

NOTES ON HEBREWS

Wyn Laidig
2013

It is clear from Acts 6 that there were two groups of Jewish believers in Jerusalem -- the "Hebrews" and the "Hellenists." No doubt they were distinguished by their language and culture, the latter being Greek speaking and/or having moved from areas outside of Judea when Greek culture and influence was dominant. The Hebrews, on the other hand, were Hebrew speaking Jewish believers. Like Paul, who was a Hebrew of Hebrews. Hebrew through and through. No doubt, adherence to the Torah, and full participation in temple life was an important part of their daily lives.

James was killed in 62AD by the religious leaders. That event was likely a major turning point in persecution of the Way by the religious Jewish leadership. They were probably no longer allowed to participate in temple activities which were so much a part of their lives. Even though persecution began after Stephen's stoning (Acts 8:1), the Temple continued to be part of their daily life (Acts 5:42, Acts 21:26ff) for some time. However at some point, followers of the Way were excluded from Temple life. Persecution began in earnest. Some of the Hebrews were no longer as strong in their faith as they used to be. They were caving to pressure of their non-believing Jewish brothers. They were not growing in their faith; meeting together was not the priority it used to be. Perhaps they were confused about what the truth really was. They knew they could not walk away from Torah, but yet they were told that could not participate if they continued to claim to follow Messiah. What was right? They were in confusion, and in danger of falling away from their faith in Messiah.

The letter to Hebrews encourages them to persevere in spite their being forced out of the Temple life. It encourages them to recognize that as important as that was, what they have in Messiah is even more valuable and more complete.

Summary statement of Hebrews: **"Don't give up! Stay strong! Persevere! What you have in Messiah is even better than what you had before!"**

Hebrews 1:2 (ESV)

but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.

There is no "but" in the Greek. The Son's speaking is to be seen not in contrast with the prophets of old, but in sequence to them, building upon what they wrote.

Hebrews 1:3

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,**

This is one of the key statements in the book of Hebrews... stated right at the beginning: **"Messiah made a way for once and for all purification of sins, and now sits at the right hand of the Father"**

Hebrews 1:12

like a robe you will roll them up, like a garment they will be changed. But you are the same, and **your years will have no end."**

Already we see a hint of the comparison to Melchizedek which the author will focus on later.

Also Heb 13:8 – Yeshua HaMeshiach the same yesterday today and forever.

Ch 1 summary - The Messiah is above the angels, above all created beings. He is forever. He has made purification for our sins and sits with the Father.

Hebrews 2:1

Therefore we must **pay much closer attention** to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.

We need to listen to His words, even more than those of the prophets (messengers, angels) of old! He is greater than them. So his words must carry more weight. Hebrew principle of **"kal v'chomer"** – *if X is important, how much more so is Y important*. This is used throughout the book of Hebrews.

Hebrews 2:2

For since **the message declared by angels** proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution,

This could be translated “the word declared by messengers”. Messenger can include both angels as well as prophets, both referred to in the previous chapter.

Hebrews 2:8

putting everything in subjection under his feet.” Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control. **At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him.**

Here we see clearly that the book of Hebrews will be talking about a process. All is under subjection to Him, speaking as if complete, yet in some sense it is yet incomplete, because it is not yet fully realized or apparent.

Hebrews 2:10–11

For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering. **For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers,**

Hebrews 2:17

Therefore **he had to be made like his brothers in every respect**, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

Ch 2 – Messiah was human... we are brothers to him. He was tempted as we are, and overcame death for us. He is the founder of our salvation which was accomplished through his suffering.

Hebrews 3:1–6

Consider Jesus... who was faithful to him who appointed him, **just as Moses also was faithful** in all God’s house. For 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. (For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.) **Now Moses was faithful in all God’s house as a servant**, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later, **but Christ is faithful over God’s house as a son**. And **we are his house if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.**

Moses was considered the greatest prophet of old (Heb 1:1), and Yeshua was greater than even him. Yeshua is not just a servant, but a son. We are “his house”... Beit YHWH... like the temple was his house, his people are and always have been his house.

