

LAWS WRITTEN ON OUR HEART

Hebrews 8:1-13

Christian Barnard, 1st to do heart transplant, asked his patient if he'd like to see his heart. He took down glass container & handed it to him. He was 1st to hold his heart in his hands. He exclaimed: "So this is my old heart that caused me so much trouble!" He handed it back, turned, & left it forever.

Points to problem with any system that tries to get us to God by obeying laws.

However valid the laws may be, we face same problem:

That old heart causes us so much trouble!

Hebrews 8 addresses this problem.

It presents contrast between Christ's ministry

& that of old legalistic system represented by Levitical priests.

God's people are considering throwing in the towel to escape the pressure.

If they go back to old system,

they can still worship the true God but escape the pain.

Hebrews encourages us to hang in there, wait patiently, because

God has established a better system that makes the old deficient.

Going backwards isn't the answer!

SUPERIORITY OF CHRIST'S PERSON 1-7

1-4 Jesus is the best revelation of the Father

–best One to speak to *us* on God's behalf

5-7 Jesus is the best High Priest

–best to speak to God on *our* behalf.

SUPERIORITY OF CHRIST'S WORK 8-10:18

SERVED BY BETTER HIGH PRIEST 8:1-5

Bridge into discussion of Jesus' ministry, summarizing what he's saying about Jesus' Person, esp. His role as Priest.

Jesus' priesthood is superior to Levi's:

Old Priesthood

Weak 18

Ineffective

Perfected nothing 19

New Priesthood

=> Energized by power of an indestructible life 16

Based on better hope 19

Based on better covenant 22

The **old was deficient because of death:** *Priests die!*

The **old was deficient because of sin:** *Priests sin!*

They had to offer sacrifices for their own sin first.

The **old was deficient because of repetition:**

Priests offer sacrifices over and over.

Jesus offered *Himself*, as *sinless* sacrifice *once for all* and now *lives forever*, to intercede on our behalf at the Father's right hand.

No priest presented these credentials!

"We have such a High Priest!"

8:1

"Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the rt. hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven"

Jesus is seated at the right hand of God (in heaven).

One obvious contrast between Jesus' priesthood & Levites is that He sat down.

There were no chairs in the Holy Place!

Their work was *never* finished. **Jesus' work is finished.**

He offered Himself as a sacrifice *ONCE*

–It never needs to be repeated!

Now He *sits* at Father's rt. hand, to intercede on our behalf.

[2nd way Jesus' priesthood is better than that of Levi:]

Jesus serves in the true sanctuary. 8:2-5 *"A minister in the holy places, in the true tent the Lord set up, not man. ³For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts & sacrifices; thus it is necessary for this priest also to have something to offer. ⁴Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law. ⁵They serve a copy & shadow of 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."*

God Himself built this one—in heaven

—not the scale model built down here!

Earthly tabernacle was a photocopy!

5 Combines 2 terms: *"a shadowy outline"*—NOT the real thing.

Jesus couldn't be a priest in the earthly sanctuary!

—not from the right tribe.

Old order still has that role

—but it's in a copy, shadow of the real thing.

Jesus offers His sacrifice in Heaven

—in tabernacle God Himself built

Therefore, His priesthood is better!

Now the focus shifts from Jesus' Person to His ministry.

Jesus has a superior ministry 6 *"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."*

BASED ON A BETTER COVENANT 8:6-13

For Christ to function under different priesthood,

must be new *arrangement, new legal contract, covenant.*

Christ's ministry is better because it's based on new, better covenant.

Deficiency of old covenant 8:6-9 6-7 *"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. ⁷For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a 2nd"*

Replacing 1st covenant with new covenant shows the 1st is deficient.

Have you ever bought a new, "state-of-the-art" computer? What happens to it? Next day new model comes out! It has more memory, faster speed, larger hard drive, CD Rom, or multi-media capacity, *your* "new" computer didn't have. The new renders the old out-of-date. **"State-of-the-art" becomes deficient when new model comes out.**

If you've experienced that feeling, you'll understand Hebrews

That's what the writer is saying about the law.

