

Better Ministry ... Better Covenant ... Better Promises

Hebrews 8:1-9:15

Northwest Community Church, Todd Havekost, 6/16/2024

Introduction

The dictionary defines analogy as a method of expression that explains the unfamiliar by comparing it to something that is familiar. By extension, it also applies to explaining the unseen by comparing with things that are seen. It plays a major role in thinking and all forms of learning, including parents with children and teachers with students.¹

This learning method has extensive application to us as followers of Jesus since our entire lives are governed by "**look[ing] not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal**" as 2 Cor. 4:18 tells us.

So much of Jesus' teaching falls under this heading. In Matthew 13 alone Jesus taught 7 parables introduced by "**the kingdom of heaven is like ... like a mustard seed ... like leaven ... like a treasure hidden in a field ...**"

So much of the Old Testament (OT) also makes extensive use of analogy. Those events really happened, and truths are taught by those events as they stand by themselves. But time and time again God designed and orchestrated these events to also shed light on later events and eternal truths, most frequently about Jesus.

Every one of us can understand God's truths. Most Sundays when teaching elementary children, I review John 3:16 with them, and they get it. After reciting the verse, I ask, "what does everyone who believes in Jesus have?" and they answer, "eternal life." Then I ask, "who has eternal life?" and they answer "everyone who believes in Jesus." And then I reinforce that eternal life means being spiritually alive to God for forever, in this life and in the life to come. There is a connection between John 3 and Numbers 21 (a "hyperlink" in modern terminology).

In Numbers 21 the Israelites were complaining about their wilderness journey speaking **against God and against Moses** (v. 5). So God sent poisonous snakes their way. When the people repented of their complaining and cried out to God for relief in verse 7, He provided a solution.

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent, and set it [up high] on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live" (Num. 21:8, NKJV). Everyone who looked up at the bronze snake (indicating they believed the solution God was providing) lived.

¹ One author goes so far as to assert that "analogy-making is what lies at the core of human thought" (Douglas Hofstadter, "Analogy as the Core of Cognition").

That story stands entirely on its own. Their complaining was particularly perverted because their difficulty was entirely self-inflicted. If they had been walking by faith at Kadesh Barnea seven chapters earlier, they would have already entered and been enjoying the blessings of the Promised Land. That they were still wandering (and would be for 40 years) was entirely their own fault, a direct consequence of their own sin, a classic case of reaping what you sow. But that fact conveniently escaped their awareness as they blamed God.

In any situation, God frowns on complaining in a major way, because it reflects not walking by faith, not living with the eye of faith. Complaining says "God I am not on board with Your plan, I don't believe You know what You are doing. I want things to go my way and I am justified in criticizing You that they are not." That is the path of emptiness, of futility, of death.

Now back to John 3:16. In the immediately preceding verses, as He speaks with Nicodemus, Jesus brings out additional significance from that Numbers 21 event. **"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life"** (John 3:14-15). When God orchestrated His solution in Numbers 21, He was looking ahead to leveraging that to help people more fully understand the life-giving benefits of Jesus' death. Just as in Numbers 21 where people who believed God's promised cure and looked at the lifted-up serpent lived, so also people who "look at" (believe in) the "lifted up on a cross" Savior also live.

Realizing the omniscient, eternal God inspired the Biblical authors and their content makes studying Scripture so energizing. God has woven so much profound instruction and application and correlation into the events and teachings of Scripture. There is always more to understand, there is always more to apply.

I love the story in Acts 8 where the Holy Spirit is beginning to send the good news of Jesus out from Jerusalem into surrounding areas. One "next step" in His plan was to equip a government official traveling south to Africa to be an ambassador of that good news.

Philip ran up and heard him [the government official] reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?" And he said, "Well, how could I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him (Acts 8:30-31).

Then Philip the Deacon helped the Ethiopian man understand that Isaiah 53, in its original setting a description of the Servant Israel, chosen by God to be a light to the nations involving a path of both victory and suffering, had an additional, more profound, ultimate application and fulfillment in Jesus who was THE Suffering Servant.

Scripture contains profound, infinite truth. We can accurately understand its teachings. But we will never fully "plumb the depths" of all the truth that is there.²

I repeatedly feel the same way as that government official, "God, how can I understand more of what You want to communicate in this passage unless someone guides me?" That is why I have such a great appreciation for teachers and authors who have studied a given Bible book extensively and who explain the text with integrity. For teachers who avoid importing foreign concepts that would never have been considered by either the author or his initial primary audience. For teachers who point out that a reference in chapter 6 represents the fifth time this Biblical author has already used that word in this book and the resulting implications for understanding what he means when he uses that word.

