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**Study 1 – 8:1-13 (The New Covenant)**

Hebrews chapter 8 continues the discussion of the superiority of Christ’s high priesthood. The writer first mentions Christ’s seat at God’s right hand and His heavenly sanctuary. The primary emphasis of the chapter is the new covenant. The author explains the need for a new covenant and its superiority to the old covenant.

1. Explain the significance of Jesus being seated at God’s right hand (v. 1; see also ch. 10:11-14).
2. Discuss how the Old Testament sacrifices were a shadow of what was to come through Christ (v. 2-5)
3. What was the “fault” with the Old Covenant? (v. 7-9)
4. Verses 10-13 give at least six qualities of the new covenant (quoting Jeremiah 31:33-34). Discuss each of these and their implications.
	1. Initiated by God (10a “the covenant I will make)
	2. Made with Israel (10a). How does this give hope to Gentiles?
	3. Dependent completely on God’s actions (underline 5x where God says “I will”)
	4. Internal, not external (10b – for more on the new heart see Ezekiel 36:26-27)
	5. Personal, comprehensive, impartial (10c, 11)
	6. Brings total forgiveness (12)

5. What does it mean that the old covenant is made “obsolete”? (v. 13)

6. When was the New Covenant ratified? (Luke 22:20)

7. Are you resting in Christ’s work alone for your salvation? What insights from this passage could you share with a friend who is trying to improve his or her life apart from Christ?

**Study 2 – 9:1-10:18 (The High Priest Who Sacrificed Himself)**

In Hebrews chapter nine the author describes the purpose of the old covenant as ordained by God and expressed through the workings of the tabernacle. The old covenant was important and valuable and crucial for those who believed in God, but it was always meant to be temporary. By showing the legitimacy of the old covenant and praising it, Christ is exalted even more because his new covenant is superior to the old covenant.

1. All of the activities performed in the earthly tabernacle were shadows of the future work of Christ. Describe how the furnishings listed in 9:2-5 pointed forward to Jesus.

1. The tabernacle had three parts; the outer court, the Holy place (outer sanctuary) and the Holy of Holies. What does this design tell us about access to God in the old covenant? (9:6-10)

1. How is access to God different in the new covenant fulfilled in Christ? (9:11-15)
2. All believers of all ages are saved by the finished work of Christ. Explain how verse 15 verifies that for those under the old covenant.
3. Is there such a thing as reincarnation? Why or why not? (see 9:27)

Hebrews chapter ten begins with a summary of the differences between the Old Testament sacrifices and the perfect sacrifice that is in Christ:

*The old sacrifices:*  *The sacrifice of Christ:*

Could not grant access to God Was the fulfillment of God's plan to replace the old system

Could not remove sin Sanctified the believer

Were only external Removed sin

 Established Christ's sovereign rule

Secured the believer's destiny

Placed the laws of God in the heart of man

1. The author of Hebrews repeatedly emphasizes in chapters 9-10 that Christ’s sacrificial work is finished; it is once for all! Underline the phrases that indicate this (9:12, 25-26; 10:11-14, 18).

1. What are some ways that people attempt to add to Christ’s sacrifice, as if it were not enough? Why is it important for us to understand that there is nothing we can add to Christ’s sacrifice?

**Study 3 – 10:19-39 (Hold On to Your Confidence)**

In light of the teaching in Hebrews 9:1–10:18 regarding Jesus as high priest and sacrifice, the author draws specific application and encouragements for believers: “let us draw near” (22), “let us hold fast” (23), and “let us consider” (24).

1. Explain how full assurance of faith is focused on Jesus Christ (v. 19-21).
2. The gift of divine faith is a reality for the believer because the conscience is cleansed and the body is washed with pure water (v. 22). Discuss what those two things mean and how they are reflected in our walk with God.
3. What does it mean to hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering? (v. 23)
4. What is the mutual ministry described in v. 24-25? Why is accountability so important?

Hebrews 10:26-39 is one of five warning passages in Hebrews. The warning is against apostasy. In any congregation of professing believers there are wheat and tares (Matthew 13:24-30). The tares look so much like wheat that often you can't distinguish between the two. However, the heart of a “tare” (false believer) is filled with pride and eventually falls away from belief and commitment to Christ.

1. What is the difference between being an apostate and being a disobedient believer? (See 2 Tim. 2:12-13.) Can a true believer ever become an apostate?
2. What are some of the causes of apostasy?
3. What is God's promise to those who persevere? How do we persevere? (v. 35-39)

**Study 4 – 11:1-6 (The Eyes of Faith)**

*Faith*, Biblically defined, is seeing and trusting God and His promises, which are invisible to human eyes. Hebrews 11 demonstrates how the Old Testament saints saw God in faith and responded, even when it was difficult or seemed crazy.