Heb 3:7-11 quotes Ps 95:7-11. “They had hardened unbelieving hearts.”

What is the context of Ps 95?

Psalms 95:7–8

For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts, **as at Meribah, as on the day at Massah** in the wilderness,

This refers to Exod 17:1-7, when just after the people left Egypt, they were thirsty, and grumbled and complained, not believing the Father would take care of them. So God gave them water from the Rock when Moses struck it. They called the place Meribah (grumbling) and Massah (testing). This was an event that demonstrated the hardness of heart and the lack of faith that the people had in the Father.

Hebrews 3:12

Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, **leading you to fall away** from the living God.

Ch 3 – Don’t be like our forefathers were with Moses. They did not obey the His voice then. Today we hear His voice not thru Moses, but through His Son. Not through a messenger (or an angel), but through an heir! Don’t fall away! Hold fast.

Nearly everyone in Moses’ day didn’t have the faith to obey, because it looked too hard. And they didn’t get to enter the promised land. Except for Joshua and Caleb. Just two were willing to stand against the voice of all their brothers. And only those two were allowed to enter the promised land. So too, in the time

of the Hebrews. They are urged to be like Joshua and Caleb, to not listen to the strong opposing voice of all their brothers. Once again, all their brothers will not enter into His rest, but will perish.

Ch 4. Picks up on the promise that we can enter his rest if we don't fall away, seen in Heb 3:11 -

Hebrews 3:11

As I swore in my wrath, 'They shall not enter my rest.' "

Hebrews 4:3

For we who have believed enter that rest, as he has said, "As I swore in my wrath, 'They shall not enter my rest,' " although his works were finished from the foundation of the world.

Best to put a period after "**For we who have believed enter that rest.**" (as in the Jewish Bible) The following quote from [Psalm 95](#) refers to the whole concept of the preceding sentences – that's God's people were unbelieving and so did not enter the promised land.

Hebrews 4:8-9

For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on. So then, **there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God**,

[IVP NT Commentary](#): This makes clear that truly keeping the Sabbath is not observing a special day (that is but the shadow of the real Sabbath), but **Sabbath keeping is achieved when the heart rests on the great promise of God to be working through a believer in the normal affairs of living**. We cannot depend on our efforts to please God, though we do make decisions and exert efforts. We *cease from our own works* and look to his working within us to achieve the results that please him. As Jesus put it to the apostles, "Apart from me you can do nothing" ([John 15:5](#)) . They must learn to work, but always with the thought that he is working with them, adding his power to their effort. That is keeping the Sabbath as it was meant to be kept!

Wyn: The IVP Commentator's view sounds nice but Scripture does not say this. We keep the Sabbath on the Sabbath because God asked us to. It is indeed a reminder, a symbol, of a full relationship with God and His Son, unhindered by the sin in our lives - that complete rest in Him and enjoyment of Him.

What is the Sabbath rest? (picture: promised land; picture: 7th day of creation; picture: weekly Sabbath) It is God's rest... our ultimate rest in Him... in the fulfillment of His kingdom... the millennial rule with Messiah.

Ch 4 – The Sabbath rest was for God's people if they obeyed Him. They would have entered the promised land, and would have totally conquered it, and would have rested. Just as the Father rested after creation on the Sabbath. But because of their disobedience, they never reached that rest. The land was never totally theirs. They were eventually exiled. But TODAY, the promise is still here. If we chose to obey, we may still rest. The Son conquered sin and death for us... He made the way for us, since our forefathers failed to do it.. could not do it.

4:11 – strive to enter... don't be disobedient

4:12 – His Word reveals the intentions of our heart.. God sees our hearts... we are to obey His word

Why were the Hebrews tempted to be disobedient? And disobedient to what? They had hardened, unbelieving hearts. Did not believe and hold fast to God's promises. Exod 17:1-7. **"Why did you bring us out of Egypt?"** They didn't want the promised land! Wanted to go back to the way it was, because the path was too hard for them. Similar situation faced the Hebrews. Would they refuse the blessing of Messiah, as their forefathers refused the blessing of Moses? Would they prefer to go back to Egypt, because the persecution was too great?

