrificial system. Hebrews leaves no room for that, the old has vanished, the new has come.

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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† Ezekiel 36:26 - new heart and spirit promise

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† Philo, On the Migration of Abraham 102 - heavenly archetype sanctuary

† Philo, On the Decalogue 2.5 - Law disciplines but cannot perfect

† Dead Sea Scrolls, 1QS 8.4-9 - sectarian community as temple

† Dead Sea Scrolls, 11QTemple - earthly temple as shadow

† Josephus, Wars 6.93 - sacrifices until temple's fall

† Josephus, Wars 6.300 - destruction of the temple

† Chrysostom, Homilies on Hebrews 14 - Christ seated means completed work

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