

# HEBREWS

## Chapters 8-13



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11 They shall  
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# ▶ ABOUT THIS STUDY

## WHERE DO YOU PUT YOUR FAITH?

There will be times when you don't know how things are going to work out. When the pressures of life are swirling all around you and a storm is raging within, where do you turn?

Having faith is more than hoping for the best or believing in yourself. Christian faith is trusting in someone greater than you and your circumstances: Jesus.

The Bible's heroes of the faith were ordinary men and women who trusted an extraordinary God to lead them through seemingly impossible situations. That same faith is possible today.

Chapters 8-13 of the Book of Hebrews explore topics like living each day by faith, growing through hard times, the strength of covenant, and God's desire for life-changing community.

**Explore the Bible: Hebrews, Chapters 8-13** helps you know and apply the encouraging and empowering truth of God's Word by organizing each session in the following way:

**UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT:** This page explains the original context of each passage and begins relating the primary themes to your life today.

**EXPLORE THE TEXT:** This section walks you through the Scripture, providing helpful commentary and encouraging thoughtful interaction with God through His Word.

**OBEY THE TEXT:** This section helps you apply the truths you have explored. It is not enough to know what the Bible says—God's Word has the power to change your life.

**LEADER GUIDE:** This final section provides optional discussion starters and suggested questions to help anyone lead a group in reviewing each section of the personal study.

# ➤ GROUP COMMITMENT

As you begin this study, it is important that everyone agree to key group values. Clearly establishing the purpose of your time together will foster healthy expectations and help ease any uncertainties. The goal is to ensure that everyone has a positive experience leading to spiritual growth and true community. Initial each value as you discuss the following with your group.

## PRIORITY

Life is busy but we value this time with one another and with God's Word. We choose to make being together a priority.

## PARTICIPATION

We are a group. Everyone is encouraged to participate. No one dominates.

## RESPECT

Everyone is given the right to his or her own opinions. All questions are encouraged and respected.

## TRUST

Each person will humbly seek truth through time in prayer and in the Bible. We will trust God as the loving authority in our lives.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

Anything said in our meetings will never be repeated outside of the group without permission from everyone involved. This is vital in creating an environment of trust and openness.

## SUPPORT

Everyone can count on anyone in this group. Permission is given to call upon each other at any time, especially in times of crisis. The group will provide care for every member.

## ACCOUNTABILITY

We agree to let the members of our group hold us accountable to commitments we make in the loving ways we decide upon. Questions are always welcome. Unsolicited advice, however, is not permitted.

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I agree to all of the above

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date

## ➤ GENERAL EDITOR



**Dr. David Jeremiah** serves as senior pastor of Shadow Mountain Community Church in El Cajon, California. He is the founder and host of Turning Point, committed to providing Christians with sound Bible teaching relevant to today's changing times through radio and television, the Internet, live events, and resource materials and books. A best-selling author, Dr. Jeremiah has written more than 40 books, including *What Are You Afraid Of?* and its companion small group study, and his study notes from over four decades have been compiled into *The Jeremiah Study Bible*.

Dr. Jeremiah's commitment to teaching the complete Word of God continues to make him a sought-after speaker and writer. His passion for reaching the lost and encouraging believers in their faith is demonstrated through his faithful communication of biblical truths.

A dedicated family man, Dr. Jeremiah and his wife, Donna, have 4 grown children and 11 grandchildren.



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# SESSION 1

# ONLY JESUS TRANSFORMS

Jesus established a new covenant based upon God's good promises.



## ➤ UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

PREPARE FOR YOUR GROUP EXPERIENCE WITH THE FOLLOWING PAGES.

The writer of Hebrews spent a great deal of time and effort in the middle section of his book explaining the ministry of Jesus as the believer's Great High Priest.

In 8:1-6, the writer emphasized the main point of his effort. Jesus is now and forever seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven. He is in the true sanctuary of God, in the immediate presence of the Heavenly Father.

His ministry of advocating for believers is unending. There isn't a moment when Christ hits the pause button on interceding for His followers. For this reason, the new covenant in Christ is vastly better than any earthly priesthood and temple rituals. Those were never more than shadows of the salvation that comes through faith in Christ.

In 8:7-13, the writer took his readers back into the Old Testament and to a Scripture in which God promised that a new covenant would one day be established. Through the prophet Jeremiah, God had declared that the old covenant made through Moses would one day be replaced. It had proved to be inadequate, not because of anything lacking in God but because of the Israelites' constant disobedience.

The people needed more than rules to live by. They needed heart transformation. That transformation required a new and better covenant.

“THE OLD COVENANT SPOKE OUTWARDLY TO THE INWARD MAN, BUT WHAT WAS NEEDED WAS SOMETHING THAT COULD SPEAK INWARDLY TO THE OUTWARD MAN. THE NEW COVENANT WAS GIVEN TO DO JUST THAT.”