Old covenant is outdated.

The law's replaced by new "state-of-the-art" model

New priestly ministry demonstrates the old was lacking.

Old covenant had defect. God "*found fault with it*"

Problem with old covenant wasn't in what it requires.

Romans 7 assures us that the law is good (7:12).

What was its problem? => the people 8-9 "He finds fault with them when he says: "Behold, days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel & with the house of Judah, ⁹not like the covenant 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**, so I showed no concern for them, declares the Lord.”*

The people didn't remain faithful.

That's *always* the problem with law-based covenants.

We don't fulfill them.

They could never establish our righteousness
because the defect is inside us.

To prove his point, the writer quotes **Jeremiah 31:31-34**.

God spoke over 600 years earlier, in Josiah's time.

The law had been discovered & read.

Time of national repentance followed.

Again Israel failed to remain faithful

In midst of failure, God promises a new covenant
—fully dependent on Him.

So even while still under the old covenant,

God promises a new provision that will solve the problem,
a new covenant, written on their hearts.

That's why going back won't work.

It doesn't solve real problem: ***our unfaithfulness***.

They have come to the only real solution.

This isn't the time to turn back!

Solution through the new covenant 10-12 *“This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, & write them on their hearts, & I will be their God, & they shall be my people.*

¹¹They shall not teach, each one his neighbor & each one his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. ¹²For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, & I will remember their sins no more.”

The new covenant solves the problem because **God changes the heart.**

Problem with old covenant: => the law was written on stone.

It provides no power to carry out the standard.

We don't have to be told. He writes it on the inside.

His people know intuitively what pleases Him—like people deeply in love for many years—they sense what the other is thinking, they know what pleases their loved one.

What God wants from us is engraved on our hearts.

Doesn't depend on us, but on God!

This is God's covenant *with Israel*. 8:10a

This is how He solves *their* problem with unfaithfulness:

"I will put my laws in their minds & write them on their hearts."

"I will be their God & they will be my people."

"They will all know me, from least to greatest."

"I will forgive their wickedness."

"I will remember their sins no more."

**New covenant is motivated by internal change,
NOT external legalism.**

Compliance is result of inner desire,
not outward compulsion.

Ezekiel also promised internal transformation: **Ezek. 36:26-27**

"I will give you a new heart, & a new spirit I will put within you. I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh & give you a heart of flesh."

²⁷I will put my Spirit within you, & cause you to walk in my statutes & be careful to obey my rules."

This new standard is written on the heart, not on stone.

New covenant is based on personal relationship –with God!

NOT fear & separation.

**New covenant is accompanied by forgiveness,
NOT condemnation.**

We hear a lot these days about “**values.**”

Values are important when we consider what motivates us to live godly lives.

At risk of oversimplifying, I want to use a simple version of levels of values development.

Christians, like other people, go through

3 LEVELS OF DEVELOPMENT related to values:

Infants begin with PAIN AND PLEASURE as their motivation for making decisions.

Spankings and candy motivate small children to behave.

Infant *Christians* also function on that basis

–not candy & spankings, but pain & pleasure nevertheless!

We don’t do certain things for fear that God will “zap” us

“He’ll punish us!” “It will hurt!”

We do other things because God will reward us, or bring prosperity into our life.

Some people never outgrow this stage of life-decisions on basis of pain & pleasure, reward & punishment.

2nd stage of values development is LEGALISM.

“Just tell me the rules, and I’ll do it.”

These people want a list of rules to live by.

What does the book say?

Tell me the rules God requires & I’ll be satisfied.

Problem is that none of us perfectly obey the rules.

Legalism leads to condemnation—sends us on a guilt trip!

We can't measure up to God's standards.

That's problem Heb tries to show us with old covenant.

Yet, people still try to live by legalism!

