

## SECTION EIGHT

### JESUS MEDIATES A SUPERIOR COVENANT

#### 1. TEXTS

a. **Hebrews 8:3 – 9:10.**

b. **Complementary relevant texts**

(1) **2Corinthians 3:3-6**—“He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant ...”

(2) **Galatians 4:21-31**—“One covenant is from Mt. Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves ...”

#### 2. TRANSITION FROM PREVIOUS SECTION TO THIS SECTION

a. **Hebrews 7:22**—“Because of this oath, Jesus has become the guarantor of a better covenant.”

b. **Key points about the role of Jesus’s priesthood in the covenant which make the transition**

(1) A better covenant has been established.

(2) The covenant is better because it is based upon an oath, which established a superior priesthood.

#### 3. THE PRIESTHOOD AS AN INSTRUMENT OF THE COVENANT (8:3-6)

a. **A generic appraisal of the function of propitiation in the priestly office**

(1) Every priest, since an important element of his office is dealing with divine displeasure at the misdeeds of the people, must have something to offer God in expiation for those misdeeds.

(2) The priests of the Levitical covenant, on earth, offered earthly sacrifices prescribed by that law and covenant.

b. **The superiority of the ministry of Jesus**

(1) His ministry is not on earth, but rather in heaven, where the real act of atonement takes place.

(2) The priests of the Levitical covenant, on earth, participated in a sacrificial **system** which was only a shadow.

(3) The real atonement, which took place in heaven, was not a **systematic** sacrifice, but a **personal** sacrifice: *i.e.*, the sacrifice by Jesus of Himself as an offering which would restore the favor of God to the covenant people.

(4) It is because their system was only a copy that they were required to be careful to “make everything according to the pattern ...” the pattern being the sacrifice of Jesus, which was typified by the Levitical offering.

(5) As minister of the new covenant, Jesus must achieve results which are superior to the results achieved by the Levitical priests—He must be able to do something they could not—because the promised blessings of the covenant He ministers are superior to the promised blessings of the former covenant.

#### 4. PROMISE OF A NEW COVENANT (8:7-13)

a. **The necessity of a new covenant**

(1) There would have been no need to replace the old covenant if there had been no deficiency found in it.

- (2) But it was God who declared His dissatisfaction with “them”—that is, either the people or the provisions of the old covenant—either way, with the results of the old covenant.

**b. Quoting Jeremiah 31:31-34**

- (1) This prophecy is, on the whole, a word of consolation.
- (2) Prefatory proclamation: **vv 29-30**:  
“In those days people will no longer say,  
‘The parents have eaten sour grapes,  
and the children’s teeth are set on edge.’  
Instead, everyone will die for their own sin; whoever eats sour grapes, their own teeth will be set on edge.”
- (1) Under the old covenant, the sins of the fathers were frequently visited upon the children, because the old covenant was a **national** covenant into which one was born.
- (2) That is why it would have been fitting to urge participants in that old covenant to come to know God, because one could be a participant in that national covenant without knowing God!
- (3) But no one will be a participant in the new covenant who does not know God, for the individual knowledge of God (in Christ) will be the condition for participation in the new covenant.
- (4) They all, “from the least of them to the greatest,” will know, concerning God, that He has forgiven their sins.
- (5) Not merely that on one annual *yom kippur* the **nation’s** ceremonial standing with God is restored, but that the standing of each **individual** as **sinless** is restored.

**a. The implication of the prophecy**

- (1) By calling for a “new” covenant, this prophet of the old covenant disclosed the fact that the covenant under which he prophesied was even then obsolete.
- (2) Thus, the coming of the new covenant is **immanent** in the continued ministration of the prophets on behalf of the old covenant.

**5. THE COVENANT MEETING-PLACE (9:1-10)**

**a. The tabernacle of the old covenant**

- (1) This meeting-place between God and the **representative** of the people was material and upon earth.
- (2) The furniture is mentioned briefly—“We cannot discuss these things in detail now.”
- (3) The high priest, representing the nation, took the **sacrifice** of atonement into this meeting place once a year.
- (4) The sacrifice of animal blood was required for both the high priest himself and the nation.

**b. What was proclaimed by the continuation of the rituals of the old covenant**

- (1) Entry into the true “most holy place” had not yet been disclosed.
- (2) God desires to meet His covenant people in the restored Edenic relationship, but this meeting was not possible so long as the only sacrifices available were the lives and blood of animals.
- (3) These sacrifices were recognized, even by those who offered them, as insufficient to settle the injury done by the sins of the people to their relationship with God and thus to permit entry to the true meeting place.
- (4) Under the old covenant, the animal sacrifices were sufficient to restore the nation to its relationship to God.
- (5) Under the old covenant, individual sins were being forgiven, but the sacrifices that were being offered were not effecting that forgiveness of sin.
- (6) These ceremonies and sacrifices were only external and ceremonial, practiced until the coming of the new and superior order in which God and His covenant people would again have the meeting He desires.