

# The Message of Hebrews



Week Two

## inTro



Read This Week's Passage:  
Hebrews 8:1-6

### HOLDING FAST

A Jewish document written a few decades after Hebrews, around AD 100, contains a prayer: "All this I have spoken before you, O Lord, because you have said that it was for us that you created this world. . . . And now, O Lord, behold, these nations, which are reputed as nothing, domineer over us and devour us. But we your people, whom you have called your first-born, only begotten, zealous for you, and most dear, have been given into their hands." (James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 1 (New York: Hendrickson, 1983), 536.)

The readers of Hebrews probably felt something similar. If they were God's children, why were they going through such suffering?

Thus, Paul wrote Hebrews to strengthen the faith of the believers amid their trials. He reminded them (and us) that the promises of God will be fulfilled through Jesus, who is seated at the right hand of the Father and will soon take us home. In the meantime, Jesus mediates the Father's blessings to us. So, we need to hold fast to our faith until the end.



## **inScribe**

Write out Hebrews 8:1–6 from the translation of your choice. If you are pressed for time, write out Hebrews 8:1, 2. You may also rewrite the passage in your own words, or outline or mind-map the chapter.

## inGest



Go back to your scribed text and study the passage.

**Circle** repeated words/phrases/ideas

**Underline** words/phrases that are important and have meaning to you

Draw **arrows** to connect words/phrases to other associated or related words/phrases

What special insights do your marks seem overall to point to?

Memorize your favorite verse in Hebrews 8:1–6. Write it out multiple times to help memorization.

How can we draw comfort, especially amid trials, from knowing that Jesus is the ruler of the universe?



Read more at [www.inversebible.org/heb02-3](http://www.inversebible.org/heb02-3)

## JESUS THE DAVIDIC KING

The main point of Hebrews is that Jesus is the Ruler who is seated at the right hand of the Father (Heb. 8:1). As God, Jesus has always been the ruler of the universe. But when Adam and Eve sinned, Satan became the ruler of this world (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11). Jesus, however, came and defeated Satan at the cross, recovering the right to rule those who accept Him as their Savior (Col. 2:13–15).

The first two chapters of Hebrews focus especially on the inauguration of Jesus as King. Hebrews 1:5–14 is arranged in three sections. Each section introduces an aspect of the enthronement ceremony of the Son. First, God installs Jesus as the royal Son (Heb. 1:5). Second, God introduces the Son to the heavenly court, who worship Him (Heb. 1:6, 8) while the Father proclaims the eternal creatorship of the Son (Heb. 1:8–12). Third, God enthrones the Son—the actual conferral of power over the earth (Heb. 1:13, 14).

One of the most important beliefs of the New Testament is that in Jesus, God fulfilled His promises to David (see 2 Sam. 7:8–16 and Luke 1:30–33). Jesus was born from the line of David in the city of David (Matt. 1:1–16; Luke 2:10, 11). During His ministry people often called Him “son of David.” He was executed under the charge that He claimed to be “the king of the Jews” (Matt. 27:37, NKJV). Peter and Paul preached that Jesus had risen from death in fulfillment of the promises made to David (Acts 2:22–36; 13:22–37). And John identified Jesus as “the Lion of the tribe of Judah” (Rev. 5:5).

Hebrews, of course, concurs. God has fulfilled His promises to David in Jesus: God gave Him a great “name” (Heb. 1:4), installed Him as His own Son (Heb. 1:5), affirmed Him forever as Creator and Lord (Heb. 1:8–12), and seated Him at His “right hand” (Heb. 1:13, 14). Furthermore, according to Hebrews 4, Jesus leads the people into the rest of God, and He is the builder of the house of God (Heb. 3:3, 4). Jesus, then, is the legitimate ruler of earth engaged in a war with Satan, the usurper, for our allegiance.

