

Hebrews 8:1-13

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[0:00] We've been studying together on the Lord's Day, the book of Hebrews. And this morning our text will be Hebrews chapter 8. However, before you turn to Hebrews chapter 8, I'm going to ask you to join me in Revelation chapter 4.

The book of Hebrews was written by an unknown pastor to a group of beleaguered Hellenistic Jews, Greek-speaking Jews, who most likely lived on the outskirts of Rome and had suffered much for their faith.

The text lets us know that they had been beaten, some had been imprisoned, some had had their property taken because they were followers of Jesus Christ. And some of them who had professed faith in Jesus had left the church already, and some of them were being tempted to do the same. So the author of Hebrews writes to them this very pastoral letter encouraging them to hold firm, to stay steady, because Christ is the great anchor of the soul.

And I know we've been spending a lot of time talking about Jesus' priesthood, his Melchizedekian priesthood, and I know that it's easy for us to get lost sometimes in all that that means.

[1:26] The author of Hebrews finds it extremely important. He's spending this great labor to be sure that they understand the significance of Jesus' priesthood.

And he continues that into chapter 8. And so I thought this morning, as we're going to consider further, that Jesus is not a priest from the Aaronic priesthood, but is rather a priest after the order of Melchizedek.

This massive significance, him being able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them, chapter 7 and verse 25, that we would have a grander view of what that looks like.

So to help expand our minds and ignite our hearts to the glory of heaven, I thought it would be good for us this morning to read John's account of his vision of Jesus Christ ascending to his throne as our eternal high priest.

This has served me well, Revelation chapter 4 and 5 this week, and I hope it will do the same for you. So beginning in verse 1, Revelation 4 and following.

[2:55] After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.

At once I was in the Spirit, and behold, a throne stood in heaven with one seated on the throne. And he who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian, and around the throne was a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald.

Around the throne were 24 thrones, and seated on the thrones were 24 elders, clothed in white garments with golden crowns on their heads. From the throne came flashes of lightning and rumblings and peals of thunder, and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God.

And before the throne there was, as it were, a sea of glass like crystal. And around the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind.

The first living creature like a lion. The second living creature like an ox. The third living creature with the face of a man. And the fourth living creature like an eagle in flight.

[4:09] And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night, they never cease to say, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is

to come.

And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who is seated on the throne, and worship Him who lives forever and ever.

They cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Worthy are You, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for You created all things, and by Your will, they existed and were created.

We're not going to unpack the significance of all of that this morning, but it is awesome. Chapter 5. Then I saw in the right hand of Him who was seated on the throne a scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals.

And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals? And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it.

[5:23] And I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. And one of the elders said to me, Weep no more.

Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered so that He can open the scroll and its seven seals. And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a lamb standing as though it had been slain with seven horns and with seven eyes which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

And He went and took the scroll from the right hand of Him who was seated on the throne. And when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the lamb, each holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song saying, Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals. For you were slain and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.

You have made them a kingdom and priests to our God. They shall reign on the earth. Then I looked and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the lamb who was slain to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.

[6:59] And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea and all that is in them saying, To him who sits on the throne and the lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever.

And the four living creatures said, Amen. And the elders fell down and worshipped. This is our Christ.

And I think he gets lost so often in our minds with a buddy Jesus mentality. He is our high priest who reigns at the right hand of the Father.

And none of us have suffered the way these Hebrew believers were suffering or would suffer for that matter. So certainly whatever we bring to this room this morning, we can have a great confidence, an unshakable hope because we have this king priest, this Melchizedekian priest who ministers on our behalf.

I hope that the book of Hebrews is not getting boring for you. Our text for today is Hebrews chapter 8 verses 1-13 which is the entirety of the chapter.

[8:31] Please join me there with that magnificent scene from Revelation chapter 4 and 5.

Fixed in your minds, beloved, let me remind you that this is God's word to us written for his glory and our good. So we would all do well to listen to it in order to believe its promises and obey its commands.

chapter 8 and verse 1 and following. Now the point in what we are saying is this. We have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the majesty in heaven, a minister in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up, not man.

For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices. Thus it is necessary for this priest also to have something to offer. Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there

are priests who offer gifts according to the law.

