Study Notes and Questions for Hebrews 8:1-13

THE POINT OF THE SERMON:
JESUS, HIGH PRIEST OF A BETTER SANCTUARY, SACRIFICE AND COVENANT

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Context:

Up to this point in the sermon, the preacher has focused on Jesus’ appointment as a Son to the position of high priest and His qualification to be such a high priest (Hebrews 5:6-10; 6:20; 7:11-28). Based on this foundation, the preacher now states that this has all lead up to the climactic statement that Jesus is currently acting as our high priestly minister at this moment and is “seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven.”

In Hebrews chapter 7 Jesus’ priesthood was related to Melchizedek: like Melchizedek, God appointed Jesus; like Melchizedek, Jesus’ priesthood is eternal; and like Melchizedek, Jesus has a unique priesthood not in the order of Aaron. This uniqueness is based on the Jesus’ indestructible life; although He died on the cross, death could not hold Him. God raised Him up from the grave and appointed Him as our high priest. Because God promised to do all this, even swearing to do it by an oath, Jesus is now a fully effective priest, a “guarantor of a better covenant.”

However, there is a very significant and important component missing in this comparison with Melchizedek. Nowhere is Melchizedek associated with a sacrifice. Jesus’ sacrificial ministry; that is, His offer of His unblemished life as a perfect sacrifice for the sins of His people must still be presented to the preacher’s congregation. This superior sacrifice offer puts an end to the whole Levitical system of sacrifices since Christ, once and for all, has secured our complete and eternal atonement. It is particularly this aspect of Jesus’ high priest ministry that also requires a new covenant; and it is this aspect of Jesus’ high priestly ministry – our redemption through the blood of the new covenant in Christ – that the preacher now explains to his friends (8:1-10:18). However, before he gets to the core of his message (9:1-10:18), it is important that he relate the aspects of Jesus as our heavenly high priest to the themes of sanctuary and covenant (Lane, 115).

This great central section can be outlined as follows (George Guthrie, 278):

Opening: We have a Great High Priest (4:14-16)

A. The superior appointment of the Son as a great high priest (5:1-7:27)  PSALM 110:1,4
   A1 Introduction: the Son, in the flesh, appointed in the order of Melchizedek (5:1-10)
      [An exhortation to the congregation (5:11-6:20)]
   A2 The superiority of Melchizedek (7:1-10)
   A3 The superiority of our eternal high priest in the order of Melchizedek (7:11-28)

AB Transition: We have such a high priest who is a minister in heaven (8:1-2)

B. The superior sacrifice of the great high priest (8:3-10:18)  JEREMIAH 31:31-34
   B1 Introduction: The superior ministry and mediation of the heavenly high priest (8:3-6)
   B2 The superiority of the new covenant (8:7-13)
   B3 The superiority of the new covenant sacrifice (9:1-10:18)

Closing: We have a Great High Priest in heaven … (10:19-25)
This passage (Hebrews 8:1-13) for this lesson, may be outlined as follows:

A. Jesus, the minister in a better sanctuary with a better sacrifice (8:1-5)
   1. A new ministry is based on a true heavenly tabernacle (8:1-2a)
   2. which is described in opposition to the old (8:2b-5)

B: Jesus, the mediator of the better (new) covenant (8:6-13)
   1. The new ministry is based on a better covenant (8:6)
   2. which is described in opposition to the old (8:7-13)

Note that in each of these sections Jesus as minister and mediator of the new covenant is contrasted in opposition to the old. The reason, most likely, for this emphasis is the pastor’s concern for the members of the Hebrews’ church. If we are correct in assuming that they were seriously thinking of embracing again the Jewish religion with its Levitical system then this passage is a polemic against such thinking. For most modern Christians however this is simply not an issue; we tend to take for granted the inferior status of the old cultic system and have no desire to embrace it.

There are two reasons why this attribute may be harmful and that we should be cautious in our approach to this (George Guthrie, 275). First, it devalues what God has done in giving the first covenant. There is nothing that He does that is not perfect and good and so we need to understand its continuing value and purpose in our lives. For us, the first covenant laws continue to show the justice, and mercy of God as given to His people at that time but it also is a guide to reveal to us our own sinfulness and need for God’s forgiveness. This lack of focus on our sin and need for forgiveness has resulted in an evangelism that is almost entirely focused on God as our life-helper rather than our judge and saviour.

