

Shawn Brummund: Hello, welcome to another edition of the "Sabbath School Study Hour" right here in the Granite Bay Hilltop Seventh Day Adventist Church in the greater Sacramento area of California. It is always so good to be able to have those of you who are watching online live here this morning on this particular Sabbath. For those of you who are watching this broadcast on the various networks at various times, it's always nice to have you join us. And, of course, we're always thrilled to be able to have our local church congregation and visitors, friends, join us here right in the Seventh Day Adventist Church here in Granite Bay. So, it's always good to have all of you.

I want to wish God's blessing upon you as we continue to study one of my favorite books, which is the Book of Hebrews, powerful good news book that is full of the gospel at the very core of its message. And so, today we're going to be looking again at our quarterly. Of course, the Bible is our textbook. The lesson study that helps us to explain some of those different Scriptures is found in your quarterly lesson study. So, make sure that you grab that, as well as your Bible, if you are going to study along with us. And the title of it is, "In These Last Days, The Message of Hebrews".

We're going to be looking at lesson number eight today, lesson number eight, "Jesus, Mediator of the New Covenant". So, we're going to be looking at how Hebrews paints and reveals Jesus as that all-important mediator for you and I today. So, please take advantage of that. And for those of you who are watching, I want to also offer you a free-gift offer that we always like to offer different ways each and every Sabbath and each and every week. And this particular free-book offer is one of my favorite reads. It's written by Joe Crews, which is "Why The Old Covenant Failed". If you've never read this before or studied this topic, this is a very, very helpful book in regards to that question, why the Old Covenant failed.

And so, please take advantage of that. Call into 1-866-788-3966 and ask for offer, free offer number 716. And we'll be happy to be able to send that to you if you're in North America or the various US territories. If you want to download a digital copy of this, which more and more of us are interested in doing either on your phone, tablet, laptop, and so on, just go ahead and text to the code-- or to the number 40544, and for the message you want to put in there SH097. And that will get you connected to a link that will allow you to get a free digital download copy of that.

Let's pray. Father in heaven, we are thankful today to be able to worship You, to be able to open up Your Bible. We ask for Your Holy Spirit. We ask for You to fulfill Your promise that You have given to us that You will send Your Spirit to all who sincerely desire the truth, and that You will lead us and guide us into all truth. Please help us to be able to understand this great and powerful truth concerning the very core of the gospel. Jesus is our mediator. And so, Lord, we ask for an extra blessing both upon Pastor Luccas, as well as all of us. In Jesus's name, we pray these things, God, amen.

Luccas Rodor: Friends, we're going to jump right in to the study today because today's lesson is a very, very important one, and there's a lot to cover. We're going to spend quite a bit of time on Monday's lesson because that's, that's where I feel that the heart of this study is. But I truly hope that you were able to study the lesson, you were able to learn a lot because we are going to-- we do have a lot here to learn. Before we do, I know that Pastor Shawn just prayed, but I like also to pray.

Dear Lord, thank You so much for this day. Thank You so much for your Word, Lord. And thank You for giving us material as the Sabbath School lesson, all these things that are based on Your Word, Father, for us to learn more, and not only learn intellectually, but to apply more in our daily lives. I ask You for these things, and I pray in Your name, amen.

So friends, a few weeks ago when we studied lesson number six, I mentioned that Hebrews was written primarily, or its target audience, were the Jews, the members of the church living in the first century, right? That was the target audience. It was particularly written for those that were-- those members that had left Judaism to become Christians. Those members of the church were suffering persecutions. They were suffering all sorts of horrible things happening in their lives. They had lost the connections that

they had in-- within Judaism. Many had been kicked out of the synagogues. Many had lost their properties. They had been confiscated. You remember also that, back then, for you to be kicked out of the synagogue, for you to be expelled from the church, it was the same thing as being cut off from the land of the living. And so, many of them were going through horrible times, precisely because of their acceptance in-- of the gospel and of Jesus Christ.

And so, as time went on and with the delay of Christ's return--because the whole church, everyone, thought that Jesus was coming back in that first century. The apostles thought that He was coming back only after a few months. And the church, as time went on, they all had this hope that Jesus would come back before the death of the Apostle John. And we also mentioned that a while back. And so, as time went on and as Jesus didn't come back, they were becoming the victims of despair, of discouragement, of pessimism, chronic doubt, and ultimately, they were being tempted of giving up on their faith, of relinquishing their faith, abandoning their faith.

And so, in essence, the Book of Hebrews is a sermon about encouragement. It's a sermon of motivation. And its central argument, as I mentioned a few weeks ago, its central argument is that Jesus is better than everything that they had known previously. Whatever they had known, wherever they had come from, Jesus covers the cost. He covers the price. That's the central argument here. Everything that they had known before, Jesus is better. And so, this week's lesson, lesson number eight, is based mainly on Hebrews chapter 7, and it's about Christ's superior priesthood. You'll see that the title of the lesson is Jesus, "The Mediator of a New Covenant". And so, we're going to get into this whole topic of New Covenant, Old Covenant.

