

NEW AND IMPROVED - II

Scripture Reading: Read Hebrews 8

A number of years ago, the Coca-Cola Company introduced a reformulated version of its original Coca-Cola soft drink. It was a marketing failure as the American public gave the new product a great thumbs down. The company reintroduced the original formula under the brand, "Coca-Cola Classic" and it resulted in a significant gain in sales. Folks found the old to be better than the new.

The temptation for the Hebrew Christians to go back to the original formula found in the old covenant was quite strong. It was familiar, comfortable, safe, and ritualistic in a way that made the worshippers feel good when they brought sacrifices for the priest to offer on the altar. It was classic worship with which they were familiar and it was legal under Roman law. No wonder the struggle was intense for these Jewish believers to keep holding on to Christ.

It's why the author of Hebrews has to repeatedly show these believers why the new version is so much better than the classic version. He knows the pull is strong to go back. In Hebrews 7, we witnessed the contrast he made between the old priesthood and Jesus, the great high priest, and his conclusion that Jesus is superior. In today's chapter reading, further contrasts are presented revealing the superiority of the new over the classic version:

- 1) **Jesus has a superior ministry (8:6)** – the old priests ministered in a sanctuary that was a copy and shadow of what is in heaven but Jesus ministers in the heavenly sanctuary (8:1-2, 5).
- 2) **The new covenant is superior to the old (8:6)** – in the old covenant, the laws were written on tablets of stone but in the new covenant, they're written on the tablets of believers' hearts; in the old covenant, the knowledge of God was restricted primarily to the Jewish people but in the new covenant, the gospel is available to both Jew and Gentile and all may know the Lord (8:7-11, 13).
- 3) **And is founded on better promises (8:6)** - In the old covenant, the blood of goats and bulls could not remove the sins of the people but in the new covenant, God has promised to forgive our wickedness and remember our sins no more (8:12).

Even though New Coke may have crashed and burned when it was introduced, the new covenant is still going strong. After tasting that the Lord is good, billions of people have made the switch and have put their trust in Christ for salvation. They came to realize that all the other brands out there, whether the old covenant or any other religion found on planet earth, just don't taste as good as the living water Christ provides.

Action Step & Prayer Focus: Do you know Christ as Savior? Every other attempt to reach God apart from Christ ultimately leaves a bitter aftertaste in your mouth. Christ is superior in his ministry, in his new covenant and in his promises. Open your heart to the Lord today and pray for him to forgive you of your sins and make you his child.

Take-a-way: *For the taste of your life, try Jesus. He's the Real Thing!*