Second, the dismissing of the old and the triumphalist acceptance of the new can easily turn into distain for what is so precious; and in its worst form can turn into anti-Semitism. We need to remember that Jews wrote the vast majority of the New Testament and the majority of the first Christians were Jews. Finally, the promises that God made to Abraham still stands; God’s promises never fail and so although it may not be clear to us, He will fulfill these promises to them in His perfect way and in His perfect timing (cf. Romans 9 and 11).

Notes

JESUS, THE MINISTER IN A BETTER SANCTUARY WITH A BETTER SACRIFICE (8:1-5)

A Better Sanctuary (v. 1-2)

8:1a “Now the main point of what we are saying is this” (NET) The point of what was said by the preacher is everything he has been teaching them about Jesus’ superior appointment or qualifications as the Son to be their high priest of a new (non-Levitical) order. To summarize: He was appointed to this office by a divine oath (Hebrews 7:20-22); He was appointed as a Son (Hebrews 5:5); He was appointed as a sinless man but who was tempted in every way like us (Hebrews 4:15); He was appointed as one “holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, exalted above the heavens (Hebrews 7:26); He was appointed forever (Hebrews 5:6; 7:17); He was appointed by the power of an indestructible life (Hebrews 7:16); and now He is appointed to sit before God (Hebrews 1:3; 8:1) interceding continuously for us (Hebrews 7:25).

However, the ‘main point’ also points forward to what the preacher will now say regarding His superior ministry which finally reaches to the highest point in 9:1-10:18 – the once-and-for-all redemptive sacrifice by the blood of Christ. But first, he must give more background to that teaching.
“we have such a high priest” Jesus, as just described, is our high priest; this is a personal matter available to all who believe, trust and obey.

The main point may therefore be summed up by stating: we need such a high priest and we have such a high priest (France, 105).

8:1b-2a Two statements are now given about this high priest. First, He is the “one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven.” The preacher began his sermon with this statement (Hebrews 1:3) but now repeats it, relating it directly to Jesus’ as high priest. As such it is a fulfillment of the prophecy in Psalm 110:1. Once again, “seated” implies the work was done and done to perfection. It also indicates the kingship of Christ. How important this is can be viewed by the number of times the preacher refers to this; he will come back to it twice more (Hebrews 10:12; 12:2). That Jesus, as our royal high priest, sits with God reveals the superiority of Jesus over the priests in the order of Aaron who had to stand and whose work was never done (Donald Guthrie, 170).

The second observation is that Jesus Christ is “a minister in the sanctuary and in the true tabernacle” (NASB). This statement reveals His continuing work (compare “seated” with completed work). The word “sanctuary” or “holy places” refers to the holy of holies (cf. Hebrews 9:3) where God was most present on His throne. The “true tabernacle” refers heaven where God is. This is a tabernacle set up by God, which is a sharp contrast to the early tabernacle set up by man, i.e., Bezalel, Oholiab and craftsmen (Exodus 31:1-11) (cf. Mark 14:58; Acts 7:48). The word “true” is not the opposite of false but means ‘original’ in contrast to a copy (cf. Hebrews 9:24). By making this contrast, the preacher is stating emphatically “The place of Christ’s ministry is real and spiritual, compared with the ministry of Aaron’s line [which is in a] merely temporal tabernacle” (Donald Guthrie, 171). The point of the contrast is not to make the early tent less ‘real’ but to demonstrate the reality of the unseen heavenly tent. So, the ministering work that Christ Jesus as our great high priest is doing today, at this moment, is done in heaven in the presence of the Father.

A Better Sacrifice (v. 3)
8:3 Although Jesus is our high priest in the order of Melchizedek; the preacher now addresses the issue of sacrifices, which was not present in the Genesis story concerning Melchizedek. The preacher wants to show that although Jesus is the fulfillment of the Melchizedek priesthood, He also fulfills all of the duties and requirements of the Levitical priesthood but in a much more complete and perfect way. The preacher had touched on this issue in Hebrews 5:1 but now he discusses more specifically; however, the full implications of this awaits Hebrews 9:11-10:18.

“For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices” This statement was already given in Hebrews 5:1. Levitical high priests were required by law to represent the people and to “offer gifts and sacrifices” on their behalf. Most likely this is a reference to the Day of Atonement.