An interesting concept of Old Testament theology is that the promised Davidic King would represent the nation before God. Israel was God’s son, and God would give them a place where they would rest from their enemies. God would also choose a place among them where His name would dwell. These promises for Israel were transferred to the promised Davidic King. He would be adopted as God’s son, God would give him rest from his enemies, and he would build a temple for God in Zion where God’s name would dwell. This means that God would fulfill His promises to Israel through the promised Davidic King. The Davidic King would represent Israel before God.

The insertion of a representative in the relationship between God and Israel made the perpetuation of their covenantal relationship possible. The Mosaic covenant required the faithfulness of all Israel to receive God’s protection and blessings (see Josh. 7:1–13). The Davidic covenant, however, secured God’s covenantal blessings upon Israel through the faithfulness of one person, the Davidic King.

Unfortunately, for the most part the Davidic kings were not faithful, and God could not bless Israel as He wanted. The Old Testament is filled with accounts of just how unfaithful many of those kings actually were. The good news is that God sent His Son to be born as the Son of David, and He has been perfectly faithful. Therefore, God is able to fulfill in Him all the promises He made to His people. When God blesses the king, all his people share in the benefits. This is why Jesus is the Mediator of God’s blessing to us. He is the Mediator in that He is the channel through whom God’s blessing flows. Our ultimate hope of salvation is found only in Jesus and what He has done for us.

## JESUS THE CHAMPION AND HIGH PRIEST

The Israelites wanted a king to be their judge and their leader in battle because they forgot that God was their king. The complete restoration of God's rule over His people came with Jesus. As our King, Jesus leads us in the battle against the enemy.

Hebrews 2:14–16 describes Jesus as the champion of weak human beings. Christ faces and defeats the devil in solo combat and delivers us from bondage. This description reminds us of the battle between David and Goliath. After being anointed as king (1 Samuel 16), David saved his brethren from slavery by defeating Goliath. The terms of engagement determined that the winner of the combat would enslave the people of the other party (1 Sam. 17:8–10). Thus, David acted as a champion of Israel. He represented them.

Hebrews 2:14–16 also alludes to the notion that God would save Israel in solo combat. Note this passage from Isaiah: “For thus says the LORD: ‘Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken, and the prey of the tyrant be rescued, for I will contend with those who contend with you, and I will save your children’ ” (Isa. 49:25, ESV).

As Christians we often think that we ourselves are engaged in solo combat with Satan. When we read Ephesians 6:10–18, we see that, yes, we are in combat with the devil. But God is our champion, and He goes to battle before us. We are part of His army; that is why we have to use His armor. Also, we do not fight alone. The “you” in Ephesians 6 is plural. We as Christians take the armor and fight together behind our champion, who is God Himself.

Hebrews 5–7 introduces a second function of Jesus: He is our High Priest. The author explains that this fulfills a promise God had made to the promised Davidic king, that He would be “ ‘a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek’ ” (Ps. 110:4, as quoted in Heb. 5:5, 6, NKJV).

The priests were appointed on behalf of human beings to represent them and mediate their relationship with God and the things pertaining to Him. The priest was a mediator. This was true of any system of priesthood, whether Jewish, Greek, Roman, or any other. The priest makes it possible for us to relate to God, and everything the priest does has the purpose of facilitating the relationship between us and God.

The priest offers sacrifices on behalf of human beings. The people cannot bring these sacrifices to God in person. The priest knows how we can offer an “acceptable” sacrifice so that our gifts may be acceptable to God or that they can provide cleansing and forgiveness.

Priests also taught the law of God to the people. They were experts in God's commandments and were in charge of explaining and applying them.

Finally, the priests also had the responsibility of blessing in the name of Yahweh. Through them, God mediated His goodwill and His beneficent purpose for the people.

