

HEBREWS

“NO TURNING BACK”

Hebrews Lesson 12

Ice Breaker: If someone invented a car that would never brake and would work perfectly forever, would you trade in your old car for it? Why might someone choose to hang on to his or her old car?

INTRO: When something works right, there is really no need to improve or replace it. However, Judaism never really worked right... it's priesthood was weak, flawed and prone to turn over, and it's rules and requirements never really brought people close to God. It needed to be replaced. In this passage the writer of Hebrews explains why Jesus and His Kingdom are the perfect “trade up” they had been waiting for.

READ: Hebrews 7:11-8:5

11 If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the law was given to the people), why was there still need for another priest to come—one in the order of Melchizedek, not in the order of Aaron? 12 For when there is a change of the priesthood, there must also be a change of the law. 13 He of whom these things are said belonged to a different tribe, and no one from that tribe has ever served at the altar. 14 For it is clear that our Lord descended from Judah, and in regard to that tribe Moses said nothing about priests. 15 And what we have said is even more clear if another priest like Melchizedek appears, 16 one who has become a priest not on the basis of a regulation as to his ancestry but on the basis of the power of an indestructible life. 17 For it is declared: “You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.”

18 The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless 19 (for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God.

20 And it was not without an oath! Others became priests without any oath, 21 but he became a priest with an oath when God said to him: “The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: ‘You are a priest forever.’” 22 Because of this oath, Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.

23 Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; 24 but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. 25 Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.

26 Such a high priest meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. 27 Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself. 28 For the law appoints as high priests men who are weak; but the oath, which came after the law, appointed the Son, who has been made perfect forever.

8:1 The point of what we are saying is this: We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, 2 and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by man.

*3 Every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices, and so it was necessary for this one also to have something to offer. 4 If he were on earth, he would not be a priest, for there are already men who offer the gifts prescribed by the law. 5 **They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: "See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain."** 6 But the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, and it is founded on better promises.*

Q: According to verse 11, the Law and the priesthood didn't work right. What does this verse say was wrong with their religion?

- Like an unreliable car, you couldn't count on it to get you where you were going... we needed to get to perfection!
 - Matt. 5:48 **"Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."**
- The law only taught us what sin was, but it couldn't make us righteous.
 - Ro. 3:20 **"Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin."**

Q: Verse 12 tells us that with Jesus as our new High Priest, we also get a new law. What do verses 18 and 19 say was the difference between the old law and the new one?

- The old law was "weak and useless"... "it made nothing perfect."
- The new law, which is a "better hope", allows us to "draw near to God."
- God traded off the "old Junker" of following rules to give us something better, something that would get us where we needed to go!
 - Rom. 8:1-3 **"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, 2 because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering..."**
 - A place where we aren't condemned (vs. 1)
 - A place where we are free from the law of sin and death (vs.2)
 - A place where we live by the law of the Spirit of Life (vs. 3)

Q: What does it mean in vs. 8:1-2 that our high priest has "sat down at the right hand of the throne of Majesty in heaven"?

- **Heb. 10:11-14** **"Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. 12 But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God. 13 Since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool, 14 because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy."**
- Jesus finished the job that the law could never do... he took away our sins, made us perfect, and now He can sit down and rest.
- It also means He is still in the Holy of Holies, in the presence of God, representing us as our High Priest.

- There were no windows or candles in the Holy of Holies. The only light source came from the presence of God.
 - 1John 1:7 *“But **if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.**”*

Q: Heb. 10:14 says the job of making us perfect for God has been done... now we are being made holy. What does it mean that you are being made holy?

- The word translated as “holy” is *hagiazō*; which means to purify or consecrate.
- Jesus is transforming us to be about one thing... being obedient and pleasing to God... just like He is! He is making us perfect!
- This is something that could never be done by through practicing religion or trying to keep a list rules.
 - We have to choose which we will follow: A list of rules or Jesus!

Q: According to Heb. 8:5, Moses built the tabernacle following a pattern God gave him. Why do you think it had to be built exactly according to the pattern?

- The “copy and shadow” gave people an idea what the real thing in Heaven was like.

Q: The tabernacle was the forerunner of the temple, which was supposed to serve the same purpose. 1 Cor. 6:19 says your body is the temple now. What are the implications?

- 1 Cor. 6:19 *“Do you not know that **your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own;...”**”*
 - God has a legitimate claim to your body and what you do with it.
 - How you live your life in your body give people an idea of what life in Heaven (or the Kingdom of God) is like.
 - Your life is always under construction and God has given you a pattern to follow... Jesus!

APPLICATION ASSIGNMENT: *Answer the following questions as best you can, then get with your discipler/discipleship group and discuss your answers.*

1. How would you explain the difference between trying to be perfect (following the rules) and trying to be holy (following Jesus)?
 - a. Which do you tend to follow more: Rules or Jesus?
2. How is Jesus making you holy?
 - a. What things has He caused to stop doing?
 - b. What things has He caused you to start doing?
3. Since your body serves as God’s temple today, how closely are you building your life according to the pattern God has given you?
 - a. What conclusions about the Kingdom of God could people make by looking at your life?