

GROUP LEADER GUIDE

Hebrews: The New and Better Covenant

Hebrews 8:7-13



**Check out the TJC Weekend Recap podcast for a more in-depth look at our sermons each week!
The podcast is available on all streaming platforms!**

SERMON NOTES

Growing up when I was probably 7-8 years old I remember we had a computer at our house with dial-up internet. And if you wanted to get online you had to wait for what felt like an eternity. It would make an awful screeching noise as it was connecting. Once you did get online, every single web page took forever to load. Oh yeah, and if someone got on the house phone.. Boom you lost your connection and you have to start all over.

What we can do in 30 seconds on our phones and computers today, might have taken 30 minutes back in the 90s, it was absolutely crazy. But then in the early 2000s, broadband internet came on the scene. Suddenly, you could connect to the internet immediately. No crazy waiting times, no horrible sounds, no getting kicked off. Internet connection would be changed forever.

Almost overnight, dial-up internet became obsolete. It had been replaced by something much better. There would be absolutely zero reason to go back to dial-up internet today.

And what I want you to see in today's message is that this is exactly the Hebrew author's argument for the old and new covenant. The Old Covenant is like dial-up internet, it served its purpose, but something new has arrived. It's grown old, and given way to something much better.

His whole argument to the Jewish Christian audience is don't go back. The New Covenant established by Jesus is a better covenant, that has a better mediator, a better sacrifice, and enacted on better promises.

First of all, what is a covenant? A covenant is an agreement by two or more parties based principally on a promise. God has revealed His eternal plan of redemption throughout history through the unfolding of several different covenants. Most theologians describe the first covenant as the

Covenant of Redemption before the foundation of the world. This is a covenant between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in eternity past to elect, atone for, and save a group of people to eternal life.

We see this in passages like Ephesians 1, that *“He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless.”* We see Jesus mentioning several times throughout His ministry that He is carrying out the Father’s will plan. That He came to seek and save the lost.

Then, when we read the early pages of the Bible we see the first covenant with humanity between God and Adam in the garden. This is often referred to as the Adamic Covenant or the Covenant of Works.

“You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

So life was the reward for obedience, and death was the punishment for disobedience. We obviously know that Adam broke this covenant by sinning against God.

However, God would not leave man without a promise and hope. In Genesis 3:15, God promises to send an offspring of the woman who will ultimately crush the head of the serpent. This is often referred to as the beginning of the Covenant of Grace. God promises to show grace to sinful people and restore His relationship with them that they had broken.

Then as we continue throughout redemptive history, God makes several more covenants with His people. You have the:

- **Noahaic Covenant** – God would never destroy the earth with a flood again.
- **Abrahamic Covenant** – God promised Abraham a land, a people, and that all the nations of the earth would be blessed through him.
- **Mosaic Covenant** – God gave Israel His law at Mt. Sinai, promising blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience.
- **Davidic Covenant** – God promised David an eternal throne and kingdom through his offspring.
- **New Covenant** – Which we will be looking at specifically today, where God will ultimately fulfill all these covenants through His Son Jesus Christ.

It's also important to note that most of these covenants have a sign or symbol connected to them:

- **Noah** – the rainbow
- **Abraham** – circumcision
- **Moses** – the Sabbath
- **New Covenant** – The Lord's Supper and Baptism

Reading the Bible in light of these covenants will help us better understand the overall story of redemption that God is unfolding throughout history. So let's look back at Hebrews 8. I want to start by going back to verse 6 that Pastor Erik ended with last week.

V6 – 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.

Now, the first mention of covenant by the Hebrew author is back in chapter 7 verse 22. Speaking of Jesus being a priest forever, he says, *“This makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant.”* And then in verse 6 here of chapter 8, he says Christ' ministry is much more excellent than the old because the covenant He mediates is better and it is enacted on better promises. So again, what I want you to see is that the whole theme of this section of Hebrews is that the new covenant is better than the old covenant because it has a better mediator, a better sacrifice, a better ministry, and better promises. Jesus is the better mediator. He is the better sacrifice. He has a better ministry. And the better promises are going to be laid out for us in verses 8-12.