However, in 1 Peter 2:9, we see something else. We—believers in Jesus—are called “a royal priesthood.” This role implies incredible privileges. Priests could approach God in the sanctuary. Today, we can approach God through prayer with confidence (Heb. 4:14–16; 10:19–23). There are important responsibilities as well. We must collaborate with God in His work of saving the world. He wants us to teach and explain God's laws and precepts to others. He also wants us to offer sacrifices of praise and good works, which are pleasing to Him. What a privilege and what a responsibility!



## inTerpret

After looking at your scribed and annotated text, what special insights do your marks overall seem to point to?



What questions emerge after reading Hebrews 8:1–6? What parts are difficult?

What other principles and conclusions do you find?

In our daily struggles with self and temptation, what actually happens in the interaction of the armor of God, God's intervention, and our own strength?



Read more at  
[www.inverseible.org/heb02-4](http://www.inverseible.org/heb02-4)



What relationship do the following verses have with the themes of Hebrews?

Luke 1:30–33

1 Peter 2:9

2 Samuel 7:9–14

Deuteronomy 12:8–14

Psalms 132

Isaiah 42:13

Isaiah 59:15–20

Leviticus 10:8–11

Malachi 2:7



What other verses/promises come to mind in connection with Hebrews 8:1–6?

Review your memorized verse from Hebrews 8:1–6.

## JESUS MEDIATES A BETTER COVENANT

Hebrews 8–10 focuses on the work of Jesus as Mediator of a new covenant. The issue with the old covenant was simply that it was only a foreshadowing of the good things that would come. Its institutions were designed to prefigure, to illustrate, the work that Jesus would do in the future. Thus, the priests prefigured Jesus, but they were mortal and sinners. They could not provide the perfection that Jesus did. And they ministered in a sanctuary that was a “copy and shadow” (Heb. 8:5, NKJV) of the heavenly sanctuary.

Jesus ministers in the true sanctuary and provides us access to God. The sacrifices of animals prefigured the death of Jesus as a sacrifice in our behalf, but their blood could not cleanse the conscience. Jesus’ death, however, purifies our conscience so that we can approach God with boldness (Heb. 10:19–22).

By appointing Jesus as our High Priest, the Father inaugurated a new covenant that will accomplish what the old covenant could only anticipate. The new covenant delivers what only a perfect, eternal, human-divine priest can. This High Priest not only explains the law of God but implants the law in our hearts. This Priest offers a sacrifice that brings forgiveness. This Priest cleanses and transforms us. He transforms our hearts from stone to flesh (Ezek. 36:26). He creates us anew (2 Cor. 5:17). This Priest blesses us in the most incredible way, by providing us access into the very presence of the Father Himself.

God designed the old covenant in order to point toward the future, to the work of Jesus. It was beautiful in its design and purpose. Yet, some misunderstood its purpose. Unwilling to leave the symbols—the shadows—and embrace the truths that the symbols were pointing to, they missed the wonderful benefits that Jesus’ ministry offered them.

Despite all the good and hopeful truths in the book of Hebrews, there is also a series of warnings that reach their climax in chapters 10–12. These sections have at least two common elements. First, they all compare the desert generation with the readers of Hebrews. Second, they exhort us to have faith.

The desert generation was the one that saw the amazing power of God unleashed in signs and wonders in their deliverance from Egypt. They also heard God speak the Ten Commandments from Mount Sinai. They saw the column of fire in the night and the protecting cloud during the day. They ate manna—bread from heaven. They also drank water that sprang from the rocks wherever they camped. But when they arrived at the border of the Promised Land, they were not able to trust God. They lacked faith, which is the core of what God requires. “Without faith it is impossible to please Him” (Heb. 11:6, NKJV).

Paul says that we, like the desert generation, are at the border of the Promised Land (Heb. 10:37–39). Our privileges and responsibilities are greater, however. We did not hear God speak at Mount Sinai, but we have seen through Scripture a greater revelation of God at Mount Zion: God in the flesh, Jesus Christ (Heb. 12:18–24). The question is: Will we have faith? The author encourages us to follow the example of a great list of characters that culminates with Jesus Himself.



inVite

Meditate on Hebrews 8:1–6 again and look for where Jesus is.