They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things. For when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God saying, see that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain.

[9:49] But that as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, there had been no occasion to look for a second.

For he finds fault with them when he says, Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt.

For they did not continue in my covenant, and so I showed no concern for them, declares the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares 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. And they shall not teach each one his neighbor and each one his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me from the least of them to the greatest.

For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more. In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete, and what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

[11:07] A very short outline for our text today, two primary points, and we'll have some sub points which I'll try to carefully spell out for you. But simply this, the overarching structure today, it's number one, the supremacy of Jesus' priesthood, verses 1-9, and secondly, the supremacy of the new covenant, verses 10-13.

The supremacy of Jesus' priesthood and the supremacy of the new covenant. So let's look first at the supremacy of Jesus' priesthood. In the first subset, A, if you'd like to call it that, Jesus' supreme session.

And you'll see this in verses 1-2. Jesus' supreme session. And that is a word that means His reign. Jesus Christ currently is reigning over all things.

And it is so important to note in this text, verses 1-2, that He is seated. He is seated at the right hand, which is the place of honor, of the throne, of the majesty in heaven.

He is seated. And this posture speaks to His completed work, the finality of the work that He has accomplished.

[12:35] In John chapter 19 and verse 30, John records for us, when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, it is finished.

And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit. The author of Hebrews makes this point in his introduction to this letter. Hebrews chapter 1 and verse 3, he says of Jesus, He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature.

And He upholds the universe by the word of His power. After making purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high.

After hanging on that cross for those three brutal hours where the wrath of God for our sin was poured out on Him, after making that purification He declared, it is finished.

And He sat down. The temple worship of the Jews' day was full of sacrifice. This gets unpacked even further as we move into chapter 9 of the book of Hebrews.

[13:46] There was constant sacrifice happening in this place. For the known sins of Israel, and there was a day once a year for all of the unknown sins of Israel called the day of atonement.

Blood flowed constantly from this place. And in all of the carefully administered instructions for how to erect first the tabernacle and then the temple, every bit of furniture carefully described, there was never once a place for sitting.

Priests did not sit. Their shift included no rest. When they clocked in, they made sacrifice, and they continued to make sacrifice until they clocked out when someone else took over to continue making sacrifice.

But Jesus offered for himself, he offered up himself, excuse me, once for all. A final sacrifice, right?

A perfect sacrifice, a completed sacrifice. So he is seated, magnificently significant.

[14:57] Maybe not so much to our non-Jewish minds. This phrase would have just leapt off the page at this original here.

But this does not mean that he's done working. That he doesn't still have ministry to be done.

It simply means that all that was necessary to accomplish it has been accomplished. Verse 2 says that Jesus is a minister in the holy places.

In the true tent that the Lord set up, not man. And here the author of Hebrews is referencing the inner part of the tabernacle, then the temple.

That's why he refers to a tent that the Lord set up and not man. This place that the high priest one day of year, this day of atonement, was allowed to enter into the presence of God.

[15:57] This is where Jesus is. In the presence of God. And he is ministering. And he is ministering on our behalf.

I think it's an astounding thing that our eternal Christ, this priest that lives forever, lives now in service to us.

And this should be, beloved, massively humbling. It should be incredibly humbling. It should give us no room for boasting, but rather great humility. What?

The one who spoke the world into existence, the world was created through Christ and for Christ, he is ministering on our behalf.

Hebrews 7 25, we see that Jesus always lives to do what? Make intercession for us. He is praying now on our behalf.

[17:00] The finalized work is being yet actualized. We still live in between the times. It is all coming to pass, but all that was necessary to accomplish it has been done.

All that's been accomplished is coming to pass. This is difficult to wrap your mind around, but if you are in Christ, what a space for hope because your sanctification is sure.

It's already been accomplished. Your final salvation is sure. It's already been accomplished. It is finished.

You have such reason for hope and confidence because Jesus is a minister in the holy places.

Now, I want you to turn with me again to an Old Testament reference this time, Daniel chapter 7.

Turn with me there, please. Mark Hebrews chapter 8. We will come back to it. He reminds you we're talking about Jesus' supreme session, his supreme reign.

