

# Blessings of the New Covenant – Part 1

By David Harrell

**Bible Text:** Hebrews 8:1-3  
**Preached on:** Sunday, March 19, 2017

We now come to the pinnacle of our worship service where we have the opportunity to look into the living word of God and this morning I would invite you to take your Bibles, turn to Hebrews 8. In the province of God, we now come to the first 13 verses of this chapter where we will begin to understand more of some of the blessings of the new covenant and before I read the text, I have some words of introduction that I hope will help frame what the Spirit of God has laid on my heart for you this morning.

One of the great difficulties that we have as believers in the era in which we live is being able to somehow bridge the cultural divide between the people that lived in the first century, especially the ancient Jews, and how we live today, how we think, especially with respect to God. Unlike them, we know very little about persecution for our faith. Very few of us have ever lost our job or our spouse, a family or friends because of our faith in Christ, though I know some of you have. Very few of us have ever come out of a religious system that basically defined who we are as a person, such as Judaism. But for the first century Hebrew believer in Christ, Judaism was more than a religion, it was literally a way of life. Everything they believed about God, about salvation, everything they did, everything they wore, everything they ate, their entire social life orbited around their Jewish heritage. All of their traditions, their celebrations, their temple worship, all of it was inextricably bound to their understanding of the Abrahamic covenant and then later on the Mosaic covenant, the law of Moses. Their temple was absolutely fabulous. By the time that the Jews that we're reading about here in Hebrews, by that time the temple was probably about five years old. It was a magnificent structure. The vestments of the priests were elaborate. All of their services were just magnificent to behold. The high priest was considered to be one of the most important political figures in their culture. So it was incomprehensible to them for somebody to come along and say, "Do you know what? All of that is over. The old covenant is done. There is now a new covenant, one that is superior. Not only that, your Messiah came and you killed him. However, that was according to God's plan to send his Son to purchase your redemption to pay the penalty for your sins."

You see, it was mind-boggling to them to be told, as the writer of Hebrews did in chapter 7, verse 26, "it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the sins of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself." My, that was hard to hear. Imagine. And then to know, if you followed Christ, you opened yourself up to all manner of persecution in your community, with your family. Some of them perhaps had

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seen or at least knew about Stephen being martyred for his faith in Christ. They had other friends who undoubtedly had been persecuted, who had to leave Jerusalem, and so they are asking the question, "Is it really worth following Jesus?" Most of us know nothing of that. Some of them perhaps knew about the great Pharisee, Nicodemus, that went to Jesus who, according to tradition, was then later deprived of his office, he was banished from Jerusalem by hostile Jews, and his family was left in utter poverty. He was eventually buried in a common grave along with Stephen, all because he trusted in Christ. So these people are wondering, "Is it really worth all of this? My friends and my family are begging me to leave this Jesus of Nazareth cult."

So knowing this, the writer of Hebrews was telling them, "No, no, please don't do that. Jesus Christ is the superior high priest of a superior new covenant. Trust in him." In fact, later in Hebrews you will recall in Hebrews 11, there is that great chapter that we often call the heroes of the faith or the saints' Hall of Fame, powerful testimonies of lives that attest to the high cost of discipleship and yet the infinite value of following Christ. And you will remember, then, on the heels of that in chapter 12, verse 1, he says this, "Therefore," in other words, in light of those who have suffered for Christ, "since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself," and here's why, "so that you will not grow weary and lose heart." What a blessing to know that all who trust in Christ will persevere, according to his power. But, dear friends, the more we know him and walk in fellowship with him, the more we will enjoy him in the midst of great persecution and adversity and the more we will honor him in our life. This is why it was so important for the writer of Hebrews to extol the supremacy of Christ and the superiority of the new covenant over the old, and it is my passion and my prayer that each of you, each of us living in this age, will see how incredibly important it is to know Christ, to fix our eyes on him, to know the real Jesus, not this smiley face Jesus of neo-evangelicalism. But even knowing the true Jesus, at times we are still tempted to ignore him, especially in seasons of prosperity, right? When things are going good, we tend to not need him that much, at least our flesh subtly tells us that. Now, if you are engaged in the battle for the truth, if you are actively confronting the culture in your life and you are proclaiming the Gospel, you will experience persecution, and only the most naïve would deny that persecution in our country is mounting like a hungry lion stalking an innocent unsuspecting lamb. The enemy, dear friends, is approaching.

