

## Ultimate Reality

### Hebrews 8

***(Heb. 8:1-2) Now the main point in what has been said is this: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, <sup>2</sup> a minister in the sanctuary and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man.***

I want you to first notice the phrase “in the true tabernacle” ... and I want to show you a picture.



This is a picture of a painting entitled “The School of Athens” by the Italian Renaissance artist Raphael.

Depicted in this painting is the greatest mathematicians, philosophers and scientists from classical antiquity ... and they are pictured here, gathered together, sharing their ideas and learning from each other.

These figures all lived at different times, but Raphael has put them all under one roof to show that they learned from each other, each building on the advances of their predecessors.

The two thinkers in the very center, Aristotle (on the right holding out a flattened hand) and Plato (on the left, pointing upward) to illustrate their different contrasting philosophies.



Aristotle holds his hand down because in his philosophy the only reality that exists is the one we can see and experience through our five senses ...

... and the book Aristotle is holding in his hand is his own writing “The Politics” to emphasize that Aristotle believed that our greatest effort needs to be given in ordering and governing unruly society in such a way as to promote civilization.

On our left Plato is pointing upward and holding his writing “Timaeus” in which Plato says the world we see, this reality, is only a shadow of an unseen eternal reality.

... Plato is not a Christian—he preceded Christ by over 300 years...

... but Plato believed that everything we see in the physical world was actually made by a divine creator, all of this physical reality is really a weak reproduction of a perfect or ultimate reality.

These two mindsets (flawed physical/perfect eternal) are exactly what the writer of Hebrews is dealing with.

... These Jewish Christians are so connected to the Old Testament ritualism that even though they have been believed on Christ and been saved...

... although they have been freed from the obligations of the ceremonial law, they want to go back to it.

... Aaron was a priest they could see; the Day of Atonement sacrifices were offerings they could see and smell... these Jewish Christians had a deep sentimental attachment to the ways of the Old Testament.

The writer of Hebrews is saying to them, “Jesus is better than Aaron, Jesus is better than Moses’ tabernacle or Solomon’s temple ...

Jesus is *a minister in the* [ultimate] *sanctuary and in the true* [ultimate] *tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man.*

This is the main point ... we are to embrace Jesus Christ because He came into this physical world ... and has now returned and ministers in the “true tabernacle” in heaven.

In John 2:19, Jesus goes into the temple and when he sees the merchants and money changers overcharging and robbing the people, He makes a whip, beats them, turns over their tables. and chases them out of the temple...

... After that happens the Jews come to Jesus and ask him, “*what gives you the authority to throw these merchants out of the temple?*”

Jesus responds by saying something mysterious but powerful, “*Destroy this temple and in three days and I will raise it up.*”

They think Jesus is talking about Herod’s Temple in Jerusalem, but that is not what Jesus means.

Jesus is pointing back to the tabernacle/temple in the Old Testament, where the shekinah glory of God dwelt over the mercy seat on the ark of the covenant in the Holy of Holies.

... it was a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

Jesus is saying to them, **here is my authority ... the glory of God that filled the Holy of Holies now fills me, just as the shekinah glory of God dwelt in the camp of Israel, it not resides within me!**

That is exactly what happened at Jesus’ baptism.

...unlike false religions ...

Jesus is saying, **I’m not pointing to the ultimate reality, I am the ultimate reality.**

**... I have come to bring to you the ultimate reality.**

... and how is Jesus going to do this?

Well, look at what our text says in verse 1.

... He says that Jesus, as our high priest ***has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens...***

Jesus is sitting... this is important because no priest ever did his work seated.

... Please see this: Jesus being seated not only says **something about Jesus it also says something about us.**

Many religions speak of this physical world and an unseen spiritual world of some kind...

But in these religions the physical and eternal worlds are entirely disconnected ...

- **Buddhism** teaches endless rebirths and reincarnations but if you're good enough (or lucky enough) maybe you'll reach Nirvana which means extinction and your endless reincarnations will stop.
- In **Hinduism** there are multiple spiritual plains and through multiple reincarnations you may end up on one of those plains, but you will ultimately be recycled again until you reach self-realization and cease to exist as an individual.
- In **Jainism** if you become a pure soul you will reach Siddha status and reside at the very top of the Universe.
- In **Islam** the spiritual world of paradise (or Jannah) is a place where every wish is immediately fulfilled when asked. Those who dwell in Jannah are said to wear costly apparel, partake in exquisite banquets, and recline on couches inlaid with gold or precious stones—that is if one's good deeds outweigh one's sins.

In these religions there is a chasm between this temporary world and that eternal world ... and as you see there are various theories of how someone may or may not get into the eternal one.

The writer of Hebrews in verse 1 tells us that as Christians “we have” (present tense) a high priest who dwells in both worlds.

... Jesus is seated **THERE** and interceding for us **HERE**.

This is why Paul could say to the church at Colossae “**Christ is in you, the hope of glory.**”

Because our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is both Priest, and King, He bridges this unbridgeable chasm ...

... Unlike the false religions, as Christians we don't have to hope that **maybe/perhaps** we will be one of the few lucky ones who will experience ultimate reality...

**NO!** ... Christ has bridged the chasm for us!

*Thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.<sup>13</sup> For He rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,<sup>14</sup> in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (Col. 1:12-14)*

When we see Jesus, our great high priest, seated **at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens...**

... we know with absolute confidence that Christ has finished his work and we are reconciled to the Father.

... Christ work is complete!

But Jesus being seated doesn't just say something about Jesus, it says something about us.