Hebrews 4:14-15

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

4:14 – **BUT we have help to stay strong... we have a High Priest... hold fast our confession (DON'T GIVE IN).**

4:15 – He was tempted to give in, as we are. But he didn't... he passed thru temptation to the Father, without sin, so can be helped in our time of need.

Just as the High Priest mediated on behalf of sinful people, our Great High Priest mediated for us without any sin.

Hebrews 5:9–10

And being made perfect, **he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him**, being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

Summary 4:14-5:10. Messiah was perfect... forever.. from the order of Melchizedek not from Aaron. Messiah was appointed High Priest, just like Aaron and his descendants. He is sympathetic to our failures, but he too has been tempted in all ways like us... just like Aaron and his descendants. He can help us overcome our weaknesses, and remain strong.

Heb 5:11 – 6:12 – A parenthetical passage – he wants to teach them more about Melchizedek, but they are “dull of hearing”, still drinking milk (elementary doctrines), and not able to eat the solid food of the mature.

Why were they sluggish, living on milk, not maturing? They were caving in to pressure. No longer committed like they used to be. Not meeting together regularly. Not growing in their faith and commitment. They were lukewarm, confused, questioning.

Hebrews 6:4–6

For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, to restore them again to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt.

***Constable:** The view that I believe harmonizes best with the writer's emphasis is that those who fall away are believers who turn away from God's truth and embrace error (i.e., apostates)... I believe the writer meant that in the case of apostates, the really hard cases who are persistently hostile to Christ, it is impossible to restore such people to repentance (cf. vv. 1, 3, 7–8).¹⁸⁶ This inability to repent is the result of sin's hardening effect about which the writer had sounded a warning earlier (3:13). It is also the result of divine judgment (cf. Pharaoh, Exod. 9:12; 10:20, 27; 11:10; 14:4, 8, 17).*

It seems as if the author is simply saying “be careful... it is possible, even though you have been enlightened by the Spirit, and tasted the goodness of God, for you to harden your heart and fall away. And if you do, there is no way for restoration by any other means – so there can be no hope salvation for you if you reject the only way.

This makes sense in light of the context. The Hebrew believers were being urged to forget about Yeshua as Messiah, and go back to the old ways of worship and sacrifice within the confines of the traditional Judaism and priests and religious leaders of the day. Therefore, they were being urged to reject this Messiah Yeshua. But the author is warning, beware, if you do, there is no other way of salvation available to you.

Hebrews 6:18

so that by **two unchangeable things**, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us.

The two unchangeable things are God's promise (his word), and his oath (covenant sacrifice). Those who receive the promise are those who, like Abraham, had faith and patience until the very end (Heb 6:11-12).

An oath says "I promise to do such and such, and if I break this promise it will be under the penalty of this or that." The oath to Abraham was the smoking pot and the flaming torch passing through the halves of the animal sacrifice, saying I (YHWH) accept the penalty of death if either one of us breaks our commitment. The fulfillment of that oath was the penalty YHWH paid for Abraham and his offspring's breaking their commitment -- that penalty was the sacrificial death of the Messiah.

¹⁸⁶ 186. The word “apostate” refers to extreme cases of departure from the truth. We usually refer to less serious departure as backsliding.

What is his oath to us? To Abraham it was the sacrificed animals that He passed through. Now, is it is the sacrifice of the Messiah, who takes us into the holy of holies.

Hebrews 6:19–20

We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the **inner place behind the curtain**, where Jesus has gone as a **forerunner** on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

Our sure and steadfast hope is in the Messiah who entered the Holy of Holies as our Great High Priest to offer His sacrifice for us. He not only entered His presence to make the sacrifice (as the High Priest did once a year), but He now sits at the right hand of the Father (Heb 1:3).