I am very thankful we sit under such teaching with Dave every Sunday. And I am very thankful for the many authors and teachers God has provided in my life who have profoundly enhanced my learning journey and thereby my ability to follow Jesus more faithfully.

One of the activities I most look forward to in the new earth is sitting at the feet of Jesus and hearing Him teach through the entire Bible. I am so eager to hear Him explain "this is what that meant; this is what that was referring to; when this happened, it was also shedding light on this past event or foreshadowing this future event."

In today's passage, Hebrews 8:1-9:15, we have the immense privilege of "sitting at the feet" of the Holy Spirit-inspired author of Hebrews as he enhances our understanding of how so many OT events and practices and teachings pointed to Jesus and were fulfilled by Jesus.

Hebrews 8:1-5

As Dave covered last week at the end of chapter 7, Jesus became our perfected High Priest whose ministry lasts forever.³ And connected with that forever ministry the author introduced a teaser in 7:22, **Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant**, which he will elaborate on in our passage.

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 (8:1).

Up to this point in Hebrews, a primary theme has been Jesus is our High Priest.⁴ The High Priest facilitates access into the presence of God, specifically with reference to dealing with sin. One

² There are several hundred OT allusions in Revelation (estimates vary from 400 to more than 1000). To the degree we are familiar with the OT, we will pick up on those and will have a better understanding of what is happening and what it means. People like me who are novices in the OT probably miss the great majority of those. That is one reason Revelation can be such a challenging book to interpret.

³ The short span of the 8 verses at the end of chapter 7 (vs.:21-28) contain 4 "forever" references of Jesus: **priest forever; continues forever, save forever, made perfect forever.**

⁴ It has been explicitly referenced in every chapter except chapter 1, and even there it is implied in 1:3 (J. Paul Tanner, The Grace NT Commentary, p. 1061).

major implication of having Jesus as our High Priest is He enables us to have cleansed consciences as we will see later in this passage.⁵ Another key aspect of Jesus' high priestly ministry is that He **has taken His seat at the right hand** of God of the Father. Sitting down indicated that His work was finished. The significance of this will also be developed later in our passage.

A minister in the sanctuary and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man (8:2).

The Jewish readers of Hebrews were very familiar with the tabernacle built by man. It was built according to the precise specifications God provided in the OT. In contrast to that, we learn here Jesus is carrying out His priestly ministry **in the sanctuary and true tabernacle**, which represents the actual presence of God, the true place of worship **which the Lord pitched, not man**.

The author is setting up a major theme running through our passage that all the worship infrastructure that drove the frenzy of activities within Jewish worship, that is all symbols, it is not the real thing, it pointed to the real thing,

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 (8:3).

As the author had previewed in 7:27 and will develop further in our passage, Jesus did indeed have something to offer, but it wasn't the blood of animals.

Now if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer the gifts according to the Law (8:4).

As Dave explained last week, Jesus wasn't qualified to be a priest **according to the Law**, because under the Mosaic Covenant priests had to be from the tribe of Levi. Instead, as we saw last week, Jesus was from the tribe of Judah and a priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

Who [those earthly priests] 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 pattern⁶ which was shown you on the mountain"⁷ (8:5).

The earthly tabernacle was a pattern, a blueprint, an analogy of the heavenly realities. It consisted of tangible symbols, something you can see, that pointed to the heavenly, unseen, eternal truths.

God prescribed the earthly tabernacle to play a central role in the Jewish system of worship. But that was just a copy, it was all just shadows. Now that Jesus has come, that stuff is like

⁵ This "dealing with sin" aspect was also previewed in chapter 4. **Therefore since we have a great high priest ... let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need (4:16).**

⁶ Gk. "tupos" here has the meaning "an archetype serving as a model, type, pattern, model" (NET Bible, Heb. 8:5, note 6).

⁷ Ex. 25:40.

cotton candy, all fluff, no substance, no reality. Its only value was pointing to the real thing, Jesus. The repeated exhortation by the author of Hebrews is don't leave following Jesus and go back to religious activity. If you do, you have lost all the substance.

We aren't plugged into sacrifices, but we too can substitute religious activities for Jesus. If I show up for Sunday worship, I have "checked the box." Or we can be tempted to substitute following rules for following Jesus.⁸

Every societal or religious culture has its own set of behavioral norms that can tempt us to substitute them for the real thing. Don't shrink back from following Jesus into any of the trappings. Keep walking by faith, no matter what.

Hebrews 8:6-13

In contrast to the copy and shadows of the system of Jewish worship, verse 6 highlights the superiority of Jesus with a list of "betters".

But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises (8:6).

Jesus has a better priestly **ministry**. He mediates a **better covenant**. His covenant involves **better promises**. This **better covenant** (previewed in 7:22) is the focus of rest of chapter 8.

For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second. For finding fault with them, He says ... (8:7-8a).

