

Hebrews Lesson 9, Handout #1: Chapter 8

From chapter 8:1 to 10:18 the inspired writer of Hebrews will make his argument for both the superiority of the priesthood of Jesus Christ and the New Covenant by presenting a series of contrasts:

- Contrasting the heavenly and the earthly Sanctuaries
- Contrasting the Old and the New Covenants
- Contrasting the old priesthood's repeated sacrifices and Christ's one eternal sacrifice

His focus will be the superiority of God's sworn oath [Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 6:13-17] over the old Law:

❖ **The old Law** established a priesthood full of human weaknesses offering repeated imperfect sacrifices and was established on an old covenant offering only temporal promises.

❖ **The sworn oath** of the New Covenant establishes a divine Son who serves as a sinless priest-king offering one perfect and complete sacrifice and a new covenant established on eternal promises.

| The Old Covenant Priesthood contrasted with the New Covenant High Priest in Hebrews chapters 5-8 | |
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| Sons of Levi | God the Son |
| Service in the earthly "shadow" sanctuary | Service in the true heavenly sanctuary |
| Based on heredity | Based on divine Sonship and an unchangeable oath [Psalm 110:4] |
| Daily Sacrifices to atone for the debt of sin [the daily sacrifice of Exodus 29:38-42] | One perfect sacrifice offered in atonement and as a "surety" or guarantee for the debt of sin |
| Sacrifices offered for emselves (sinners) | One sacrifice offered of Himself (sinless) |
| Sacrifices only for the sins of Israel | One sacrifice for all men |
| Priesthood limited time of service | Eternal service |
| Temporal blessings | Eternal blessings |
| Death ended service | Death began service |

| EARTHLY SANCTUARY | HEAVENLY SANCTUARY |
|---|---|
| Made with human hands | Created by God |
| A copy and shadow of the heavenly reality | The true eternal sanctuary |
| Served by many mortal priests offering continual sacrifices | Served by one eternal priest offering one perfect sacrifice |

Hebrews Lesson 9, Handout #2

Unity of belief is the essence of the Church: *For it is through Christ's Catholic Church alone, which is the universal help toward salvation, that the fullness of the means of salvation can be obtained. It was to the apostolic college alone, of which Peter is the head, that we believe that our Lord entrusted all the blessings of the New Covenant, in order to establish on earth the one Body of Christ into which all those should be fully incorporated who belong in any way to the People of God. Vatican II, Decree on Ecumenism.*

What were some characteristics of the formation of the Old Sinai Covenant? See Exodus 20:1-33; 24:3, 12; 31:18.

1. It was established first by Yahweh's teaching of the 10 Commandments and the other articles of the Law [Exodus 20:1-33].
2. The children of Israel's acceptance of the obligations of the covenant [Exodus 24:3].
3. The covenant treaty was sealed in a blood sacrifice and a sacred meal [Exodus 24:5-11].
4. The summary of the Old Covenant Law was written on stone tablets [24:12; 31:18].
5. Established in unity of belief through one central authority

What were some of the characteristics of the formation of the New Covenant and acceptance of the bonds of that covenant for Christians?

1. Jesus taught the Law of the New Covenant which He summed up in two commandments [Matthew 5:1-7:29; 22:37-40]
2. The covenant treaty was sealed in the blood of Jesus on the altar of the Cross and celebrated in the sacred meal of the Most Holy Eucharist, first initiated in the Last Supper in the Upper Room on the night before His crucifixion [Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:20-29].
3. We accept the obligations of the covenant in Christian baptism and confirmation; in our participation in the Sacraments; and in our fidelity to all the teachings of the Universal Magisterium.
4. The Law of the New Covenant is written on the hearts of the believers by the Holy Spirit.
5. Established in unity of belief through one central authority