Forerunner: 36.9 πρόδρομος, ου m: (a figurative extension of meaning of πρόδρομος ‘one who runs on ahead,’ not occurring in the NT) one who undergoes an experience in advance of others—‘forerunner.’ ὅπου πρόδρομος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν εἰσῆλθεν Ἰησοῦς ‘Jesus has gone in there as the forerunner on our behalf’ Heb 6:20. In rendering πρόδρομος in Heb 6:20 it is important to avoid an expression which would suggest that Jesus simply ‘ran on ahead.’ The implication of πρόδρομος in this type of context is that of a precursor, that is to say, one who goes on ahead in order to show the way or to pioneer on behalf of someone else. (From Louw-Nida.)

Jesus went as our **forerunner** through the **curtain** (the veiled entryway into the Holy of Holies) into God’s presence. Eventually we too will be in His presence forever. He went ahead on our behalf, to pave the way for us, by making sure we are seen to be without sin, so we can be in His presence.

Later in Heb 10:10, we see that WE also will enter through the curtain. Messiah truly is the forerunner, going ahead of us, through the curtain into the presence of the Father.

order of Melchizedek: The author has much to say about Messiah as Melchizedek, but it is complex and goes beyond the elementary teachings where the Hebrews have been dwelling. (Heb 6:1)

Hebrews 5:11

About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.

He therefore went into the topic of apostasy... the reason many have dull of hearing.

Having challenged them to persevere, the author resumes his teaching, presenting now some “solid food” that he wants them to digest. He starts with Abraham and the promised and covenant made with him, and links that to the promise made to us and the covenant sacrifice of the Messiah. Now he comes back to the topic of Messiah and Melchizedek, which is the focus of Chapter 7.

Heb 7:1-10.

The priesthood of Melchizedek is far superior to that of the Levites and of Aaron.

Hebrews 7:12

For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well.

What changed in the Torah? Allowance was made for a high priest to be appointed outside the line of Aaron. The Torah prescribed priests were designated from the line of Levi, and High Priests from the line Aaron. But if there was to be a High Priest from the order of Melchizedek, that requires a change. This is outside Torah. **Is it a change to Torah, but not a replacement of anything in Torah.**

changing priesthood: μετατίθημι (*metatithēmi*) – V. to depart, alter, change from one state to another

change to Torah: μετάθεσις (*metathesis*) – N. departure, removal, a taking away, a change from one state to another

This is ALL about the fact that Yeshua became our High Priest, and he is not from Levi. He is from Judah, but appointed as High Priest as predicted in Torah, but outside the normal appointed lines of the Levites as prescribed in Torah.

m masculine

NT New Testament

Hebrews 7:18–19

For on the one hand, a former commandment is set aside because of its weakness and uselessness (for the law made nothing perfect); but on the other hand, a better hope is introduced, through which we draw near to God.

What was “set aside”? The specific law prescribing that all priests are from Levi. Also the sin sacrifice since there is no longer a need for that (Heb 10:18).

Why was it set aside? It was not able to make anything perfect. The priests had to sacrifice year after year... it could not accomplish perfection and complete holiness of God’s people.

Our better hope is that we can now draw near to God perfectly and completely. We can be IN HIS PRESENCE. The annual visit to the holy of holies by the Levitical high priest could not complete our perfection. That is done with the complete once and for all sacrifice of Messiah, who went in the Holy of Holies as our FORERUNNER, and stays there at the right hand of the Father.

The law that made nothing perfect is not speaking of the entire Torah, but rather of the specific method of appointment of the Levitical High Priest. It is set aside, because we now have a perfect Great High Priest.

Hebrews 7:22

This makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant.

It was a better promise because our High Priest is forever, appointed on the basis of an indestructible life, and able to accomplish perfection and completion before of the sacrifice was perfect and complete.

Hebrews 7:28

For the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the **word of the oath**, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.

See Heb 7:21 quoting from Ps 110:4 "word of the oath" = "the Lord has sworn".