[18:28] Daniel chapter 7 verses 9 and 10 and then verses 13 and 14. We have recorded these visions that Daniel saw. Daniel saw. And there's some astounding stuff in here.

Beginning of verse 9 of Daniel 7. As I looked, thrones were placed. Notice there's more than one throne. Thrones were placed and the ancient of days took his seat.

His clothing was white as snow and the hair of his head like pure wool. His throne was fiery flames. Its wheels were burning fire.

Notice this is an advancing. It's a moving throne. A stream of fire issued and came out from before him. A thousand thousand served him and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him.

The court sat in judgment and the books were opened. Some of this should feel familiar to the text we read previously Revelation chapter 4.

[19:35] Verse 13 and 14. I saw in the night visions and behold with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man.

Now I want you to understand that in Hebrew this was a common way of referencing somebody to their kind. man. So what Daniel is saying is there came one who looked like a human.

This is what he's saying. It's a descriptor in this case. But this is the descriptor that Jesus picks up as a title and he calls himself this more than anything else in the New Testament.

He calls himself son of man. And to his listeners and if you're familiar with this text this would have brought up all kinds of imagery.

They would have understood clearly who Jesus was saying that he was from here. So with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man and he came to the ancient of days and was presented before him and to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom that all peoples nations and languages should serve him.

[20:56] His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed. So again here Old Testament now speaking forward to Jesus' session right thrones were placed there's a second throne and it is empty in the first vision but in the second vision one comes he's a human Jesus says that's me later on in the New Testament and he comes and he's presented and he's given reign he's given session right that all peoples and nations and languages would come and serve him sitting on this throne that is in motion and his kingdom is one that shall not be destroyed Jesus surely has a supreme session king of kings and lord of lords sub point

B Jesus' supreme reality I'm chuckling because I normally don't outline like this Jesus' supreme reality verses three through five we see in verse three every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices thus if you're going to be a priest is what he's saying if you're going to be a priest it's necessary for this priest Jesus also to have something to offer and what did he offer he offered up himself Hebrews 9 verse 11 and 12 but when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come then through the greater and more perfect tent not made with hands that is not of this creation he entered once for all into the holy places not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood thus securing!

himself so that we can have an eternal redemption! Verse 4 Now if he were on earth he would not be a priest at all since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law he's driving us to this point that there's a new covenant right that things are now different referencing the old covenant verse 5 they serve those priests who were appointed in the Aaronic priesthood a copy and shadow of the heavenly things he's talking here about service in the tabernacle and then the temple for when Moses was about to erect the tent the tabernacle he was instructed by God saying see that you make everything according to pattern that was shown you on the mountain right so again he's given very careful instruction for what this was meant to look like the tabernacle and then the temple which was meant to point us to greater reality and this point is made at the beginning of verse five they serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things right all of the mosaic worship was like a dress rehearsal for our worship now and the worship that will happen in heaven in fact the word pattern denotes more than just verbal instruction we don't know this factually but it suggests that

Moses was actually shown a model when he was up on the mountain with God that he saw what it was supposed to look like as he was to go down the mountain!

and build this tabernacle the place where God's glory would dwell so Jesus has a supreme reality right he's a better priest we've been making that point again and again and again and I hope you'll see its significance sub point C Jesus supreme covenant Jesus supreme covenant verses 6 through 9 but as it is Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better since it is enacted on better promises for if that first covenant had been faultless there would have been no occasion for a second now it's interesting to think of a covenant as with fault which is the case that's being made here the writer of

[26:03] Hebrews is saying that covenant had fault but we have to be careful at this point which covenant is he referring to he's referring to the mosaic covenant the promise that was made on the mountain with Moses he's not referring to the Abrahamic covenant right we can see this in Exodus chapter 19 verse 5 and 6 God says to Moses now therefore if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples for all the earth is mine and shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation these are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel so he makes a sure promise and that sure promise is if you will keep my commands then you will be my people so where's the fault in that it's with us the fault in it is with us because ever since the fall we are entirely incapable of keeping the commands of

