

Study 0065

Worship Under the New Covenant (1)

The new covenant is God's agreement with man to put His laws in our minds, and write them in our hearts, so that we can obey them; and then He can indeed bless and prosper us. In order that we keep our part of God's covenant, He has given to us the Holy Spirit, but we need to yield to or allow Him take control of our lives. In very simple terms, the new covenant is a spiritual matter, unlike the old covenant which was largely a physical matter. The basis for the worship of God under the old covenant was a set of regulations governing the kinds of sacrifices and offerings, a worshipper should bring before he is accepted to worship God, through the priests called and ordained for that purpose. The priest, who was essentially an intermediary or intercessor, had to offer similar sacrifices, offerings, and incense for himself before he could even stand to minister on behalf of the people, and this he did on a daily basis. We shall be looking at worship under the new covenant, in this study, and for a few studies hence.

Text: Hebrews 7:1—8:6

In order to study the worship of God under the new covenant, we ought to note that the old covenant pattern for understanding the new covenant is not an "apple for apple" comparison. This is because, while the old covenant is a pattern, a type, or shadow of a reality; the new covenant is the substance and reality. The old covenant was established upon certain regulations, also called laws or ordinances, to enable the people of God approach and worship God in a manner acceptable to Him.

The priesthood played a key role in the worship of God under the old covenant, for it was the priest who offered the sacrifices and oblations on behalf of the worshipper, and took their petitions in the form of incense into the inner court of the tabernacle to offer upon the altar of incense, while the worshipper stood outside. The priest was thus the connection, and intermediary between the worshipper and God—an intercessor. Under the new covenant, the worshipper also needs a priest, but this time, the priesthood is governed by a completely different set of regulations.

- 1) While the old covenant priesthood was according to the order of Aaron, the new covenant Priesthood is according to the order of Melchizedek.
 - (a) The old covenant priest had to come from the family line of Aaron; but the new covenant Priest did not have to belong to an earthly family, just as Melchizedek was without any earthly parentage or lineage. The Priest under the new covenant was therefore a Priest to all men, not just to the nation of Israel.
 - (b) The old covenant priests were many, so that when the serving high priest died, there could be a successor to take his place and continue the priesthood; but the new covenant Priesthood does not change hands, since the Priest does not die (His life is endless)! Thus, a worshipper's salvation and deliverance remains intact and fully guaranteed at all times under the new covenant (**Numbers 35:22-28; John 8:35-36**).

- (c) The old covenant high priest was established by a law which could be changed (**1 Samuel 2:27-35**); but the new covenant Priest was established by a divine oath, for God swore saying, *“You are a priest forever”*
- 2) Under the old covenant, the people could only worship God from outside the tabernacle, while the priest went inside the tabernacle on the worshipper’s behalf; but under the new covenant, a worshipper can draw near to God, because the new covenant Priest had made it possible for such a close and direct relationship between the worshipper and God (**Ephesians 2:14-18**).
 - 3) The old covenant priesthood with its regulations, could not make the people perfect before God, because the old covenant priests were human and imperfect, themselves, needing to offer animal sacrifices for their own sins and go through ritual washings on a daily basis before approaching the inner court to minister before God on behalf of the people; but under the new covenant, such fleshly/physical/earthly regulations of animal sacrifices and ritual purification have been annulled, and in its place, a better hope based entirely on the one and only perfect sacrifice offered by the new covenant Priest which pleased the Father, so much so that, the Father accepts all who come to Him through this Priest..
 - 4) The old covenant priesthood was a temporary one which was only perpetrated through the succession of priests, but the new covenant Priesthood is a permanent one, as the holder of this Priesthood can never die! Thus, the intercession of the new covenant Priest is continuous and without interruption. No wonder the new covenant is a better covenant established on better promises.

ASSIGNMENT

1. Who is the Priest being referred to in the scripture text and notes above?

2. Is there any part of the old covenant priesthood still standing? If, “Yes” which ones?

3. Where is the place of animal sacrifice under new covenant worship?

4. Certain attributes are ascribed to Melchizedek, which make the Priest of the new covenant to be one in the order of Melchizedek. What are these attributes? (**Hebrews 7:1-3**)

5. Under the new covenant, the Priest appears to do everything. Is there anything that a new covenant worshipper does? (**Hebrews 10:19-22**)

6. The old covenant worshipper worshipped God with the priest as intermediary. How does the new covenant worshipper worship God? (**Hebrews 10:19-22**)

Conclusion

The central role of the new covenant Priest is to make it possible for the new covenant worshipper to be able to not just approach God, but also to have direct access to Him in worship. Indeed, the new covenant operation can be said to hinge on this Priest, who is also _____, _____, _____, and _____. His name is _____.

Indeed, without Him, there could never have been a new covenant. He is thus the fulfilment of all the promises of God as contained in the Old Testament, and under the old covenant.