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Covenant - The Book Of Hebrews Is One Long Eviction Notice



By Dan Maines

The Book Of Hebrews Is One Long Eviction Notice

Introduction

† The Book of Hebrews is often studied as a book about faith, but its central message is much bigger than that. It is God's formal announcement that the Old Covenant system was passing away because something infinitely better had arrived.

† Every major theme in Hebrews points in the same direction. The old priesthood was being replaced. The old covenant was becoming obsolete. The old sacrifices were ending. The earthly temple was giving way to a heavenly reality. The earthly homeland was replaced with a better country.

† Hebrews wasn't written to encourage believers to return to Judaism. It was written to warn them not to remain in a covenant God Himself was removing.

Hebrews 7:22

by the same extent Jesus also has become the guarantee of a better covenant.

† Jesus didn't come to improve the Mosaic Covenant. He came to guarantee a better one. (Hebrews 8:6)

† If one covenant is better, the former covenant was no longer God's final arrangement. (Hebrews 8:13)

† This was the first notice that the old system was being replaced by something permanent.

Hebrews 7:18-19

For, on the one hand, there is the nullification of a former commandment because of its weakness and uselessness (for the Law made nothing perfect); on the other hand, there is the introduction of a better hope, through which we come near to God.

† Hebrews says the former commandment was "disannulled," meaning it was set aside.

† This wasn't merely an addition to Moses, it was the replacement of the old system.

† The better hope is Christ, through whom believers now have direct access to God. (Hebrews 8:6; Romans 5:1-2)

Hebrews 8:13

When He said, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is about to disappear.

† God Himself declared the first covenant old. No man abolished it, God did.

† Hebrews says it was "near to disappearing," showing the readers were living during the transition before Jerusalem fell in AD 70. (Luke 21:20-22)

† The old covenant wasn't meant to continue forever because Christ had established the New Covenant.

Hebrews 8:6

But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, to the extent that He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises.

† The New Covenant wasn't simply newer, it was better in every way.

† Better promises require a better covenant and a better Mediator.

† This continues the repeated theme of Hebrews that everything in Christ is superior. (Hebrews 7:22; Hebrews 12:24)

Hebrews 9:11-12

But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things having come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made by hands, that is, not of this creation; and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all time, having obtained eternal redemption.

† Jesus entered the true heavenly sanctuary instead of the earthly temple.

† His sacrifice accomplished what animal sacrifices could never accomplish. (Hebrews 10:1-4)

† Once the perfect sacrifice had been offered, the temple sacrifices

had fulfilled their purpose.

Hebrews 10:11-14

Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time onward until His enemies are made a footstool for His feet. For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.

† The Levitical priests stood daily because their work was never finished.

† Jesus sat down because His work was complete.

† A completed sacrifice meant the entire sacrificial system had become obsolete.

Hebrews 10:18

Now where there is forgiveness of these things, an offering for sin is no longer required.

† Once forgiveness was accomplished, no further sacrifices were needed.

† This verse alone ends the entire Levitical sacrificial system.

† Continuing temple sacrifices after Christ could never improve what He had already completed. (John 19:30)

Hebrews 11:16

But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.

† Hebrews wasn't directing believers toward an earthly kingdom.

† Their inheritance was a heavenly country fulfilled in the New Covenant relationship with God. (Hebrews 12:22-24)

† The better country wasn't postponed for thousands of years, it was the inheritance Christ secured for His people.

Hebrews 13:14

For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is to come.

† The earthly Jerusalem was never the believer's permanent home.

† Hebrews points believers toward the heavenly city established through Christ.

† This fits perfectly with Hebrews 12:22-24 and the coming judgment upon earthly Jerusalem. (Luke 21:20-24)

Hebrews 12:22-24

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.

† Notice the writer says, "you have come," not "you will someday come."

† The readers had already entered the heavenly Jerusalem through Christ.

† The earthly Jerusalem was about to pass away, but the heavenly Jerusalem would remain forever.