“thus it is necessary for this priest also to have something to offer” Although Jesus was not a priest in the order of Aaron, it was still necessary for Him to fulfill all the requirements of priesthood including offering sacrifices on the people’s behalf. There is no indication here of what “something” is but given that the preacher has already stated in Hebrews 7:27 that “he offered up himself” no doubt the “something” refers to Jesus’ own death; that is, a superior sacrifice (cf. Hebrews 7:27; 9:11-14; 10:1-18). The real heavenly tabernacle required a sacrifice of surpassing worth (Johnson, 98).
The word “necessary” is also important since it points to the necessity of Jesus’ death with respect His duties as a high priest to provide redemption for our sins. This word implies that there was no other way but for Christ’s sacrifice as our high priest.

A Better Sanctuary (again) (v. 4-5)

8:4 “Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all” It maybe that the preacher now addresses the issue (for the time the sermon was written) that there was two co-existing priesthoods at work simultaneously: Jesus in heaven and Levitical high priest on earth. What he is maintaining here is that it would be impossible for Jesus to do the work of a Levitical priest since He does not fulfill the conditions “according to the law” of such a priesthood in terms of His genealogy or the type of sacrifice (Hebrews 7:11-19). In other words, the pastor is pointing out the discontinuity and inferiority between the Jewish high priest and Jesus’ priesthood; Levitical priests offered animal sacrifices in a copy or shadow tabernacle, Jesus offered Himself in a heavenly real tabernacle. As Stedman writes, “Moses spoke of God’s words which provided for the partial covering of sins so God could remain with his people; Jesus promised the actual remission of sins so God could live within his people forever” (Stedman, 87).

This is a natural transition into the preachers argument that Jesus’ priesthood which resides in heaven is much more superior to any earthly one. This also explains why Jesus’ ministry as high priest did not take place during His time on earth but only after His ascension. However, Christ’s sacrifice itself took place on earth; again, highlighting the discontinuity between the two priestly orders.

8:5 In the previous verse, the preacher identified a discontinuity, however, in the present verse he reveals a continuity. This continuity is a direct relationship between the Levitical system and the work of Christ; however, this relationship is always from the lesser to the greater (Donald Guthrie, 172). (cf. Hebrews 9:24 ἀντίτυπα)

Specifically the phrase “they serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things” refers to the correspondence between that which was specified for the Levitical system (Exodus 25-30) to the real and true things in heaven. The relationship is one of “copies” (or pattern; i.e., something to be copied) and “shadows” (cf. Hebrews 10:1). In other words, it was a careful replica (“instructed by God”) of what was in heaven. This is expected since this was the tangible place that God dwelt with His people in the first covenant. When the heavenly tabernacle is seen, the earthly one is seen as its shadow. The earthly replica was never as an end in itself but intended as an earthly copy of the real and the true. This is the point the preacher is making here to his congregation. As an example of this lesser to greater correspondence, the earthly copies could not exist without the real heavenly things. This lesser-to-greater correspondence does not reduce the glory of the earthly things but enhances the glory of the heavenly ones (Donald Guthrie, 172).

Although the Jewish temple was real to his Jewish-Christian friends, they in fact had a much superior tabernacle – the real tabernacle – a much superior high priest who is ministering in the heavenly tabernacle and has been a much superior sacrifice.

“For when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God” There are two points we can learn from this. First, the preacher is not talking about the second temple that was currently in Jerusalem with its corrupt priesthood. He goes right back to the beginning with when the gift of the tabernacle to the Israelite people was first given (Exodus 25:40). This is his second point, that even this Shadowy copy was a specially ordained gift from God; how much more then should the congregation rejoice that their high priest is now in the real tabernacle.
JESUS, THE MEDIATOR OF THE BETTER (NEW) COVENANT (8:6-13)

8:6 “Christ has obtained a ministry that is much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better” In this verse the preacher compares the ministry of the old covenant and the ministry of the new covenant (cf. 1:4 for a similar comparison). He simply states that the ministry of the new covenant is better than the old.