Why was the New Covenant needed? If there's something today that I find a lot of people find confusing is, why are there so many covenants? I mean, you hear about a first covenant, a second covenant, the old one, the new one. Well, if God is perfect, why do you need so many? And so, that's why we really emphasize this free offer because it's exactly about that. It's, you know, why the Old Covenant failed. And so, that's what we're talking about today.

Now, Hebrews chapter 7 is considered among the least-understood chapters of the Bible with its enigmatic reference to Melchizedek in verse 3 and Levi, who hadn't even been born yet, you know, in Melchizedek's time, but who had tithed to Melchizedek, even though he hadn't been born yet, he had tithed to Melchizedek through Abraham. And you'll find that in verse 9 and verse 10. And so, it's a very misunderstood, or little understood, chapter of the Bible, but it does provide precious lessons to any fervent Bible student. And if we read it in its entirety, we find the essential concept that sheds further light upon Jesus, our Great High Priest, the mediator of a new, of a better covenant. And that's indicated in our memory verse that you'll find in Hebrews chapter 8, verse 6 that says the following, "But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry inasmuch as He is also mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises." And so, today, that's what we're looking at.

So, Sunday's lesson, I think I misspoke before. We're going to spend most of our time today on this one, not on Monday's, on this lesson, Sunday's lesson, which is the need of a new covenant. And that's the question, why is there a need for a new covenant? Now, the term itself, the concept of a covenant is very central in the Bible. You'll find it interwoven everywhere. The Covenant story is huge. If you want to break down the Bible in three basic themes, you can do that easily. Creation, our God is the Creator God. He made everything that we know and that we see. Then you go to conflict, we find that this world, this creation of His, this perfect creation, it fell into this conflict, this war, this battle. And finally, you'll have covenant, covenant is God's deal to fix things, right?

So, we have the creation, we have the conflict, and we have the covenant. And basically the whole Bible is summed up into those three words. Wherever you go, God is the Creator, wherever you go, there is a conflict, and what you find in Scripture is God fixing the problem, Him doing that through this word "covenant." And so, it's one of the central themes throughout the whole Bible. The word itself basically means a contract, right? That's what covenant basically means. It's a contract or an agreement. But in the biblical context, it goes way beyond these definitions. It goes way above and beyond. It describes the

graciousness, or the gracious closeness, between divinity and humanity, the fact that God wants to get involved in our problem, in our conflict, and that He desires to create a resolution and He's made an agreement with us, an agreement based on His closeness to us. That's incredible. That's marvelous.

What we learn here is that Yahweh, this transcendent being, this being that goes way beyond anything that we know, He enters into a relationship with us in our fallen state so that we may know Him and we may experience the power of His salvation and the abundance of life that He brings. Friends, there's no way that this subject can be small. There's no way that it can be understated. The story of the Covenant, that's our story of what we're going through. In modern terms, it means that God descended to our level to make a deal. That's what He says, "Come and reason with Me. Let's make a deal." The initiative was whose? All His. There's nothing that we bring to the table. Humans have nothing to bring to the table. He brings it all. He brings the offer. He establishes the terms. And what that means is that we cannot bargain with him. That's something that humans like to do, we like to bargain, right? "Well, you know what? This here doesn't work for me. Let's--what if we do it this--" You can't do that with God. It doesn't work like that with the Covenant.

God is the One who stipulates the terms, and that means that we cannot bargain salvation with Him. And I'm very thankful for that, that we can't. The blessings of the Covenant are always on His terms, always, but we do have a part to play. We have our own part to play. We can refuse and turn away the divine and special offer. We can do that if we want to. We can choose to despise the gracious offer that God has given us, or we can joyfully accept it. We can enter into a covenant with Him. We can commit to the divine stipulations and in return, we receive the divine promises, we receive what He's promised us.

So, friends, God's condescension is at the very heart of the biblical story. The Most High, He swears by oath to the tiny men and women here of planet Earth, and the greatest demonstration of the acquiescence of heaven is given when He becomes a man, Emmanuel, God with us. He sets up His tent, just as John teaches in John chapter 1, verse 14. You remember John 1:14 says that the Word became flesh. He dwelt among us. We beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of God, full of grace and full of truth. And so, living a perfect life, dying a death in our stead, Jesus became the mediator of a new covenant between God and us. And that happened only because He is our substitute. Jesus canceled our bill, our debt.

What does Isaiah 53:5 say? He was wounded for whose transgressions? For ours. He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes, we are healed. But the question, and this is what we're going to dive deep into today, the question is, why was a new covenant needed? Why wasn't the Old Covenant good enough? Well, when we actually think about that, we understand that the Old Covenant, it was based on the Levitical code. It was based on the Levitical order, the Levitical priesthood. That's what we find in Hebrews 7, verse 11. Look at what it says. "Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood, for under it the law-- the people received the law, what further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron?"