V7 – For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second.

Once again, we have to remember the Hebrew author is writing to Jewish Christians, so these covenants would have been well known and very important to them. The temptation for these Jewish Christians would be to go back to their old ways of Judaism. Is Jesus really enough? Are you sure we don't need to continue to make these sacrifices? Are you sure we don't really have to be circumcised?

But notice, he clarifies with them that the old covenant had faults... if it didn't there would have been

no need for a second. You see, the old covenant could not provide a final sacrifice for sin. The endless repetition of sacrifices shows the covenant's inability to truly atone for sin. The Old Covenant revealed sin but it could not remove it. Next, the Hebrew author shows us these better promises by giving us the longest quotation of the Old Testament that we find in our entire New Testament.

One of the weaknesses found in the old covenant was that man could not keep his side of the agreement. *"They did not continue in my covenant... so I showed no concern for them."* You see the problem wasn't in the covenant itself. God's Law is holy, righteous, and good. However, the problem was with the people's inability to keep their end of the deal. Under the old, there were conditions and consequences for the people breaking the covenant with God. This is why there was a need for a new and better covenant.

There's 3 things I want you to see in verse 10-12 that are vital to the New Covenant

1. All in the New Covenant have the law written on their hearts.

Under the Old Covenant, the Law was written on tablets of stone, but under the New Covenant the Law is written on the hearts of man. This is what we call regeneration. Under the New Covenant established by Jesus, God transforms His people from the inside out. We see God promise this to Moses in Deuteronomy 30:6, *"And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live."* This was also prophesied through Ezekiel in Ezekiel 11:19, *"And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh,"* God promised this inward transformation long ago but these promises were ultimately fulfilled in Acts chapter two. At Pentecost God pours out His Spirit on the people. The Spirit of God now indwells believers and gives us the ability to discern the things of God and follow Him obediently. You see, it's not that we simply know the law of God, but through His Spirit, He gives us the ability to walk obediently to the law of God. Those in the New Covenant have the law written on their hearts through the working of the Spirit.

2. All in the New Covenant will know the Lord relationally.

V11 – 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.

This knowledge of God by personal experience offered in the New Covenant was greater than that in the Old. There will be no need for a faithful remnant in the covenant people to teach the unfaithful majority to know God, for all those in the New Covenant WILL know Him. One theme we see throughout the Old Testament is Israel forgetting what the Lord had done. God’s covenant people quickly forgot all that He had done. But this will not be so for those in the New Covenant. They will all have a personal knowledge of God because His presence will not only be with them, but IN them. This promise also shows we no longer need human mediators, like prophets and priests to get to God. We have direct access to God through the perfect mediator Jesus Christ.

3. All in the New Covenant have their sins forgiven.

V12 – “For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.”

The New Covenant offers a true, complete cleansing of sins through the blood of Jesus Christ. It’s impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins, but the blood of our Savior Jesus is effective and sufficient. Under the old sacrificial system, there was an annual reminder of sins, but under the new covenant in Christ’s blood, we are reminded of the once-for-all sacrifice of Jesus. Every single person included in the New Covenant has their sins forgiven eternally. The Hebrew writer closes with this commentary after his quotation of Jeremiah:

V13 – 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.

He continues to strengthen his argument to the Jewish Christians of not going back to the things of old. The New Covenant is here, don’t return to the Old. The first has become obsolete, it’s growing old and ready to vanish away. Just like that dial-up internet, it served its purpose, but there’s no reason to go back. The Old Covenant isn’t abolished or cancelled, but it’s been fulfilled in Jesus Christ. It’s a better covenant, with a better mediator, a better sacrifice, enacted on better promises. What Jesus offers through His sacrificial death, is infinitely greater than anything the Mosaic Law could ever provide. And this sacrificial system would soon vanish away at the destruction of the

temple in AD70. Just like our new life in Christ, the old is gone, the new has come.