The reason the new covenant is better than the old is “since it is enacted on better promises.” So, again the preacher has pointed out the continuity and discontinuity of the two covenants. They are similar in that both were enacted on promises from God. But how are the promises different? Since they are both from God it is difficult to take the view that one is qualitatively better than the other. In response to this question, Donald Guthrie writes, “it is preferable to take ‘better’ to refer to the higher spiritual purpose inherent in the new covenant, e.g. the idea of law written on the heart (verse 10). Promises which can do that must be better than promises which could only lead to the codification of the old law (i.e., the law of Moses)” (Donald Guthrie, 174). These promises are introduced in the next few verses given in the passage by Jeremiah; specifically in the announcement of a new covenant in which God’s laws will be written on our hearts, where all of His children will know Him personally and where there will be complete forgiveness of sins. As such these promises really include the whole of the “great salvation” obtained through Jesus’ sacrifice and His current work as our high priest.

8:7 “For if the first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second” The logic of the argument is clear: the very fact that a new covenant was needed means that something had serious gone wrong with the old covenant. However, when the preacher states that the first covenant had been faulty, he does not mean that there was something wrong or faulty about the laws themselves. What he means is that the Israelite’s ability to live under the law was faulty; they did not keep the law despite their initial vow (Exodus 24:3). As well they were not able to keep the covenant law because it was not written on their minds and hearts (Stedman, 89). Since they were unable to meet the requirements of the old laws it was necessary that a new covenant be enacted. As well, the sacrifices offered when the people did break the laws were inadequate to cover their sins and heal their conscience (Hebrews 9:9; 10:4). The preacher had already gone over this once before when he stated:

“Now if perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need would there have been for another priest to arise after the order of Melchizedek, rather than one named after the order of Aaron?” (Hebrews 7:11 ESV)

8:8a “he finds fault with them” This introduces the preacher’s long quotation of the Jeremiah passage on Israel’s inability to keep the first covenant and God’s provision for a new one. “he” that is God, finds fault with His sinful people for not keeping the law of the first covenant.

“with them” (ESV) or “with the old one [covenant]” (NLT, NET, MESSAGE) Most translations identify the fault with the people who were unable to live under the laws of the old covenant. Some translations (and commentaries) identify the fault with the old covenant itself. However, as already noted, the fault was with the people although the sacrifices under the old covenant were unable to deal with these faults adequately. As Paul writes, the first covenant was “weakened by the flesh” (Romans 8:3).
And again, the preacher introduces the passage with “he says” (as well as all the personal pronouns in the Jeremiah passage, i.e., I, my, me) which refers to God. The preacher views the Old Testament Scripture as directly inspired by God; so he is not particularly interested in the human author.

**THE QUOTATION OF JEREMIAH 31:31-34 IS IN THREE PARTS:**

1. **The Lord’s promise of a new covenant (8b)**
2. **A negative comparison with the old covenant (what it is not like) (v. 9)**
3. **A positive description of the new covenant, itself in three parts**
   a. God will establish a new relationship between Himself and His people (v. 10)
   b. God will reveal Himself to everyone in the new covenant (v.11)
   c. God will forgive the sins of His people (v. 12)

**1. The Lord’s promise of a new covenant**

8:8b The preacher now quotes Jeremiah 31:31-34, the longest quotation of the Old Testament in the New. It is so important that he quotes it particularly again in Hebrews 10:16-17. He has no doubt that this old prophecy concerning a new covenant applies directly to Jesus and the covenant to which Jesus, as the high priest, is the minister.

“Behold, the days are coming ... I will establish” “declares the Lord” God has spoken and He will accomplish the establishment of a “new covenant” for Israel and Judah. The word “new” here means something new and different in comparison to what was before rather than something fresh which was once old (Donald Guthrie, 175).

**2. A negative comparison with the old covenant**

8:9 “It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers” (NIV) The ratification of this first covenant is given in Exodus 24:1-8 a passage that the preacher refers to directly in Hebrews 9:18-20.

“covenant I made” The initiative for the covenant was all God; He did not consult or ask.

“I took them by the hand” emphasis both the sovereign action of God and the helplessness of the Hebrew people in their captivity in the “land of Egypt.”

“they did not continue” It was the Israelites that broke the condition of the covenant.

“my covenant” again emphasizing the initiative of God in establishing the covenant.

“no concern” is the consequence of the Israelites breaking the covenant God established.

