

Naked Bible Podcast Transcript

Episode 193

Hebrews 8

December 9, 2017

Teacher: Dr. Michael S. Heiser (MH)

Host: Trey Stricklin (TS)

TS: Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 193: Hebrews chapter 8. I'm the layman, Trey Stricklin, and he's the scholar, Dr. Michael Heiser. Hey, Mike, how does it feel to be home?

MH: It feels wonderful. It's just... [laughs] I thrive in routine, and yeah, I'm back doing a routine. It's great.

TS: Absolutely. It's nice to have our own set-up here, and everything. It just feels right. I don't know, it just feels...

MH: Yeah, I'm with you.

TS: Well, Mike, all those interviews were good. We apologize on the last one (Episode 192). We had to cut two interviews because of the sound quality.

MH: Yeah, it's basically my fault. We didn't have Trey with us, so it just didn't turn out well.

[laughter]

TS: I couldn't salvage it, so we went ahead and went too short. We apologize for that. And also, Mike, I mentioned in one of the episodes about our NAKEDBIBLE7 coupon code, and what it is. It's not actually a coupon code, but if you go purchase anything off of www.logos.com and use that coupon code, it'll track your purchases and, therefore, we'll get credit for it. So that's what it is. And also, Logos is giving you a 20% discount on the base packages plus five free books. So the coupon code NAKEDBIBLE7 is just a tracking code to track people (whatever they purchase), to know that you're doing that through us. We get credit for it, so if you want to... If you purchase anything at normal price, you're not going to get a discount on that, but go ahead and use that coupon code and you're not going to get a discount, but at least we'll get credit for it. However, on top of that, they are giving our listeners a 20% discount on the base packages, plus five free books. There's a link on our episode page or on our Facebook page where you can get the link to that if you want. And then also, Mike, I'm going to put up some other recommendations that you recommend. You put together a list of scholarly works that you think would be a good...

MH: Yeah, most of them are a reference works—things like DDD—but there’s a whole bunch of things that if you’re going to develop some serious study skills and have access to some good reference material, there are sets I certainly recommend, so that’s what Trey’s talking about.

TS: Yeah. And so no discounts with those, but use code NAKEDBIBLE7 and we’ll get credit for that if you purchase that. And then also, Mike, some fun news. Me and you both made the playoffs in Fantasy Football. [MH laughs] As one and two, we both get the bye, so apparently we’re in a bye week.

MH: Yeah, that’s kind of nice, we just don’t have to think about the line-up that week.

TS: Low stress. Yep.

MH: Alright.

TS: Alright, so we’re back in Hebrews, after a month off, basically. Ten episodes later, almost, we’re back into Hebrews.

MH: Boy, it seems like a long time.

TS: It does. It sounds long.

MH: Yeah, it sounds long, but you know, some of those were rapid release episodes, so it’s not ten weeks, but yeah, still a bit long. So we are back in Hebrews 8. We’re going to go through the whole chapter in this episode. There’s one thing I really want to camp on for at least half the episode—one topic. We’ll hit a few things before we get there. But let’s just read through the whole chapter (it’s not that long) and then jump in to it. So Hebrews 8... I’m reading from the ESV.

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,² a minister in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up, not man.³ For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices; thus it is necessary for this priest also to have something to offer.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.⁵ 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.”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. ⁷ For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second.

⁸ 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,

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ 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.

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.

¹² For I will be merciful toward their iniquities,
and I will remember their sins no more.”

¹³ 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.

Now that’s the entirety of Hebrews 8. Lots of good stuff in there, and it continues on this theme of Christ is better than... (fill in the blank). We’ll get to that in a moment, but just a few observations here and there in the passage before we camp on the topic I want to camp on. That’s going to be the new covenant. Let’s go to the first verse. The language of the first verse is... There are some interesting things in there. Just to read the first verse again:

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.

Now Lane, in his commentary (this is the Word Biblical Commentary—his commentary on Hebrews, the first volume, which is chapters 1-8) writes this:

In 8:1 [the writer] unites the themes of priesthood and heavenly session. Jesus' session [seating, situation, placement] at God's right hand is linked with his priestly office only in 8:1 and at 10:12–13.

I'll just stop and read that and then we'll get back to Lane:

¹²But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet.

Back to Lane:

The phrasing . . . “who has taken his seat at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven,” recalls the formulation in 1:3...

I'll read that:

³He 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...

There's that same phrase again: “sitting down at the right hand of the Majesty.”
Back to Lane:

The phrase... recalls the formulation in 1:3, where the writer alluded to Ps 110:1 to assert the exaltation of the incarnate Son to a position of supreme honor. The session at God's right hand is invoked here not for its connotation of transcendent dignity but for its implication that Jesus exercises a heavenly office. The primary allusion is to Ps 110:1, but the writer may have intended a secondary allusion to Zech 6:13 LXX, where the one who is seated at God's right hand is the anointed priest.

So there's this linkage of high priestly office and being seated at the right hand of God, which if you take it back to Psalm 110:1 and earlier episodes, is also linked to rulership and kingship. So we have this king/priest thing going on. And because you have a king/priest that is eternal, and because you have a priest that's also a king, Jesus' priestly ministry is by definition superior to the priestly ministry of the Old Testament—of the Mosaic system. That's the point. And I

thought Lane's allusion there—his comments—were worth repeating. Now if you go to Hebrews 8:2, there's another little item there, and I'll read that.

...we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven,² a minister in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up, not man.

10:00

There's a couple things here in Hebrews 8:2. Luke Timothy Johnson, I think, is worth quoting here, when he comments on the term "minister," which in Greek is *leitourgos*. (You can look at the transcript for the spelling there). Johnson writes':

In the ancient Greek world, the verb *leitourgein* (from which we derive the term "liturgy") refers generally to the performance of public service, most often at one's own expense (Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 2.7.6; Aristotle, *Politics* 1291A). The *leitourgia* [the liturgy or ministry], in turn, is the public work, and the *leitourgos* is the one who puts it on (P.Oxy. 82.3). Given the public and pervasive character of ancient polytheistic religion, such public service—the providing of festivals and the like—naturally took on a religious coloration. It was appropriate, therefore, that the LXX used this language for the "public work" **of worship** in Israel (*leitourgein*, Exod 28:35; 29:30; *leitourgia*, Exod 37:19; Num 8:22).