God and this covenant was meant to point us to a greater covenant it was meant to aim us at something better it was meant to expose to us our lostness look how incapable we are of keeping these commands of God so we have to be careful because we don't want to suggest that the law itself isn't good it's very good God's commands were meant for the good of his people Psalm 119 is

all about this how very good God's words God's commands are for his people so the fault in it is that we can't keep it so the occasion for the second is our failure which he points out in verse 8 for he finds fault with them when he says and this is a long citation verses 8 through 12 from Jeremiah chapter 31 verses 31 through 34 behold the days are coming declares the Lord when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt for they did not continue in my covenant and so I showed no concern for them declares the Lord connecting that right the old covenant was flawed not that it was imperfect for God's law is perfect but it was flawed because it could not be kept by fallen humanity we're starting back up this evening project grow for the kids and we're on the new city catechism question and answer 13 and the question is can anyone keep the law of God perfectly and the answer is since the fall no human has been able to keep the law of God perfectly and I think they're doing that that way for simplicity but I really want to say accept the God man Jesus Christ in his hypostatic union Christ being fully human is the one and only perfect law keeper he fulfills the Mosaic covenant and in him we do as well because we are unable to keep the old covenant Jesus Christ keeps it for us this is the new covenant this is the new covenant that we are found in him we are given his righteousness we rightly so emphasize the death of Jesus Christ in Christianity right we should spend much time thinking about his passive obedience on the cross right his death is bearing the wrath of God for us right but that's not the complete picture he also was actively obedient he kept the law of God he was without sin he was righteous that he would grant to us righteousness so we fulfill the mosaic covenant by faith in his fulfilling of the mosaic covenant and this is a covenant that is better it is greater because it is enacted on better promises what promises what promises is he referring to I believe he's referring to the aforementioned promise to Abraham Hebrews chapter 6 and verse 13 for when God made a promise to Abraham since he had no one greater by whom to swear he swore by himself what were those promises!

[31:28] What were the promises that God made to Abraham that he would make him the father of a great nation and that he would bless all the peoples of the earth through him we now know with all of our new testament commentary that what God promised to do was that through the lineage of Abraham to build a church a people for his praise better promises!

And the writer of Hebrews is carrying that thematically through chapter 7 verse 21 and 22 he talks about the oath that God made Psalm 110 verse 4 the Lord has sworn and will not change his mind you are a priest forever and then verse 22 this makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant Jesus who's of the family of Abraham bringing salvation to all the peoples of the earth this is astounding truth Jesus supreme covenant which we should talk more about so this is point number two the supremacy of the new covenant which is Jesus verse 10 and following so point a the new covenant supreme indwelling the new covenant supreme indwelling the very first part first three quarters anyway of verse 10 for this is the covenant that

I will make with the house of Israel remember this is from Jeremiah chapter 31 after those days declares the Lord I will put my laws into their minds and write them on their hearts the old covenant was predominantly external right its laws!

after all were written! on stone the old covenant provided no power for obedience it required obedience but it provided no power for it but now in the new covenant right we have both God's word given to us and placed into our minds that we would read it think about it meditate on it and it's written our hearts the new covenant is primarily an indwelling covenant through the gift of the Holy Spirit given the Spirit of God you've been baptized into him and now we can take up and read and we have consciences that are aimed God word if you are in

Christ the more normal compulsion is towards obedience we now being in Christ having been saved by his work we work because of the rest that we have in him we know how to labor to earn salvation a thing we could never do but now having been saved from a place of rest we can be law keepers empowered by the Holy Spirit the new covenant has a supreme indwelling so point B the new covenant also has a supreme relationship the last part of verse 10 and I will be their God and they shall be my people I referenced already temple worship in brief and I'm trying to keep it brief because we're going to talk about it quite a bit more next week can't give away all the material this

[35:29] Sunday there was such a limited access under the Mosaic covenant now we have unlimited access to God in Christ this is a cool reality that we can approach God and not be utterly destroyed because of what Jesus has done and his current ministry on our behalf and I hope your understanding of that is thick and thickening and not thin you would just take some time to really consider what that means for you the ancient of days the creator of the universe draws us into relationship with him this is incredible and not as just individuals but as people a God who has a people my mind in studying this was drawn to

