

The Shadow Is Replaced

ONCE UPON A TIME THERE LIVED A VAIN EMPEROR. His only worry in life was to dress in elegant clothes. He changed clothes almost every hour and loved to show them to his people. Word of the Emperor's "refined" habits spread over his kingdom and beyond. Two scoundrels who had heard of the Emperor's vanity decided to take advantage of it. They introduced themselves at the gates of the palace with a scheme in mind. "We are two very good tailors and after many years of research we have invented an extraordinary method to weave a cloth so light and fine that it looks invisible. As a matter of fact, it is invisible to anyone who is too stupid and incompetent to appreciate its quality." Finally, the two men were allowed to meet the emperor, "Besides being invisible, your Highness, this cloth will be woven in colors and patterns created especially for you." The emperor gave the two men a bag of gold coins in exchange for their promise to begin working on the fabric immediately. The two men finally finished and presented the new clothes to the emperor, who was encouraged to show them to his subjects. Of course he was naked, but everyone said, loudly enough for the others to hear: "Look at the Emperor's new clothes. They're beautiful!" "And the colors! I have never seen anything like it in my life." They all tried to conceal their disappointment at not being able to see the clothes, and were unwilling to admit their own stupidity and incompetence. A child, however, who had no important job and could only see things as his eyes showed them to him, went up to the carriage. "The Emperor is naked," he said.

SELF DECEPTION. The above story is an old fairy tale called "The Emperor's New Clothes." It was not written to illustrate the problem we find in the book of Hebrews. But it illustrates what the men and women to whom Hebrews was written thought they had done. They had left Judaism for Jesus and found trials, conflicts, and difficulties. They did not realize, as we do not usually realize, that when there is a battle, trouble is just around the corner. When they looked back, they thought they had left Judaism for nothing. They thought they were now "wearing spiritually invisible clothes." They were wondering if they had made a mistake of leaving their old, "real clothes" behind.

So the Holy Spirit has explained that Jesus is better than the angels who in some way helped give the law to Moses (Acts 7:53; Gal. 3:19; Heb. 2:2). The Holy Spirit has shown them that Jesus was more

faithful than Moses who was the mediator of the Old Covenant - the Law. (Gal. 3:18-19; Heb. 3:1-6). Jesus is also better than earthly priests since He a priest after the order of Melchizedek, and lives forever. The Holy Spirit has laid the foundation and is ready for the shocking, unbelievable conclusion.

MAIN POINT. The reason the first seven chapters of Hebrews were written - the main point - is now given.

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, a minister in the sanctuary, and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man. (NASB) Heb. 8:1-2.

**A SHADOW IS NOT
THE REAL THING**



The main point is that Jesus is not just a man who lived and died, but He is our high priest and He sits at the right hand

of God the Father in heaven. The Hebrew expression “heavens” envisioned three heavens: our atmosphere, outer space, and then heaven itself. That is where Jesus serves as our high priest. He is also a minister! He ministers in a heavenly sanctuary - the true tabernacle, not an earthly one like the ones made with human hands, but one made without hands by God.

Jesus is a minister. The ministers in Israel were priests. They offered sacrifices for sin and thanksgivings. What is Jesus’ ministry? The Holy Spirit told us in Heb. 7:27 that he offered Himself as a sacrifice for sins.

... 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. (NASB) Heb. 7:27

THE SHADOW. But if Jesus had still been on earth He would not have been a minister or a high priest, since the old Mosaic Law - the Old Covenant - was still in place. The old Law, even though it is only a copy, even though it is only a shadow, was still in force. But not for long. History tells us that the Mosaic law, along with the sacrifices and temple worship, disappeared with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. God ended it, using His tool - the army of the Roman Empire! The Mosaic law was only a shadow of the real thing.

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; 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.” (NASB) Heb. 8:4-5

The last portion of this passage is amazing. It tells us that there is a tabernacle in heaven. The Holy Spirit proved this by quoting Exodus 25:40. The literal Hebrew of the passage

says, that “which you are caused to see.” Moses was shown a copy on Mt. Sinai and was instructed to make a tabernacle similar to it.

HE IS BETTER. So Jesus is a better minister, who offered a better sacrifice, and has a better ministry in a better place.

