

Hebrews 8:1-3 Commentary

PREVIOUS

NEXT

Hebrews 8:1 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 ([NASB: Lockman](#))

Greek: [Kephalaion de epi tois legomenois](#), (PPPND) [toiouton echomen](#) (1PPAI) [archierea, os ekathisen](#) (3SAAI) [en](#) dexia [tou thronou tes megalosunes en tois ouranois](#).

Amplified: NOW THE main point of what we have to say is this: We have such a High Priest, One Who is seated at the right hand of the majestic [God] in heaven, ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

NLT: Here is the main point: Our High Priest sat down in the place of highest honor in heaven, at God's right hand. (NLT - Tyndale House)

Wuest: Now, in the consideration of the things which are being spoken, this is the chief point: such a High Priest we possess, who took His seat on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, (Eerdmans)

Young's Literal: And the sum concerning the things spoken of is: we have such a chief priest, who did sit down at the right hand of the throne of the greatness in the heavens,

NOW THE MAIN POINT IN WHAT HAS BEEN SAID IS THIS WE HAVE SUCH A HIGH PRIEST WHO HAS TAKEN HIS SEAT: Kephalaion de epi tois legomenois (PPPND) toiouton (such) echomen (1PPAI) archierea os ekathisen (3SAAI):

- Hebrews 7:26, 27, 28-notes) (Hebrews 1:3-note, Heb 1:13-note; Heb 10:12-note; Heb 12:2-note; Ephesians 6:20-note; Colossians 3:1-note; Revelation 3:21-note)
- Hebrews 8 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Hebrews 8:1-13 A Better Priest for a Better Covenant](#) - Steven Cole
- [Hebrews 8:1-13 Hebrews and the New Covenant](#) - S Lewis Johnson
- [Hebrews 8:1-13 The New Covenant, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Hebrews 8:6-13 Written on the Heart](#) - John MacArthur

Hebrews 7 emphasizes the priesthood = a new priesthood.

Hebrews 8 emphasizes the covenant = a new covenant.

He first alluded to the **new covenant** in Hebrews 7:22...

so much the more also Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant. (see note Hebrews 7:22)

Beginning in Hebrews 7:1 through Hebrews 10:18, the writer has a number of contrasts between the old and the new covenant -- 13 out of 17 uses of the Greek word for "**covenant**", **diatheke**, occur in this span of Hebrews, so it is clearly a **key word** in this section.

As you study Hebrews 8, keep the context in mind, remembering that the readers of this epistle were primarily Hebrews who professed Christ but who under threat of persecution were being tempted to abandon the truth about the Messiah and return to the bondage of Judaism. It is difficult for most of us in modern America to comprehend the mindset of these Jews whose forefathers had practiced Judaism for over 1000 years. They had been taught the Hebrew Scriptures through which God had revealed Himself and they were "comfortable" with their religious practices. Would we too not be tempted to slide back into our "comfort zone" of the old paths which were tried and true, especially if we were being threatened with persecution by our peers? The writer's solution to this spiritual challenge is to present the supremacy of the Lord Jesus Christ, Who was in every way **better** - better than angels, better than Moses, a better priest than Aaron, and the Inaugurator, Guarantor (see Hebrews 7:22-note) and Mediator of a better covenant, these latter two concepts being the primary focus of Hebrews 8.

In **Hebrews 8:1-6a** the writer explains that Jesus is the **better priest** Who ministers in the **true tabernacle**. Note that although the specific phrase "better priest" does not occur in the NAS, this is clearly the writer's intent.

Then in **Hebrews 8:6b-13**, the writer presents Jesus as the Mediator of a **better covenant**, one which had been predicted in the writings of their own prophets, over 400 years earlier.

Brooke Westcott introduces this section with a comment summarizes Christ as High Priest writing that...

By His offering of Himself He has made purification of sins (see Hebrews 1:3-note); He has applied the virtue of His Blood, to speak in earthly language, to the scene of the worship of redeemed humanity (see Hebrews 9:23-note); He has taken His seat upon the throne, entering in His humanity upon the full enjoyment of every privilege won by His perfect fulfilment of the will of God. Henceforth He applies for the benefit of men the fruits of the Atonement which He has completed.

This work is shown to us in the Epistle in three distinct forms, and we have no authority to go beyond its teaching.

i. Christ intercedes for men as their present representative before God: Hebrews 7:25, 7:27; 9:24. (See notes Hebrews 7:25, 7:27; 9:24)

ii. Christ brings the prayers and praises of His people to God, embodying their true spiritual desires, so that at each moment they become articulate through His Spirit and are brought through Him to the Throne: Hebrews 13:15- note.

iii. Christ secures access for His people in their present state to 'the holy place,' where He Himself is, in His Blood—the virtue of His earthly life lived and offered: Hebrews 4:16-note; Hebrews 10:19; 20; 21; 22. - See notes 19; 20; 21; 22.

These three forms of Christ's work show under the conditions of human experience what He does for humanity eternally. Our fellowship with God will grow closer, more perfect, more conscious, but still our approach to God, our worship, our spiritual harmony, must always be '**in Him**' in Whom we have been incorporated.

The modern concept of Christ pleading in heaven His Passion, 'offering His blood,' on behalf of men, has no foundation in the Epistle. His glorified humanity is the eternal pledge of the absolute efficacy of His accomplished work. He pleads, as older writers truly expressed the thought, by His Presence on the Father's Throne.

