

BRIARCLIFF CHURCH

Small Group Study Guide: Hebrews

Week of October 19 (Week 7)

Hebrews: Copy and Shadow (8:1-13)



CHAPTER 8 SUMMARY

Hebrews 8 presents to the readers that “In Jesus we have a High Priest who has offered an effective sacrifice for sin. In contrast with earthly priests, Jesus demonstrated effective service and provided a better covenant or agreement with God. God instituted the new covenant because the old was ineffective. The new covenant promised a new nature to obey God’s law, a new knowledge of God, and the forgiveness of sin. The ineffectiveness of the old covenant rendered it useless, fit only to decay and disappear.” (Thomas D. Lea, *Hebrews & James*, Holman New Testament Commentary. 150).

SERMON DISCUSSION

Topic:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

OBSERVING AND APPLYING THE TEXT

In the previous chapters, the writer has already discussed at some length about Christ as high priest, it might be wondered what is still left to be expounded. But so far, he has not explained how our high priest carries out his duties.

1. How does the writer of Hebrews emphasize the superiority of Jesus' ministry over the earthly priests in 8:1–3?
2. The Jews regarded the tabernacle (and later the temple) as the place where heaven touched earth, where God met with man. What do you think the author wanted his hearers to understand about the tabernacle as it relates to heaven (8:2–6)?

3. How do the concepts of the earthly sanctuary and the heavenly sanctuary contrast in this chapter?
4. How would the knowledge of Jesus being our High Priest in heaven affect your daily life decisions?
5. What are some examples of following the shadow instead of the ultimate reality?

Reflection: "The concept of shadow and reality is borrowed from Greek philosophy, which held that visible things of this earth are mere shadows or copies of the true realities that exist on the heavenly plane. This worldview was quite influential in the Hellenistic world, and Hebrews draws upon it to convey that the work of the Levitical priesthood foreshadowed the priestly work of Jesus Christ that is of ultimate significance" (Frances T. Gench, *Hebrews and James*. 52).

6. How does the prophecy of Jeremiah 31:31–34 (as quoted in 8:8–12) reinforce the author's message of that which was incomplete or imperfect and that which is better? How does Jeremiah say the new covenant will be better than the old one?
7. How can the promise of the New Covenant encourage you in your current life circumstances?
8. What aspect of God's character has Hebrews 8 shown you more clearly?

9. How can understanding the New Covenant influence your interactions with others?
10. If the New Covenant involves God's laws being written in our hearts and minds, what does that mean for our personal accountability to God?
11. How can the promise of everyone knowing God in the New Covenant inspire you to share your faith with others?

Reflection: "It is apparent from the quotation (Jer. 31:31–34) that the new and better covenant differs from the old covenant in two respects. First, Jeremiah announces that it is an interior covenant, one that involves our innermost being.... Second, Jeremiah announces that under the new covenant, sins are effectively forgiven ...Though the prophet Jeremiah did not specify how the new covenant was to be established, and forgiveness of sins effected, the author of Hebrews discerns a clear connection between the new covenant and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ." (Gench, 54).

PRAYER

PRAYER GUIDE

October 21-24, 2025

Read Hebrews 8

Monday: 8:8–9 “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah ... not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. For they did not continue in my covenant, and so I showed no concern for them, declares the Lord. Thank God for his faithfulness that never ends. Despite our failure, he does not forsake us.

Tuesday 8:10a “For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts.” Ask God that you will daily experience the new covenant that provides inward change—a new sense of intimacy with God where he is known as Father (Abba). Allow God’s laws to be written on your heart and mind, guiding your daily actions and decisions.

Wednesday: 8:10b “And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Thank God today for the promise of giving himself to us—“I will be their God,” and taking us to himself—“they shall be my people.” Pray that others—family and friends—may experience this close relationship with God.

Thursday: 8:11 “And they shall not teach, each one his neighbor and each one his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest.” God has not only given his word to us but also the Holy Spirit to help us know him better each day. Do you daily desire to know God and his truth better?

Friday: 8:12 “For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.” Regularly seek God’s forgiveness and transformation, knowing that He remembers your sins no more. As you ponder God’s mercy upon you, search your heart to see if you have been merciful to others.