So, the Bible itself is making this question. If perfection, if wholeness, and I would like you to understand the word "perfection" here as wholeness with God. If wholeness were possible through this old Levitical priesthood, this old Levitical system, well, then what need was there for the people to continue bringing sacrifices to the temple? What need was there for them to do that?

So, the Bible itself is stipulating the same question, what need was there for a new covenant? But according to the Levitical order, and here's the problem, according to the Levitical order, Jesus could not be a priest because Jesus was not from the tribe of Levi. What tribe was Jesus from? Judah. So, according to the text itself, Jesus was disqualified from birth. He couldn't be part of that priesthood. He couldn't be part of that order. So, how do we resolve this? How do we understand Jesus as our, not only our priest, but our High Priest? If Jesus was disqualified from birth of being a priest, how could Jesus be our priest? That's where--and again, this is a text coming from the Old Testament.

You know, a lot of interpretations bring the idea of the New Covenant as something completely new and unique to the New Testament. It's absolutely not. This idea of a new covenant, this was already in the Old Testament times. If you read, and this is the central verse to this whole thesis, to this whole understanding, is Psalms chapter 110, verse 4, and this is one of the main messianic Psalms. Psalm 110, verse 4 it says, "The Lord has sworn and he will not relent, you are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek." This is David. This is in the Book of Psalms, hundreds of years before Jesus. And it's already speaking of a new order, a different order of priesthood, different from the current-day priests of his time, the order of Melchizedek.

Now, this is an exclusive text that stipulates the emergence of a new priesthood, a priesthood, friends, that transcends, that goes beyond the Levitical order. And this way, only this way, Jesus could be our High Priest. In fact, Psalm 110, verse 4 not only provides the scriptural foundation for the thesis of Hebrews chapter 7, but it also carries through the entire Book of Hebrews. Without Psalm chapter 10--110, verse 4, there would be no Book of Hebrews. It couldn't happen because it wouldn't make sense. The apostle writing this book, he continually quotes, either completely or partially or by allusion, this truth. And this reality is where the book, the author of the book, finds his theological foundation and authority for the priesthood of Jesus. And his position is the very basis of the New Testament and of the New Covenant. And so, we find Psalm 110, verse 4 being quoted all through the book, okay.

So, if you ever want to understand this subject of the New Covenant, and someone is talking of New Covenant, Old Covenant, you know, first and second, see what they're quoting. What Scripture are they quoting? And if they're trying to discard the Old Testament, you can't. There's something wrong there because the Old Testament is what lays the foundation for this New Covenant idea. I'll give you an example of how you can find this psalm all throughout the Book of Hebrews. For example, in Hebrews chapter 5, verse 6, the author quotes clearly that Jesus is divinely designated as a High Priest, even though He didn't ascend from Aaron. In chapter 6, verse 20, they have only the last part.

So, in chapter 5, you have the first part. In chapter 6, you have the latter part that says, "Having become a high priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek," you find that quote. The--and so this way, the author of Hebrews, he completes what he had said in chapter 5, verse 10, with the last part of the fuller revelation of chapter 111, verse 4 of Psalms in chapter 6. So, you might be saying, "Well, he's talking about chapter this, chapter that, chapter that." Well, unfortunately, in this study, this is necessary. This is a very biblical study. It's not very even thematic. It's more biblical, and that's why so many quotes have to be mentioned. In chapter 7, verse 11, you'll remember that the main chapter of this week's lesson is Hebrews chapter 7. So in chapter 7, verse 11, he alludes again to Psalm 110, verse 4, making the argument that the new priestly order was necessary. In verse 15 and 17, it's quoted again completely in contrast to the old order that demanded a physical descendent of Levi. In verse 20 and 21, the emphasis is placed on the first part of Psalm 110, verse 4, which is a divine oath. The Lord has sworn and will not relent.

And here we find God swearing something. God is making an oath of something. In verse 24, we find another allusion that emphasizes the continual priesthood of Jesus. The text calls it the unchangeable priesthood. And finally in verse 28, we find an allusion to Psalm 110, verse 4 again, in which the theme of the high priesthood with the divine indication the eternal office of Jesus is united.

And so, friends, here, have you just noted how many texts just in Hebrews chapter 7 quote Psalm 110? How could you ever discredit the Old Testament? How could you ever discredit the teachings coming from the prophets? How could you, if they're completely intertwined into the very foundation of the New Testament theology? You can't. The Bible is whole. You can't put the Bible against itself. It doesn't work. it doesn't work that way. And so, there is a change in the emphasis of how the author of Hebrews, how Paul, is using or writing--sorry, using Psalm 110, but he does use it again and again. I'll give you--I'll give it again to you very quickly because this is essential. In chapter 5, verse 6, Jesus is the priest forever. In chapter 6, verse 20, in chapter 7, verse 11, and in chapter 7:15, through 17, the emphasis is on the order of Melchizedek. On verse 20 and 21 of chapter 7, the emphasis is the Lord has sworn and He will

not relent. In chapter 7, verse 24, the priesthood is described as unchangeable. And in chapter 7, verse 28, it's forever, it's eternal.