Chapter 8. Often misunderstood passage.

Matthew Henry’s commentary gives the traditional Christian view of Chapter 8:

What is here said of the old covenant... it is decayed, grown old, and vanisheth away, v. 13. It is antiquated, canceled, out of date, of no more use in gospel times than candles are when the sun has risen. Some think the covenant of peculiarity did not quite decay till the destruction of Jerusalem, though it was forfeited at the death of Christ, and was made old, and was now to vanish and perish, and the Levitical priesthood vanished with it...

What is here said of the New-Testament dispensation... it is a better covenant (v. 6), a more clear and comfortable dispensation and discovery of the grace of God to sinners, bringing in holy light and liberty to the soul. It is without fault, well ordered in all things. It requires nothing but what it promises grace to perform. It accepts of godly sincerity, accounting it gospel perfection. Every transgression does not turn us out of covenant; all is put into a good and safe hand... it is established upon better promises, more clear and express, more spiritual, more absolute... promises of progress and perseverance in grace and holiness, of bliss and glory in heaven...

Matthew Henry’s view reads way more into Scripture than what is said. In fact, it contradicts Scripture, as we will see in Heb 8:6 and other verses.

Hebrews 8:1–2

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, a minister in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up, not man.

Lest there be any confusion on this complicated topic, the author makes his point very clear.

Hebrews 8:4

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.

They don't need more of the same! They had Aaronic priests already, but that was not sufficient for the complete forgiveness of sins. They needed something better. Something lasting. Something perfect.

Also, this verse is clear indication that the normal activity and sacrifices of the priesthood were still continuing. The temple had not yet been destroyed. Thus the writing of Hebrews was prior to AD70.

Furthermore, it indicates parallel and ongoing priesthoods... one on earth and one in heaven. One is a picture, a symbol, a shadow of the other.

Hebrews 8:6

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.

What does Scripture say of the "old ministry" = "old priesthood"? It is excellent!! And Messiah's priesthood is even more excellent?

What does Scripture say of the "old covenant"? It is also excellent, by comparison!

Hebrews 8:7

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

How was the first covenant faulty? We know from previous verses it was incomplete and not entirely effective in removing sin once and for all. But lest we are left to wonder, he makes it clear in vs 8 and the quote from Jeremiah:

Hebrews 8:8-9

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, 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.

The people did not continue in the covenant, so He showed no concern for them. They broke the covenant. So in that sense, it did not work. It was broken – faulty. It did not last. That does mean that the Torah, God's instructions for life are not still to be followed. It means that the covenant was broken. The covenant was that if God's people obeyed His Torah, he would protect them and provide for them. They didn't so he didn't. Yet TODAY, if we hear His commands, we are to obey, and if we, we can still enter the Sabbath Rest of the fulfilled Promised Land.

So the first covenant was faulty because the people did not keep it. The fault of the covenant was the people, not the Torah.

So he establishes a new (or a renewed) covenant with the people. He could lower the bar, and remove the Torah, or he could empower the people, help them to succeed. He does the latter:

Hebrews 8:10

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.

He will change things so that His Torah will be on their hearts. How? Through the Holy Spirit. So His people, filled with His Spirit, will have it be their hearts' desire to obey His Torah.

We have been told in previous verses that Yeshua is the mediator of a better covenant, enacted on better promises. One that is eternal in nature because He is eternal in nature. So clearly the new Covenant began with the Messiah who entered the Holy of Holies as our Forerunner.

Luke 22:20

In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, **"This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.**

It is interesting that the new covenant was initiated at Passover. Actually the first covenant began at the first Passover in Egypt. Although the tablets were given at Sinai, the first covenant, according to Heb 8:8-9:

Hebrews 8:8-9

“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, **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.

That day was at the time of the very first Passover. Now at the Passover with Messiah, the covenant is renewed with the blood of the perfect Passover Lamb – the Messiah.