**Aaron and the Levite priests** had to keep offering their sacrifices year after year after year ...

... over and over again, the people kept the feast days, gave the offerings, and made the sacrifices

**BUT NOT ANYMORE! JESUS IS SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD!**

THINK about it ... if the Levites no longer need to offer sacrifices of goats and lambs then we no longer need to be bringing goats and lambs.

...JESUS BEING SEATED ISN'T just saying His work is done, it is also saying **OUR WORK IS DONE!**

*<sup>10</sup> For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His.<sup>11</sup> Therefore let us be diligent to enter into that rest, (Heb. 4:10-11)*

No **spiritual experience**, no **amount of giving**, no **religious practices**, no **personal sacrifice** is required...

Jesus is seated at **the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens...**

Now, that is something our human nature doesn't like.

We want to think we **earned** it, we **deserved**, we **stood on our own 2 feet** ... we are **self-made** people.

This is why false religions and cults are so popular ... people are told the lie that if they work hard enough they can earn salvation.

... that feeds our ego ... that inflates our pride.

Since Genesis 3 in the garden of **Eden** humanity has been **trying to be like God and save itself**.

During the time of Christ and the birth of the church, the Romans embraced all kinds of religions ... Rome allowed for every religious group

... but yet they persecuted Christians and called them atheist.

Why? Because Christianity was the end of every other religion ... Christianity said the opposite of every other religion.

Don't work ... don't trust in yourself ... trust in Jesus and He will give you what you can never give yourself.

... ultimate reality, ultimate peace, and ultimate rest.

Jesus being seated at the right **hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens** says, I have done and completed what only I could do ...

... NOW "*come unto me all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will **GIVE** you rest.*"

Look at Hebrews' description of Christianity—the Ultimate Reality

*(Heb. 8:7-12) <sup>7</sup> For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second. <sup>8</sup> For finding fault with them, He says, "BEHOLD, DAYS ARE COMING, SAYS THE LORD, WHEN I WILL EFFECT A NEW COVENANT WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH;<sup>9</sup> NOT LIKE THE COVENANT WHICH I MADE WITH THEIR FATHERS ON THE DAY WHEN I TOOK THEM BY THE HAND TO LEAD THEM OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT; FOR THEY DID NOT CONTINUE IN MY COVENANT, AND I DID NOT CARE FOR THEM, SAYS THE LORD.<sup>10</sup> "FOR THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THE HOUSE*

**OF ISRAEL AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: 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. <sup>11</sup> "AND THEY SHALL NOT TEACH EVERYONE HIS FELLOW CITIZEN, AND EVERYONE HIS BROTHER, SAYING, 'KNOW THE LORD,' FOR ALL WILL KNOW ME, FROM THE LEAST TO THE GREATEST OF THEM.<sup>12</sup> "FOR I WILL BE MERCIFUL TO THEIR INIQUITIES, AND I WILL REMEMBER THEIR SINS NO MORE."**

**He tells us three power truths about this ultimate reality.**

**Truth #1: I will be their God and they shall be my people.**

People ... not persons.

God is saying you are not one of the many people I am in relationship with... NO! You are the race, the nation, the people that I have a relationship with.

*<sup>9</sup> But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; (1 Pet. 2:9)*

That is why we come and worship, and pray, and sing, and take communion together ...

This is our preparation for when we fully experience the ultimate reality of seeing Jesus Christ face and face and living with Him forever.

*<sup>9</sup> After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands; <sup>10</sup> and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." (Rev. 7:9-10)*

**Truth #2: From the least to the greatest, I will remember their sins no more.**

Our glorious eternal God has adjusted to us (I don't know how to say it any better.)

**Our holy God has even turned his omniscient memory away from our sins!**

This is why the only true equality exists in the Body of Christ ... we were all equally wicked, equally sinful .... but now we are **all equally forgiven and our sins fully forgotten!!!**

*<sup>12</sup> As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us. (Ps. 103:12)*

**Truth #3: “Christ is the mediator of a better covenant.” (v.6)**

I want to show you a short video of Oprah Winfrey interviewing Carl Lantz the lead pastor at Hillsong Church in New York City.

**SHOW CLIP!**

That is heresy!

The reformer Martin Luther said, *“If you remove Jesus Christ from the Scriptures, you have nothing left.”*

The writer of Hebrews wants us to know that Christ is more than just a great historical figure or a teacher of morality

... He makes it very clear that Christ is essential!

**“Christ is the mediator of a better covenant.”**

In verse 7 the author of Hebrews writes, **“For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second.”**

The first covenant had faults, so Jesus has provided a better one... a perfect covenant.

Look at this word Covenant ... this is not the same thing as a contract

... that’s the mistake we America readers make because we sign contracts ...

... a contract is something different that is where we **pit the legal against the personal.**



A contract says **I will do what I should do if you do** what you are supposed to do.

That's not what a covenant is.

... a covenant is the most intimate and binding of all relationships in the bible.

A COVENANT says, **I will do what I should do** regardless of what you do because I love you.

Under the old covenant Israel disobeyed God, went into captivity ... Israel rejected Jesus Christ the Messiah and Paul says in the book of Romans that Israel has been cut off ...

**But Jesus is the mediator of a better covenant.**

The Apostle Paul says it this way ...

***<sup>6</sup> For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. (Phil. 1:6)***

This covenant relationship that we have with God is Christ Jesus is a relationship of deep intimacy and perfect peace.

**In Christ we find, have, and experience ultimate reality** and it is a reality of equality, unity, intimacy, purity, perfection, and peace.