3rd stage of values development is based on LOVE.

Decisions are made because we *desire* to do what's right.

Christians on this level seek to do what *pleases* God,

not to avoid punishment or enjoy pleasure,

not because rulebook says so,

but because we long to please Him.

These are the people the new covenant describes.

GOD'S LAW IS WRITTEN ON OUR HEART.

When we learn something "by heart," we make it our own and it remains with us.

When H.S. deals with us, we don't have to go to Exod. 20 to see what law says.

We carry within ourselves a scale, a standard by which we can evaluate things.

We have the law of God written on our heart, so that, as soon as we look at something, we perceive whether there's evil in it, or whether it's good.

We have a sensitivity which helps us discern good & evil.

But the law is not fully written in the heart till a person *delights to obey it*.

=>"My highest joy lies in doing what You want me to do.

We don't look for an excuse for sin;

we want, above anything else, to be holy!"

God makes it as natural for us to be holy

as it used to be for us to be unholy!

Natural reason to be good is. "If I'm good, I'll go to heaven;
if I'm bad, I'll go to hell."

That's slave's motive; but child of God's no longer a slave.

We've been delivered from our former bondage.

We respond: "Tell me how I can show my gratitude to such a
gracious God."

That's difference God's law written on our hearts makes!

While the covenant is specifically *for* Israel,

it describes how God works in *all* His people.

We're no more capable than they of keeping God's laws.

The only way anyone pleases Him is by coming to the
High Priest by faith.

He writes His law on our heart;

He plants the desire to please Him inside.

Then He forgives our wickedness

& remembers our sin no more.

Christian struggling with habit, resolved to give it up, but each time he
fell. After losing yet another battle, he cried out, "Lord, I've done it
again!" Expecting a stern rebuke, he was stunned when God
responded, "WHAT have you done again?"

God *"remembers our sins no more."*

Satan remembers!

He accuses us night and day—over and over again!

God removes them far as East from West. Ps. 103:10, 12

He hurls them to bottom of the deepest sea. Mic. 7:19

Obsolescence of old covenant **13** *"In speaking of a new
covenant, he makes the 1st one obsolete. & what's becoming
obsolete & growing old is ready to vanish away."*

Writer's point in this passage isn't to show that WE receive the new covenant.

He isn't speaking to that issue.

His point is to show that even O.T. affirms that the old covenant—Levitical system—has to go! It will never cut it!

New covenant's needed—written on people's hearts.

Institution of new covenant makes old covenant obsolete.

Moment God announced there'd be a new covenant, He served notice old's temporary, that it'll eventually be terminated.

No point going back to Judaism—to legalistic approach;
we can never make it that way.

Israel needed a new heart.

God promised to provide one.

He'll do it when Christ comes to establish His kingdom

He'll give them a new heart.

That promise points to deficiency & obsolescence of OLD covenant.

That's why a new one is needed

—It's that old heart that caused so much trouble!

For us too; we need a new heart.

We have chronic heart trouble. We need a new heart.

That's just as true for us as it was for Israel!

That's what the *good news* is about.

God does what we couldn't do!

We'd *never* keep the law; we rebel & refuse to submit to Him.

God changes our will, renews the heart, & changes our affections,
so that what we could never do, He does for us!

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR US TODAY?

God has provided a better way, based on a better covenant.

He provides a new heart, with God's laws & knowledge of God, written on the inside.

We've all sinned & come short of God's standard.

But He has provided a High Priest to offer an acceptable sacrifice for us.

Though legalism will never make a way for us to come to God, His grace will.

We have such a High Priest, who sits at the right hand of the Father, in the true tabernacle, and intercedes on our behalf.

We need no other recourse! That's good news!

We don't need a "Plan B!"

Whatever circumstances we may face . . .

However hard times may be . . .

We can be sure that WE have such a great High Priest.

He is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He intercedes on our behalf—always and forever!

We can trust Him!