Meanwhile men on earth **in union with Him** enjoy continually through His Blood what was before the privilege of one man on one day in the year. So far the thought of the priestly work of the Ascended Christ is expressed under the images of the Levitical covenant, as He works for 'the people'; but He has yet another work, as 'priest after the order of Melchizedek,' for humanity. He does not lay aside this wider relation in completely fulfilling the narrower. Rather it is through the fulfilment of His work for the Church—the firstfruits—that He moves towards the fulfilment of His work for the world. (B. F. Westcott: Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews. London: Macmillan. 1889) (Bolding added)

The main point - This does not mean "sum" as some versions render it (because that is one of the possible meanings of kephalaion) but is more accurately rendered as the main point, the chief point, the most important point. I like Coverdale's rendering as "the pith" (pith = the essential or important part or point), which Knox amplifies as "the very pith". The Dutch Common Language translation has "the kernel". The "crown of his argument" ("now to crown what we are saying"). The author is not "summarizing" what he is saying (has been said is more accurately rendered "is speaking" because it is not past tense but present tense) but is telling us the chief point, the most significant point up to this time -- we have such a high priest who has sat down and who is minister in the superior, heavenly sanctuary.

Vine writes that "the writer is doing more than summing up what he has stated about Christ (a.v., "sum"). He is not merely gathering up all the glories of Christ as a High Priest. What is meant is that the "chief point" is that Christ is "a minister of the sanctuary and the

true tabernacle." Of this he is about to speak more particularly." ([Vine, W. Collected writings of W. E. Vine. Nashville: Thomas Nelson](#))

Main point ([2774](#)) (**kephalaion** from **kephale** = a head, only other use Acts 22:28) describes the things belonging to the head and thus the main matter. The word in Latin is capitulum. **Kephalaion** was used of a sum total or a sum of money, but that is not the best understanding of the use in Hebrews 8:1. BDAG writes that it represents "a brief statement concerning some topic or subject." It means the chief point, as of a capstone or capital of a pillar -- the main thing. Here it describes the main point in the progression of the argument.

Expositor's Bible Commentary sums up **Hebrews 8:1-7** noting that "The author leads on from his treatment of the priesthood after the order of Melchizedek (Ed note: beginning in Hebrews 4:14 and reaching a "crescendo" in Hebrews 7, the writer has been emphasizing the priesthood of Christ) to emphasize the point that Christ's ministry far surpasses that of the Levitical priests. The readers of the epistle would be familiar with this priesthood, and the writer wants it to be clear that Jesus has a ministry far excelling it. ([Gaebelein, F, Editor: Expositor's Bible Commentary 6-Volume New Testament. Zondervan Publishing](#))

The **writer of Hebrews** had just explained that "it was fitting that we should have such a **High Priest**, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; Who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins, and then for the sins of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. For the Law appoints men as high priests who are weak, but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, appoints a Son, made perfect forever. (see notes Hebrews 7:26; 27; 28)

We have - Don't miss this small point - he uses the present tense meaning we continually have such a High Priest! Now and forever. Do we live with the confident realization that He is presently functioning in this capacity on our behalf?

The writer had just contrasted this High Priest with human high priests in Heb 7:28 (note) writing that

the Law appoints men as **high priests** who are (present tense = continually) **weak**, (literally - without strength - they are continually without the capacity to do or experience something) **but** the word of the oath, which came after the Law, appoints a Son, made perfect forever.

A high priest ([dictionary article](#)) ([749](#)) (**archiereus** from **archi-** = denoting rank or degree + **hiereus** = priest) was the principal member among the chief priests. The irony is that the high priest Caiaphas was residing over the Sanhedrin during trial of Jesus, the trial which would lead to His death and pave the way for His eternal High Priesthood!

Vine adds that **we have** "one Who embodies in Himself all the glories of deity and all the

perfections of humanity, One Who is almighty in power and infinitely tender in sympathy. He not only knows our every need and feels with us in our sufferings, but has power to succor and sustain us, comforting us in our afflictions and carrying us right through them. As the antitype of Aaron He has been perfected through sufferings; as the antitype of Melchizedek He is enthroned in His rightful position of exaltation, a royal Priest, whose priesthood is both perfect and unchangeable, Who is able to save to the uttermost and is entirely suited to us. ([Collected writings of W. E. Vine](#))

Spurgeon - We have all the privileges of the once-favored race. Are they the seed of Abraham? So are we, for He was the Father of the faithful, and we, having believed, have become His spiritual children. Had they an altar? We have an altar whereof they have no right to eat who serve the tabernacle. Had they any high priest? We have a high priest—we have one who has entered into the heavenly. Had they a sacrifice and paschal supper? We have Christ Jesus, who, by His one offering, has forever put away our sin, and who is today the spiritual meat on which we feed. All that they had we have, only we have it in a fuller and clearer sense.

Has taken His seat - Taken His seat is in the **orist tense** speaks of a completed past action. An effective action. This statement points to the **finished work** of our great High Priest.

The work of the Aaronic high priest was never finished and he did not sit when he entered the holy place or the holy of holies because there was no chair! Of course, the real reason he did not sit is because his work was never done. In fact the writer of Hebrews emphasizes this fact in Hebrews 10 writing that...

every priest **stands daily ministering (present tense = continually)** and offering (**present tense = continually**) time after time the same sacrifices... (see note Hebrews 10:11)

In **John 4** Jesus had to explain to His disciples what was His real "food" declaring...

My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to accomplish (to take it to completion, to the intended goal) His (the Father's) work. (John 4:34)

In **John 17** in His high priestly prayer Jesus declared...

I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do. (John 17:4)

And then **John** records that on the Cross...

Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished, in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I am thirsty." A jar full of sour wine was standing there; so they put a sponge full of the sour wine upon a branch of hyssop, and brought it up to His mouth. When Jesus therefore had received the sour wine, He said, "**It is finished!**" And He bowed His head, and gave up His spirit. (John 19:28, 29, 30-note)

Comment: "It is finished" translates the single verb tetelestai which means in essence "Paid in full". The perfect tense speaks of the permanence of this payment. In ancient times when someone had a debt that was finally paid off, the lender would write "Telelestai" across the bill to certify that it was paid in full! When Jewish priests would examine an animal for its suitability to be sacrificed, they would use this same verb if they found the animal to be faultless! We owed a debt we could never pay, but Jesus paid in full the debt He never owed! Amazing grace.