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I want to remind you of this for a moment before we look at the text because the real keyword in Hebrews is "perseverance." Understand Christ so that you will persevere. Our nation has intentionally descended into an abyss of immorality and irrationality consistent with the reprobate mind of Romans 1. In what was called an "international day of protest" after the inauguration of our new President, feminists and lesbians marched on Washington and other cities around the country and, frankly, all over the world, and they were wearing a specially designed pink hat that symbolized things too vulgar to mention in public. These women spewed their incoherent venom at anyone who disagreed with them, especially those who believe in God's design for a family and those who believe abortion is murder. And during that protest, for example in northern Argentina, I read about and saw the picture of feminists in pink masks pretending to commit a very bloody abortion on a woman dressed as the Virgin Mary outside of a cathedral.

So this kind of abhorrent behavior is escalating around the world and, frankly, we are witnessing a global epidemic of lawlessness that is so evil, it is so blasphemous that it can only be described as satanic. The LGBTQ activists march naked and commit lewd acts in public and there is no public outrage. Men who think they are women and women who think they are men attack anyone who does not agree with their depraved delusion and governing officials try to pass legislation to force the public to do so. Our educational systems teach that basically there is no God and certainly deny him as the Creator, and they do all they can to feminize our boys and masculinize our little girls.

A stunning outcome of our recent presidential election has served as a contrast, frankly, of two radically different cultures, different worldviews, all of which, I might add, is necessary to prepare the world for the coming Antichrist. We can now witness the sheer hatred of liberal democratic anarchists who served in the previous administration, a satanic den of evil. That was an administration made up of globalists, socialists, sodomite activists, Islamic sympathizers and angry atheists who hate true Christians, and these people grow more aggressive and more perverted in their policies and their protests with every passing day. Think of the protests that we are seeing on television routinely. It's getting to a point where we're just kind of almost anesthetized to it. We just see it so much. College students shouting down conservatives, racist rioters attacking and killing police, rioting anarchists destroying property and committing acts of violence, and much of this is being funded by New World order globalists such as the Nazi sympathizer, George Soros. Over the last eight years of the Obama administration, we have seen him and his people quietly appoint activist judges whose purpose is to really legislate from the bench and undermine the Constitution of the United States. The anti-God lawlessness that now characterizes our nation is, frankly, a personification of our last President and those who put him in office, a man who has made our country a worldwide embarrassment. Our enemies no longer fear us and our allies no longer trust us, and God is mocked.

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Every day we are bombarded with fake news against the current administration that wants to make America great again, a slogan that is horribly offensive to those who want open borders and a global world. Of course, that's what's going to eventually happen in the age of the antichrist. Fake news is the great weapon, of course, that the media uses to de-legitimize and, frankly, destroy our new President. Civil discourse is now over, spirited debate, that is all gone. Facts no longer mean anything. People live in a way that they are just going to believe, frankly, whatever they want to believe no matter how easily disproven, how irrational.

But folks, the greatest tragedy of all is the mounting apostasy in the evangelical church. Discernment is gone. An understanding of the word of God is gone in ostensibly evangelical churches. Primarily this is because another Gospel is being preached, a man-centered Gospel rather than a God-centered Gospel. And sadly many Christians, I fear, are like the proverbial frog in the kettle that never noticed the slow rise in temperature and eventually died in the boiling water.