So, friends, according to the Book of Hebrews, the fact that Jesus was indicated as priest according to the order of Melchizedek, implies that the New Covenant had been inaugurated. That's the meaning here. That's the implication. The Levitical priests, and this is important for us to understand, these Levitical priests, they act as mediators between God and Israel. And the law of Israel excluded anyone except from the order, from the light lineage of Levi of being priests. So, here the author concludes that the change of the priesthood implied in a change of the law of the priesthood. See, notice the logic of the author. He's implying that since Jesus was not of the order of Levi, there needed to be a change in the law itself by changing the law of priesthood, and that implied in a change of the Covenant.

Do you understand the need of a new covenant? Because the Old Covenant couldn't fit into Jesus. And it wasn't Jesus that had to alter Himself or change Himself to the Old Covenant. It's the Covenant that needed to alter itself. The logic of the biblical author, it's flawless. It's impeccable. Now, the problem with the Old Covenant was that it didn't provide perfection. Isn't that what we read in Hebrews 7:11? So, what does that mean? The author is speaking regarding the priestly, or the priesthood, in its ministries. Its sacrifices, its feasts, its services in the old system, that's what he's talking about. What he's saying is that the sacrifices of animals could never provide complete, true, and total atonement and purification from sin. It couldn't offer access to God.

Look at what Hebrews 10, verse 1 through 4 says. "For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have no more consciousness of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins."

The fact that the New Covenant was necessary, doesn't mean that God was unfair with the ministration of the Levitical priests. It doesn't mean that God gave them something to do and said, "You're not doing good enough." It has nothing to do with that. It was never meant for that. The service of the tabernacle, friends, was designated to protect them from idolatry, to point towards the future, towards the future ministry of who? Of the Messiah, of Jesus. Hebrews emphasizes that the sacrifices of the old tabernacle were shadows of good things to come. And so, these lambs, these goats, as much as they represented, as much as they were significant, and as much as they meant, they didn't save. That's what this text is saying.

They pointed to Jesus. The sacrifices of the old system, they were meant to help the people place their hope and faith in the true Lamb of God that removes away the sin of the world. And that's precisely the same point that Paul makes when he declares in Galatians chapter 3, verse 24, "Therefore the law was a tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith." And also Romans 1:4 that says, "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes."

So, friends, in other words, even the Ten Commandments, even the Ten Commandments, as good and as perfect as they are for their purpose, are not meant to provide salvation. The law is not meant to save but to make sin evident and to provide a norm for justice, but the law does not provide justice itself. You understand the difference?

The law is meant to provide a norm, but it doesn't provide justice itself. You remember that old illustration? I've seen Pastor Doug do it. I remember as a kid watching him do it, where there's a mirror, and there he has a marker on his forehead. And he has water and a washcloth, you remember that? In that old illustration of the mirror and the water, the purpose of the mirror is only to indicate the sins, the stains. But the purification, the cleanliness comes from the water, which is a symbol of God's grace.

So, someone might ask, and a lot of people do, "Why doesn't the law save? Why doesn't the law save?" Well, it's easy. It's because that was never its purpose. You want to buy a car, fine. You can ask a whole

bunch of questions about a car. It goes this fast, there's this much horsepower. It has this much torque. It can do this, it can do that. But what happens if you ask the car salesman, the car dealership salesman if how fast does the car fly? Is that a fair question? Why is that not a fair question? Because cars don't fly. It's unfair to ask that question. You cannot demand that of the law. It's unfair. The law was never given to save, never.

Our salvation does not depend on our obedience, but on Christ's obedience. His grace was the foundation of our salvation. And faith is the instrument by which we take hold of His grace. And obedience is the result of our acceptance of Christ as our Lord. What does Ephesians chapter 2, verse 8 through 10 say? By what are we saved? By grace. "By grace you have been saved through faith, and that does not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Lord Jesus, in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." Do you see that?

Everything is coming from God. Grace comes from God. Faith is created by God. Faith comes from hearing and hearing the Word of God. And even obedience, the good works, who do they come from? Who prepared them beforehand? Him, everything comes from Him. Friends, if our obedience saved us, then salvation would not be by grace, but the reward for our effort. And what matters, what really matters, at least primarily, it's not what we do as the basis of our salvation. It's what Christ did for us.

And that's where we kind of segue into Monday's lesson, which is New And Renewed. And this is also a crucial day because the promise of the New Covenant, it's not a new concept. As I've already stated, this isn't a new concept. It doesn't only emerge in Psalms 110. This is something, again, that's interwoven through the whole Old Testament. You'll find the need of a new covenant all throughout the Old Testament. It's not new. We find it all the way back in Jeremiah chapter 31 where, according to Jeremiah, the New Covenant was, in fact, a renovation, a renewal of the covenant that God had already established with Israel through Moses.