Although when the Israelites first received this covenant they were eager and committed to following it:

“Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it in the hearing of the people. And they said, “All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient.”” (Exodus 24:7)

However this did not last very long at all as the incident of the golden calf makes clear (Exodus 32:1-35). Over and over again God sent leaders, judges, and prophets to turn

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1 There are other places in the New Testament which speak about the new covenant (Luke 22:20; Romans 11:27; 1 Corinthians 11:25; 2 Corinthians 3:6) but nowhere as extensively as in the sermon to the Hebrews.
His people back to Himself but instead the history shows an almost continuous disregard for the covenant. Elsewhere in Jeremiah’s book he describes this disregard of God’s covenant:

“But they did not obey or incline their ear, but walked in their own counsels and the stubbornness of their evil hearts, and went backward and not forward. From the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt to this day, I have persistently sent all my servants the prophets to them, day after day. Yet they did not listen to me or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck. They did worse than their fathers.” (Jeremiah 7:24–26)

To be sure there had been a rededication of the covenant when Hilkiah the priest discovered the “book of the law” during the reign of Josiah. Certainly the king and the priests commitment was genuine but not so the people (Jeremiah 3:6–10). They continued in their ways of synchronistic religion secure in the knowledge that they were the chosen people of God; they had the temple and they had the sacrifices; and so, God would never abandon them. God had specifically told them not to believe in such deceptive security:

“Do not trust in these deceptive words: “This is the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD.”” (Jeremiah 7:4)

As a result God refused to hear their superficial cries of repentance. He even commands Jeremiah not to pray for them:

“As for you, do not pray for this people, or lift up a cry or prayer for them, and do not intercede with me, for I will not hear you.” (Jeremiah 7:16)

It is evident that in such a dire situation, God would have to do something new and wonderful in order to save His people; something which did not depend on their efforts or will. This new thing is given in the next three verses that describe the new covenant.

3. A POSITIVE DESCRIPTION OF THE NEW COVENANT

In these three verses God through the voice of Jeremiah places the emphasis on relationship and its internal effect on God’s people. As George Guthrie states, “The new covenant, in essence, establishes a relationship with God. In that relationship the laws of God are internalized and the forgiveness of sins is foundational” (George Guthrie, 282). The preacher in quoting these verses interprets them as the new covenant mediated by Jesus.

3. A GOD WILL ESTABLISH A NEW RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HIMSELF AND HIS PEOPLE

8:10 This verse marks the beginning of the description of the new covenant. “this is the covenant” means the new covenant. “I will make” again shows that this new covenant will be entirely at God’s initiative and discretion. “house of Israel” means not only the ethnic Israelite but all the people of God including the Gentiles who accept the Gospel and become followers of Christ. “after those days” refers to the last days of the Christian era.

“I will put my laws into their hearts, and write them on their hearts” again shows that the action of this covenant will be at the initiative of God. These laws will but put into the “minds” and “hearts” (note Hebrew parallelism) of the people of God and shows that this new covenant will be an understanding (mind) but that it also affects the will and emotions (heart). Of course this does not mean that the people of the new covenant
will simply memorize God’s word; that had been done before (Deuteronomy 6:6-9). This was a new awakening of the heart by God alone; an awakening that liberated it from the bondage (death) of sin and which would then know and love God (Bruce, 190). Ezekiel, a contemporary of Jeremiah while in exile, describes this new heart:

“And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God.” (Ezekiel 11:19–20 ESV)

and again …

“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.” (Ezekiel 36:26)

“I will be their God and they shall be my people” shows the mutual intimacy resulting from the new covenant. The placing of the law is not just an individual activity but is part of the community that is God’s people. This promise was first given within the context of the first covenant (Exodus 6:7; Leviticus 26:12); it is again given in the promise of the new covenant (Jeremiah); now fully enacted in the New Testament (Hebrews here, also 2 Corinthians 6:16); and will finally be perfected in the new heaven and earth when God will make His dwelling with His people (Revelation 21:3). In each age, the meaning and significance of this wonderful promise increases, as God’s will for His people is more clearly revealed (Bruce, 190-191).

3.B GOD WILL REVEAL HIMSELF TO EVERYONE IN THE NEW COVENANT

8:11 As a result of God placing His laws into the minds and hearts of His people the people will have a direct intimate knowledge of God; there will be no need for an intermediary. There will be no special group who has unique knowledge; all His people “from the least of them to the greatest” will have a personal relationship with the Lord, “for they shall all know me.” (cf. 1 John 2:9-14).