Dear friends, these are perilous times. Parents, wake up with your kids. The prophetic Scriptures are clear, before Christ will return, the world will fall under the spell of the antichrist, apostasy is going to increase. We know that. We're seeing that. And along with that, will be an increase in persecution of the saints and certainly even unbelieving Israel. And frankly, what I have just described is just a prelude to these things, a harbinger of even greater anarchy in America. Wickedness and persecution against true believers is going to increase because, friends, evil is like cancer, it will always metastasize. It is never satisfied to come to one place and kind of stop. I am reminded of what Jesus said in Luke 17:22. He said that, "The days will come when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it." We will long to have him physically present with us. Aren't we longing for that now? I know I am but, friends, until we enter into his presence, we've got to keep our eyes fixed on him and in order to do that we have to understand who he is. We have to have an accurate and an intimate understanding of the Lord Jesus Christ, an understanding of the new covenant, an understanding of the Gospel, because the Christian life is hard and it's going to get harder and we are going to be prone to compromise even like those early Jews did. So it is important for us to understand clearly the unsearchable riches of Christ, to know him more fully so that we can enjoy him more richly and serve him more faithfully.

This brings us now to our text in Hebrews 8, the first 13 verses, and this passage is another opportunity for the Spirit of God through his inspired writer to encourage these beleaguered saints as well as bring conviction to those people that were kind of straddling the fence; they were considering Christ but they hadn't made a sincere commitment to

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him. And I would like to look at the text under three simple categories. First, we're going to see Jesus' superiority as the high priest of a new covenant. Secondly, the superiority of the new covenant itself. And then I will close with some practical considerations.

So let me read the text to you. Hebrews 8:1,

1 Now the main point in what has been said is this: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, 2 a minister in the sanctuary and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man. 3 For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices; so it is necessary that this high priest also have something to offer. 4 Now if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer the gifts according to the Law; 5 who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned by God when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for, "See," He says, "That you make all things according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain." 6 But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises. 7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second. 8 For finding fault with them, He says, "Behold, days are coming, says the Lord, when I will effect a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; 9 not like the covenant which I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; for they did not continue in my covenant, and I did not care for them, says the Lord. 10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws into their minds, and I will write them on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 11 and they shall not teach everyone his fellow citizen, and everyone his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for all will know Me, from the least to the greatest of them. 12 For I will be merciful to their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more." 13 When He said, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.

So, first, let us understand what he's saying with respect to Jesus' superiority as the high priest of a new covenant and this is, frankly, because of two things: because of his superior seat and his superior ministry. Notice verse 1 again, "Now the main point in what has been said is this: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right

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hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens." Now, this would have been a stunning statement to the Jews because there was no such thing as a priest taking a seat. Never would they see that. There was no seat in the Holy of Holies. The work of the priest was never finished. But when Jesus gave himself, when he sacrificed himself, he said, "It is finished," then he took his seat, in a manner of speaking. But when Jesus was on earth, they did not understand these things and yet he was the final work of reconciliation for man to be reconciled to a holy God through faith in him in contrast at what the Levitical priests would do and, again, they never sat down. Hebrews 10:11, "Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins."

But also notice where he is seated, it says that he has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. Now, we've got to bridge the cultural divide here. The Jews would have understood this in ways that we cannot. You see, the Jews had their version of a Supreme Court, it was called the Jewish Sanhedrin. It consisted of 70 elders and whenever they judged a particular case, they would have one man that was designated as the presiding judge and on his left would sit a scribe to record the condemnations against the accused, and on the other side, on the right-hand side, would sit another scribe who would record the acquittals. How fitting it is that Jesus sat on the right rather than the left, right? "Because there is therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." But the Jews also understood that anyone seated at the right hand of a monarch enjoyed a position of highest honor and this is precisely what we see with Jesus. Having perfectly satisfied the just wrath of a holy God, he ascended into the most holy place in heaven that was pictured by the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle and later the temple, and there he was seated at the right hand of his Father. That's where he is today, reigning in absolute sovereignty over his creation.