Look at Jeremiah chapter 31:31 through 33. It says, "Behold, the days are coming--" This is Jeremiah, okay, again, hundreds of years before Jesus, a classical Old Testament prophet. "Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, that I will make a," what? "A new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah--not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."

You know, the Hebrew term for "new" is the word Chadashah, and it has a double meaning. Depending on the context, it can mean completely new, or it can mean renovated, renewed. Now, the problem with the Old Covenant is that the people broke it, how many times? Continuously, all the time. They broken it again and again and again and again. And you see this in Hebrews chapter 8, verse 8 and 9. Now, there was no problem with the covenant itself because God is the One who established the covenant.

Can God make anything imperfect? Can God make anything that's not good enough? No. The problem wasn't the covenant itself, it was with the people. If Israel had understood through the symbols, the anti-types, the parables, and they had placed their faith in the coming Messiah, what would have happened if they had done that? Well, then the covenant would never have been broken.

So, in a way, the New Covenant is the Old Covenant, but renewed. And in another way, it's something entirely different. So, here you find this kind of this strange dichotomy. You have the Covenant, which is very similar to the old in many ways, but it's also very different, completely different. As the lesson puts it, the Covenant would not be like the Covenant that God had made with their fathers because of the unfaithfulness of the people. The promises that God made under the Mosaic Covenant were never fulfilled.

Now, in virtue of the guarantee given by the Son, God would fulfill their purposes of his Covenant. God

did not change His law or His power or lower His standards. Instead, He sent His Son as a guarantee of the Covenant promises. This is why the Covenant does not have curses. You remember that the Old Covenant had curses. There were the rights, the-- not the rights, the blessings of the Covenant and there were also the curses.

This New Covenant has no curses. This is why the Covenant has no curses. It is it has only blessings because Jesus fulfilled it perfectly, becoming a curse for us. And so, this is, this is what the Monday lesson tells us at the end of that day. And that also segues into the next day. The New Covenant has a better mediator. What does that mean? The New Covenant has a better mediator. How could Jesus--why is Jesus a better mediator? So, friends, as we have already seen, according to the Old Testament, Jesus did not qualify for priesthood. Why did Jesus not qualify? Let's see if you're--why? Why? His lineage, his lineage. Jesus was not from the lineage of Levi.

Now, friends, for us today living thousands of years after this whole cultural, scriptural context, it's difficult for us to really say, "Well, why is that such a big deal? Right, why was that--why would that make the need or create a necessity of a new covenant? Why?" But it is a very big deal. It's a huge deal in the Bible. The very prediction of Scripture indicates that a new priestly order would be established designed by God. And so, Jesus, while he was born of the lineage of Judah, he became a priest by divine proclamation. God made Jesus a priest. It wasn't His lineage. It wasn't His family. It wasn't His genetics. It wasn't the power of His family name. It was none of that. It wasn't His pedigree. It was God saying, "You are my Son. Today, I have begotten You. You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek."

This cannot be overstated. That's why I'm repeating it so much. And not only is Jesus a priest, He's a better priest. Hebrews chapter 7, verse 10 establishes that Melchizedek was superior to Abraham, and therefore superior to Levi because Levi was of the descendants of Abraham, Melchizedek wasn't. Do you see why this is so significant? Jesus is a priest according to an order that is completely outside the scope of Judaism, of the Israelite nation, because Israel could not keep the covenant. Something external was needed.

You see, you kind of think of God as extending his hand and trying to take hold of the arm of man, to come into a deal. The problem is that the arm of man is constantly slipping and failing. And so, what happens is that God--and He knew all of this. All of this is for us to learn. It's for our benefit. But what happens is that God steps out from behind His kind of--His veil of silence because one of the most powerful instruments that God used in this whole, this whole great controversy is that God, He didn't immediately argue with Lucifer.

Lucifer is spouting out his ideas, but God uses silence because silence is a very strong weapon. Instead of talking too much, God, at the right moment, the Bible says, "In the plenitude of times," God steps out from behind that curtain. And He appears on scene as a baby in the manger, a defenseless baby. And all throughout the whole Old Testament, you have those slivers of light of truth of a coming Messiah, someone that would come that would finally be able to grab hold of the arm of God and not let go. Jesus, the new High Priest. He didn't acquire his office based on power or authority, but by divine institution. It was based on the indestructible power of his life. You find that in verse 16, chapter 7. The author himself indicates this by saying in chapter 7, verse 3 that, "he having neither beginning of days nor end of days."