And so the continual work of the Aaronic priests (and high priests) was a mere shadow of the substance fulfilled in the finished work of Christ on the Cross. Christ's taking His seat is the indisputable evidence marking the fact that His work as Priest is finished. No more yearly "Day of Atonement." No more daily sacrifices. No need for more Passover lambs to be sacrificed (cp 1Cor 5:7, Jn 1:29).

Christ may have **taken His seat** but He is far from inactive! In **Hebrews 7**, the writer records...

Hence, also, He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since **He always lives to make intercession** (entugchano in the **present tense** = our Lord's continual activity -- and most of us would readily acknowledge how difficult is the work of prayer!) for (on their behalf) them. (Heb 7:25-note)

In **Romans** Paul says that Christ Jesus Who died for us and was raised is now...

at the right hand of God, (and)... also **intercedes** (entugchano in the **present tense** = our Lord's continual activity) for us. (Ro 8:34-note)

Considering the fact that Jesus is now our example (1Pe 2:21-note, 1Cor 11:1, 1Jn 2:6) and we are to follow in His steps, ponder for a moment the paradox of the exalted One interceding for His own. The natural tendency when we are exalted as men and women is to leave the menial tasks to others. Jesus' example of prayer even though highly exalted above every name, should motivate us to follow in His steps, walking in His Spirit (Gal 5:16-note), energized by His Spirit to pray without ceasing (1Th 5:17-note) for those around us!

As an aside, recall that the resurrected, reigning Christ did stand once as recorded by Luke upon the stoning of Stephen...

Acts 7:55 But being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus **standing** at the right hand of God.

Comment: Don't be confused by the truth that Stephen saw the glorified Man, Christ Jesus standing at the right hand of God. Jesus will possess the marks of covenant (cp Jn 20:27, Rev 5:6-note = "as if slain"

where slain is perfect tense = speaks of permanence) in His glorified Human body forever (Fully Man). But in the mystery of mysteries, Jesus is ever and always fully God. And so as the One Who is fully God, He is omnipresent. In addition while as a **Man** He is able to be literally seated at the right hand of the throne of His Father, as **God**, He is able to indwell the bodies of those who are His by grace through faith (Col 1:27-note). And just as mysterious is the truth that God the Father (Jn 14:23) and God the Spirit (1Cor 3:16, 1Cor 6:19-note) indwell the "temples" (bodies) of believers.

AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE THRONE OF MAJESTY IN THE HEAVENS: en dexia tou thronou tes megalosunes en toia ouranois:

- 1 Chr 29:11; Job 37:22; Ps 21:5; Ps 45:3,4; Ps 104:1; Ps 145:12; Isaiah 24:14; Micah 5:4
- Hebrews 8 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Hebrews 8:1-13 A Better Priest for a Better Covenant](#) - Steven Cole
- [Hebrews 8:1-13 Hebrews and the New Covenant](#) - S Lewis Johnson
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The greatness (and superiority) of the High Priest is manifested by the place where He ministers; viz (that is to say), His greatness is revealed in His sitting down at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. He is not continually carrying out His work as if it were never finished. The sacrifice has been rendered and is over. The propitiation has been accomplished. God's holiness and righteousness has been satisfied. On the basis of the value and efficacy of His sacrifice, Jesus has not only set down, but is now ministering in the sanctuary. In short the chief point is a seated High Priest within the veil (the inner room, the holy of holies, the place where God dwelt) and He is ministering for us.

The right hand ([1188](#))(**dexia**) is the place of honor. **Dexia** is used in the gospels to describe Jesus seated at the right hand of power (Mt 26:64, Mark 14:62, Luke 22:69 - all uses of the phrase "right hand of" = Ps 77:10; 89:42; 109:31; 118:15, 6; 144:8, 11; Isa 63:12; Matt 26:64; Mark 14:62; 16:19; Luke 22:69; Acts 2:33; 7:55f; Ro 8:34; Gal 2:9; Col 3:1; Heb 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; 1 Pet 3:22; Rev 5:1, 7). The right hand is not only the place of honor and majesty but is also the place of affection (eg, see Neh 2:6 where an earthly king delights to place in bride at his right hand).

S Lewis Johnson mentions an 8 year old boy who came up to him after hearing him preach on Christ seated at the right hand of the throne of majesty and asked "Dr Johnson, who's sitting on the left hand of the throne of God?"

Throne ([2362](#)) (**thronos**) is a raised chair with a footstool and by metonymy speaks of dominion, royalty, kingly power. He is in the place of sovereign power as the Father's

coequal.

(**The = tes**) **Majesty** (3172) (**megalosune**) speaks of a state of prominence, greatness or preeminence. In this context **Majesty** is the Name of God, as interpreted by the NAS and NIV which capitalize **Majesty**, one of John Calvin's favorite names for God. The definite article (**The = tes**) preceding Majesty further serves to underscore that this is not just any majesty or majesty in general, but "the specific Majesty", the Majestic One Himself, the great God omnipotent and sovereign over all things, all peoples and all times.

The Majesty is used as a Name of God (see also study of Names of God) in only one other NT passage...

... He sat down at the right hand of **the Majesty on high**. (see note Hebrews 1:3)

In the heavens - This location serves to magnify Christ's priesthood. He amplifies this later writing that...

Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but **into heaven itself**, now to appear in the presence of God for us (See **note** Hebrews 9:24) (There is no higher, holier place He could have gone, again marking His superiority in comparison to the Aaronic priesthood.)

Heavens (3772) (**ouranos**) represents the dwelling place of God, the holy angels and the redeemed.

The right hand of a king was considered the highest place of honor in the kingdom, as seen in Solomon's day...