But may I remind you of something else that I think is truly astounding: one day we too will have the privilege of reigning with him. This is incomprehensible to me. For example, in revelation 3:21 we read, "He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne." This is a figurative statement stating that we will share somehow in the privilege and the authority that Christ enjoys as we reign with him. This is just, again, it's just inconceivable. Our high priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, not only offers us fellowship with him, as incredible as that is, but he offers us as well the privilege of somehow reigning with him and can you imagine such a thing? And certainly the Lord's promise is drawn from the vision that Daniel received in Daniel 7:27, there we read, "Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints, the people of the Most High." And Paul also said in 2 Timothy

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2:12, "If we endure, we will also reign with Him." Oh, dear friends, the glory of the redeemed, right? What we have to look forward to.

I find it interesting as well as I was thinking this through, that as far as I'm aware of there are only three chronological occasions mentioned in the New Testament where we see the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, standing rather than being seated. The first time was in an act of sympathy, the second in an act of judgment, and finally in an act of triumph. Let me tell you about them briefly. We know that he first rose to stand as the sympathetic high priest to encourage Stephen as he was about to be stoned by the Jewish leaders. Acts 7:55, "But being full of the Holy Spirit, [Stephen] gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God." We also see him standing later again as the sovereign judge in Revelation 5, 6 and 7, and there John sees, it says, "a Lamb standing as if slain," and he goes on to describe the incredible power and glory of the Lamb and the one who is about to unleash the pre-kingdom judgments upon the nations of the world. And we see him a third time in Revelation 14:1 as the triumphant Lamb standing on Mount Zion with the 144,000 who, it says, "had his name and his Father's name written on their forehead, the firstfruits of the redeemed of Israel," and so forth. So as I think about this, I think, "My, isn't it incredible." Though our precious Savior and Lord is gloriously seated in unassailable sovereignty, we can also see that he can stand as our sympathetic high priest to care for us intimately in our time of need. And we also know that day is coming when he will rise from his throne with his nostrils flared in wrath as he prepares to descend upon the nations of the world in righteous indignation and take back what is rightfully his. The prophet Zechariah tells us that in that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives. So Jesus Christ is the superior high priest because of his superior seat and because of his superior ministry.

Notice, verse 2, "a minister in the sanctuary and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man." The true tabernacle here refers to the real, the authentic, the eternal heavenly tabernacle of which the earthly tabernacle and, frankly, even the temple, were merely symbols, shadows of the real thing. So he's telling them this, "Folks, Christ ministers in the infinitely superior sanctuary. Not the ancient tabernacle in the wilderness that was made of animal skins and had to be taken up and torn down and moved in certain ways. Not even ministering in the beautiful Herodian temple of your day."

Now, some might ask, "Well, in what ways does Christ currently minister? I thought his work was finished on the cross?" Well, yes it was. The blood sacrifice of his atoning work was finished. It's over with. But remember, the priests not only made blood sacrifices for the cleansing of sins for themselves and for the people, but also bloodless gift sacrifices, also called meal offerings, to express the praise and the thanksgiving and the personal dedication that the people had to the Lord. Now, no Israelite could ever offer

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these things on their own. Those things had to be administered by a priest and the same is true today. No one can come to the Father except through the Son, the high priest, the Lord Jesus Christ. And whether we come to him in repentance seeking forgiveness of sin or, frankly, even come to him to offer gifts of praise and thanksgiving or a personal commitment, we do it all through Christ, our great high priest. Ephesians 5:20, we are to "always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father." Colossians 3:17, "Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father."

Beloved, we do nothing on our own to bring honor to our glorious God. It is all through Christ, all because of him and his power. He is the one that has passed into the heavenly Holy of Holies and is now seated in the immediate immaterial presence of the living God. And the only reason we have access into the presence of God is because we are united to Christ, the one who continues to minister on our behalf, the one who continues to intercede for us and bring all of our worship, all of our praise to him, and that's why we preach Christ.