So this term has to do with priestly duties to the wider public here. Back to Johnson:

In light of such usage, it is striking that the LXX does not employ the term *leitourgos* for the priests engaged in the cult. Only in Isa 61:6 are priests referred to as *leitourgoi theou* [ministers of God]. Instead, it used *leitourgos* for servants in the broader sense (see Josh 1:1; 2 Sam 13:18; Sir 7:30; 10:2; 3 Macc 5:5). In the New Testament, so also does Paul (see Rom 13:6; 15:16; Phil 2:25). Indeed, Hebrews itself employs the term in this broader sense in Heb 1:7 with reference to the angels (citing Ps 103:4). This broader sense of "public work" should perhaps be kept in mind when Hebrews uses the substantive *leitourgia* in 8:6 and again in 9:21.

Now the point there is that the ministry that the writer of Hebrews is talking about with respect to Jesus is all-encompassing—it subsumes everything. It is aimed not just at what a priest does for someone who trucks his goat or his sheep up for the sacrifice that day, it's not just aimed at cultic sacrificial type of ministry—it's just broader, it's more all-encompassing. And so Johnson is suggesting here that by using this language, the writer of Hebrews wants his readers to think of the priesthood of Christ as being as broad as it can possibly be, and not just something that has to do with a particular ritual. Now the writer of Hebrews is

going to get to the sacrifice issue in the next verse—in verse 3. Let me just read verses 3-5 here.

³For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and 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...

He wouldn't be part of the Levitical system because Jesus wasn't a Levite. And since the offering that those priests give were... They were offering something outside themselves—something that he's going to go on and say is temporary.

So if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all like the old system, since...

since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law. ⁵They 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."

What the writer of Hebrews is doing here is he's comparing what Jesus offered (that happened to be himself) which was eternal, which led to a priestly office in heaven that was created exclusively by God... There was no human artisanship—no human help involved in that. These are all contrasts to the older system, where the sacrifices were temporary in nature—where the priest wasn't sacrificing himself, where it took place at the tabernacle or temple that was built by human hands even though God instructed them how to do it. These are all points of contrast to illustrate how Jesus' sacrifice—his role as a high priest—just one-ups (is just superior) to what was going on in the older system.

15:00 Now what about this reference to the true tent? Now it's interesting that by using the word "tent"... Most scholars would say this is a reference to the tabernacle and not the temple. I don't think we can be that clear-cut here because if you'll remember in *Unseen Realm*, I talked about how the tent of the tabernacle was moved inside the temple structure. If you're curious about that, you can go read *Unseen Realm* and read a little about that. But nevertheless, the language here is still interesting because of the tabernacling idea.

Hagner, in his commentary, brings this question up. He asks, "Why does Hebrews refer to the tabernacle rather than the temple?" Just for the sake of the discussion, let's zero in our language to the tent regardless of whether the tent was inside the temple or not. The writer of Hebrews is using tent language, so why does he do that? Now here's Hagner's explanation, and I'll give you a heads up—I'm going to disagree with it a bit—I think he complicates it unnecessarily, but I'm just going to read it to you because there are some things in here that are interesting. So Hagner writes:

Hebrews refers consistently to the “tent” (“tabernacle”) rather than to the “temple,” a word not used by our author. The word “tent” in this sense, though very common in the Pentateuch, occurs elsewhere in the New Testament only in Acts 7:44. The “tent” refers to the portable tent shrine that was the center of Israel’s religious life from the Sinai experience until Solomon built the first permanent structure that we call the “temple.” This tent shrine was the prototype of the Jerusalem temple.

Our author refers to the tabernacle rather than the temple because the tabernacle was the original earthly manifestation of the sacrificial ritual of the old covenant (cf. 9:1–10). It was the tabernacle that was set up according to the command of God (8:5). But since the Jerusalem temple was the contemporary counterpart to the wilderness tabernacle, criticism of the latter was also implicit criticism of the former. This could not have been missed by any of the original readers. The sacrificial ritual of the temple was no more effectual than that of the tent shrine.

Now I’m going to say that I think he’s just complicating things. I think it’s much easier to understand why the writer of Hebrews is using tent language and not specifically temple language. It’s just simpler. He’s doing this because the tabernacle is associated with Moses—it’s just so simple. Moses didn’t minister in the temple. The temple postdated Moses considerably. So when you talk about the tabernacle, it immediately brings to mind Moses and the Mosaic system, i.e., the Torah system that he’s consistently contrasting Jesus with—Jesus being superior to Torah and the Mosaic system. So that’s why he’s using tent language. It just conjures up the image of Moses again. Another question: what about this copy and shadow language? Let me read the verse again in Hebrews 8:5.

⁵They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things.

...i.e., those who are under the Mosaic system—the Israelites, the Jews of the writer of Hebrews’ day—are serving a copy and shadow of the heavenly things. In other words, the heavenly reality is something associated with Jesus, because he’s seated at the right hand of the majesty in heaven and the Mosaic system is lesser to that—it’s inferior to that. But what about this copy and shadow language—earthly versus heavenly language? Hagner introduces something that I think is interesting, but again I’m going to quibble with what he says a little bit here, but I’m using him to get us into the subject. He has a heading in his book called “Dualism in Hebrews: Metaphysical or Temporal.” He writes

The dualism that we encounter in the reference to the earthly sanctuary and sacrifices as “a copy and shadow” of the “true” or “heavenly” realities that exist in heaven (8:2–5; 9:23–25; 10:1) sounds very much like that of the Greek philosopher Plato, who argued that earthly objects are the particular manifestations of perfect and eternal “ideas” or “forms” that cannot be perceived by the senses but known only through the intellect. This dualism between matter and idea/form was widely influential in the Hellenistic world. It is found extensively in the writings of Philo, a first-century Hellenistic Jew of Alexandria. This is one important reason for associating the author of Hebrews with Alexandria (hence, the plausibility of Apollos as possibly the author), where this Greek dualism appears to have been very popular.