Application

1. Trust in the finished work of Christ, not your own efforts.

You see, the New Covenant is better because it rests not on us, but on God. Jesus came and did what the people could not do. He lived a perfect life and died a sacrificial death, in our place. So our membership in the New Covenant is based on God's transformative work in our hearts, not on our merits. We are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. This is why we must be given a new nature, we must be born again, and filled with the Spirit. If you have the Holy Spirit inside of you, you will receive all the benefits of Jesus' finished work.

2. Embrace God's Law as good.

Jesus tells us in Matthew 5, that He did not come to abolish the Law, but rather fulfill the Law. So, the Law must now be understood according to the person and work of Jesus Christ. In the Sermon on the Mount, He correctly interprets the Law for the people, He doesn't throw it out or disregard it. We have to understand that God's Law is for our good and for our flourishing. His Law is according to His character and shows us what Holy Living is like. So just because we are under grace does not mean we disregard the moral law of God, rather, because we love God, we then obey Him. Just like David says in Psalm 19, *"The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes."* God's law is good and we should find joy in obeying Him.

3. Be comforted knowing that you have direct access to God.

The promise of verse 11 is that we will all know the Lord through this inward transformation of the heart. Jesus has torn the veil that separated us from God and we now have direct access to Him. You don't need a high priest. You don't need a prophet. You don't need a king.

- Jesus is the ultimate high priest because He not only offers a sacrifice for God's people, but He is the sacrifice for God's people.
- Jesus is the ultimate prophet because He not only speaks the words of God, but He is the

Word of God.

- Jesus is the ultimate king because He not only has kingly authority, but He is the King of kings and the Authority Himself.

Friends, we have direct access to the Father because we have been covered by the perfect atonement of the Savior.

4. Rest in the assurance of your forgiveness.

God's promise for every person included in the New Covenant is that He "*will remember their sins no more.*" If you are in Christ, He's removed your sins as far as the east is from the west. Nothing can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus. You're eternally secure and your record of debt is clean. The atonement of Christ on the cross has paid in full all your sins past, present, and future. Let this be of great comfort for you today.

So as we move into a time of response and prayer today I just want to speak to some different people in the room. First, if you do not have confidence in your salvation today. I urge you to trust in Christ. If you don't know the Lord and know that your sins have been atoned for by Jesus, go to Him in faith and repentance. Our entrance into the New Covenant is by faith alone. *If we confess with our mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in our heart that God raised him from the dead, we will be saved.* That is the promise of God. Secondly, if you're here and you're struggling to trust in Christ or maybe you're battling with sin or having confidence that you have access to God... lay it all at His feet today. Jesus says come to Him and He will give you rest. If you're in either one of these categories today, I want to ask right now to just stand where you are so that we can pray for you. Just stand where you and some people will come to gather around you and pray. If you're comfortable sharing what your needs are, do so. But if not, that's okay, you can just ask for prayer.



- How was your week? What is one thing you're grateful for and one thing that challenged you?
- How did you grow in obedience to Christ over the last week?
- Where did you go to share the gospel or have a spiritual conversation with someone?
- What is a sin you have been struggling with that you need to repent of?



- **REVIEW**

- Read Hebrews 8:7-13 and then have someone else in the group read it again, preferably from a different translation.
- Additional Scripture
 - Deuteronomy 30:6
 - Judges 2:10
 - Psalm 19:7-11
 - Jeremiah 31:31-34
 - Hosea 4:1
 - Romans 10:9-10
 - Ephesians 1:4-5
- What big takeaways did you have from the sermon?
 - What did this teach you about God?
 - What did this teach you about man?
 - What did this teach you about salvation?

- **DISCUSS**

- What is a covenant, and how does it help us understand the Bible?
- How is the Old Covenant like dial-up internet, and what does this analogy teach us?
- Why is the New Covenant considered "better" according to Hebrews 8?
- What were the limitations of the Old Covenant?
- What are the three key promises of the New Covenant found in Hebrews 8:10-12?
- How does the Holy Spirit enable us to live under the New Covenant?
- What role does Jesus fulfill in the New Covenant that the Old Covenant could not?
- Why is it important for Christians to embrace God's Law even under grace?
- What assurance do we have as New Covenant believers?
- What is a practical step you can take as a result of this sermon?