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. (NASB) Heb. 8:6

Wow, Hebrews is full of many “betters.” This is the reason these first seven-plus chapters of Hebrews were written! In the first chapter of Hebrews, the Holy Spirit warned us to listen to Jesus. The angels had helped give the law. But Jesus is better than those who gave the law - the angels. Jesus is better than faithful Moses who was the mediator of the Law. Jesus is better than any earthly high priest of the Mosaic Law. Jesus is a better minister of a better covenant with a better promise in a better tabernacle. Jesus is better and better and better! And the Mosaic Law - the old covenant - cannot match Him!

OLD COVENANT. The old covenant was faulty - it was imperfect. The Jews believed that it was perfect and that it would never go away. No wonder the readers of Hebrews thought they were wearing “invisible clothes.” There was no ridicule in Judaism like that received when they

came to Jesus. They must have thought “Who needs this?” But they had sinful priests, who offered inferior sacrifices, who served a shadow - not the real thing - and had to endlessly offer sacrifices. The old covenant was faulty.

The Mosaic Law is called the first covenant, or old covenant. It was established in Exodus 19:5-6 when God said,

Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ (NASB) Ex. 19:5-6



This covenant was conditional; that is, it depended on how they lived and what they did - their obedience. If they were not obedient, then they would not be God's own people. God never promised to be their God in this covenant. It was one sided!

As we know, the people of Israel, including their leaders, did not obey. They did not even believe Him in the wilderness (Heb. 3:1-4:14). Most of the kings of Israel did not love God as they should have. We find that King Solomon started off well; but near the end of his life, he started loving other gods in addition to God.

... his heart was not wholly devoted to the LORD his God
(NASB) 1 Kings 11:4

As a result, the nation of Israel was divided into two kingdoms: the Kingdom of Israel and the Kingdom of Judah (1 Kings 11:1-4, 9-11; 12:16-24). The kings of these two kingdoms did not learn from King Solomon's error. Most of them were wicked or evil kings whose hearts were not completely "devoted to the LORD." Did you notice their problem was not that they did not love the Lord, but that they did not love Him completely! So the prophet Jeremiah gave them a warning from the Lord,

They have turned back to the iniquities of their ancestors who refused to hear My words, and they have gone after other gods to serve them; the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken My covenant which I made with their fathers." Therefore thus says the LORD, "Behold I am bringing disaster on them which they will not be able to escape; though they will cry to Me, yet I will not listen to them. (NASB) Jer. 11:10-11

NEW COVENANT. The old covenant - Mosaic Law - depended on their obedience. If they did not obey, God

would bring disaster on them.

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, "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; 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. (NASB) Heb. 8:7-9

This is a quote from Jeremiah 31:31-32. Did you notice the words "new covenant" in the first verse? So God decided long ago to make a new one. The old one did not work.



"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 UPON THEIR HEARTS. AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. "AND THEY SHALL NOT TEACH EVERYONE HIS FELLOW CITIZEN, AND EVERYONE HIS BROTHER, SAYING, 'KNOW THE LORD,' FOR ALL SHALL KNOW ME, FROM THE LEAST TO THE GREATEST OF THEM. "FOR I WILL BE MERCIFUL TO THEIR INIQUITIES, AND I WILL REMEMBER THEIR SINS NO MORE." (NASB) Heb. 8:10-12

This is Jeremiah 31:33-34 - the promise of a new covenant. Notice all of the "I will" statements. There are no conditional statements here. God does not require that we do anything. He does it all. He will put the Holy Spirit in our hearts. That is how His law is written in our minds, and on

our hearts. This is the first covenant or promise that He will be the Christians' God and we will be His people.

CONCLUSION. Those who believe that one can lose his or her salvation have missed the point of the new covenant. The old covenant depended on a person's behavior, but not the new one. Under the old covenant a person lost favor with God; but not with the new one, because it all depends on Him. God was unhappy with the Old Covenant because the men and women were not obedient and He had warned them of the consequences. But that is not true of the new

one. The old covenant of "I had better not make a mistake" is gone and a new one where God says "I will" is here. It does not depend on me.

When He said, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear. (NASB) Heb. 8:13

The old is gone and the new is here. My salvation no longer depends on my efforts but on Jesus' death for my sins and return to life. Praise God!