

STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF HEBREWS

A Study of Hebrews 8:1-13

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Introduction – Review

- The apostle Paul is believed to be the author of the epistle to the Hebrews (**GC 347, 411, 413, 420-421**).
- Timothy was a close ministry associate of Paul, and is mentioned by name in the epistle (**Heb. 13:23**), similar to other epistles written by Paul (**2 Cor. 1:1; 1 Tim. 1:2; 1:18; 6:20-21; 2 Tim. 2:1; Philemon 1:1**).
- Produced prior to Jerusalem’s destruction in AD 70, this epistle was written to Jewish Christians, and might have also been used as an evangelistic tool to reach the Jewish people with the Gospel message.
- One of the central themes in the book of Hebrews is the “**Jesus is better than . . .**” theme.
- **Heb. 1:1-14** (Jesus is better than angels); **Heb. 2:1-18** (Jesus is better than any human being); **Heb. 3:1-19** (Jesus is better than Moses); **Heb. 4:1-16** (Jesus offers a better rest – salvation, Sabbath, and eternal life); **Heb. 5:1-14** (Jesus has a better priesthood – Melchisedec); **Heb. 6:1-20** (Jesus offers better promises); **Heb. 7:1-28** (Jesus is a better priest than the OT Melchisedec was).

Hebrews 8 – Reflections on Hebrews 8:1-5

- The apostle Paul summarized his thoughts from **Heb. 7**; we have a high priest, Jesus Christ, who sits on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens (God the Father).
- Jesus is the Minister of the true sanctuary (the heavenly sanctuary), which He built Himself without human hands; this heavenly sanctuary is where Christ is serving as our high priest and intercessor.
- The earthly high priests offered gifts (sacrifices) according to the OT sacrificial law. These sacrifices were shadows of heavenly realities, and were given by God when He instructed Moses to build the earthly sanctuary after the pattern of the heavenly sanctuary, which was shown to the prophet on Mt. Sinai.
- Moses built the earthly sanctuary after the pattern he was shown of the heavenly sanctuary; the earthly sanctuary was smaller in size but the same proportionally.

Hebrews 8 – Reflections on Hebrews 8:6-13

- Jesus Christ has a more excellent priestly ministry than did the OT earthly Levitical priests.
- This makes Jesus the Mediator of a better covenant that has been established on better covenant promises, i.e. God’s covenant promise of eternal salvation through Jesus Christ Himself.
- If the first covenant (based upon the OT sacrificial laws) had been perfect, then there would be no need for a second covenant; yet, because OT Israel failed to keep God’s covenant, He promised that a new covenant would be made with Israel, i.e. the new Israel of the Christian Church.
- This new covenant was not based on the covenant that God made during the Exodus, simply because Israel did not keep this covenant; this new covenant is really not a new one (see **Jer. 31:31-34**).
- However, this new covenant is called “new” because it has the important purpose of reminding His people of the one true covenant, and He will empower His faithful people to keep this covenant.
- God’s new covenant involves a promise to put His law into the hearts and minds of His faithful people.
- This faithful group will also teach their neighbors and brethren this law, and all people shall know God, from the least person to the greatest person; the old covenant has waxed old, and involved a failure of God’s people to keep His commandments; the new covenant, however, will involve success by the faithful to keep God’s commandments through Christ’s strength.

Summary of Hebrews 8:1-13

- Jesus Christ is our high priest, and sits at the right hand of God the Father in the heavenly sanctuary.
- The heavenly sanctuary, a better sanctuary, was built by Jesus Christ, and was not made by human hands.

- Moses instructed the Israelites to build the OT earthly sanctuary after the pattern of the heavenly sanctuary that was shown to him on Mt. Sinai; this OT earthly sanctuary was built in proportion to the heavenly sanctuary, but was a scaled down version in terms of size.
- The OT sanctuary services in the OT earthly temple were actually types and shadows of services that Jesus Christ performs in the heavenly sanctuary as our High Priest.
- Christ’s sacrifice and high priestly ministry are the divine basis for the new covenant, which involves the eternal promise that God will place His laws into the hearts and minds of every faithful person.
- There are several words related to the “sanctuary” in **Heb. 8-10**, and these words are shown in the chart below; these words demonstrate that Christ ascended into the heavenly sanctuary after His resurrection to begin His work in the holy place; He moved into the most holy place in the fall of 1844.

Verse	NKJV English	Greek	Literal Translation	Suggested Meaning
Heb. 8:2	sanctuary	τῶν ἁγίων	“the holies” (plural)	“sanctuary”
Heb. 9:1	sanctuary	τό ἅγιον	“sanctuary” (singular)	“sanctuary”
Heb. 9:2	sanctuary	Ἅγια	“sanctuary” (singular)	“holy place”
Heb. 9:3	*Holiest of All	Ἅγια Ἁγίων	“holy of holies”	“most holy place”
Heb. 9:8	*Holiest of All	τῶν ἁγίων	“the holies” (plural)	“sanctuary”
Heb. 9:12	*Most Holy Place	τὰ ἅγια	“the holies” (plural)	“sanctuary”
Heb. 9:24	holy places	ἅγια	“holy places” (plural)	“sanctuary”
Heb. 9:25	*Most Holy Place	τὰ ἅγια	“the holies” (plural)	“sanctuary”
Heb. 10:19	*Holiest	τῶν ἁγίων	“the holies” (plural)	“sanctuary”
Heb. 13:11	sanctuary	τὰ ἅγια	“the holies” (plural)	“sanctuary”

- The chart above is important because of the false claim that Jesus Christ went directly into the most holy place when He ascended to heaven after His resurrection; He actually went in to the holy place right after His ascension to begin His High Priestly work in that room; He would move into the Most Holy Place when the investigative judgment began in the year A.D. 1844.
- Notice that five verses above (noted by an *) refer to the most holy place in the King James Version (**Heb. 9:3; 9:8; 9:12; 9:25; 10:19**); yet, only one Greek phrase (Ἅγια Ἁγίων – “holy of holies” in **Heb. 9:3**) applies directly to the most holy place; the other four verses use the plural form of either ἅγια or ἁγίων (**Heb. 9:8; 9:12; 9:25; 10:19**) both of which mean “holies”/“sanctuary” (the plural form) and refer the sanctuary as a whole, which would include both rooms that make up the sanctuary itself.
- This word evidence suggests that Jesus Christ ascended into the holy place of the heavenly sanctuary after His resurrection, not directly into the most holy place; these specific cases are examples of how any given translation of Scripture can have an influence on theological conclusions.
- Consistent with our “Jesus is better than . . .” theme, Heb. 8:1-13 discusses how Jesus is a better High Priest than the earthly high priests, and ministers in a better sanctuary (the heavenly sanctuary), and offers a better covenant (God’s Law is to be written in the heart and mind), which is built upon a better promise (the promise of eternal life through Jesus Christ)!