3.C GOD WILL FORGIVE THE SINS OF HIS PEOPLE

8:12 “I will be merciful” shows God’s character; who He is. This is however nothing new; God has always been merciful and the old covenant itself came from the mercy of God. But here the mercy is more clearly revealed in sending His Son to as a man, to take our sins upon Himself and to now be our high priest ever interceding for us.

“I will remember their sins no more” means that their sins are completely forgiven.

Both these phrases show that forgiveness is complete. God had spoken earlier about the forgiveness of sins (Exodus 34:6; Micah 7:18f) but the complete forgiveness of these sins had to await the fulfillment of their punishment. Without the judgment and punishment there can be no justice, yet God is perfectly just. If God is just how can He forgive the sins of those who lived in the first covenant? This is the question that Paul addresses in Romans 3:21-26:

“For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God’s righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.” (Romans 3:22–26)
This aspect of the new covenant, that our sins are forgiven (paid for) and remembered no more is what the preacher will now focus on in the remainder of his discussion (Hebrews 9:11-10:18). This is the essence of the new covenant; it has at its heart a new relationship with God that is only made possible through the forgiveness of sin and the living out of this forgiveness through our intentional maturing faith in the service to God.

These then are the “better promises” mentioned in verse 6 that are included in the new covenant; promises to put His laws into our hearts, to change our hearts so that we will know Him, and that He will remember our sins no more. There had been great promises in the first covenant but none like these.

**Commentary on the quote**

8:13 **“In speaking of a new covenant”** The preacher now comments on the quotation although it is a surprising for us how little he says (George Guthrie, 282). He understands that if there is a new covenant then the old one has now become (present tense) obsolete. He then restates this in terms of an old person – like an old person it dies and “is ready to vanish away.” In other words, the two covenants cannot co-exist. The Melchizedek priesthood of Jesus has replaced the Levitical priesthood; and regarding the end of the old sacrificial system, this happened soon after this letter was written in the destruction of Jerusalem by Rome and the resulting destruction of the temple.

However we do not have to assume by this that when the new covenant was enacted that the Ten Commandments also vanish (Matthew 5:18). What it means is that the purpose of the law is completed when men and women come to Christ. The old law could never make them perfect but they have come to the great high priest who can (Stedman, 92).

**Biography**


Questions

Study it:

1. [8:1a] Summarize for yourself the main points that the preacher has given for Jesus to be our great high priest. As a transition statement, what is the next major point he will be preaching on? How does

2. [8:1b] How is Christ’s appointment as a high priest shown to be superior in this verse?

3. [8:2a] Where does this verse say Christ ministering today? What does the word “true” mean? Why is the preacher making this contrast?

4. [8:3] How does the preacher connect the work of Jesus as high priest to the Levitical priesthood? What does “something” refer to? Why would the “true” tabernacle require a different superior sacrifice then the earthly tabernacle? What is the significance of the word “necessary”? Is it used of Jesus anywhere else in the New Testament?

5. [8:4] Why would it have been inappropriate for Jesus to function as a high priest during his earthly ministry? When did He begin His work – and continues to today – as a high priest?

6. [8:5] How does the word “copy” function in this verse? How does the word “shadow”? What two things can we learn from the phrase “For when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God”?

7. [8:6] How are the two covenants the same and how are they different? How do you interpret the phrase “better promises”?

8. [8:7-8a] What argument does the preacher use in this verse for the faultiness of the first covenant? What does he mean by implying the first covenant is ‘faulty’?

9. [8:a] When the preacher states, “he finds fault with them” whom is he referring to?

10. [8:b-12] Outline this passage from Jeremiah yourself. Why (and how) does the preacher understand this prophecy to be fulfilled in the person and work of Jesus Christ?

11. [8:13] What is the main idea that the preacher wants to leave with his congregation in concluding this passage?

Live it:

1. Summarize the “main point” in 8:1a from a practical perspective; that is, what has the preacher said that is of help to you in your understanding of who Jesus is and how He ministers to you?

   Or in other words: Reflecting back on what the preacher has already taught us, how has your knowledge and understanding of Jesus Christ as your high priest today changed or helped you?

2. Do you relate better to specific external laws or to the interior direction of the Holy Spirit? How does verse 10 encourage you in this? (Note all the personal pronouns)

3. Jeremiah states that God’s people will know Him (v. 11). What role does God have in this knowledge? How should you respond to such an amazing promise?