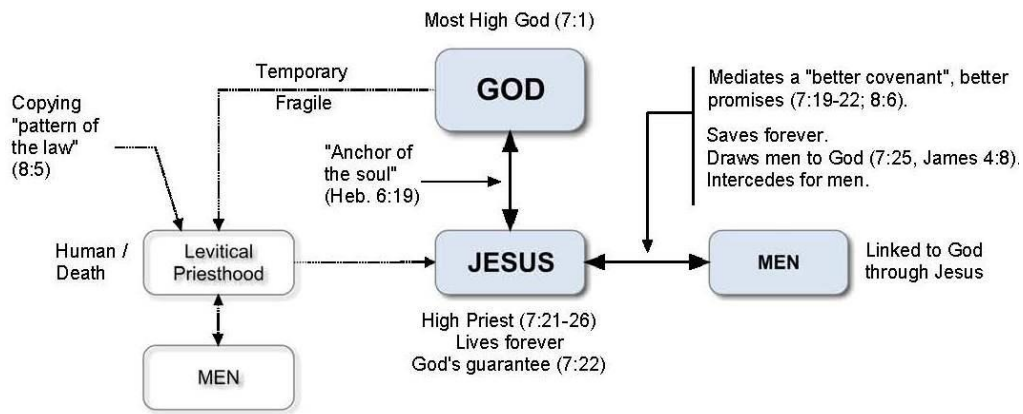


Warm-up

If you are a parent, what is ONE thing that you hope your son or daughter never forgets?

- ▶ *Do you invest your time in relationships with the goal of making a difference in another's life?*

Hebrews chapter 7 explained why God's "Plan A", even with Melchizedek and the Levitical priesthood, was not able to save us. It taught us that Jesus *"is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him"* (7:25). With this being clear it is now fitting to talk about how He will help us live a pure life as His children. *He promised!*



Linked to God Through Jesus

The Bottom Line (vs. 1-2)

"Now the main point in what has been said is this..." (8:1)

Have you ever just wanted to "cut to the chase" and know the essence of something important? It seems that the writer of Hebrews sensed this with his readers after his discourse in chapter 7. So, here is it: "Plan A" failed due to "operator error" (man); the priest was human and frail. So God created "Plan B" (B is for better), with Jesus seated at His right hand, having offered one sacrifice forever.

I think that we subconsciously try to make this more complicated than God did. He replaced in it's entirely "Plan A" and set in place a simple plan, free to all who will accept it on His terms.

Are you still trying to earn God's favor? If you believe in Jesus Christ as your Savior, are you living by grace rather than by human effort? I like the way Bill Tell of the Navigators puts it: "There is nothing you can do that will make God love you less, and there is nothing that you can do that will make God love you more." Remember, *"while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly"* (Rom. 5:6). Indeed, *"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; ⁹ not as a result of works, so that no one may boast."* (Eph. 2:8-9).

- ▶ *God made the "bottom line" simple and powerful. Trust in Jesus and you will be saved! (Rom. 10:9)*

Without Bounds (vs. 3-5)

"Now if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all..." (8:4)

When I'm under pressure to accomplish something difficult I sometimes have to admit that it is beyond my human ability. I also recognize that I must summon all the ability, all the truth and wisdom I possess in an effort to succeed. When I recognize my limits I must look elsewhere for help. God recognized that man would not be able to please Him without help. Enter Jesus, who lives forever and is not limited by the Law of Moses as the priests were. Jesus has a higher calling.

Notice that before Christ we were limited to copying the pattern of the law. Now, we have a direct connection with god through Jesus! With the freedom we have in Christ, we can strive to please Him (Col. 1:10) and walk according to His ways, His pattern (Phil. 3:16).

► “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.” (Rom. 8:2)

Caution: It’s easy to “serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things” (v. 5), inserting our human thoughts and following our plan verses God’s. No one can walk with God on their own terms! Coming to Christ means complete surrender to Him, on His terms. At the same time, we MUST walk according to the pattern God gave us in Christ. And then our lives must become the pattern of godly living that others can follow (see Phil. 3:17).

Holding Hands (v. 9)

“...I took them by the hand to lead them...”

When my kids were small I insisted that they hold my hand when we crossed a busy street, or when they did not know which way to go. Exodus 19 tells about God leading His people out of Egypt, lifting them up and bringing them with Him (“...I bore you on eagles’ wings, and brought you to Myself”). Otherwise they would not have come with Him, nor gone where He wanted them to go. He urged Moses to instruct them to obey and follow the Lord.

Is God extending His hand to you today, to protect you from danger or to lead you in His direction? Sometimes He will actually pick us up, cancel our present plan, and take us somewhere else. “The mind of man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps” (Prov. 16:9). What will you do when God intervenes in your life?

“I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants.” (Dt. 30:19)

► Set God before you today, holding His right hand (see Ps. 16:8). Be willing to trust Him to guide you.

Better Promises (Chapter 8)

“...He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises.” (v. 6)

Peter writes about “God’s magnificent, precious promises” (2 Peter 1:3-4). The writer of Hebrews says that Jesus obtained a “more excellent ministry” (8:6). God’s “Plan B” solved the problem of our human limitation, and established some truly magnificent promises for believers. Let’s list the six given in chapter 8.

v. 1	He’s there for you.	He sits next to God and is always praying for us, ready to help us.
v. 2	He speaks for you and helps you.	He “always intercedes for us” (Rom. 8:34).
v. 4	He’s not limited or bound by human things.	What’s impossible for man is possible for God. (Matt. 19:26)
v. 6	He presents us to the Father; He’s our advocate.	He actually represents our best interests to God.
v. 10	He gave us / put into our mind His laws, and also plants them in our heart.	We are God’s people when our mind and heart are His.
v. 12	He forgives my sin.	It’s God’ free gift to all who believe! (Eph. 2:8)

IOS Update (v. 10)

“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.”

Sometimes I get irritated when Apple insists that I accept an upgrade to my iPhone operating system, since it sometimes fouls up the way I’m accustomed to doing things. I feel like saying, “Leave well enough alone!” God, however, knew that our way of doing things would result in disaster, so he orchestrated a major re-boot! As a result we now operate with Holy Spirit 1.1, with full access to His infinite wisdom and knowledge through Christ (Col. 2:3)!

► Does your software require an upgrade? If so visit the God-tunes store!

Group Discussion

1. What is the “bottom line” in your relationship with Jesus Christ? _____
2. Share how your “direct connection” with God through Jesus has freed you and increased your potential. (vs. 3-5).
3. Which of God’s “better promises” is especially important to you today? (Chapter 8)