So Bathsheba went to King Solomon to speak to him for Adonijah. And the king arose to meet her, bowed before her, and sat on his throne; then he had a throne set for the king's mother, and **she sat on his right**. (1Kings 2:19).

Christ is a High Priest in every way superior to the priesthood of Aaron. Why would one want to return to the old system when there is such a superior High Priest permanently seated in such an exalted position?!

Hebrews 8:2 a minister in the sanctuary and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man. (NASB: Lockman)

Greek: [ton hagion leitourgos kai tes skenes tes alethines, en](#) ephexen (3SAAI) [o kurios, ouk anthropos.](#)

Amplified: As officiating Priest, a Minister in the holy places and in the true tabernacle which is erected not by man but by the Lord. ([Amplified](#)

[Bible - Lockman](#))

NLT: There he ministers in the sacred tent, the true place of worship that was built by the Lord and not by human hands. (NLT - Tyndale House)

Wuest: a ministering servant of the holy places, even those of the tent, the genuine one, which the Lord pitched, not man. (Eerdmans)

Young's Literal: of the holy places a servant, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord did set up, and not man,

A MINISTER IN THE SANCTUARY: *ton hagion leitourgios*:

- Heb 9:8-12-note; Heb 10:21-note; Exodus 28:1,35; Luke 24:44; Romans 15:8-note
- Hebrews 8 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Hebrews 8:1-13 A Better Priest for a Better Covenant](#) - Steven Cole
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Rom 15:8 For I say that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises given to the fathers,

Heb 10:21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God,

Minister ([3011](#)) (**leitourgios** from **léitos** = of the people [NIDNTT says it from "**laos**" = people] + **érgon** = work) is literally a worker of the people. In classical Greek **leitourgios** referred especially to persons performing public duties, or works of public use. Of note, leitourgios was used in the Septuagint (LXX) of the (Levitical) priests of God (Ezra 7:24, Neh 10:40).

Leitourgios speaks of Christ as a Servant, which is striking in view of the preceding reference speaking of His high place in heaven... but not too high to be a Servant!

Sanctuary ([40](#))(**hagios**) conveys the idea of that which is set apart, separated, sanctified. Whatever is set apart (sanctified) is so ordained for a special purpose, in context speaking of the holy place where God is. Jesus although not a minister in the "shadow", as the perfect God Man served as the minister in the "substance", the true holy place. His ministry is better than the Aaronic priesthood. In this context, the reference appears to be to the "Holy of holies" within the **true tabernacle**.

Remember that this holy place is not only where Christ our High Priest now **serves** but where He **seeks** to bring us! The writer had just stated that...

(for the Law made nothing perfect), and on the other hand there is a

bringing in of a better hope, **through which we draw near to God.**
(see note Hebrews 7:19)

So the purpose of His ministry is that we be brought to God within the sanctuary. As Dr Johnson observes that

"It should not be the experience of believing Christians to enter heaven for the first time at their death. It should be an experience our spiritual experience constantly. We are to live in the sanctuary! By faith, of course. But our lives are to be lived in the light of what God seeks to do through the Lord Jesus Christ for us. Heaven should not be a totally strange place to us when we come in, in the physical sense."

AND IN THE TRUE TABERNACLE: kai tes skenes tes alethines:

- Hebrews 9:11-note; Hebrews 9:23,24-notes
- Hebrews 8 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Hebrews 8:1-13 A Better Priest for a Better Covenant](#) - Steven Cole
- [Hebrews 8:1-13 Hebrews and the New Covenant](#) - S Lewis Johnson
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The true tabernacle - The genuine tent in heaven. The earthly was only a copy and shadow ("a symbol for the present time") constructed from the pattern that Moses was shown on Mt. Sinai.

True (228) (**alethinos** from **alethes** = true, one who cannot lie from **a** = without + **lêthô** or **lanthanô** = to conceal = that which is out in the open) refers to words that conform to facts and thus are true, correct and dependable. **Alethinos** describes that which conforms to reality. It is that which has not only the name and resemblance, but the real nature corresponding to the name, in every respect corresponding to the idea signified by the name and thus real, true and genuine. It is the opposite of fictitious, counterfeit, imaginary, simulated or pretended. **Alethinos** speaks of that which measures up to or consists of all that would make that person or thing that which is expected of him or it.

Although we cannot see this **tabernacle** now, it is more abiding and more real than that which the Jews could see. Note it is not that the Old Covenant tabernacle was false, but that it was temporary and prefigured the tabernacle in the wilderness. It is true in contrast to that which is symbolic.

Tabernacle (4633) (**skene**) is a tent, booth, hut, tabernacle, any covered or shaded place. The first use is of **skene** is in the transfiguration where Peter sought to build "three tabernacles here, one for (Jesus), and one for Moses, and one for Elijah." (Mt 17:4).

The related verb **skenoō** is used to describe Jesus "*tabernacling*" with men - "And the

Word (Jn 1:1-3) became flesh, and **dwelt (skenoō)** among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." (Jn 1:14-**note**) **Skene** is used in the **Septuagint (Lxx)** to translate the Hebrew noun **mishkan (word study)** which was the dwelling place of God. The verb from which mishkan is derived is shakan which gives rise to the term **Shekinah (wikipedia)**, not found in the Bible but introduced in the Talmudic literature to describe the cloud of glory over the Holy of holies in the Tabernacle (and later the Temple), which was the visual manifestation of the presence of Jehovah (See on site discussion of the **Shekinah glory cloud**)

BDAG summarized - 1. a place of shelter, freq. of temporary quarters in contrast to fixed abodes of solid construction, tent, hut (a.) generally lodging, dwelling, of the tents of nomads (Ge 4:20, 12:8; Heb 11:9) (b) of a movable cultic tent - Yahweh's tabernacle (Ex 27:21, 29:4, Lev 1:1, Acts 7:44) or Moloch's tabernacle (Acts 7:43; cf Amos 5:26). 2. transcendent celestial tent, tent, dwelling metaph. ext. of 1. The earthly Tabernacle (Heb 9:11, 8:2, Rev 15:5)