Hosea the prophet Hosea who lived out a real life pageant his actual life displayed the unfaithfulness of Israel he took an unfaithful wife her name is Gomer he has textually we believe one son with Gomer named Jezreel which means in Hebrew to scatter then it seems that she has other children which he calls his own Hosea calls his own who are named Lo Ru Hamah which means no mercy and lo ami which means not my people young people are you willing to follow Christ wherever he leads you Hosea took a wife he knew would be unfaithful named Gomer and he! named his kids to scatter! no mercy not my people in service of his God incredible and this pageant plays out Gomer is unfaithful she leaves him yet he continues to care for her finally in chapter 3 he buys her out of slavery it's all such a beautiful picture at the end of chapter 2 beginning at verse 16 God here is talking about the way he is going to beckon back his people draw back to himself Israel and in that day declares the Lord you will call me my husband and no longer will you call me my Baal idol of the day for I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth and they shall be remembered by name no more and I will make for them a covenant on that day with the beasts of the fields the birds of the heavens and the creeping things in safety and I will betroth you to me forever I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice in steadfast love and in mercy I will betroth you to me in faithfulness and you shall know the Lord and in that day I will answer declares the Lord I will answer the heavens and they shall answer the earth and the earth shall answer the grain the wine means to scatter but here the meaning is changed to sow to plant verse 23 and I will sow her for myself in the land and I will have mercy on no mercy I will have ruhamah on lo ruhamah and I will say to not my people you are my people I will say to lo ami ami and he shall say you are my

God and what a comfort a text like Hosea chapter 2 verse 16 and 23 would have been should have been to these suffering Christians should be for us today right the new covenant has a supreme relationship so point C we're getting there I'm landing the plane the new covenant has a supreme knowledge it has a supreme knowledge in brief verse 11 and they shall not teach each one his neighbor and each one his brother saying know the Lord for they shall all know me from the least of them to the greatest I believe that we're referencing here the full inclusion of the church we're between those times right we are gospel proclaimers we are gathering together

[40:38] Christ's sheep right we are his agents in his earthly ministry of gathering together his church one day that task will be completed he will return for us there will be a new heaven there will be a new earth there is a supreme knowledge in the new covenant Jesus in his high priestly prayer prayed in John 17 in verse 3 and this is eternal life and get this beloved we have we are in Christ we have eternal life now and we will have it forever and this is eternal life that they know you the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent you've been given the revelation of God and the person and work of Jesus Christ and we are bringing about that revelation means to that great end that one day the church together this tens of thousands upon tens of thousands that we see in revelation four and five will cry out holy holy holy holy sub point d and finally the new covenant has a supreme forgiveness ending

I think this is best of all. Verse 12. God says, for I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.

I think we, as American Christians, most of us, at very least, grew up under some sense of morality. Had some trajectory of goodness, at least in our own thinking of it. And I think because of that, far too many of us have never really felt the weight of our rebellion against a most holy God.

Not really understood his good reign over us and our abject rejection of it.

[43:10] Have not seen that if we have failed at any point of the law, then we have failed at all points of the law.

We have been found imperfect for our God. And what we do for that is his eternal wrath, his eternal judgment poured out on us.

We think in small consequence, don't we? There's great consequence for our sin. And so when the author of Hebrews quotes Jeremiah chapter 31, God saying, I will be merciful.

He's talking about being merciful towards enemies, haters of his. I will be merciful towards their iniquities. And I will remember their sins no more.

That will be forgotten in this new covenant. I have a hard time forgetting my sin because Christ is a great high priest who's ministering on my behalf.

[44:25] God has forgotten my sin. I have no need to carry around the guilt of my sin because God's forgotten it. What an incredible truth.

Psalms 103, verse 11 and 12, For as high as the heavens are above the earth, immeasurable, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him.

As far as the east is from the west, infinite, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.

Because we have this Christ as our great high priest.

The author of Hebrews concludes, he's no longer quoting Jeremiah 31, verse 13 of chapter 8 he says, In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete.

We never could and we are not required to keep God's law to be accepted by him. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

[45:41] What has replaced it is the righteousness that comes by faith in Christ. Christ who has a supreme priesthood.

And because he has a supreme priesthood, he is the priest of a supreme new covenant. I pray this morning, and I'll pray in a moment this morning, that you can join with me today and that we will forever be together and we will cry out to him who sits on the throne, to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever.

Amen.