But although the New Covenant has been initiated, it is not yet complete, as Heb 8:11 shows:

Hebrews 8:11

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.

Clearly not ALL know him and no longer need to be taught. This aspect of the New Covenant has not yet taken place. Just as with Messiah, not all things are seen to be in subjection to Him at the present time, even though He has been given all authority and control:

Hebrews 2:8

putting everything in subjection under his feet.” Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control. **At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him.**

Heb 8:13 is needs careful study.

Hebrews 8:13

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.

Heb 8:13 is literally translated: “*In speaking of the new, he says the first (**protos**) is old. And what is becoming old and aging is near disappearing.*”

What is becoming old, and when will it disappear?

The author is referring to the quote from Jeremiah, who specifically speaks of the “new covenant”. So in speaking of the new covenant, he says the first covenant is old.

The author says the old covenant is **near disappearing**. It has not yet vanished. When will it vanish away? When the New Covenant is fully established. That has not happened yet. Not ALL of Israel knows Him, has His Torah on their hearts, and no longer needs to be taught by men.

Torah is not the same as Old Covenant. Jer 31:31-34, quoted in Hebrews 8, makes it clear that the Torah is still valid. The covenant was an agreement between two parties – YHWH and Israel. As part of that covenant, Israel’s responsibility was to keep the Torah.

Jeremiah 31:33

This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time,” declares the LORD. “**I will put my law (TORAH) in their minds and write it on their hearts.** I will be their God, and they will be my people.

The Torah has not changed. Only the manner of delivery!

Recall when the Torah was given by God to Moses. The covenant was that if the people fully obeyed His Torah, God would make them his people.

Exodus 19:5-6

Now therefore, **if you will indeed obey my voice** and keep my covenant, **you shall be my treasured possession** among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel.”

They agreed:

Exodus 24:3

Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the rules. And all the people answered with one voice and said, “**All the words that the LORD has spoken we will do.**”

Then 40 days later Moses comes down from the mountain with the Torah written on tablets of stone. Finds the people worshipping idols, and he breaks the tablet.

Exodus 32:19

And as soon as he came near the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, Moses’ anger burned hot, and he threw the tablets out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain.

The first covenant was broken. Did the Torah still exist? Yes. God’s instructions for life, his desires for His people, had not changed. The covenant however was broken. And God was going to destroy the people; he was no longer in covenant relationship with them.

Exodus 32:10

Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them...

Moses intervened, and pleaded with God on behalf of the people. So new tablets of stone were written. And the covenant was reestablished.

Exodus 34:27–28

And the LORD said to Moses, “Write these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel”... And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.

It was the same Torah... the Torah never changed. Just the covenant was renewed.

Of course the people broke the covenant again. And God said he would leave His people for a time... they would no longer be in covenant relationship with him. However he promised to renew the covenant again. He promised to unite them, and be their God again. They would ALL know him. He would forgive them. And this time He would write the Torah on their hearts. They would desire to keep His Torah.

Ezekiel 36:24-30 is another prophetic passage with similar wording to Jeremiah 31.

Ezekiel 36:24–30

I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. **And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you.** And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, **and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God.** And I will deliver you from all your uncleanness. And I will summon the grain and make it abundant and lay no famine upon you. I will make the fruit of the tree and the increase of the field abundant, **that you may never again suffer the disgrace of famine among the nations.**

From Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 36, we see the following characteristics of the new covenant:

1. The new covenant is with Israel (Jer 31:31)
2. YHWH is the God of Israel & Israel will be YHWH’s people (Jer 31:33, Ezek 36:28)
3. The Torah will be written on their hearts (Jer 31:33)
4. Israel will all know YHWH (Jer 31:34)
5. Israel’s sins will be forgiven (Jer 31:34)
6. YHWH will spiritually cleanse Israel (Ezek 36:25)
7. His Spirit will be within them (Ezek 36:26)
8. Israel will walk according to Torah (Ezek 36:27)
9. Israel will live in the land of their fathers (Ezek 36:28)

10. The nations will know who YHWH is (Ezek 36:36)

It is important to realize that the keeping of Torah is a significant aspect of the New Covenant. *YHWH will write his Torah on the hearts of the people of Israel.*

The new covenant (renewed covenant) makes use of the same Torah as before. But now it will be written on our hearts. That new covenant has begun to be established, but the process of implementation has not been completed.

