

Dr. David A. deSilva, Hebrews, Session 7B, Hebrews 7:1-8:13: Better Priesthood, Better Covenant Part 2, 6-min. Video Overview

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Today, we are going to unpack one of the most powerful and honestly pretty dense arguments in the entire New Testament. It's from Hebrews chapter 8, and it was written to give some serious hope to a community that was right on the brink of collapse. Let's dive in.

Okay, so to really get this argument, you have to picture who it was for. Imagine a community that's just under siege. Your neighbors hate you, you're losing your home, your job, your reputation, everything, all because of your faith.

You were just exhausted, and that little thought in the back of your mind, the one that says, just give up, it's getting louder every single day. So the question is, what in the world do you say to people in that situation? What kind of argument is powerful enough to not just, you know, comfort them a little bit, but to actually convince them to keep going, to persevere through all of that? That is the massive challenge the author of Hebrews decides to tackle head-on. Yeah, it all kicks off with this very real, very human crisis of hope.

And look, this isn't just some abstract theological debate for its own sake. No, this is a lifeline, a lifeline being thrown to people who felt like they were completely drowning. So the author doesn't waste any time with empty platitudes.

He builds a rock-solid case, and he starts with his main point right out of the gate. This one sentence is the anchor for the entire argument. The whole case for why they should hang on rests on this single idea.

Their priest, Jesus, isn't stuck in some earthly temple. He is at the absolute center of power in heaven, right beside God himself. Now you've got to understand this introduces a totally radical concept, a heavenly priesthood.

His audience was used to thinking of priests and temples as, you know, physical things, stuff you could see and touch. But the author completely flips the script. He shifts their focus entirely from the visible world to the invisible, eternal reality where God actually is.

And to really drive this point home, he uses this brilliant analogy that his audience would have totally understood. The difference between a shadow and the real thing that casts it. What he's arguing is that the earthly tabernacle, the temple and all its rituals, was never the main event.

It was just a shadow, a copy, a blueprint of the true original sanctuary up in heaven. The earthly one was built by human hands, but the heavenly one was pitched by the Lord himself. So one is just a temporary echo.

The other is the eternal source. It's a huge difference. And here's the clever part.

He's not just making this up. He points them straight back to their own scriptures, back to the Torah, to God's instructions to Moses. This whole idea of an earthly sanctuary being based on a heavenly model was already there.

He's arguing from their own home turf. Okay, so this is where the logic gets really cool. The law was crystal clear.

Earthly priests had to come from the tribe of Levi, period. But Jesus, he was from the tribe of Judah. So by the rules, there was no way he could be a priest here on earth.

But wait, Scripture also promised he would be a priest. So how does that work? The author's solution is brilliant. His priesthood couldn't be earthly, so it must be in the true sanctuary.

And that logic leads us to what is, without a doubt, the most controversial part of the whole argument. See, if Jesus is a better priest serving in a better place, it implies he also represents a better agreement, a better covenant with God. And if there's a better one, what does that mean for the first one? And again, the author isn't just giving his own hot take.

He reaches way back, centuries back, to the prophet Jeremiah, who wrote about God's promise to make a new covenant with his people. So the point is, this whole idea of a new covenant comes straight from God. So this is why the author calls this new covenant better.

He just breaks down Jeremiah's promises. Instead of external laws on stone tablets, God's laws would actually be written on people's hearts and minds. Instead of constantly needing to be taught about God, people would know him personally.

And here's the real game changer: the lingering guilt of sin. Under this new covenant, God promises their sins will be remembered no more. Just gone.

So here's the step-by-step logic that would have been so stunning to them. One, God himself promises a new covenant. Two, well logically, the second you call something new, you automatically make the first one old.

And three, the author draws this incredibly sharp conclusion. That thing, which is now declared old and is becoming obsolete, well, it's on its way out. It's close to disappearing.

That is an incredibly bold claim based entirely on the words of their own prophet. Okay, whew. That is some heavy theology, I know.

But what's the point? Why all this complicated reasoning? Well, it was all meant to completely change how this suffering community saw their world. This entire argument was designed to totally reframe their perspective. He's saying, look, your suffering, your losses, that's not a sign you made some huge mistake.

Quite the opposite. He's telling them they are living in a moment of incredible historical privilege. Prophets like Jeremiah only looked forward to this time.

They were actually living it. And that new perspective was meant to give them the strength to just hold on. And that brings us right to the core challenge that still echoes today.

The author of Hebrews forces us to re-evaluate what we consider to be real and what we consider to be reliable. He's asking us to put our trust in the invisible, eternal realm of God over the very tangible, but ultimately temporary world that's right in front of our faces. This really sums it up perfectly, doesn't it? On one side, you have the visible world, the things you can touch and measure, which the author says is ultimately unreliable.

It's passing away. On the other side, you have God's invisible kingdom, his unbreakable promises, and Jesus, the eternal high priest. And that, the author argues, is the only solid foundation you can build a life on.

So the whole argument of Hebrews 8 really leaves us with this final, pointed question. In our own lives, in a culture that is so obsessed with what's material and immediate, how do we decide what's truly real? What should we actually build our lives upon? It was an urgent life-or-death question for them. And you know what? It remains just as urgent for us.