1. Underline every word in Hebrews 11 which refers to spiritual or physical sight: see/seek (11x), visible/invisible (2x), look (2x), etc.
2. The “people of old” (v. 2) were the Old Testament saints. They are listed here not because they were great, but because of their faith in a great God. Was their faith different from the faith of saints today?
3. Why is it important that we believe God created the universe (v. 3)? Contrast the Biblical worldview with a materialistic/naturalistic worldview.
4. Read the story of Abel's sacrifice in Gen. 4:1-7, and Heb. 11:4. Why was Abel's sacrifice accepted by God and Cain's rejected?
5. John MacArthur writes, “Cain *believed in* God but he did not *believe* God.” Explain the difference.
6. What is the reward God gives to those who diligently seek Him (v. 6)?
7. How are faith and obedience related?
8. Do you struggle with anxiety or fear? How does faith in God’s promises strengthen us for the challenges we face in life?

**Study 5 – 11:7-22 (Faith When It Seems Crazy)**

*Faith*, Biblically defined, is seeing and trusting God and His promises, which are invisible to human eyes. This week’s passage recalls the Genesis stories of Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, all of whom expressed their faith through obedience even though it must have seemed crazy to those around them. In each instance, you can see that God’s promise was received by faith, leading to an obedient response to God’s command.

1. Read the story of Noah in Genesis 6:13-22. What was God’s promise? What was Noah’s faith-driven response? Discuss how faith always involves things “unseen.”
2. Abraham's first act of faith was to leave his old life to follow God, without any knowledge of the destination (v. 8). How is Abraham’s calling similar to our calling?
3. Sarah is listed as an example of faith, even though we know that she laughed when told she would conceive in her old age (Gen. 18:9-15). Discuss how God is gracious to His children in moments of doubt.
4. According to verses 10, 13, and 16, did OT saints ultimately have their eyes on earthly reward or heavenly reward? How can you balance a heavenly mindset with the reality of earthly living?
5. God’s command for Abraham to sacrifice his son was unusual, to say the least. What are some excuses Abraham could have made to justify disobeying God? How are we tempted to disobey God when it seems crazy to follow Him?
6. The life of faith always looks beyond one’s own lifetime, taking the “long view” of God’s work over time (consider 13, 19, 20, 21, and 22). Do you struggle to remember that God may be working through you in ways that may not be fully understood in your lifetime?

**Study 6 – 11:23-40 (Faith When It’s Difficult)**

*Faith*, Biblically defined, is seeing and trusting God and His promises, which are invisible to human eyes. This week’s passage recalls the Old Testament stories of Moses, the Israelites, and others who expressed their faith through obedience even when it was extremely difficult. In each instance, you can see that God’s promise was received by faith, leading to an obedient response to God’s command.

1. Consider the decisions made by Moses' parents and later by Moses (v. 23-28). Discuss the struggle you would experience if you were in the same situation. What motivated Moses to choose reproach and wilderness wandering instead of the riches of Egypt?
2. The events at the Red sea (v. 29) and at Jericho (v. 30) seemed impossible, and God’s commands to the Israelites must have seemed ludicrous. How are the actions of God related to the faith of His people?
3. Verses 32-38 are remarkable, verses 32-35a showing examples of faith in victory and verses 35b-38 showing examples of faith in defeat. Some by faith escape the sword (v. 34) and others by faith are killed by the sword (v. 37). Discuss how the life of faith does not guarantee earthly success and comfort. How does this passage, particularly verses 35b-38, contrast what is taught in “prosperity gospel” churches? (See also Heb. 10:32-34.)
4. What promise of God motivated the saints of Hebrews 11 to live as they did? What does it mean that they did not receive what was promised (v. 39)? Have we received that promise?
5. Jesus said, “Whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?” (Mark 8:35-36). Commenting on this passage, missionary Jim Elliot wrote, “He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose.” Consider these statements in light of what we have observed in Hebrews 11. Do you consider the reward of Christ greater riches than anything this world can give?

**Study 7 – 12:1-17 (Get Bitter or Get Better)**

Every true believer, at salvation, begins a life-long race to become conformed to the image of Jesus Christ (sanctification). Our “trainer” in this race is God, and our adversary is our flesh. In Hebrews 10:19-11:40 the author has described the life of faith and gave us several examples of saints who lived by faith. Hebrews 12:1-17 describes our participation in the life of faith.