So what is becoming old and about to disappear? The old covenant. The new covenant is replacing it. The Torah is still the same. But the covenant is different. It is written on our hearts, not on tablets of stone. And we have the gift of the Holy Spirit to help us. And ALL Israel will know him.

The Messiah is the mediator of this new covenant, and it based on a “better promise”:

- a better High Priest
- sins forgiven once and for all
- Torah written on our hearts
- Holy Spirit given as a Helper

Hebrews 8:6

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.

What was the better promise? Just before Jeremiah speaks of the new covenant, he makes this statement about sin / iniquity:

Jeremiah 31:30

But everyone shall die for his own iniquity. Each man who eats sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge.

And then, he as prophesies about the new covenant, he states that YHWH promises to forgive their iniquity:

Jeremiah 31:34

And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know YHWH,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares YHWH. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

This is also prophesied to David in 2 Samuel, speaking of the Messiah who would take upon himself the iniquity of the people:

2 Samuel 7:12–16

When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. **When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men,** but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.’ ”

Isaiah 53:5–6

But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and YHWH has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

So the new covenant YHWH will make with Israel **includes a provision for their iniquities to be forgiven forever, through the Messiah.** This is an “Old Testament” theme, as well as a “New Testament” theme.

Hebrews 9

Start again with Heb 8:13 as is literally translated: “In speaking of the new, he says the first (**protos**) is old. And what is becoming old and aging is near disappearing.”

Ch 9 contrasts the first covenant with the second covenant. He has just quoted Jeremiah, who speaks of the new covenant, and therefore implied that the first one (**protos**) is at least in some ways old, aging, and near vanishing. Now he further compares the old with the new. Note the use of **protos** (first) and **deuterios** (second) in this comparison and contrast.

Heb 8:13 ...the **protos** is old. And what is becoming old and aging is near disappearing.

Heb 9:1 The **protos** has regulations for worship and an earthy place of holiness.

Heb 9:2 A tabernacle was made; in the **protos** was the lampstand, table and bread of presence; called the Holy Place.

Heb 9:3 Behind the **deuterios** curtain was a section called the Most Holy Place

Heb 9:6 Priests go regularly into the **protos** section, but into the **deuterios** only the high priest goes, once a year

Heb 9:11-12 But when Messiah appeared as High Priest... he entered once for all into the Holy Place

Heb 9:15 Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant.

The author is comparing the **protos** and **deuterios** covenants with the **protos** and **deuterios** sections of the tabernacle (the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies). The **protos** section, frequented by the Levitical priests as part of their weekly routine, was effective, but could go only so far. The Holy of Holies, where God's presence truly resided, could be entered only once a year, and not without blood. The Messiah, as mediator of the **deuterios** covenant, entered the **deuterios** section, the Holy of Holies, once and for all, with his own blood.

Hebrews 9:8-9

By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the holy places is not yet opened as long as the first section is still standing (which is symbolic for the present age). [OR *which is symbolic for the age then present*]

The ordinary believer had no access to the very presence of God. Only the high priest did. But Messiah entered His presence as our Forerunner, so that we may eventually have full access, as He does. Now we, have access through Him, as our mediator. And He has given us His Holy Spirit as an aid. In the future, when the New Covenant is complete, we shall be in His presence, and shall know Him completely and fully. His Word will be on our hearts, and we need to be taught by no man.

Does that mean in the millennial kingdom there will be no first section; no “Holy Place”??