Now this is there in the context referring to Melchizedek, but was Melchizedek God? No. This is a parable. This is an example. When it says, "Neither beginning of days nor end of days," it's talking--it's telling us that we don't know about him. He's excluded from the scope of the context of Israel. But what it's really saying is that Jesus, His power comes from His eternal life, indestructible, having neither beginning of days nor end of days. As the Son of God, He remains High Priest forever. The rest of chapter 7 establishes the specific ways in which the New Covenant succeeds the Old. The original term for mediator, it's derived from the word, the Greek word, "mesos." Have you ever heard the word "meso?" Yeah, meso, it means half, middle. that's where meso comes from. And so, that's where the word "mediator" comes from also, and it describes someone that walks in the middle. And it was a technical

word used to refer to a few things, someone who fulfilled the role of a mediator, someone in the function of an arbiter between two parties, a negotiator, a witness in the legal sense of the word, or yet someone that guaranteed the execution of the deal or of the bargain. That's what the word "mediator" means literally in Greek.

The problem is that our English word for mediator, it doesn't translate all these different definitions. It doesn't translate the richness of the original word. But when it comes to Jesus, the mediator here means that He is the One that guaranteed the New Covenant. He's the One. You want something that to make sure--do you want to know why you can be sure that the New Covenant is enough? Jesus is the One that guarantees it. In the letter of Hebrews, the term "mediator" is equivalent to, he who guarantees. He is the One that guarantees that the promises of the Covenant would be fulfilled. Jesus's death, friends, makes the institution of the New Covenant possible of being satisfied because it satisfies the demand of the first covenant with Israel. It even satisfies the needs of the first covenant given to Adam. Jesus covers it all. Jesus fulfills it all.

And so, this way, in this way, Jesus is the care--I know that this isn't a word, but Jesus is the guarantor. Is that a word, guarantor, guarantor is that how you say it? So, Jesus is--you live and you learn, right, one new thing every day. Jesus is the guarantor. That's a weird word, but Jesus is the guarantor that took upon Himself the legal obligations of the Covenant that had previously been broken. And so, in another way, the execution, or the exaltation of Jesus in heaven guarantees that God's promises to humanity will be fulfilled.

At Jesus's resurrection when He sat at the right hand of God, He demonstrated that He will also resurrect us, and He will come back to bring us to stay at His right hand. Do you see? Because that happened to Jesus, that promise as co-heirs, it applies to us. Jesus was a mediator greater than Moses himself because He ministers in the heavenly sanctuary, and He offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for us. Moses's face reflected the glory of God. That's a big thing. Jesus is the glory of God. Moses spoke to God face to face, but Jesus is the face of God, the Word of God made flesh. And so, Jesus satisfies all the requirements of the Covenant. He died to bear the weight of sin so that we could die to sin, and that makes obedience not only important, but vital.

Wednesday's lesson speaks about the better promises of the Covenant. What are these better promises? After all, what rewards could be better than the old ones that He had already given? The truth, the truth, friends, is that God offered the same, the same rewards, the same rewards that the Old Testament heroes and patriarchs were offered. They're the same promises that He offers us. When Hebrew speaks of these better promises, such as in Hebrews chapter 8, verse 6, it's speaking about a different kind of promise. The covenant between God and Israel was a formal exchange of promises when God took the initiative and freed Israel from Egypt, and He promised them the Promised Land. The promises of this Old Covenant had to do with the emergence of Israel as a nation. That's the context of these better promises.

The thing about the New Covenant and the promises of the New Covenant is that it implies something more universal. The Old Covenant had to do with the emergence of Israel as a nation. The New Covenant goes way above and beyond that because in Galatians chapter 3, verse 28 and 29 it says that, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. For the Christians of the New Testament, Jesus was the definitive lens through which they understood the Old Testament, and He attributed to Scripture and interpretation that was not centralized on Himself-- sorry, not centralized on the Israelites, but centralized on Himself.

So, that was something completely different for the Israelites at that time because the whole Covenant had to do with them, with their nation, with their people, with their land. But in Jesus, it becomes universal. It's for everyone. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that," how many? Whoever, all inclusive. The New Covenant applies to everyone. Jesus, not the old geographical dream of the Jews is the focus, the gravitational center of the New Testament, and even the Old, if you

read it right. According to Paul in 2 Corinthians 1:20, "For all the promises of God, in Him are yes and in Him amen to the glory of God through us."

All of the promises of God are made complete, are fulfilled through who? Through Jesus. Friends, you cannot exclude Jesus from Scripture. It just becomes words. Jesus is the key. He's the conduit through which we understand the Bible. Gerald Hasel, an already deceased, but great Adventist theologian, he observed that this text provides a Christocentric answer to the question to "Whom pertained the promises of the Old Testament?" And the answers, "These promises are not connected anymore to the ethnic, literal Israel, but to Christ. He is in you the hope of glory."

So, when you read his writings, Paul's writings, Paul completely ignores the territorial aspects of the promises given to ancient Israel. The Palestinian land doesn't even appear within his horizon. And so, he--what happens is that he does personify the promises in Jesus, and by doing so, he universalizes the promises of the Bible.

Friends, you know what this means? This means that you can never say that you are disqualified. This means that you can never say that it doesn't apply to you. You could never say that you are a greater sinner than Jesus is a priest, an atoner, a forgiver. The promises apply to you. They apply to us. Whatever your past has been, wherever you have lived, whatever you have done, what matters is now forward because this New Covenant applies to your life. The saints united in a universal assembly. They await the city of the living God, the New Jerusalem.