Friberg summarizes **skene** - tent, booth; (1) generally, of transitory, movable lodging places for nomads, pilgrims, herdsmen, soldiers, constructed of various materials tent, lodging, dwelling (Heb 11.9); (2) as the portable divine sanctuary Tabernacle, Tent (Heb 8.5); (3) as referring to the temple in Jerusalem (Heb 13.10); (4) as referring to the outer and inner rooms of the Tabernacle, comprising the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies (Heb 9.2-8); (5) as a portable case for an idol shrine (Acts 7.43); (6) figuratively, of the heavenly dwelling place of God, sanctuary (Rev 13.6); (7) plural, as the eternal habitations of the righteous dwellings, homes (Lk 16.9); (8) figuratively, as a ruling dynasty or lineage ruling family, kingdom (Acts 15.16).

TDNT - Greek Usage. Of uncertain etymology, skene consistently means "tent," although with such nuances as market booth, accommodation in a tent, portable shrine, stage of a theater (originally a framework of pillars with portable walls), cover of a wagon, and cabin on the deck of a ship. The idea of transitoriness is inherent in the term, although later it can have the more general sense of dwelling or lodging. The LXX. **1.** Skene occurs some 435 times in the OT, mostly for Heb. ohel. About two-thirds of the references are to the **tent of meeting**. **2.** The use of tents is common in Israel; cf. Abraham (Ge 12:8), Jethro (Ex. 18:7), Korah (Nu 16:26-27), and Achan (Josh 7:21 ff.). Nomads (Ge 4:20), herdsmen (Jdg. 6:5), and soldiers (2Ki 7:7-8) live in tents. At Tabernacles living in tents recalls the wilderness period (Lev 23:42-43). **3.** The OT tells us little about the construction of tents. Cedar is mentioned in Song 1:5, and we read of pegs (Jdg. 4:21) and hangings (Isa 54:2). Pointed tents and matted structures both seem to be in vogue (cf. 2Sa 11:11). The structures used at Tabernacles are the latter, i.e., booths or huts of thickly intertwined leaves. **4.** The **tent of meeting** is always called a tent in the OT (ohel or mishkan). Later it perhaps becomes a matted structure, but originally it is the place where one meets God rather than the place where he resides, and skene (or skenōma) is chosen as the rendering, not because it bears the general sense of dwelling, but because it represents the original sense of tent, and probably also because the three consonants skn also occur in Heb. mškn. Yet in time the tabernacle comes to be regarded as the place of God's

dwelling and this tends to give to skene more of the sense of a dwelling in this context. **5**. A few poetic statements refer to God's dwelling in heaven or on earth as in a skene (cf. Isa 40:22; Ps. 18:11; Job 36:29). In Ps 27:5 (skēne) the idea is that of protection. Ex 26:30 presupposes a heavenly prototype for the tabernacle, but this does not imply that in heaven God lives in a skene.

In Heb 8:2, skene refers to **the** (definite article signifies it's uniqueness) **tabernacle** but not the one made according to the Old Covenant, for that tabernacle was made largely of skins and was designed to be portable, emphasizing the essence of its **impermanence**. (See [Tabernacle in the Wilderness](#)) The tabernacle of the Old Covenant gave every impression of being a temporary structure, which it was. As an aside, it is fascinating to note that God inspired **only two chapters to describe the creation**, but took **fifteen chapters to describe various aspects of the earthly Tabernacle** (esp. Ex 25-40). Clearly, God was saying that the **Tabernacle** was an important picture, one which demanded the attention of the Jews and for that matter of all believers. And as many expositors have noted (see discussion of **Typology**), the Tabernacle of the Old Covenant was essentially a "giant portrait of Jesus Christ" (See related study on **Covenant: Abrahamic versus Mosaic**). Everywhere you look in the Tabernacle you can see the Messiah. And yet the Tabernacle on earth was but a dim picture of the true Tabernacle in heaven.

Skene - 20 uses - dwellings(1), tabernacle(15), tabernacles(3), tents(1).

Matthew 17:4 Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, I will make three **tabernacles** here, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

Mark 9:5 Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three **tabernacles**, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

Luke 9:33 And as these were leaving Him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three **tabernacles**: one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah "-- not realizing what he was saying.

Luke 16:9-note "And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by means of the wealth of unrighteousness, so that when it fails, they will receive you into the eternal **dwellings**."

Acts 7:43 'YOU ALSO TOOK ALONG THE **TABERNACLE** OF MOLOCH AND THE STAR OF THE GOD ROMPHA, THE IMAGES WHICH YOU MADE TO WORSHIP. I ALSO WILL REMOVE YOU BEYOND BABYLON.' 44 "Our fathers had the **tabernacle** of testimony in the wilderness, just as He who spoke to Moses directed him to make it according to the pattern which he had seen.

Acts 15:16 'AFTER THESE THINGS I will return, AND I WILL REBUILD THE

TABERNACLE OF DAVID WHICH HAS FALLEN, AND I WILL REBUILD ITS RUINS, AND I WILL RESTORE IT,

Hebrews 8:2 a minister in the sanctuary and in the true **tabernacle**, which the Lord pitched, not man.

5 who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned by God when he was about to erect the **tabernacle**; for, "SEE," He says, "THAT YOU MAKE all things ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN WHICH WAS SHOWN YOU ON THE MOUNTAIN."

Hebrews 9:2 For there was a tabernacle prepared, the outer one, in which were the lampstand and the table and the sacred bread; this is called the holy place.

