

# HE IS BETTER.

A Series in the Book of Hebrews



## Hebrews

### A Note to the Parents/Teachers

*The book of Hebrews is often summed up in one simple phrase: Jesus is better. Yet the book of Hebrews is itself is far from a simple book. The audience of this letter appears to be primarily Jewish Christians who grew up in Judaism but have believed in Jesus. Yet, they seem to be facing persecution for believing that Jesus was/is the Messiah that Israel had been waiting for. The author responds to these believers turning from faith in Jesus by showing that Jesus is superior to every possible thing that you could put in his place.*

### Call to Worship

*Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come. You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will, they were created and have their being.” - Revelation 4:8,11*

### Starter

#### Evidence of Grace

Ask kids to share ways they’ve seen God at work lately. Anything, big or small, which is good is from God. Take time to thank God together.

#### Discussion Question(s):

- ▶ Have you ever played a video game, maybe an outdoor game like fishing, or a racing game, and then went out and actually went fishing in real life or went in a race car in real life?

- Do you remember when you were learning to draw or paint and would often look at another picture and try copying it? Did it look exactly like the original picture you were copying?

## Text

# Hebrews 8

## Big Idea: Jesus is the better COVENANT

### Summary

In Hebrews 8, the author continues this theme of Jesus being better, and this chapter carries over the theme from the last chapter of Jesus being the great High Priest. However, the author now introduces the readers to the idea of Jesus being a better covenant.

What is a covenant? A covenant, both back then and now, is when two parties or people make a promise to one another and exchange something to show one another that they are serious about their commitment to keep their side of the promise. Getting married is a good example of a covenant. Both the man and the woman are committing to stay faithful to and care for one another. They exchange valuable rings to show one another and the people witnessing the wedding that they are committed to love and care for one another. The rings they exchange also serve as a reminder, every time they see it on their finger, of the commitment and vow that they made with their spouse.

Just as humans make vows, commitments, and covenants with one another, God also makes vows, commitments, or covenants with humans as well. God first made a covenant with Abraham, promising that he would be his God, create a whole nation of people from Abraham's family, and do this so that all nations would know that YHWH (God) was the only true God (Genesis 15). God also made a covenant with Abraham's descendants, the people of Israel, after He rescued them from slavery from Egypt. The covenants that God made with His people were meant to be kept and honored by both parties, God and the people of Israel. The problem was that Israel kept forgetting their vow and covenant and would always end up worshipping other gods. They broke their side of the covenant, but God never did. The covenants and the laws of the Old Testament were always meant to point the people of God and eventually the nations to what it was like to live in God's kingdom, with Him as ruler and us as His people.

The author of Hebrews mentions two reasons why a new covenant was needed. First, the old covenant was faulty. It was not evil, wrong, or sinful. The first one couldn't accomplish what it looked forward to. It was a provisional or a temporary covenant to point toward a new one that God would establish through His Son, Jesus.

Second, the old covenant was faulty because people were faulty. In 8:8, the author says that "God finds fault with them" — not with "it" but with "them": that is, with the Old Testament Israel. They did not continue in His covenant. They kept breaking their covenant only to worship God and submit to His rule and reign. Instead, they kept running off and worshipping other people, things, and gods.

The old covenant was a copy that was meant to give a glimpse and a picture of the relationship between God and his human creation that He had established at the beginning of creation and

what it will be like again when Jesus returns to restore His creation. With the people of Israel continuously breaking their side of the covenant, God didn't destroy his people, which was often the penalty for breaking a covenant: death. Instead, God pursued his people and renewed His covenant with them. But this couldn't go on forever. There needed to be a new covenant, not just a constant renewal of an old one.

The new covenant involves a new **power** (*Holy Spirit*), new **people** (*church*), and a new **priest** (*Jesus*).

“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...they shall all know me from the least to the greatest” (8:10-11).

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## Power

The sacrifices, obedience to the law, and rituals were always meant to be a sign of what was going on inside. Those were meant to flow out of people's love and faith in God in their hearts. The reality was that some, maybe most, just performed all of these rituals and laws as a way to earn God's favor and love. With this new covenant, God would provide a new power for his people. He was going to write the law on their hearts. He would pour out his Holy Spirit and change them from the inside.

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## People

The new covenant also involves a new people. These new people are characterized by unity and love for one another and their neighbors. The new people also include people from every tribe, tongue, and nation. All people are welcome into this group called the church. Again, through the power of the Holy Spirit, these new people are able to live lives, though not perfectly yet, that is a foretaste, foreshadow, or copy of what living in God's kingdom will one day fully look like in the new creation.

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## Priest

Jesus, the great high priest now in an earthly body seated in the original heavenly temple, has made the ultimate sacrifice on our behalf that has settled the penalty of sin forever. That is why we no longer need to make animal sacrifices for the atonement of our sins.

Jesus didn't come to abolish the law or covenant but to fully embody and fulfill all the old law and covenant meant to do. Jesus was what the old law and covenant were pointing toward. They were the copy drawing or painting that was meant to point to the people of God toward the original.

## Dialogue Questions - you may use some or all.

- What are some ways you can be a reflection of God's glory to the world around you?
- What are some ways that you can point others toward Jesus?
- Where have you seen God at work in the world around you?
- Why was Jesus the perfect sacrifice for sins?

- If you have trusted Jesus with your heart, life, and loyalties, how should you live in relationship to God, to others, and to God's created world?

## Breakout Time

### Pray:

God, I know that you are the one true living God who created all things. You created the earth and everything on the earth. You created me. Thank you for sending your Son Jesus so that I can be forgiven of worshiping other things. Forgive me for sometimes worshiping other things than you. I repent. Holy Spirit, please work in my heart to love God and love others in a way that points them to Jesus and your Kingdom. May our hearts be filled with love for you and for others in response to what you have done in and through your Son Jesus and the story you have invited us to now participate in. Help me to think of my community this week and how I can love them well so that they might know you more.

### Craft

You can have the kids color the temple picture below or have them copy it, or you can show it to them and see if they can draw it just by looking at it. It will probably depend on the age of the kids you are teaching.