Hebrews 12:26-28

And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth, but also the heaven."

This expression, "Yet once more," denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let's show gratitude, by which we

may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe;

† The things being removed were the Old Covenant institutions that were about to pass away.

† The kingdom that remains is the unshakable New Covenant kingdom.

† This is the climax of Hebrews' "eviction notice" theme, the old is removed so the permanent may remain. (Hebrews 8:13; Haggai 2:6)

Historical References

† Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book 6, Chapter 4 records the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in AD 70, bringing the Old Covenant sacrificial system to its permanent end.

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book 3, Chapter 5 records that Christians fled Jerusalem before its destruction, following Jesus' warning in Luke 21.

† Tacitus, Histories, Book 5 describes the Roman siege and destruction of Jerusalem, confirming the catastrophic end of the Jewish temple system.

† Irenaeus, Against Heresies, Book 4 explains that Christ fulfilled the Law and established the New Covenant through His sacrifice.

† Clement of Rome, First Clement, Chapters 40-44 describes the continuing Levitical priesthood shortly before the temple's destruction, demonstrating that Hebrews was written during the transition period before AD 70.

How It Applies To Us Today

† We don't live under an earthly priesthood because Christ is our eternal High Priest.

† We don't offer sacrifices because His one sacrifice was sufficient forever.

† We aren't looking for another covenant because we already live under the better covenant.

† We aren't waiting for another temple because we have access to God through Jesus Christ.

† We aren't waiting to enter the heavenly Jerusalem because Scripture says we have already come to it through Christ.

Q & A Appendix

Q: Why do you call Hebrews an eviction notice?

A: Because every chapter announces that the Old Covenant system was giving way to something better. The priesthood, sacrifices, covenant, sanctuary, and promises were all being replaced by Christ. (Hebrews 7:22, Hebrews 8:13, Hebrews 9:11-12, Hebrews 10:11-14)

Q: Who was being evicted?

A: Not individual Jews, but the Old Covenant order itself. God was bringing the Mosaic system to its appointed end and establishing the everlasting New Covenant through Christ. (Hebrews 8:13, Jeremiah 31:31-34)

Q: When did the eviction become visible?

A: The process began with Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension, and reached its covenantal conclusion when Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed in AD 70, exactly as Jesus foretold. (Luke 21:20-22, Hebrews 8:13)

Q: What is the repeated message throughout Hebrews?

A: Better Priest. Better Covenant. Better Sacrifice. Better Temple. Better Country. Everything under Christ is better because it is complete, permanent, and cannot be replaced. (Hebrews 7:22, Hebrews 9:11-12, Hebrews 10:14, Hebrews 11:16)

Q: Why does Hebrews keep using the word "better"?

A: Because the entire purpose of the book is to show that Christ fulfilled and surpassed every part of the Old Covenant. Every "better" is another announcement that the old order was passing away. (Hebrews 1:4; Hebrews 7:19, 22; Hebrews 8:6; Hebrews 9:23; Hebrews 10:34; Hebrews 11:16; Hebrews 12:24)

Q: If Hebrews is an eviction notice, who issued it?

A: God did. He declared the first covenant old, established a New Covenant through His Son, and brought the Old Covenant age to its end exactly as He promised. (Hebrews 8:13; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Luke 21:20-22)

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies. †

Source Index

† Hebrews 7:18-19, 22; Hebrews 8:6, 13; Hebrews 9:11-12; Hebrews 10:11-14, 18; Hebrews 11:16; Hebrews 12:22-24, 26-28; Hebrews 13:14; Luke 21:20-22; Jeremiah 31:31-34; John 19:30; Romans 5:1-2; Haggai 2:6

† Historical Writers: Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book 6, Chapter 4; Tacitus, Histories, Book 5; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book 3, Chapter 5; Irenaeus, Against Heresies, Book 4; Clement of Rome, First Clement, Chapters 40-44.

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