The lesson puts it this way, God satisfies the absolute demands of the New Covenant for us because He gave His own Son to come and live a perfect life, so that the promises of the Covenant might be fulfilled in Him, and then offered to us by the faith in Jesus.

Now, unfortunately, we won't be able to go into Thursday's lesson, which, in my opinion, was such a beautiful day. The New Covenant has solved the problem of the heart. But basically, this day's lesson is summed up by the reality that the old law written on stone and written on paper, on scrolls, those could be lost. They could be broken, as the law of stone was broken at one point. And this is why God, He writes the new law, the New Covenant, in our heart. He's the only One that can do that. He can write it in your heart, what that means that He'll write this new law of His in your mind, in your will, in your volition, in your actions. In every aspect that you allow Him to write it, He will write His new law, and this new law now is based on Him.

Last quote that I'd like to read comes from the book "Steps To Christ" page 60, 64 and 65. It says, "No deep-seated love for Christ can dwell in the heart that does not realize its own sinfulness. The soul that is transformed by the grace of Christ will admire His divine character. But if we do not see our own moral deformity, it is unmistakable evidence that we have not had a view of the beauty and the excellence of Christ." You know how you have a view of this? You get to know Him. Contemplate Him, and He will reveal to you everything that needs to be revealed.

I'd like to emphasize this offer. You'll get all of this and more in this book, "Why The Old Covenant Failed." You could get it by calling 866-788-3966. You can ask for offer number one--sorry, number 716. If you're in continental North America, you can text us SH097 to the number 40544. Outside of North America, you can go to study.aftv.org/SH097, and you could get a digital download of, "Why The Old Covenant Failed."

Please bow your head and pray with me. Dear Lord, thank you so much for the understanding that we get from the Bible of who You are and what You've done for us. Thank you so much, Lord, that we understand that this New Covenant was, in essence, You coming down to our level, reaching out, grabbing the hand of God for us, and taking us along as You fulfilled the deal. And thank You for offering us this new deal, this new bargain, this covenant, Lord, where by Your merits, we can gain salvation.

Lord, out of love, allow us to see You day by day and want to live by Your side day by day, allow us to want to be obedient and to be more like Jesus day by day because we see the great love that You have

towards us. We can't understand it. We don't really understand why. But we do know that You love us. I thank You, Lord, for these precious lessons. Please bless everyone here that is watching live and those that are watching from home, those that are going to be watching from the future. Please allow these truths to be made open and clear in their minds and hearts and write Your law in their hearts. I ask You these things in Jesus's name, amen.

May God bless you.

Announcer: Don't forget to request today's life-changing free resource. Not only can you receive this free gift in the mail, you can download a digital copy straight to your computer or mobile device. To get your digital copy of today's free gift, simply text the keyword on your screen to 40544 or visit the web address shown on your screen. And be sure to select the digital download option on the request page. It's now easier than ever for you to study God's Word with Amazing Facts wherever and whenever you want. And most important, to share it with others.

Announcer: Amazing Facts, Changed Lives.

Rubin: You know, we grew up in a neighborhood up in the Midwest that was a pretty bad neighborhood. And when I became a teenager, I started using drugs. I was on--I started using meth when I was like, I think, 16,15, something like that. I was having some problems in my life I really didn't know how to deal with. The only thing I really knew was violence. So, this night here, I was going to inflict violence on myself. I was really high and really depressed, so I took, you know, I had this 40 caliber. So, I remember I put one in the chamber, and I stuck it to the side of my head like this. And that gun had a hair trigger, you know? I remember I was tapping it because a part of me said, no, I don't want to do this. But there was something very evil present there saying, "Do it." I just said to myself, I said, "God, if you're real, show yourself to me."

My mother took me to church when I was a little kid, and we used to sing "Jesus Loves Me." And I remembered that song. It started playing in my mind, and I almost had like a vision of me as a little kid. You know, in Sabbath school, we used to bang those sticks together and sing, "Jesus Loves Me." And I heard that in my mind. So, I said, wow. So, I just kind of like put the gun down, and I kind of fell on my bedside there. I said, "Lord." I just basically just prayed this crazy prayer. I says, you know, I told Him everything that was wrong with me.

And I remember one day I was driving around, I kind of felt lost. And I drove by this church, and I seen Tom out there. Tom was just out there watering the flowers, you know?

Tom: So, I caught a vision of the side of my eye of this big, husky guy with tattoos walking up and saying, "Hello." And so I asked him if I could help him. And he told me that he drives by church on occasion, and every time he goes by, he's thinking that he should stop in.

Rubin: After he showed me around the church, you know, I was like, "Okay, man, it's nice meeting you," and this and that. So, I jumped in my car, and I started heading down the driveway. And the next thing you know, in like my peripheral vision, I see him coming around the corner like Jerry Rice running a football. Nah, not that fast, but, you know, he was taking off after me. And he says, "Hey, hey, hey. Hold on, hold on."