Hebrews 9:13-14

For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

Sacrifices according to Torah were of great benefit. They did what they were supposed to do. They sanctified and purified the people! But **how much more** does the blood of Messiah purify! He is the mediator of a better covenant... a more effective covenant:

Hebrews 9:24-26

For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

These verses are the essence of the author's argument. The Torah, the Tabernacle, the High Priest... **all these are copies, shadows, symbols** in the earthly realm of the reality in the heavenly realm. The Messiah showed us the reality of the heavenly realm. That does not mean or imply in any way that the earthly

representations are to be ignored. They are as valid as they ever were. They are a reminder and symbol of the heavenly original.

In chapter 10, the author quotes Ps 40, to show the finality of the Messiah's sacrifice for sin.

Hebrews 10:9

then he added, "Behold, I have come to do your will." He does away with the first in order to establish the second.

Clearly he is talking about the Messiah ushering in the beginning of the new / renewed covenant. It is interesting that the next verse of Ps 40, which he didn't quote is:

Psalms 40:8

I delight to do your will, O my God; **your law is within my heart.**"

This is just like Jer 31, where the new covenant is marked by the Torah being written on our hearts!

He then quotes this very verse from Jeremiah 31:33 in Heb 10:16.

Hebrews 10:18

Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.

This passage does make it clear that there is no longer a need for the sin offering.

The author goes on to say that because of the sacrifice of Messiah once for all, we can enter the "Holy Places"... **through the curtain into the Holy of Holies.** This should be an encouragement to persevere, to keep meeting together, continue without wavering, in spite of persecution and in spite of not being allowed into the earthly temple. They get to enter the heavenly temple, into the Holy of Holies with the very presence of God. That is the real thing. Even if they are not allowed to experience the earthly shadow, how much more blessed are they to experience the essence of the spiritual reality it represented.

Hebrews 10:26

For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,

Messiah made the sacrifice once for all, but if we go on sinning deliberately the sacrifice does not cover us. This is a sobering verse.

"The righteous one shall live by faith" is a quote from Hab 2:4. Also quoted in Rom 1:17 and Gal 3:11, where it clear that this refers to living a faithful life, in obedience to the Torah.

Chapter 11 is the great faith chapter.

Hebrews 10:39-11:1

But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls. Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

After warning them of the dangers of apostasy, and shrinking back, he now makes it clear that they are not like that... they are people of faith. Even though that faith is something not always seen. Just like their fathers from Abraham on, they must live in faith, living faithful lives in obedience, believing the promises even though their fulfillment is not yet seen.

Hebrews 11:13

These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.

It seems chapters 11 and 12 really summarize the point of the entire letter. Everything has been focused on having them realize what Messiah did, so that in spite of their persecution, they would be encouraged to stay strong.

Hebrews 12:1

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and **let us run with endurance the race** that is set before us,

Hebrews 12:7

It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline?

Hebrews 12:11–12

For the moment all **discipline seems painful** rather than pleasant, but later **it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness** to those who have been trained by it. Therefore **lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees,**

They are being called into the presence of God.. to the true Holy Mountain – Mt Zion – not to the shadow of Mt Sinai. What may be touched in vs 18 refers to Mt Sinai, where the people gathered to hear the words of God Himself.

Hebrews 12:18–20

For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made **the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken** to them.

Hebrews 12:22

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering,

Hebrews 12:25

See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven.

They should listen to what is being communicated to them, like at the beginning of this letter, when he said that the message communicated by the Messiah is even more to be listened to than the message communicated by Moses or the angels. Again, a kal v'chomer... "Just as it is important to listen to Moses, how much MORE is it important to listen to the Messiah."

Chapter 13 encourages them to continue in their purpose of living out their faith through acts of love and kindness.

Hebrews 13:1–3

Let brotherly love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. **Remember those who are in prison,** as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body.

Hebrews 13:7

Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, **and imitate their faith.**

Hebrews 13:15–16

Through him then let us continually offer up **a sacrifice of praise** to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. **Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing** to God.

Even if they can't sacrifice in the temple, they can offer sacrifices of praise... which are not mere words but actions!! Doing good and sharing what you have exemplify the sacrifices he is talking about!