—*David Jeremiah*



## ➤ HEBREWS 8:1-13

- 1** Now the main point of what is being said is this: We have this kind of high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,
- 2** a minister of the sanctuary and the true tabernacle that was set up by the Lord and not man.
- 3** For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices; therefore it was necessary for this priest also to have something to offer.
- 4** Now if He were on earth, He wouldn't be a priest, since there are those offering the gifts prescribed by the law.
- 5** These serve as a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was warned when he was about to complete the tabernacle. For God said, Be careful that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown to you on the mountain.
- 6** But Jesus has now obtained a superior ministry, and to that degree He is the mediator of a better covenant, which has been legally enacted on better promises.
- 7** For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion for a second one.
- 8** But finding fault with His people, He says: Look, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—
- 9** not like the covenant that I made with their ancestors on the day I took them by their hands to lead them out of the land of Egypt. I disregarded them, says the Lord, because they did not continue in My covenant.
- 10** But this is the covenant that 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. I will be their God, and they will be My people.
- 11** And each person will not teach his fellow citizen, and each his brother, saying, "Know the Lord," because they will all know Me, from the least to the greatest of them.
- 12** For I will be merciful to their wrongdoing, and I will never again remember their sins.
- 13** By saying, a new covenant, He has declared that the first is old. And what is old and aging is about to disappear.

### Think About It

*A covenant is an agreement governing a relationship. Highlight all the instances of the word "covenant" in these verses. Take note of descriptive phrases that come before or after the word.*

*Underline phrases that refer to the covenant God established in Jesus the Son.*

# ➤ ABOUT THE BOOK OF HEBREWS

## AUTHOR

The writer of Hebrews didn't identify himself, and Bible scholars haven't been able to determine who wrote it. Though we don't know the writer's identity, his spiritual maturity is evident within his writing. His writing reflected a devoted Christian leader who displayed passionate concern about believers considering retreat from Christianity.

## AUDIENCE

Concerning the Christians to whom the Book of Hebrews was addressed, we can discern from the comparisons drawn in the text to key components of Judaism that they were believers, primarily from a Jewish background, who didn't have a clear understanding of who Jesus was. The persecution they were experiencing had caused them to reconsider their commitment to Christ, even being tempted to return to their traditional Jewish roots. Perhaps some of their friends and family members had been mistreated because of Christ. Or maybe they had experienced hard times themselves at the hands of adversaries of the gospel.

The strain of persecution apparently had been tempting them to consider an escape route. They still wanted to worship God, but they didn't want to live with the risk of more persecution. Details within the text suggest some were leaning toward returning to Judaism as an alternative. In their decision to embrace a safer way to serve God, they began distancing themselves from other Christians. The writer wanted them to work through any disillusionment by staying focused on Jesus and His superiority in their lives. Ultimately, they needed to be reminded of who He is.

## PURPOSE

The writer of Hebrews made a passionate effort to persuade Christ-followers to maintain their faith in Jesus. He urged them to affirm the superiority of Christ above everything and everyone they had read about in the Old Testament. Then he encouraged them to consider God's perspective in their decision to possibly walk away from faith in Christ. Through God's eyes, they would surely understand why He would hold them accountable for misguided acts of disobedience and rebellion. Finally, he challenged them to hold fast to the gospel, no matter the circumstances.



## ➤ EXPLORE THE TEXT

### ***THE NEW COVENANT NEEDED (Read Hebrews 8:1-6.)***

In these verses, the writer of Hebrews leads us to a critical point about Jesus that he wants us to grasp. Christ is the believer's High Priest, and He's altogether unique. He's the only One who is qualified to enter the true sanctuary of God in heaven on behalf of sinful humanity. To sit down at the right hand of God's throne means to keep dwelling there. In other words, Jesus has presence and authority with the Father in heaven.

In heaven, Jesus carries out the ongoing ministry as the believer's Great High Priest. The writer of Hebrews paints a picture of the distinct kind of sanctuary in heaven where Jesus dwells. For God's people in the days of the Old Testament, the sanctuary was the holy of holies in the tabernacle. The high priest would enter the holy of holies once each year on the Day of Atonement. For Christians, the heavenly sanctuary is the true and eternal dwelling of God.

***What does the picture of Jesus' being seated at the Father's right hand say to you about Jesus' identity?***

The writer of Hebrews goes on to describe the work Jesus carries out in the heavenly sanctuary. His description is set against the backdrop of the role of the Israelite high priest in Old Testament times. The

Israelite high priest offered sacrifices to God on behalf of His people. Jesus also offered a sacrifice for the sins of the people, but His sacrifice on the cross was once and for all. With that sacrifice, Jesus alone qualifies to be our High Priest in heaven. Yet, He wouldn't have qualified to be a priest at the temple in Jerusalem. Jesus was of the tribe of Judah, not the tribe of Levi.