20:00

Now, sure, part of that is certainly true. The whole dichotomy was found extensively in Alexandria. This is part of the Hellenistic world because it's related to Plato. That's true. If Apollos was the writer of Hebrews, well that makes sense as a connection because of his own backgrounds. But I'm going to say this is basically overblown, and here's what I mean by that. ancient Near Eastern religion, which is long before Hellenism—the Hellenistic period—they had the same concept. It's not as well-known because there was no writer as well-read as Plato, but they had the same concept of lesser form on Earth versus the ultimate form in the heavens idea.

I'll give you one classic example—the ziggurat. Why would you build a ziggurat? Why would you build a temple, for that matter? You're building something that you conceive of as the place where the deity resides—the god's house, so to speak, the god's house and his outer courtyard. You know that what you're building on earth is just a form or a representation—a copy—of this heavenly reality where the gods live. So this notion of, “Boy it isn't until Plato that we get this ‘ideal form in the heavens versus some lesser form on earth’ idea”... Honestly that's just bogus. If any of you have read Walton's book *The Lost World of Genesis 1*, he does a really good idea of showing how Genesis 1 conforms to the creation language—conforms to the way temples were dedicated—just literally, the language used in the order of presentation. So even the earth itself is a lesser form of this greater thing—the dwelling place of the gods, the ethereal heavens idea, something beyond the created heavens and earth. I just think this is a bit overblown, so take it for what it's worth. It's interesting that... For those of you in the audience... I know that you're going to be familiar with Platonic philosophy and you're going to have encountered these ideas before. But I wanted to introduce that, not only because of the Apollos connection (some of you are interested in authorship), but also to say yeah, the language is related to this, but let's not take the point too far because Israelite thinking (ancient Near Eastern thinking)... They're capable of the same categories. Hagner continues and he says here:

Indeed, our author has a perspective quite different from that of Philo and Platonic dualism.

Earlier he compared it to Philo and Platonic dualism, and now he's going to say, "But our author does something a little bit different," which is useful.

He thinks primarily in terms of historical sequence, and of promise and fulfillment. The comparison he wishes to make is not between earthly and metaphysical realities, but rather, between earlier and later, between preliminary and finally effective, realities.

Thus, the dualism that our author employs is a temporal dualism, and not a metaphysical dualism. It is not a vertical dualism, but a timeline dualism that involves a contrast between prophecy and fulfillment, between preparation or anticipation and finality.

So what he's saying is that the writer of Hebrews... His language about, "Hey, the Mosaic system—that was a copy and shadow of heavenly things"... Hagner is saying (and I think there's some merit to this)... Hagner's arguing that the writer's not saying, "Hey, what was going on there in the time of Moses was a dim reflection of the heavenly reality and we have a vertical comparison going on." Hagner is disputing that. I think there's something to that, but I also think there's something to what Hagner's saying because we can situate all this in chronology. One preceded the other. And what Hagner does with that is he's saying, "Look, the comparison goes beyond this vertical comparison idea." He's saying that one thing typologically prefigured the later thing. He's making the work of Christ eschatological, in other words. That's where Hagner wants to go with this. He's saying this was a foreshadowing prophetically—not just metaphysically, but prophetically. The Old Testament system was a foreshadowing of what Christ would do. So yeah, there's a vertical dimension here to it—the priesthood of Christ, what's going on in heaven is superior to that which happens on earth. We get that. But there's also this chronological thing going on, where one was like a type—a nonverbal prophecy, a foreshadowing, a prefigurement of something that would come later. And the thing that comes later is by nature superior. So I thought Hagner's little treatment there was useful to get us thinking about both a vertical comparison and also this chronological or eschatological comparison. Now Hagner says... He winds up his treatment with the statement. He says:

Interestingly, Paul says something very similar concerning the Sabbath and dietary laws: "These [the Sabbath and dietary laws] are only a shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ" (Col 2:17).

That's Colossians 2:17. Now I think that is important. It prepares us for some observations. Look at the contrasts just in these first five verses of Hebrews. We

25:00

have earthly priests versus the heavenly priest, who is superior—that's Jesus. We have an old cultic role for a priest—not *leitourgos*, but we have that compared to the worship role of the greater priest—something more comprehensive. This is why the *leitourgos* terminology gets used. So we've got an old system where it was just about sacrificing animals and whatnot. That's what's in view here of what the priesthood is really about. But here on Jesus' side, yeah, we get the sacrificial element because he sacrifices himself. But his role as a priest is much more comprehensive, so we get that contrast. We have the old tent versus the true tent. Of course, the true tent (the one in the heavens) is the one that matters more. The old tent was built by men (granted, at God's instruction), but the true tent is completely and only built by God. It's spiritual in nature. Men are not responsible for its existence in any way—only God is. You have Hebrews 8:2. You have the reference to being a minister in the Holy Places in the true tent that God set up and not man. That's the one that matters more. We have gifts and offerings of the old priesthood system. They had to kill an animal—kill something else, versus the Great Priest... the Great High Priest who offers himself. You have all these contrasts.

Now take those contrasts and look at Colossians 2:17 again. The gifts and offerings of the earthly cult and priesthood and the Sabbath and the dietary laws are "a copy and shadow" of the heavenly things. *They are a "copy and shadow" of the heavenly things.* Now just let it sink in. It's not just the priesthood that is lesser than Jesus, that is a copy and shadow of the heavenly things. It's not just the sacrifices. It's also the Sabbath and it's also the dietary laws. If you combine this statement here in Hebrews 8:4-5 (specifically Hebrews 8:5) with Colossians 2:17, it's a clear statement that the gifts, the sacrifices, the offerings, the Sabbath, and the dietary laws are all inferior to Christ. All of them. Not just the ritual sacrifices (the cult).