1. In 12:1, what is the difference between these two hindrances: “weight” and “sin”? What weights and sins threaten to hinder you as you run the race?
2. Verse 2 elevates Christ as our savior and example – He ran the race successfully in our place, and provides a pattern for us to follow as we run. Is Jesus the one who “keeps you going” each day? What are some of the ways Christians can wrongly attempt to run the race?
3. What is the difference between the discipline of God and the judgment of God (12:5-11)? Why might a Christian experience the discipline of our heavenly Father?
4. The writer of Hebrews is concerned that we don't take God's discipline lightly or grow weary of it (12:5). What are some wrong responses to God’s discipline? How has God used adversity to grow you?
5. What is the “root of bitterness” mentioned in 12:15? (Hint: see Deuteronomy 29:18 and its surrounding context.)
6. How is sexual immorality similar to Esau selling his birthright (12:16; see Gen. 25:29-34)?
7. How is true repentance different from human sorrow or regret (12:17; see also 2 Cor. 7:9-10)?

**Study 8 – 12:18-28 (A Kingdom That Cannot Be Shaken)**

This portion of scripture is a contrast between Mt. Sinai and Mt. Zion, between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. The God of the Old Covenant whose presence brought fear and trembling and judgment is the same God of the New Covenant. He will welcome all those who come to him through faith in Jesus, but He will bring fear and trembling and judgment to those who reject the new because they are clinging to the old.

1. What was the purpose of God's law in the old covenant? How can something that is holy, just and good be the means for eternal punishment? (See Rom. 7:11-14)

1. Discuss how much God hates sin and why? How does Mt. Sinai (v. 18-21) reflect God's hatred for sin? What is your attitude toward sin?
2. God is holy, exalted above sinful men. But through the cross, believers come near to God. Discuss how God’s transcendence (majesty) and His immanence (nearness) should shape our relationship with Him.
3. Who is present in Mt. Zion, the city of the living God? Discuss each. (See v. 22-24)
4. How is the slaying of Abel a shadow of the sacrifice of Jesus? (v. 24; see Gen. 4:3-8)
5. According to v. 26-28, what will be “shaken”/removed in the judgment? What will permanently remain? What should this tell us about our priorities (see Matt. 6:19-21)?
6. Believers in Christ are included in God’s kingdom through the New Covenant. Have you responded to His grace with gratitude, worship, reverence, and awe (v. 28)?

**Study 9 – 13:1-6 (Contentment in Christ)**

Jesus Christ fulfilled the whole law of God perfectly. Every believer is united with Christ so that the law of God (specifically the moral law of God) is also fulfilled in us and we live transformed lives. Hebrews 13:1-6 gives us six commands that we are responsible to obey as an expression of our new birth. By the Spirit’s power, we can be content with God’s provision and say “no” to sin. Contentment in Christ enables us to be caring and hospitable, to flee from sexual sin, to flee from greed, and to overcome fear.

1. How do you express brotherly love? What does it mean to be hospitable? How can you prepare yourself to show hospitality toward strangers? (v. 1-2)
2. What does it mean to sympathize with a suffering fellow believer? How can your small group come alongside one of your members in a time of difficulty? (v. 3)
3. How can believers keep marriage honorable? Discuss the importance of sexual exclusivity within Biblically-defined marriage. (v. 4)
4. Define covetousness. Define godly contentment. How do we cultivate contentment? How does real contentment affect your world view? (v. 5)
5. God will never leave nor forsake his children. How does this assurance help us to be content (v. 5)? How does this assurance help us not to fear men (v. 6)?

**Study 10 – 13:7-25 (The Resurrection Power of Christ)**

This final section of Hebrews instructs believers with regard to their identity in the risen Christ, as well as showing the proper response to those who have spiritual authority over them.

1. Verses 7, 17-19, 24 refer to the relationship between church members and church leaders. What are the responsibilities of the leaders? What are the responsibilities of the members? What is the motivation for each group to obey these instructions?
2. Verses 10-13 describe how the Day of Atonement is a picture of the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, with separation being the primary emphasis. What does separation unto Jesus mean for the believer?
3. What might it look like for us to bear the reproach of Christ? (v. 13) How can we prepare ourselves for that possibility?
4. How does the reality of verse 14 motivate us to obey verse 15 fully and passionately? Is praise a feature of your Christian walk?
5. Why is generosity (v. 16) an essential part of true worship? Is generosity a feature of your Christian walk?
6. Why does the author identify God as “the God of peace” (v. 20) when describing what He desires to accomplish in the believer's life? What does God desire to accomplish in each believer? (v. 21)

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