But while he was on earth, he never served as a priest in the temple. Do you ever think about that? If he's our great high priest, why wasn't he serving in the temple? Well, it was because he was of the order of Melchizedek, not the order of Aaron. He was not a priest of the old covenant, he's a priest of the new covenant. That's what he says here in verse 4, "Now if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer the gifts according to the Law," that is, the law of Moses, "who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned by God when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for, 'See,' He says, 'that you make all things according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain.'" Evidently, God gave Moses a prophetic vision of a pattern structure that is described in Exodus 26. "But," verse 6, "now He," referring to Christ, "has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises." So Jesus' earthly ministry, we see here, served only as a shadow and a copy of his current priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary and also the ministry of the Levitical priests served as just a preview of the atoning work of Christ.

So the point that the author is making here is, "Dear friends of Calvary Bible Church in Jerusalem, you Hebrew believers here, dear friends, why be satisfied with a copy when you can have the real thing?" Imagine, for example, a mother giving birth to a baby but then preferring to play with her baby dolls that she had when she was a child. It would be absurd. Those things just pictured what she has now in real life. And the author is saying, "Why be content with the old sacrifices, the old priesthood that were only shadows?" I mean, what an excellent illustration, a shadow has no material essence in itself, it only

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proves the existence of something else that is real. By the way, the reason why they were deceived with all of this is because they are spiritually dead. They needed to be born again through faith in Christ and also because Satan blinds unbelievers like perhaps some of you. Isn't that what Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 4? The "gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world," referring to Satan, "has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." And of course, they were also so afraid of persecution, so afraid of their culture, that they just would rather have the copy and the shadow than the real thing. What a tragedy.

So the argument is this: Jesus is superior to the Levitical priests of the old covenant because he is seated in a superior sanctuary, he is performing a superior ministry but he also mediates a superior, a better covenant. Notice verse 6, "But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises." Now, a mediator, of course, is one who represents two parties and is trying to bring them together and we see here that Christ, then, is the mediator of a better covenant which has been enacted on better promises, and isn't it wonderful to know that we serve a God who never breaks his promises, unlike us? And the spiritual and material promises that God has made in the new covenant are glorious beyond measure. We read a little bit of that earlier on in Ezekiel 36 this morning.

So we move from Jesus' superiority as the high priest of a new covenant but, secondly, he speaks of the superiority of the new covenant itself. Notice verse 7, "For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second. For finding fault with them, He says," and now he's going to give almost a direct quote from Jeremiah 31, "Behold, days are coming, says the Lord, when I will effect a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah." By the way, we again read the counterpart of that in Ezekiel 36 a little bit ago. Now, I want you to notice two things here: first of all, he's telling them that, "Your own Scriptures told you that this was coming. Your own Scriptures told you about a new covenant so why would this surprise you?"

But I want you to also notice that this new covenant was made with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, it was not made with the church. He gave both the old and the new covenant to his chosen people, Israel. Now, to be sure, Gentiles, the church, is the recipient of new covenant blessings and we have talked about this before. Just briefly, Paul describes Israel in Romans 11:16 through 24 as the branches from a cultivated olive tree, some of which have now been broken off for the present time due to the hardening of the heart, a temporary hardening of the heart, and that the Gentile church is the wild olive branches that have been grafted into the rich root of Abrahamic covenantal

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blessings. So indeed, the church shares in the promises with Israel. It never takes her place as a nation as Romans 9, 10 and 11 make clear. And this becomes even more clear when you examine the promises of the new covenant in Jeremiah, even beginning in chapter 30 going through 33, and in Ezekiel 36 as well, the covenant that describes both the physical blessings associated with Israel's restoration and the promises of a new heart that serve as the basis for receiving those physical blessings in the promised millennial kingdom. And this grieves me because I have some very dear Jewish friends who forfeit the grace of God in the new covenant because they reject the Messiah just like many of the people in the first century, but what a blessing to know that God is going to remain faithful to his promise. One day when the Messiah returns, we are told in Romans 11:26, "all Israel will be saved." That remnant will be saved.