Now this takes us back to an earlier episode, where, according to the writer of Hebrews, Christ is our Sabbath. If you combine Hebrews 8:5 with Colossians 2:17, you not only get the Sabbath but you get the dietary laws—these things are a shadow of the heavenly things. They are a copy. They are precursors. They are destined to be replaced. They are destined to become obsolete. They point us to something to come—something that is better. And everything that's better in all of those respects *is* the work and ministry of Christ.

So all of this raises a really simple question: Why would we go back to following Torah? The writer of Hebrews would ask his audience, and he does in all these different ways, "Why would we go back to following Torah?" His concern is the Judaizer—the person who was at one time trying to have eternal life by following the law, and then they discover salvation by faith in Christ, and then... He's concerned about them falling away—going back to the old system, going back to the works mentality. If you remember Hebrews 6, it's really a huge concern, because he even says there, "Look, for someone who was in that kind of system and then they discovered salvation by faith, and then they forsake salvation by

faith in Christ to go back to works, it's next to impossible for that person to ever come back to faith again. So this is a serious thing.

30:00 So he's been doing this for seven chapters now. And here we are in chapter 8, "These things are a copy and shadow of the heavenly things," and it's not... This is why I'm harping on this. He's not just talking about the sacrifices. He's talking about the Sabbath. He's talking about the dietary laws, if you bring Paul into this in Colossians 2:17. All of these things—the whole Torah system—is a shadow and a copy of something later to come that's superior: the person and work and ministry of Christ.

So why should we go back to following Torah? Certainly not because there is anything to be gained in terms of God's relationship to us. We'd be trading the superior for the inferior—what God accomplished by his own power for something dependent on human service. Do we really want to exchange something that God accomplished by his own power for something that, in certain respects, is dependent on human service? This is why, if you want to do the Torah (I'm speaking to many in the audience out there)... If you want to do Torah, it's only theologically and spiritually legitimate or coherent if it's a conscience issue, or if it's something that encourages your walk with Christ. It's not legitimate if it substitutes for Christ—if it supplements Christ. If we think that the work of Christ *needs* it, that's illegitimate theology. In other words, if you're doing Torah things, and those things make you feel more *connected* to Jesus, but you realize that Christ is in fact superior, and you just want some connection to the Old Testament roots of your faith, then fine. But if it transcends... If your Torah-following transcends that emotional connection to redefining the Gospel (to redefining the work of Christ or displacing the Gospel), then you're like a New Testament Judaizer and you're following false doctrine.

This is why I've wondered at several intervals in our series on Hebrews how the extreme (and I'm using that word intentionally) Hebrew Roots people can tolerate the book of Hebrews at all. They think they have an ally, I guess, in Hebrews, because it talks about Hebrew stuff. It is not an ally to the extreme Hebrew Roots idea of replacing or displacing or supplementing Jesus. It is hostile to those ideas. Maybe the Hebrew Roots folks (the extreme ones) just hate the book of Hebrews. Maybe they just hate it. Maybe they don't understand it (probably more likely). They think it's compatible, but it isn't.

All that brings us to the heart of the point of chapter 8, and really the rest of our main focus for the episode. That's Hebrews 8:6-13, which is dealing with the new covenant and the high priesthood of Christ. I'm going to read verses 6-13 again, just so they're in our heads. Right on the heels of saying all this stuff is a copy—a shadow of the heavenly things—because you're comparing a tent that was made in part with human hands versus a true tent that was made entirely by God in the heavenly places the writer says in verse 6:

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. ⁷ For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second.

⁸ For he finds fault with them when he says:

And now the writer is going to quote the new covenant passage—Jeremiah 31.

⁸ 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,**

**⁹ 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.**

**¹⁰ 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.**

**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.**

**¹² For I will be merciful toward their iniquities,
and I will remember their sins no more.”**

¹³ 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.

Now I want to read a little selection from Guthrie’s exposition. This is in Beale’s commentary on the use of the Old Testament in the New Testament, which is an excellent resource. Guthrie wrote the portion on Hebrews. Guthrie writes this:

35:00

The quotation of Jer. 31:31–34 (38:31–34 LXX) [the Septuagint numbers things differently], the longest OT quotation in the NT, plays a vital role in the book’s discourse on Christ’s superior high-priestly offering (8:3–10:18), laying the

groundwork for the climax of the book's christological exposition. Through use of this rich prophetic passage, the author establishes the superiority of the new covenant (8:7–13) prior to addressing the superiority of the new-covenant offering (9:1–10:18). The development from one to the other follows the pattern identified in chapter 7, where he first asserts the superiority of Melchizedek's priesthood and builds on that assertion by proclaiming the superiority of Jesus' Melchizedekian appointment as priest. The superiority of the institution is followed by the superiority of the new-covenant expression of the institution. The author primarily establishes the superiority of the new covenant by pointing out that (1) the first covenant was not faultless (*amemptos*) and thus gave rise to a second covenant (8:7), and (2) the term "new" (*kainē*) in the quotation (8:8) means that the old covenant "has been made obsolete" (*palaioō*) (8:13). In chapters 9–10 the author utilizes the passage from Jeremiah to focus on the forgiveness of sins promised in the quotation, thus associating the new covenant with cultic ideas of priesthood and sacrifice (e.g., 9:14–15; 10:15–18).

Now there's an important textual variant in chapter 8 that starts us off here. Chapter 8 and verse 8. Guthrie comments on this right after he's talking about how the new covenant usage of the writer sets up chapters 9 and 10, like we just read. He writes this. I'm reading it because I think it's worth noting and it helps clarify the reading a little bit. He writes about verses 8b-13:

The introductory formula for this quotation contains an important textual variant, which reads "for faulting them, he says" (*memphomenos gar autous legei*). The *autous* reads as a direct object and a reference to the people who were under the old covenant...

That's why the ESV translates this, "For he finds fault with them when he says..." Guthrie's going to disagree with that translation because of a textual variant. He goes through and he talks about witnesses... this is in the papyri. He says it should say *autous* ("to them"), and it's because it's in the papyri and some really old manuscripts. He says:

On this reading, the clause introduces the quotation [Jeremiah 31] with, "for finding fault (with the old covenant) he says to them..."