3 Behind the second veil there was a tabernacle which is called the Holy of Holies,

6 Now when these things have been so prepared, the priests are continually entering the outer tabernacle performing the divine worship,

8 The Holy Spirit is signifying this, that the way into the holy place has not yet been disclosed while the outer tabernacle is still standing,

11 But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation;

21 And in the same way he sprinkled both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry with the blood.

Hebrews 11:9 By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in **tents** with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise;

Hebrews 13:10 We have an altar from which those who serve the **tabernacle** have no right to eat.

Revelation 13:6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His **tabernacle**, that is, those who dwell in heaven.

Revelation 15:5 After these things I looked, and the temple of the **tabernacle** of testimony in heaven was opened,

Tony Garland comments on the **tabernacle of testimony** - Tabernacle is skēnēs, which denotes God's dwelling place. Of the testimony is tou martyriou, which can also be translated *of the witness* (Num. [18:2](#)). The term testimony or witness referred primarily to the tablets of the Ten Commandments which stood as a witness of the Mosaic Covenant and the entire body of Mosaic Law

which Israel came under at Mount Sinai. “And you shall put into the ark the Testimony which I will give you” (Ex. [25:16](#)). This testimony set forth God’s law, especially as embodied by the Ten Commandments, and now stands as a witness against the immoral actions of the nations in their rejection of God. The “**tabernacle of the Testimony**” (Ex. 38:21) was the meeting place, also called “the tabernacle of meeting” (Ex. 30:26), where God would meet with the children of Israel. It contained “the ark of the Testimony” (Ex. 30:26; 25:10) from which it derived the name **tabernacle of the Testimony**. The Levites were entrusted with the service of the tabernacle of the Testimony, to transport and attend to it (Nu 1:50). God’s presence dwelt between the cherubim over the mercy seat of the ark within the tabernacle. The earthly tabernacle was patterned after the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven. See [A Heavenly Pattern](#). See [The Abiding Presence of God](#). See [Tabernacle in the Wilderness](#). When the **heavenly temple** was last opened, the ark of His covenant (the “testimony”) was seen together with manifestations of judgment (Rev. 11:19-[note](#)). The same idea is present here. Whatever is about to come forth from the temple is a manifestation of God’s judgment for those who fall short of the testimony (witness) of the law and who have not sought Christ for refuge from God’s wrath. The righteous requirement of the law judges those who are guilty and under judgment of God’s wrath (Rom. 2:12; 3:19-20). For “the law brings about wrath” (Rom. 4:15). Believers will not be subject to the written requirements which were taken away in Christ (Rom. 7:6; Col. 2:14). See commentary on [Revelation 11:19](#).

Revelation 21:3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, “Behold, the **tabernacle** of God is among men, and He will dwell (skenoō = tabernacle, as in John 1:14 at His first advent) among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them,

Garland - The tabernacle is the meeting place between [sinful man and a holy God](#). Through His work on the cross, Jesus created the [Temple of the Believer](#), the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit among believers in this age (1Cor. 6:19; 2Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:19-22). But the spiritual union of believers with Christ is not the ultimate communion which the voice now declares. “For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known” (1Cor. [13:12](#) cf. Rev. 22:4-[note](#)). Such an unveiled view of God is impossible for mortal men. No living person has ever seen God in the fullness of His glory (John 1:18; 6:46; 1Jn. 4:12); He is invisible (Col. 1:15; 1Ti. 1.17) and

“dwells in unapproachable light” (1Ti. 6:16; cf. Ps. 104:2), exposure to which would mean instant death for any living person (Ex. 33:20). But in heaven, “the pure in heart ... shall see God” (Mat. 5:8), since they will be perfectly holy.

Comment - Even the name **Tabernacle** denoted the purpose common to it and to every Temple subsequently -- that God would dwell with man. It was always a manifestation of grace, wherein a Holy God took the initiative to seek to have intimacy with sinful man. On earth this tabernacle (and in the Old Covenant) was but a faint shadow of communion with the Holy One, but this intimacy will be consummated in the communion we share in the **true tabernacle** in heaven.

Skene - over 370x in the Septuagint -

Gen 4:20; 12:8; 13:3, 5; 18:1f, 6, 9f; 25:16; 26:25; 31:25; 33:17, 19; 35:16; Ex 18:7; 25:9; 26:1, 6f, 9, 12ff, 17f, 22f, 26f, 30, 35; 27:9, 21; 28:43; 29:4, 10f, 30, 32, 42, 44; 30:16, 18, 20f, 26, 36; 31:7; 33:7ff; 35:11, 21; 36:8, 34, 37; 38:8, 20f, 27, 30f; 39:33, 40; 40:2, 5f, 8f, 12, 17ff, 21f, 24, 26, 29f, 33ff, 38; Lev 1:1, 3, 5; 3:2, 8, 13; 4:4f, 7, 14, 16, 18; 6:16, 26, 30; 8:3f, 10, 31, 33, 35; 9:5, 23; 10:7, 9; 12:6; 14:11, 23; 15:14, 29, 31; 16:7, 16f, 20, 23, 33; 17:4ff, 9; 19:21; 23:34, 42f; 24:3; Num 1:1, 50f, 53; 2:2, 17; 3:7f, 10, 23, 25f, 29, 35f, 38; 4:3f, 15f, 23, 25f, 28, 30f, 33, 35, 37, 39, 41, 43, 47; 5:17; 6:10, 13, 18; 7:1, 3, 5, 89; 8:9, 15, 19, 22, 24, 26; 9:15, 17ff; 10:3, 11, 17, 21; 11:16, 24, 26; 12:4f, 10; 14:10; 16:9, 18f, 26f, 30, 42f, 50; 17:4, 7f, 13; 18:2ff, 6, 21ff, 31; 19:4, 13; 20:6; 24:5f; 25:6; 27:2; 31:30, 47, 54; Deut 1:27; 11:6; 16:13; 31:14f; Josh 7:21ff; 18:1; 19:51; 22:19, 29; 24:25; Judg 4:11, 17f, 20f; 5:24; 6:5; 7:8, 13; 8:11; 2 Sam 6:17; 7:2, 6; 11:11; 16:22; 22:12; 1 Kgs 1:39; 2:29f; 20:12; 2 Kgs 7:7f, 10; 1 Chr 5:10; 6:32, 48; 9:19, 21, 23; 15:1; 16:1, 39; 17:5; 21:29; 23:26, 32; 2 Chr 1:3ff, 13; 5:5; 8:13; 14:15; 24:6; 29:6; Ezra 3:4; 8:29; Neh 8:14ff; Job 5:24; 8:14; 18:15; 36:29; Ps 18:11; 27:5f; 29:1; 31:20; 42:4; 60:6; 78:60; 108:7; 118:15; Prov 14:11; Isa 1:8; 16:5; 22:16; 33:20; 38:12; 40:22; 54:2; Jer 4:20; 6:3; 10:20; 35:7, 10; 49:29; Lam 2:4; Dan 11:45; Hos 12:9; Amos 5:26; 9:11; Jonah 4:5; Hab 3:7;