So the new covenant was made with the house of Israel, the house of Judah, not the church, and when Gentiles are saved, they become the spiritual descendants of Abraham because, by God's grace, they obeyed the single requirement of the new covenant which is faith in Christ. Paul made this clear, for example, in Galatians 3, beginning in verse 7, "Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham. The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, 'All the nations will be blessed in you.'" And I am so thankful that that is true, aren't you? So the author of Hebrews continues to remind the readers here of the new covenant that God had promised them, that they should have been expecting.

He goes on in verse 9, "It's not like the covenant which I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; for they did not continue in My covenant, and I did not care for them, says the Lord." And of course, we know that they rebelled against God and therefore they forfeited his blessings under the old covenant law, but in the new covenant, he is going to write his law on their hearts. He does that with all that he saves.

Verse 10, "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws into their minds, and I will write them on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be My people." Dear friends, this speaks of the miracle of regeneration, of being born again, that supernatural instantaneous impartation of spiritual life into the spiritually dead, the corpse that we were before we came to Christ. What a magnificent truth.

Verse 11, "And they shall not teach everyone his fellow citizen, and everyone his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for all will know Me, from the least to the greatest of them." And what a blessing it is to have the Holy Spirit transform us by his power and dwell

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# Blessings of the New Covenant – Part 1

By David Harrell

**Bible Text:** Hebrews 8:1-3  
**Preached on:** Sunday, March 19, 2017

within us, and because of that transformation, little by little he is conforming us into the likeness of Christ. The word of God says that he sanctifies us, he instructs us, he empowers us for service, he seals us into the day of redemption and so forth.

Back to the text, verse 12, "For I will be merciful to their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more." What a magnificent promise of God's grace and mercy.

Verse 13, "When He said, 'A new covenant,' He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear." So he's saying this to his dear Jewish people, "Friends, don't substitute the shadow for reality. The old covenant is obsolete. God was using it to point to the new." This is the heart of his argument, "Therefore persevere in the faith. Understand who Christ is. Don't fall back into Judaism."

Now, let me close this morning with two very practical considerations that I would like for you to apply to your life, in other words, this is what God requires of you given these truths. There would be many things but I want to point out just two. The first thing that I would encourage you to do is root out compromise in your life. I mean, folks, think about this: in light of all that God has done for us, in light of his mercy, given all that Christ has done on our behalf, we need to look for those areas in our life where we are compromising. And by the way, if you don't see it, pray that the Spirit of God will make it real to you. And if you still don't see it, come and see me, and after I share all of the ways I see it in my life, you'll begin to see it in yours as well because, folks, it's just part of our fallen flesh. We need to deal with it. Look for those things that dishonor God, those things that are not consistent with his righteous character. Root out those things. Pull them up by the roots.

You know, the Christian life is hard in this culture and persecution is mounting and you want to ask yourself, "Where am I seeking refuge, in Christ or in compromise?" Now, you may not be falling back into Judaism but it's really easy for us in the era in which we live to fall back into kind of a Christ-less cultural Christianity that is so pervasive today where you kind of fit into the world, where you feel comfortable with the world, where you, frankly, prefer fellowship with the world more than you do with Christ because when it is all said and done, you love your sin more than you love Christ. And when you see those areas of compromise, go to the Lord in genuine repentance knowing that he has paid your sins in full. I mean, this is the whole point of all of this, that he lives forever to intercede for you. He takes you directly into the presence of the Most High God.

By the way, let me pause for just a moment there. That is such an amazing statement we take for granted. I mean, think about it: the tabernacle and the temple always

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communicated to the people that, "Yes, I am your God and I am here in your presence." All that was so comforting but it also said, "Don't get too close. You'd better stay back. Only the high priest one time a year for just a few minutes in the Holy of Holies, that's it." But, folks, that's all over. Christ has paid the sacrifice. We have access into the presence of God. We need to take advantage of that opportunity every time we pray knowing that the Lord Jesus is taking us right there into the presence of the Most High. So ask him to grant you power and help to persevere.