So he's not finding fault with people, he's finding fault with the old covenant, and he's speaking *to* people. So I think that's worth pointing out, because if you go back to ESV, just think about how this sounds now. ESV reads this:

For he finds fault with them when he says...

Well, who's "them?" You'd think, "Them...maybe that's the old priests—he's finding fault with the priests, or maybe with the sacrifices or something." But then

why does he quote the new covenant? It's not really about priests and all that stuff. Guthrie's saying, this is the way we should translate it. "For finding fault, he says, 'to them.'" Basically, he's saying that Jeremiah spoke to the Israelites, and he's not finding fault with the Israelites; he's finding fault with the whole system. And he's telling the Israelites, "Look, something better is coming down the road."

³¹ "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel..."

So I wanted to point that out because I do think it makes more sense in wording, but if it's sort of esoteric, just skip that part. And here we are at the heart of the matter, and that's the new covenant. What makes it superior to the old? Now Hebrews 8:6-13 very obviously associates the fulfillment of the new covenant with the work and priesthood of Christ. The whole chapter does this. There's no ambiguity. And that's consistent with the Old Testament context for the new covenant. I'm going to read a little selection here from the Dictionary of the Old Testament, the volume on the prophets. The author's name is Rata. And he writes this:

The expression "new covenant" appears only in the book of Jeremiah (31:31–34), but the concept is present in other Prophetic Books, such as Isaiah, Ezekiel, Hosea and Malachi. Isaiah anticipates the new covenant primarily through the Servant Songs (Is 42:1–9; 49:1–13; 50:4–11; 52:13–53:12). The Servant of Yahweh, the embodiment of God's covenant, is the agent through whom God's covenant blessing will be extended to all people.

40:00

In other words, the servant in Isaiah, which of course the New Testament recognizes as Jesus when it's an individual servant... The servant is the one who mediates this new covenant idea. Back to Rata:

God declares that this *servant himself* will be "a covenant for the people" (Is 42:6). The new covenant is also anticipated by Isaiah through the promise of the eternal covenant of peace (Is 54:10). This covenant will usher the period that will be characterized by the absence of divine wrath. The peace aspect of this covenant is more than just the absence of war or hostility; it also has the connotation of the sum total of covenant blessing. The Servant of Yahweh as described in Isaiah will inaugurate a new covenant that has the Davidic covenant as its basis, thus one that is linked to messianic hopes. This is an everlasting covenant associated with the person and work of the Servant of Yahweh, and will thus result in everlasting joy (Is 55:3; 61:8).

Now with that as a backdrop, this linkage in the prophets... Here's the point: the new covenant idea specifically is Jeremiah 31:31-34. That's the chapter, the section, the passage we think of when we think new covenant. But the idea—the concept—of a new covenant is found in other prophets. And when it is found in

other prophets (especially Isaiah) it's linked to the servant of the Lord, who is Jesus in New Testament theology. So Jesus and the new covenant are linked in the Old Testament prophets. The messiah and the new covenant are linked in the Old Testament prophets. That's important because there are things... We're going to read Jeremiah 31:31-34 now, and then we're going to go back to Hebrews 8 and talk about what the writer of Hebrews does with this. We're going to bring in some other ideas from other prophets about the new covenant to create a full picture of the relationship of the new covenant and Jesus and why that's better than the old covenant. So here's Jeremiah 31:31-34:

³¹“Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, ³²not 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, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. ³³For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

Now some thoughts. This covenant is labeled “new.” It says it right there in the text—it's a new covenant. And so that differentiates it from the older covenants. And in particular, it's different from the Mosaic covenant, because the writer of Hebrews specifically applies this new covenant passage. He quotes Jeremiah 31 here. He specifically applies it to the Mosaic covenant—the Torah. That's the old one that is atrophying and has become obsolete. And the new one is linked in Old Testament thinking (and, of course, in the book of Hebrews) to the messiah—to Jesus. So the contrast is deliberate. The Torah system is inferior, it's obsolete, it's passing away. And now we have something new, and this is the new covenant that God intended with people. He's done that elsewhere. The writer of Hebrews in chapter 3, verses 3-5... Let me just go back and read that. He says:

³For Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses—as much more glory as the builder of a house has more honor than the house itself. ⁴(For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.)

And you could say in Hebrews 8 that the builder of the true tent is *only* God. And the true tent is where Jesus is sitting at the right hand of the Majesty.

⁵ Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later...

45:00

And, of course, the things to be spoken later to the writer of Hebrews is all this Jesus stuff. It was a *shadow*. The Mosaic system—the Torah system—is a shadow of things to come.

Now second thought. The first thought is, “Hey, it’s new for a reason.” He differentiates it from the other one. Second thought is that this covenant—the new covenant—includes all the tribes of Israel. Israel and Judah are mentioned specifically. You say, “Well, wasn’t the old covenant for all of the tribes?” Yeah, it was, but where does the passage about the new covenant come from? It comes from Jeremiah. Israel—the ten tribes of Israel—are long gone. They are toast. They are history. They are scattered to the wind. And so Jeremiah is writing to the remnant of what we would think of as Israel. It’s only Judah, and little Benjamin subsumed in there. But he says in Jeremiah 31... Jeremiah says the Lord’s going to make a new covenant, and it’s going to be with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. All of you. All the tribes. That’s going to become important a little bit later on.

Number three. A new covenant was needed, not because God goofed up the old one, but because the people failed to obey its terms. And frankly, they couldn’t obey its terms perfectly. The Torah system was, as Paul put it, designed to direct us to a savior, by showing we needed a savior. And there are some other thoughts that accrue to that. Let me read Galatians 3. This is just a crucial passage. Galatians 3:23-29, Paul writes:

²³ Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law...

That’s just a great phrase! “Why would we want to be held captive again?”