What is He saying to you through the texts of the week?

In God’s new covenant, which promise means the most to you?

How do you see Jesus differently or see Him again?



Read more at  
[www.inverseible.org/heb02-6](http://www.inverseible.org/heb02-6)



Review the memory verse.  
How does it apply to your  
life this week?

After this week's study of the passage, where must Jesus be active in your personal life?

Where must Jesus be Warrior, High Priest, Mediator, and Champion in your social life?



Read more inSight from the Spirit of Prophecy at [www.inverseible.org/heb02-7](http://www.inverseible.org/heb02-7)

## MINISTER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH

“As referring to the temple at Jerusalem, the Saviour’s words, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up,’ had a deeper meaning than the hearers perceived. Christ was the foundation and life of the temple. Its services were typical of the sacrifice of the Son of God. The priesthood was established to represent the mediatorial character and work of Christ. The entire plan of sacrificial worship was a foreshadowing of the Saviour’s death to redeem the world. There would be no efficacy in these offerings when the great event toward which they had pointed for ages was consummated.

“Since the whole ritual economy was symbolical of Christ, it had no value apart from Him. When the Jews sealed their rejection of Christ by delivering Him to death, they rejected all that gave significance to the temple and its services. Its sacredness had departed. It was doomed to destruction. From that day sacrificial offerings and the service connected with them were meaningless. Like the offering of Cain, they did not express faith in the Saviour. In putting Christ to death, the Jews virtually destroyed their temple. When Christ was crucified, the inner veil of the temple was rent in twain from top to bottom, signifying that the great final sacrifice had been made, and that the system of sacrificial offerings was forever at an end.

“‘In three days I will raise it up.’ In the Saviour’s death the powers of darkness seemed to prevail, and they exulted in their victory. But from the rent sepulcher of Joseph, Jesus came forth a conqueror. ‘Having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them.’ Colossians 2:15. By virtue of His death and resurrection He became the minister of the ‘true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.’ Hebrews 8:2. Men reared the Jewish tabernacle; men builded the Jewish temple; but the sanctuary above, of which the earthly was a type, was built by no human architect. ‘Behold the Man whose name is The Branch; . . . He shall build the temple of the Lord; and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a priest upon His throne.’ Zechariah 6:12, 13.

“The sacrificial service that had pointed to Christ passed away; but the eyes of men were turned to the true sacrifice for the sins of the world. The earthly priesthood ceased; but we look to Jesus, the minister of the new covenant, and ‘to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.’ ‘The way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: . . . but Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, . . . by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.’ Hebrews 12:24; 9:8–12.

“‘Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.’ Hebrews 7:25. Though the ministration was to be removed from the earthly to the heavenly temple; though the sanctuary and our great high priest would be invisible to human sight, yet the disciples were to suffer no loss thereby. They would realize no break in their communion, and no diminution of power because of the Saviour’s absence. While Jesus ministers in the sanctuary above, He is still by His Spirit the minister of the church on earth. He is withdrawn from the eye of sense, but His parting promise is fulfilled, ‘Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.’ Matthew 28:20. While He delegates His power to inferior ministers, His energizing presence is still with His church.” (Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1898), 165, 166.)



Share insights from this week's memory verse and Bible study as well as any discoveries, observations, and questions with your Sabbath School class (or Bible study group). Consider these discussion questions with the rest of the group.



What difference should it make in our lives that we are indeed “a royal priesthood”?

How should this truth impact how we live?

How can we fight together, united as a church, behind our Champion?

What are those things that prevent this unity from happening?

How did Satan weaken Israel in the past?

What are ways that Satan can weaken us as a church?

In what specific and practical ways can your local church offer better sacrifices of praise and good works to God?

In what ways is our situation similar to the situation of the desert generation just before crossing into the Promised Land? What lessons can we learn from the similarities?