Spurgeon - The sanctuary was a place in which only one person ever dwelt, and that was God Himself. The mysterious light that they called the Shekinah shone from between the wings of the cherubim; there were the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night—the symbols of the divine presence. It was God’s house. No man lived with Him; no man could. The high priest went in but once a year, and out he went again to the solemn assembly. But now, in Christ Jesus, in whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, we find a sanctuary to reside in, for we dwell in Him; we are one with Him. God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and as

God was in Christ, so is it written, "You in me, and I in you" (John 17:23). Such is the union between Christ and His people. Every believer is in Christ, even as God is in Christ. When a Christian loses the realization of the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the "minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle that the Lord set up, not man," then it is, above all other seasons, that he sighs and cries for a renewal of communion with Christ. We would envy any, however poor and insignificant they may be, who can maintain unbroken fellowship with their Lord.

WHICH THE LORD PITCHED NOT MAN: en ephexen (3SAAI) o kurios ouk anthropos:

- Hebrews 11:10-note; 2Cor 5:1; Colossians 2:11-note
- Hebrews 8 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Hebrews 8:1-13 A Better Priest for a Better Covenant](#) - Steven Cole
- [Hebrews 8:1-13 Hebrews and the New Covenant](#) - S Lewis Johnson
- [Hebrews 8:1-13 The New Covenant, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Hebrews 8:6-13 Written on the Heart](#) - John MacArthur

Which the Lord pitched, not man - John gives us a preview in the Revelation 15:5, 21:3 - see notes above for Tony Garland's commentary.

Pitched ([4078](#)) (**pegnumi**) means to make firm or stable, to fix, to erect. It means to fasten as the pegs of a tent, to pitch a tent. God's tabernacle in heaven is firmly pitched with permanent pegs, in contrast to the Old Covenant tabernacle which was "permanently" mobile.

Not ([3756](#)) (**ouk**) absolutely not man, but (by implication) pitched by God.

Hebrews 8:3 For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices; so it is necessary that this high priest also have something to offer. (NASB: Lockman)

Greek: [pas gar archiereus eis to prosperein](#) (PAN) [dora te kai thusias kathistatai](#); (3SPPI) [othen anagkaion echein](#) (PAN) [ti kai touton o prosenegke](#). (3SAAS)

Amplified: For every high priest is appointed to offer up gifts and sacrifices; so it is essential for this [High Priest] to have some offering to make also. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

NLT: And since every high priest is required to offer gifts and sacrifices, our High Priest must make an offering, too. (NLT - Tyndale House)

Wuest: For every high priest is appointed to offer up both gifts and sacrifices. Wherefore it is necessary that this one also be having that which He might offer. (Eerdmans)

Young's Literal: for every chief priest to offer both gifts and sacrifices is appointed, whence it is necessary for this one to have also something that he may offer;

Every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices, and so it was necessary for this one also to have something to offer. (NIV - IBS)

And since every high priest is required to offer gifts and sacrifices, our High Priest must make an offering, too. (NLT - Tyndale House)

**FOR EVERY HIGH PRIEST IS APPOINTED TO OFFER BOTH GIFTS & SACRIFICES:
pas gar archiereus eis to prosperein (PAN) dora te kai thusias kathistatai
(3SPPI):**

- Hebrews 8 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Hebrews 8:1-13 A Better Priest for a Better Covenant](#) - Steven Cole
- [Hebrews 8:1-13 Hebrews and the New Covenant](#) - S Lewis Johnson
- [Hebrews 8:1-13 The New Covenant, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Hebrews 8:6-13 Written on the Heart](#) - John MacArthur

In **Hebrews 5** the writer had stated that...

every high priest taken from among men is appointed on behalf of men in things pertaining to God, in order **to offer both gifts and sacrifices** for sins (see note Hebrews 5:1)

For - Notice that **for** is dropped in the NIV but present in the original Greek where it serves to link the argument to the preceding clause. **For (gar)** is a **term of explanation- What is the writer explaining?** He is explaining why the priesthood of Jesus is superior to the priesthood associated with the Old Covenant.

High priest (749) (**archiereus** from **archi-** = denoting rank or degree + **hiereus** = priest) was the principal member among the chief priests.

Appointed (put in charge, made) ([2525](#))(**kathistemi** from **katá** = down + **histemi** = to set or stand) means literally "to stand or set down". Most of the NT uses of **kathistemi** are figurative and refer to "setting someone down in office" or appointing or assigning a person to a position of authority. To put in charge or to appoint one to administer an office. To set in an elevated position. The point of the appointment is that no one just one day decided they would be a high priest.