- **MEMORIZE**

- **Matthew 9:37-38** – *Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”*

LOOK AHEAD



- **BUILD UP:** How will you be built up this week? We have several discipleship opportunities for you to participate in.
 - **Life Groups** are a time and place to connect and learn to better follow Jesus together while abiding in Him. Life Groups are the primary means of disciple-making at TJC. Our groups focus on connecting, learning, following, and abiding. Groups meet weekly on various days/times across Wilson County. Contact Morgan Cates (morgan@tjclive.com) for more information.
 - **MDWK** is a time of education and growth in order to build up the Journey Church body. We offer a handful of intentionally chosen classes that cover a broad range of topics and are taught by quality teachers from within our congregation. Classes are at 6:30p every Wednesday. Contact Morgan Cates (morgan@tjclive.com) for more information.
 - **TJC Women** seeks to equip women to be rooted in the Word of God and bold in their faith. Our events and small groups focus on letting the gospel shape all spheres of our lives. Gather is the first Saturday of every month. Contact Laura DiLeonardi (laura@tjclive.com) for more information.
 - **TJC Men** exists to equip men to show Jesus as incomparably glorious in every sphere of their lives. The men’s ministry meets on the 2nd Saturday of every month at 8:00a in the student center. Contact Morgan Cates (morgan@tjclive.com) for more information.
 - **TJC Students** is passionate to see every parent equipped, every leader developed, and every student disciplined into baptized, self-feeding, disciple making followers of Jesus who are letting the gospel shape every sphere of their lives. Our student ministry meets on Wednesday nights from 6:00p-7:30p for MDWK worship and Sunday mornings at 8:30a and 10:00a for small group. Contact Larry Davis (larry@tjclive.com) for more information.
 - **TJC Kids** believes that the Gospel saves, sanctifies, gathers and sends. It is our desire to see our kids understand that the Gospel truly does change everything and we will do this primarily by teaching our kids to love Jesus, showing them they can have fun in the process, and making sure they stay safe. Contact Nick Judd (nick@tjclive.com) for more information.
 - **TJC Young Adults** exists to equip young adults ages 18 to 29 in becoming passionate followers of Jesus who enter their life in Christ. We do this through intentional relationships, fellowship, and worship centered around the gospel. The Fount meets Tuesdays at 7:00p. Contact Hunter Christian (hunter@tjclive.com) for more information.
- **SEND OUT:** How do you plan to be sent out to engage the world around you? We have several opportunities for local and international missions.

- **For the City:** Acts 1:8 calls us to be engaged where we live and among the nations. The people of TJC seek to bring truth, grace, and hope to Lebanon and the surrounding area by mobilizing the church to be salt and light, not only for the city, but for your city. Take part in faithfully and obediently using your gifts to declare God's glory among those who are hopeless living among you today. Contact Jeff Long (jeff@tjclive.com) for more information.
- **For the Nations:** At TJC we exist to show Jesus as incomparably glorious to Lebanon and beyond. We are ambitious and passionate about strategically taking an active role in finishing the Great Commission as we actively pursue the unreached peoples of the world by mobilizing the entire church to pray, send, go and welcome international friends among us. Contact Shawn Casto (shawn@tjclive.com) for more information.

- **PRAYER**

- **Pray over any request from your group members.**
- **Pray for our staff:** Kendall Cox (Discipleship Ministry Assistant)
- **Pray for our replanters:** Christ's Fellowship
- **Pray for our short-term teams:**
 - Southeast Asia Team departing on May 25, 2025
 - Kenya Summer Trip departing on May 25, 2025
 - Philippines Team departing on June 21, 2025
 - Kenya Team departing on June 29, 2025
 - Europe Student Team departing on July 6, 2025
 - Indonesia Team departing on August 11, 2025
 - Rome Team departing on November 7, 2025
- **Pray for our long-term units on the mission field:**
 - The Wilsons
 - The Grays
 - The Starks
- **Pray for the unreached.** Want to keep up with Unreached People Groups? Download the Unreached of the Day App <https://joshuaproject.net/pray/unreachedoftheday/app>