The second thing I would encourage you to do is celebrate your sanctification. I marvel at this promise, "I will put My laws into their minds and I will write them on their hearts." Do you realize what this means?

Let me pause for second. Some of you are not going to like what I'm about to say. I didn't like it when I thought it, okay? It means you are never ever a helpless victim of life dominating sin so get rid of your victim's badge. Throw it away. You know what it is, that badge you shine up all the time where it's everybody else's fault and not yours; where you are quick to let everyone know what a raw deal you've gotten in life. Many times when I counsel with people, they will go on for hours describing all the terrible things that have happened in their life and all the bad people that have done all of these terrible things but they can't spend 30 seconds describing the glories of Christ and what he has done for them. It's true, some people have experienced some terrible things and we want to be sympathetic to that, and many of those ancient Jews experienced horrific things, the apostles did but what did the apostles do, for example, did they moan and groan and whine and complain? No, they celebrated the Gospel and they gave their lives for Christ. They were warriors, they weren't whiners. Get rid of your badge, folks. Look what Christ has done.

You know, if you're hurting and you're sitting in a wheelchair and you can't walk, I will be the first one to push you, but if you are malingering, the worst thing in the world I could do is push you because the longer you are pushed, the more your muscles will atrophy and you won't be able to walk and, frankly, we've got an entire entitlement culture that is that way today and as Christians we can be that way. "Oh, I've just got all these terrible things," and so we just need to come and push you along. No. No. No. No. I will stand in front of you and give you my hand and help you but you're going to have to do something on your own. You're going to have to truly trust in Christ, walk by the Spirit and watch what he will do.

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It's interesting, isn't it, if you think about it: by the power of the Spirit he has changed us from the inside out, made us a new creation. He gave us all the resources that we need to love Christ, to serve Christ. He has granted unto us all things pertaining to life and godliness. In the old covenant, none of that was there. You had no power to change. You were toast. You were just going to be a slave to your sin, just keep offering the sacrifice, but that's all gone.

And folks, if you claim Christ and you find yourself in some life-dominating sin, it's either because your profession is phony or it's because you were deliberately and defiantly choosing to walk by the flesh rather than by the Spirit. And I love you all, but some of you are seriously messed up. You know who you are. Arrogant. Self-promoting. Self-absorbed. Angry. Immoral. Lazy. Unforgiving. The list could go on. Your marriage is a disaster. Your kids are undisciplined. You are miserable, your spouse is miserable, your kids are miserable. Everybody that knows you gets miserable when they're around you. There's something wrong. You have no private devotion to God, no personal piety, no real love for Christ, no real love or appetite for his word or for his people. You just live for yourself and you complain about how bad things are. You come to the church, you hear magnificent truths preached and taught and small groups, all of these things, and you leave unchanged. All I can tell you is it's going to get worse unless you get serious about rooting compromise out of your life and get serious about celebrating your sanctification and tapping into the power, the resources that you have through the Holy Spirit. This is all part of the new covenant, dear friends. Celebrate your sanctification made available by the new covenant by your great high priest, the Lord Jesus Christ. Don't dishonor him. Keep your eyes fixed on him and he will cause you to persevere, he will cause you to grow, he will give you power, he will give you joy until we one day see him face-to-face. I can't wait for that to happen, can you?

Let's pray together.

*Father, thank you for these eternal truths. May they bear much fruit in our lives to the praise of your glory. I ask in Jesus' name. Amen.*

We pray you've been edified by this presentation. You've been listening to Pastor, Bible Teacher and Author, Dr. David Harrell. For more information or for other messages from Dr. Harrell, please visit the Olive Tree Christian Resources website at [otcr.org](http://otcr.org).

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