Vincent comments that the primary meaning of **kathistemi** is "to set down, it is used in

classical Greek of bringing to a place, as a ship to the land, or a man to a place or person; hence to bring before a magistrate... From this comes the meaning to set down as, i.e., to declare or show to be; or to constitute, make to be. (Word studies in the New Testament: Vol. 3, Page 1-64)

Spurgeon - Go where you may, you will discover that, as soon as ever people begin to say "God," the next thing they say is "sacrifice"; and though their idea of God is often distorted, and their idea of sacrifice is distorted also, yet both ideas are there. Man, however degraded, cannot altogether forget that there is a God; and then, shrinking back from the awful majesty of the divine holiness, he at least hopes that there is a sacrifice by which his sins may be put away. He feels that there must be one if he is ever to be brought into connection with God; and so, in some form or other, the notion of sacrifice crops up wherever there is any religion at all. It may be in the ghastly form of human sacrifice, which is a hideous misinterpretation which has crept in under the darkness and gloom of heathenism or false teaching; or it may appear in the continued sacrifice of bullocks, or lambs, or other victims; but, somehow or other, the idea is there. Man seems to know, in his inmost nature, that he must bring a sacrifice if he would appear before God; and this is, by no means, an error on his part. However erroneous may be the form it takes, in its essence there is truth in it.

HENCE IT IS NECESSARY THAT THIS HIGH PRIEST ALSO HAVE SOMETHING TO OFFER: hothen anagkaion echein (PAN) ti kai touton o prosenegke (3SAAS):

- Hebrews 9:14-note; Heb 10:9-12-note; John 6:51; Ephesians 5:2-note; Titus 2:14-note
- Hebrews 8 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Hebrews 8:1-13 A Better Priest for a Better Covenant](#) - Steven Cole
- [Hebrews 8:1-13 Hebrews and the New Covenant](#) - S Lewis Johnson
- [Hebrews 8:1-13 The New Covenant, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Hebrews 8:6-13 Written on the Heart](#) - John MacArthur

Necessary (316) (**anagkaios** from **anagke** = necessity, constraint which is either a result of external pressures or moral sense of duty) means what one cannot do without. Compelling, pressing need. It describes that which is indispensable, what ought to be done according to the law of duty or what is required by the circumstances. A moral and logical necessity because it was so ordered in the Old Covenant regulations.

Even under the Old Covenant it was **necessary** for the high priest to have something to offer for ...

into the second only the high priest enters, once a year ([Day of Atonement](#)), **not without taking blood**, which he **offers** for himself and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance. (see Hebrews 9:7-note) (Sacrifice for sin was an essential part of the work of the Aaronic priesthood.)

This High Priest - The words "high priest" are added as they fit the context. Remember that the NAS and KJV italicize words that are added and not found in the original Greek text. Clearly this refers to Christ.

To offer (4374) (**prosphero** from **prós** = to, toward + **phéro** = bring) means literally to bring to and so to offer or present. **Prosphero** is a key verb in Hebrew more than one-third of uses being in Hebrews ([Click to study the 18/46 NT uses](#))

Notice the **orist tense** emphasizes that Christ's offering as High Priest was once for all, consistent with the author's repeated emphasis on the unique singularity of Christ's sacrifice. **Prosphero** is an integral part of the sacrificial vocabulary in Septuagint (LXX) (>50x in Leviticus alone!)

He does not elaborate further on what is offered at this point but he had mentioned offering in the previous chapter

Who (referring to Jesus) does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins, and then for the sins of the people, because this **He did once for all when He offered up Himself**. (See note Hebrews 7:27)

The writer will explain this more fully in the next 2 chapters where he reasons that in contrast to the animal blood offered by the earthly priests...

how much more will the blood of Christ, Who through the eternal Spirit **offered Himself** without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (see **note** Hebrews 9:14) (cf Hebrews 9:25, 26, 27, 28, 10:10, 11, 12, 13, 14)

Christ offering is **better blood** which yields a **better promise** of a clear conscience.

Spurgeon - If God is to pardon sin, there must be something done by which His law can be honored, His justice can be vindicated, and His truthfulness can be established; in fact, there must be an atonement. That is what it all comes to, or else pardon is impossible, and you and I must be lost forever.

In John Jesus alludes to His sacrificial offering of Himself declaring to the Jews...

I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread also which I shall give for the life of the world is My flesh. (John 6:51)

In Ephesians 5 Paul alludes to the perfect offering of Christ writing that the saints are to

walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and **gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma**. (see note Ephesians 5:2)

In the preceding chapter the writer of Hebrews explained that Jesus the heavenly High Priest actually became the offering when offered His own body and blood and thus

does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins, and then for the sins of the people, because this He did **once for all** when He **offered up Himself**. (see note Hebrews 7:27, cf Hebrews 9:12, Hebrews 10:12; 13; 14).

But there is also the sense in which He offers **gifts and sacrifices** to His Father on our behalf, for He is ever the Mediator between God and man, but even these are offered on the basis of the once for all sacrifice of Himself. The writer for example has already alluded to Jesus' present work as High Priest writing that...

we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need. (see notes Hebrews 4:15; 16)

As High Priest Christ ministers to believers who are being tested...

For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid (literally to run to one upon hearing the cry for help! Are you availing yourself of this privilege of His assistance?) of those who are tempted (literally "are continually being tested or tempted") (see note Hebrews 2:18)

As **Expositor's Greek Testament** - That Christ is in heaven as a **leitourgos** as an active minister in holy thing, is proved by the universal law, that every High Priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices. Christ is not idle in heaven, but being there as there as High Priest He must have something to offer; what that is, He has told us in Hebrews 7:27 (note), but there is no emphasis on the what, but merely on the fact that He must be actively ministering in heaven as a **leitourgos**. ([Hebrews 8 Commentary - The Expositor's Greek Testament](#))