***How would you describe the sacrifice that Jesus made on your behalf?***

The tabernacle in the Old Testament and the priests who ministered in it were a mere copy and shadow of what God had established in heaven. The heavenly tabernacle was the true, perfect, and authentic sanctuary. God gave Moses a blueprint of that sanctuary while the Israelites were at Mount Sinai. God instructed Moses to carefully use the blueprint of the heavenly tabernacle as a pattern (see Ex. 25:40).

Just as God's tabernacle in heaven is the original, even so the matchless ministry of Jesus as our Great High Priest is the fulfillment of that which earthly high priests could only foreshadow. Jesus alone is qualified to be the perfect Mediator between God and His people. In Christ, the old covenant has been replaced by a new and better covenant. Christ is the guarantee of better promises.

***How is salvation by faith in Jesus based on a better promise than a person's earning salvation by doing good works?***

## ***THE NEW COVENANT PROMISED***

***(Read Hebrews 8:7-9.)***

In Christ, God established His new covenant. When God established the covenant with His people on Mount Sinai in Old Testament times, He

### **Key Doctrine: The New Covenant**

The new covenant is superior to the old covenant because it replaces external commandments with internal enablement, the ability to obey God's commands from the heart.

revealed the law by which they were to live. If that covenant had been sufficient for our salvation from sin, then there would've been no need for Jesus to come and establish a new one. The first covenant revealed what was right and what was wrong in God's eyes, but it had no power to break the curse of sin or to transform the hearts of sinners. To be sure, mankind needed God's rules to live by, because without them we have always idolized our own thoughts and have been slaves to our fleshly desires (see Rom. 1:28-32). However, we needed more than a knowledge of God's law; we needed our hearts and minds to be transformed so that we could truly love God and desire His ways. We needed the power of sin to be broken.

The first readers of the Book of Hebrews knew the old covenant well. To drift from their confession of Christ back to the traditions of Judaism was to return to a covenant that was never able to save them from sin. The problem was not in something God did or didn't do in the first covenant. The problem was in the people's inability and unwillingness to obey the covenant. Through the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah, therefore, God declared that a new covenant would be given in the future (see Jer. 31:31-34).

### ***What does God's promise of a new covenant teach about His love for all of humanity?***

While the old covenant had to do with God's establishing a holy nation of people whom He rescued from slavery in Egypt, the new covenant would have a deeper purpose and a better promise.



## THE NEW COVENANT DESCRIBED

*(Read Hebrews 8:10-13.)*

Looking ahead to those days when Christ would come, God proclaimed that the new covenant would be established with Israel. This new covenant would be characterized by God's gift of a new heart.

Through God's new covenant, His people no longer have His law written on tablets of stone. That's the way God's law was presented to the Israelites at Mount Sinai. In the new covenant, God would etch His law into their minds and write it on their hearts (see Phil. 2:13). Having been changed on the inside, the people would serve Him out of gratitude instead of duty.

***How has God changed you from the inside out? What difference has it made on the outside?***

A most precious feature of the new covenant is God's willingness to be merciful toward sinners. In Christ, God does not give us the condemnation we deserve. Instead, He offers forgiveness. He takes away believers' guilt, frees them from sin's curse, and gives them new life. Because of His mercy shown in Christ's atoning death, the sins of His people will never be remembered again.

The writer of Hebrews concluded his quotation of Scripture by clarifying its meaning for his readers. If they were considering a return to their former life in Judaism, they needed to realize that the presence of a new covenant meant the old one was ready to pass away.

***How has God's mercy influenced your walk with Christ?***

***What does God's promise of forgiveness say about His love for you?***

**Bible Skill:**  
**Observe when and for what purpose a New Testament passage includes an Old Testament quotation.**

Identify the Old Testament passage quoted by the writer of Hebrews in Hebrews 8:8:b-12. Read the quoted passage in its Old Testament context. Then ask:

*Why did the New Testament writer use the quoted passage? What factors are different in the old and new contexts? What factors are the same or similar? How does the quoted passage help you better understand Jesus and the gospel?*

## ➤ OBEY THE TEXT

We are unable to keep God's law on our own. Only through faith in Christ can we be set free from sin to live a life that demonstrates righteousness.

*Examine your prayer life, looking for attitudes and patterns that do not reflect a new heart. Identify ways you can reword those prayers in light of the new covenant.*

*What insights from this passage could you share with a friend who is trying to change his or her life apart from Christ? What do you need to let Jesus change in your life by trusting in Him and not in yourself?*

*What needs to change in your Bible study group so that the group reflects the attitudes and characteristics presented in this passage? What action do you need to take as a part of that group to make the needed changes?*



### MEMORIZE

“For I will be merciful to their wrongdoing, and I will never again remember their sins” (Hebrews 8:12).

Use the space provided to make observations and record prayer requests during the group experience for this session.

## MY THOUGHTS

Record insights and questions from the group experience.

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## MY RESPONSE

Note specific ways you will put into practice the truth explored this week.

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## MY PRAYERS

List specific prayer needs and answers to remember this week.

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