...we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. ²⁴ So then, the law was our guardian [KJV: our schoolmaster] until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, ²⁶ for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. ²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek [he’s writing to the Galatians there], there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

This passage redefines what it means to be Abraham's seed. It is no longer about lineal physical descent. You are Abraham's offspring by faith. If you are Christ's, you are Abraham's offspring—heirs according to promise. You take this back to the book of Hebrews... This is why the new covenant's better! [laughs] Because it's all-encompassing. And it's broader in scope. All this Paul language: "neither this nor that, neither this nor that." When we look at the new covenant language, "They're all going to know me from the least to the greatest"... It's not only better for that reason, but it's better than the old covenant because the old covenant was something that people could fail at, because it was about Torah observance in the sense that [laughs] to be a functioning member of the people of God, you had to believe that Yahweh was who he was and all that. But this is how you show your loyalty. It was defined by the Torah system. And what the new covenant offers is that it says salvation's still by faith, but there's no system that goes with it. We just need to *follow Christ*. We need to be disciples. We need to be conformed to his image. That's how we walk. We need to be filled with the Spirit. What's the filling of the Spirit? This is what we need to be like. And it's not that we need to be it to keep God happy with us. This is the way we show our faith, this is the way we show we're loyal to the gospel, this is the way we show that we believe the gospel. We don't have to do rituals. We don't have to bring sacrifices. We don't have to observe specific calendars. We don't have to observe the Sabbath. We don't have to observe the dietary laws to demonstrate what we believe.

50:00

Now we *can* do those things if we want (back to my earlier comments) if they're issues of conscience or they just have... It just gives you an emotional connection back to the roots of all this back in the Old Testament, fine. But you don't substitute those things for faith. You don't substitute those things for the work of Christ. You can show your believing loyalty with those things or without them, but you don't substitute the gospel for those things. It's casting a wider net. You can show your believing loyalty to Christ *with* those things or not. Those things are obsolete. They have passed away. *Christ* is now our Sabbath. *Christ* is now our offering. *Christ* is now our gift.

So, again, I'm just trying to belabor the point because, honestly, I do think it needs to be belabored. Salvation has always been about believing in what God has promised. That's a no-brainer. In the Old Testament Mosaic system, the way you showed your believing loyalty was you had to do the Jewish thing. You had to do the Mosaic system. That was how you expressed what you believed. You couldn't just go off and worship another god. You couldn't just not worship the Lord. This is the way you show your allegiance to the true God. On the other side of the cross, you don't need those things to show your allegiance to the gospel. Again, if you want to do those things, fine, as long as they don't become a substitute for the gospel. As long as you keep it in the right perspective—that Jesus is superior to these things. God and I would be in right relationship because I believe the gospel whether I observe the Sabbath or not, whether I observe this part of the calendar or not, whether I did this dietary thing or not.

You're free to do them and you're free to not do them. That's the point. And some people enjoy doing those things because they're meaningful in such a way that it helps them draw closer to Jesus. No problem there. And Paul does these things. Paul does Mosaic things, but Paul is very clear about the gospel—about the work of Christ being superior to the Torah, to the Mosaic system. He's very clear about that. And so was the writer of Hebrews. So it's not a prohibition against doing Jewish things—doing Mosaic things. Paul does them and the early followers of Jesus did them, but we can't just take those examples in the book of Acts and then throw out Galatians 3 and throw out the book of Hebrews and say, "We all need to be Torah-observant now." That is just contrary, not only to Hebrews 8 and frankly, most of the book of Hebrews, but it's contrary to other parts of the New Testament, as well—stuff that was written by Jews like Paul and the writer of Hebrews (whoever that was). It's fine to attach yourself to Torah things if it encourages your walk with Christ who is superior to Torah things. It is not fine to redefine the gospel or to say that the work of Jesus on the cross needs to be supplemented by Torah for it to work, or something. That's not fine. There's a reason why there's a new covenant.

Fourthly, the new covenant describes the law of God written on the heart—being put into the mind. In other words, we don't have tablets of stone or Torah scrolls now, this is something that happens internally. This speaks to some internal witness to God's will—God's law. Everyone in the new covenant community... Now think about this: everyone in the new covenant community—the real, genuine, new covenant community—will know the Lord. Not just some. It entails forgiveness of iniquities and sins. So the new covenant is tied to the forgiveness of sin for everyone in the community—from the smallest to the greatest. What does all that stuff mean? Well, let's go to some other passages in the Old Testament that I think will contribute a few things and we can tell what's going on here—what this language actually means. Back to the *Dictionary of the Old Testament*—the Prophets volume. The new covenant gets described outside Jeremiah, so we need to look at some of that. We're in Ezekiel now, talking about what Ezekiel talks about as far as this "internal transformation stuff—because that's in the book of Ezekiel, too, just like it's in the Jeremiah new covenant passage. Rata (back to him) writes this:

55:00

Ezekiel emphasizes that the institution of the new covenant in the hearts of the people is possible only through the presence of God's Spirit in the people's hearts. Twice in the book of Ezekiel God promises to give the people a new heart and to put his Spirit within them (Ezek 11:19; 36:26). Only under such conditions can the people now obey God's rules and commandments (Ezek 36:27)

And that is from Ezekiel 36:27 which says:

²⁷ **And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.**

There's this link to Spirit enablement to live a life that pleases the Lord. It's not living a life so that God owes us salvation. It's just being godly so that God can/will bless us and so that we have the kind of life God wants us to have. I'm not going to go rehearse the whole thing about the purpose of the law. But the purpose of the law was not... I'll say this much: the purpose of the law was not, "Hey, here's a ticket—here's a means by which God will owe you eternal life! Do this stuff and God will owe it to you." It's not merit-based. The law of God is about preventing people from going off and worshiping other gods and not doing self-destructive things and therefore having a miserable life. It's not about earning merit, so that God owes you salvation. End of rabbit trail there.

Now the writer of Hebrews... Going back to this internal transformation stuff—the Spirit transforming from within, so that the language of Ezekiel and the language of Jeremiah 31 makes sense. The writer of Hebrews ties all that to the work of Christ, which of course makes sense. The new covenant was instituted by Jesus at the Lord's Supper—Luke 22:20. We'll read a couple of these.