Tom: I asked if he would like to have some Bible studies, and he said, "Yeah."

Rubin: He would come by the house, we'd all start-- we'd start hiding the beer cans and trying to air out the weed smell. And there was a presence that came with Tom that was comforting. You know what I mean? Even though I wasn't taking the Bible studies as serious as I should have looking back, there was just a presence about him being there in the house that was comforting. I told Tom, I said, "Tom, you know, you can't win everybody."

Tom: I looked at him and I knew I--I said to him, "Rubin, I never get anybody." I says, "The Holy Spirit will do that." And I kind of, in my heart, knew that the Holy Spirit was going to work on Rubin.

Rubin: So, then Tom kind of left the picture for a while. And then I think one day at my mother's house, they were watching "The Final Events of Bible Prophecy." So, I watched that, and I remember the scene where they had the hellfire and stuff. You know, they're outside the city, and it showed the hellfire coming down and burn and people and stuff. And I remember saying to myself, "That's where I would be right there." After the hellfire scene, I saw the saints in the city, and the New Jerusalem, Jesus recreating the earth. And I said, "I want that to be my--me and my family."

There was something about the way Doug preached and things that I felt that touched me because he's kind of like myself, you know? He's--he didn't grow up like that. You know, he'd done drugs and things. So, I kind of found these common grounds that I had him, and I liked how he just kind of like kept it real with his preaching. And then Pastor Rodney came to the church, and I got to know him very well. We started doing some finishing studies. He wanted to make sure I understand what I was doing and things. He baptized me, my wife, my brother.

No matter what you've done, where you come from, where you've been, no matter how bad of a sinner you think you are, the Lord Jesus loves you no matter what you've done.

Doug Batchelor: Friends, it's because of God's blessing and your support, thousands of others, just like Rubin, have found Jesus and eternal life.

Male: When I was 15, I bought my first bag of marijuana out of curiosity. And from the age of 15 on to 23 was a constant experimentation with different substances. By the time I was 23, there was not a drug I had not tried. I had worn myself out searching for happiness. And one day I came home, tired as usual, and I started drinking. And as usual, after I started drinking, I started looking for a higher buzz. Someone came by with some Xanax. Someone also came by with something else that I liked, and that was cocaine. This time, not thinking, I took the whole thing. So, I went to bed about 5 in the afternoon. My roommate went off to work that night. When he came back from work the next day, though, he noticed something was wrong because I was still in bed in the same position. He tried to wake me up, and he couldn't wake me up. And when my parents found me, they found me curled up in the fetal position in my hospital room unconscious still. And I stayed unconscious and in this coma-like state for the next week. I stayed the next month in the hospital, slowly getting better to where I could sit up in bed, and I had to learn to walk again.

But my parents found this one facility out in the hills of Tennessee. I had to admit that I liked the place, but they were Christian. And even worse than that, I said yes when they ask asked me if I wanted to go to church that week. Before the pastor said the benediction, I was so excited because I was planning my escape. And so, after everybody was all in bed that night, I made sure that they were snoring and that they were asleep. I went into the kitchen and stole a few bananas, got my backpack ready. I figured I can get sober on my own. My favorite song was, "I Did It My Way." Of course, my definition of sober was a nice supply of marijuana each day and alcohol on the weekends. And, of course, if I had a bad hangover, I might need some of those relaxing pills to take. But other than that, that would be it.

So, here I am stranded on the street in the big city of Houston. My bag of clothes is gone. My cell phone's gone, my wallet, my bus ticket's gone. I don't have anything but the shirt on my back. It's at that point that this man comes up to me, this mysterious man. He's actually very short and appears to be homeless, and he led me to some food and even a place to stay that night. Looking back, it is my firm conclusion that that was an angel.

So, my dad was able to come down to Houston and pick me up and take me back up to the health retreat at Wildwood in Tennessee. They had a satellite. On this channel, there was a man named Doug Batchelor. I liked what I heard. I liked the way he explained the Bible. It was so simple, and he also had an experience similar to mine. And I talked to Lou about him, and they happened to have a whole set of cassette tapes. I would wake up at 4 in the morning sometimes, and I would get up, and I would watch two of those videos before breakfast. I would sit this close to the TV watching what Doug Batchelor was saying, just eating up every word of it.

I was so tired of hearing lies and even believing my own lies that I--it was so wonderful to find something that was solid and that I could rely on. And so, when I got home from rehab in my local church, Eric Flickinger from Amazing Facts was holding an evangelistic series. They solidified my conviction, and it was then I made the absolute decision to follow Jesus. I praise the Lord Jesus Christ for Amazing Facts. I praise God for Amazing Facts because they're so Bible based. They send out evangelists who are willing to teach the truth to people. I'm thankful that they're preaching right now all over the world, changing lives just as they changed mine.

Announcer: Together, we have spread the gospel much farther than ever before. Thank you for your support.