²⁰ And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood."

And I Corinthians 11:25 says:

²⁵ In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

There are New Testament passages that link the new covenant with what happens at the Last Supper, which of course itself is linked to what's going to happen on the Cross. Now think about all this. Think about this stuff in relation to what the new covenant is supposed to be and what it's supposed to do. What does it all mean? The new covenant says that all the tribes—all 12 tribes—are included. And frankly, as we see this worked out, that's going to include even half-breed Jews (people who aren't pure in their blood) and Gentiles. Think about it: Jews scattered all over the ancient world as a result of the exile. Where did they get the Spirit? Where does the Spirit come in and start indwelling people? It's Pentecost. Jews from all over the ancient world, as a result of the exile, come to Jerusalem at Pentecost. They hear the gospel and they believe it. They also receive the Holy Spirit. It's in Acts 2:38. It's the old,

Repent and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Peter says that in Acts 2 in the sermon at Pentecost. Spirit-reception was repeated through the book of Acts. You have Acts 8, which is important here because it includes Samaria. That's where the impure—the half-breed—Jews were. Hey, they're the new covenant as well. Paul receives the Spirit. Gentiles receive the Spirit. You go through the book of Acts. Everybody... It's the same Spirit. To quote Pauline language, "They all drank of one Spirit." It's the same Spirit in all of them. The new covenant is all-encompassing.

Now this was a new idea. It's a new idea to have the same Spirit glory (presence) that was in the tabernacle now tabernacling in believers who, not coincidentally, are described as the temple of God, or our bodies are described as being little tabernacles. This language is in *Unseen Realm*. We've talked about it before as well. That's a new idea. You're not going to read anywhere in the Old Testament and get this notion that, "Oh, that glory cloud over there—the presence of God there in the tabernacle (or temple, whatever the context is)—that's in us!" You never see that. That's new covenant stuff. And then you think about the interconnections of the glory, the Spirit, and Jesus in New Testament theology. We saw in the Ezekiel passages we just read that the Spirit and the glory are connected. Paul interchanges phrases like "Christ in you, the hope of glory," with the language about indwelling of the Spirit. Paul refers to Jesus as the Spirit in 2 Corinthians 3. We'll read a few verses here.

1:00:00

⁷ Now if the ministry of death, carved in letters on stone, came with such glory that the Israelites could not gaze at Moses' face because of its glory, which was being brought to an end, ⁸ will not the ministry of the Spirit have even more glory? ⁹ For if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation, the ministry of righteousness must far exceed it in glory.

¹² Since we have such a hope, we are very bold, ¹³ not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face so that the Israelites might not gaze at the outcome of what was being brought to an end. ¹⁴ But their minds were hardened. For to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it taken away. ¹⁵ Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their hearts. ¹⁶ But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. ¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸ And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

Being conformed to the image of Christ—the image of his Son—is linked here to the Spirit as well. It's a Spirit-driven process. The writer of Hebrews links the glory to Jesus, as well. I'm going to read a little paragraph here from Newman's article in the *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and its Development*. It's part of the Intervarsity series. First I'll read Hebrews 1:3.

³ 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...

That's the same language as in verse 8.

Hebrews 1:3. The hymnic/confessional fragment preserved in Hebrews 1:1–4 describes Jesus as the “radiance of his glory” (*apaugasma tēs doxēs*) and the “exact representation of his very being” (*charaktēr tēs hypostaseōs*, Heb 1:3). The juxtaposition of *doxa* with *hypostasis* in the ontological characterization of Jesus clearly articulates Jesus' status. Jesus is God's glory, God's very being.

The full treatment of glory and Christ... glory Christology (just a little sidebar here)... Newman has book. It's called *Paul's Glory-Christology*. It's published by Brill. Again, it's just excellent stuff. But there's this link... What I want you to get here is there's this link between the person of Christ and the Spirit and the glory, and all those things are tied in to and wrapped up in new covenant. The new covenant is inseparable from Jesus. And the new covenant is better than the old covenant. And the new covenant brings with it this notion that the Spirit—the Lord who is the Spirit—the Spirit *is* Jesus, but he also *isn't* (to get back to *Unseen Realm* kind of stuff). All of these things work together. They're a matrix of ideas that blend together because we are indwelt by the Spirit—the glory. We're indwelt, in effect, by Christ (remember some of the New Testament language for this). I'm not going to go back and repeat it again, but we're indwelt by the Spirit—the glory. Because of that, the law of God is written on our hearts. We have the Spirit prompting us and enabling us to believe and obey. In other words, this idea of the law of God being written on our hearts as believers—as people who are indwelt—this isn't just conscience now. Paul talks about that early in Romans.

But this is more than conscience. This is linked to indwelling, because we're indwelt by the Spirit. We have an internal prompting—an internal enabling. It will produce a transformation in us because there's something inside of us working to transform us to be conformed to the glory—conformed to the image of Christ who is the glory—and that thing is the Spirit. The Israelites didn't have that. There's no concept of the glory-presence being anywhere except the tabernacle or the temple. There's no talk of this kind of indwelling situation. Now the Spirit did

1:05:00

come upon certain individuals for service—judges and kings and prophets. We all know that. But it was not true that everyone from the smallest to the greatest (I'm quoting new covenant language here deliberately)... It was not true that everyone from the smallest to the greatest had the Spirit. That's never said. It's new—the idea is new. That's why the covenant that will bring the Spirit in that way is called a *new* covenant. And consequently, when you get to the New Testament era—when you get to the work of Christ (the resurrection, the ascension, Pentecost)... When you get to that stuff, for the first time in the new covenant community (which is another way of referring to the Body of Christ, the Church—the real Church—the Body of Christ), it could be presumed that every member of the community knew the Lord. That wasn't true in Israel. Many Israelites were not believers—they were idolaters, especially as you go later on in history. But everyone in the Body of Christ is a believer.

Now I speak here (and so does Jeremiah) of the true Body of Christ—a metaphysical or theological concept here. Everyone who believes is put into the Body of Christ. Paul's language is "baptized into the Body of Christ." I'm talking about that one. The one that God recognizes as the real Body of Christ. Everyone in that community—everyone in that new covenant community—knows the Lord, by definition. You can't be in it unless you believe. Now the visible Body of Christ (what we see going on around us in churches and in people who profess to believe) may have pretenders in it. But the point is that in the true people of God—the true new covenant community—everyone knows the Lord, in the sense that they have the indwelling Spirit. In the Old Testament, "people of God" meant Israelites as physical descendants of Abraham. And you could believe or not believe and still be a physical descendant of Abraham. But in the New Testament, the people of God are those who believe. Back to Galatians 3: "If you are Christ's, you are Abraham's seed, but as many of you who have been baptized in Christ have put on..." If you are Christ's, you are Abraham's seed.

So again, we have to get these ideas straight. The new covenant is a big deal, and what the writer of Hebrews is doing is significant here. I'm going to read a little bit from Rata's article again in the *Dictionary of the Old Testament—Prophets*. It's an interesting section that compares the old and new covenants and then we'll close. He writes:

The specific stipulations of the new covenant are enumerated in Jeremiah 31:33–34. The Mosaic law was written on tablets of stone (Ex 31:18), and these stones could be broken (Ex 32:19). The law could be lost (2 Kings 22:8), burned (Jer 36:23) or drowned (Jer 51:63), but the law written on the heart is permanent. The central motif of the new covenant is the knowledge of Yahweh (Jer 31:34). This knowledge was first accomplished through the teaching of the law. Moses was instructed to teach this law to the people, and in return they were to teach it to their children (Deut 6). The prophets emphasized that knowing God meant obeying the covenant stipulations. Thus, Hosea rebuked the people for not

knowing God (Hos 4:1–2), and this lack of knowledge is synonymous with the lack of knowledge of the law (Hos 4:6). What God desires is both knowledge of and love for him (Hos 6:6) [believing loyalty].

One of the greatest promises of the new covenant is that the new covenant in general, and the promise of knowing God specifically, are not restricted to a specific social class or age group. Rather, God promises, “They shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest” (Jer 31:34). This knowledge of God is also tied in with his forgiveness of sin. “I will remember their sin no more” is the last promise of this unbreakable covenant. It is through God’s forgiveness of sin that the universal knowledge of God is possible. The author of Hebrews quotes Jeremiah 31:31–34 in its entirety in Hebrews 8:8–12 to emphasize that this covenant is superior to the old covenant not merely because of better promises, but because of Christ being the mediator. Indeed, the book of Hebrews affirms Jesus’ superiority over Moses, Melchizedek, the priests and the angels.

Look at the way the chapter ends:

¹³ 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.

So we’ll close with our question: Why would we want to go back to the old covenant? Wanting to go back to Torah and to minimize or reject Christ means you, in effect, would like to return the Holy Spirit, too. And more radical Hebrew Roots folks don’t say that because they wouldn’t want that, and my guess is they don’t really comprehend it—they don’t see the link between the new covenant and the Holy Spirit and what they’re saying. Why trade in something that means eternal life is a gift in response to belief for something that couldn’t produce eternal life because people can’t perfectly perform? It’s theological insanity.

1:10:00 So when you put it in those terms—when you look back at the warning passages in Hebrews (we’ve already seen the book of Hebrews seems to have Judaizers, and they would be the New Testament equivalent to the extreme Hebrew Roots folks), it seems to have them specifically in mind. As we saw earlier in the Hebrews 6 episode, it’s a near impossibility for those who went from works to faith (the real Gospel) and then rejected the real Gospel to go back to works... It’s nearly impossible for those people to return to faith. So it’s a serious thing.

So to wrap up here in Hebrews 8, the new covenant is new for a reason. It’s new because it’s better. It’s new because the old one was temporary by design. The new one is something accomplished completely by God. Therefore, it would stand to reason that God is good with it—God approves of it. If God designed it and God created it and God says to you, “this is what you need for eternal life;

believe this,” it would seem to stand to reason that that’s what we need for eternal life. We do not need to return to Torah. Christ is our Torah. Christ is our Sabbath. Christ is superior to all these things by divine design. Again, so I’m not misunderstood, if it helps you in your Christian life (your *Christian* life)... If it helps you in your walk with Jesus (who is superior to Torah)... If doing Torah things helps you to depend on Jesus’ sacrifice more, if it just helps your thinking more, if it helps you emotionally, good. But if you’re trading the gospel in for Torah, you’re in deep trouble. You need to stop and think about what you’re doing, because you are really in the crosshairs of the writer of Hebrews—not only in this chapter, but pretty much everything that’s gone up to this point. So we need to take the writer of Hebrews seriously and not fall back into those things.

TS: Alright, Mike. Feels good to get back into scripture.

MH: Yeah, it does. It does. And again, there’s a lot of that that was fairly repetitious, but look, listeners out there, you don’t see my inbox. [laughs] People struggle with this, and now we have... Again, I don’t want to say “don’t do Torah stuff.” If it’s a blessing, by all means, but if you are substituting the gospel for it, that is *not* a good thing. That’s just bad theology—it’s false teaching. And there are a lot of people that are in whole movements now that are promoting this idea, and they even get to the point of, “Oh, we like this Torah stuff so much, we don’t need Jesus. Who’s this Jesus guy? How did we even fall for that—that gospel Jesus stuff? We’ve got Torah now.” That’s just bad news.

TS: Alright, Mike. Well, with that, I just want to remind everybody, if you can, please go to leave us a review and rate us on iTunes or anywhere you consume us. Mike, I noticed that we had over 400 ratings now on iTunes.

MH: Oh, wow!

TS: So that’s pretty good, and almost 200 reviews, so we appreciate everybody that has taken time to do so. And I just want to remind everybody of that 20% discount that Logos 7 has graciously offered to our listeners, so please check out the link on our episode page for that (or our Facebook page) for that link to get that 20% discount plus five free books. And I think that’s going to be going on all month. And with that, I just want to thank everybody for listening to the Naked Bible Podcast! God bless.