Israel failed miserably in her mission to be a light to the nations, in her calling to make God look good before the nations. As a result, God gave a **new covenant**, which we now read about in this extended quotation from Jeremiah 31:31-34.

**"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 (8:8).**

Days are coming - in the days of Jeremiah God indicated His intention to put into effect in the future a new covenant with the nation of Israel.

Not like the covenant which I made with their fathers

⁸ Recognizing the Colossians were tempted to do this very thing, Paul exhorted them: **If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, "Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!" (which all refer to things destined to perish with use) in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men? These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence (Col. 2:20-23).**

**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 (8:9).**

Not like - there were dramatic differences between this new covenant and the covenant implemented with the nation on Mt. Sinai. Despite God's miraculous deliverance of His people **out of the land of Egypt** through the ten plagues and the Red Sea, **they did not continue in My covenant** - another reference to Israel's failure to live up to her mission as reflected in the Mosaic Covenant.

**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.**

**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.**

**For I will be merciful to their iniquities,
And I will remember their sins no more."**

Here we see the **better promises** indicated in verse 6.

- **My laws into their minds ... write them on their hearts** - inner inclination to obey.
- **Their God ... My people** - special relationship to God as His people.
- **All will know me** - every person will have innate knowledge of God.
- **I will remember their sins no more** – the author will expand on this forgiveness theme in 10:17-18.

Verses 8 and 10 both state explicitly that the New Covenant was made with Israel. Paul confirms in Romans 11⁹ that God will still fulfill His promises to and with Israel at a future time. We in the church are in "the splash zone" of the New Covenant in a good way. We today experience many of its benefits including the indwelling Holy Spirit empowering us to obey and forgiveness of sins.

When He said, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear (8:13).

⁹ Especially in verses 26-29.

The word "new" carries with it far-reaching implications. When I have a car, I refer to it as "my car." The moment I buy a "new car," what happens to the car I had been driving? It becomes "the old car."¹⁰

Similarly, God's pronouncement of a **new covenant** in Jeremiah 31, and Jesus' words at the Last Supper **this cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood** (Lk 22:20)¹¹ indicate the prior Mosaic Covenant is obsolete. So why would you want to go back to the old, obsolete, fading off the scene Mosaic Covenant?

Hebrews 9:1-10

In chapter 8 we saw that Jesus brought in a better covenant and that He serves in a better tabernacle. In the first half of chapter 9 he will elaborate on both of those themes.

Now even the first covenant had regulations of divine worship and the earthly sanctuary (9:1).

This introduces two of the limitations of the prior covenant that the author will explain.

- **Regulations of divine worship** will be covered in verses 6 and 7.
- The **earthly sanctuary** will be addressed beginning in the following verse.

For there was a tabernacle¹² prepared, the outer one, in which were the lampstand and the table and the sacred bread; this is called the holy place. Behind the second veil there was a tabernacle which is called the Holy of Holies, having a golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden jar holding the manna, and Aaron's rod which budded, and the tables of the covenant; and above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat; but of these things we cannot now speak in detail (9:2-5).

Of the design of the earthly tabernacle the author writes at the end of verse 5 **we cannot now speak in detail**. These specifications took five chapters in Exodus. But the author only mentions them here in passing. He isn't going to spend much time here. Why? Because these are the symbols, not the substance.

In verse 6 he picks up on the **regulations of divine worship** from verse 1.

Now when these things have been so prepared, the priests are continually entering the outer tabernacle performing the divine worship, but into the second, only the high priest enters

¹⁰ A humorous TV sitcom was based on the premise of a man who divorced his wife named Christine and married a much younger woman who happened to also be named Christine. The sitcom was titled "The New Adventures of Old Christine."

¹¹ "With Christ's first advent the moment of change had arrived" (Tanner, p. 1063).

¹² The tabernacle was used by Israel in the earlier part of their history. That was later replaced by the temple in Jerusalem, which was modeled after the tabernacle.

once a year, not without taking blood, which he offers for himself and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance (9:6-7).

The tabernacle had two areas. The **outer tabernacle** (outer area) was **called the holy place** (v. 2) where the priests performed their daily sacrifices and services.

The **second** area, the **Holy of Holies** (v. 3), represented the presence of God. That access was extremely limited, to **only the high priest** (one person) only **once a year** (on the day of Atonement). And he could not enter **without taking blood** to cover both his own sins and the sins of the people.

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, which is a symbol for the present time (9:8-9a).

The lack of access to the holy place while the tabernacle arrangement was in effect symbolized lack of access to the presence of God, specifically, to deal with sin. In this manner the Holy Spirit (who had revealed to Moses the plan of the tabernacle) was indicating that this inferior arrangement (where only the high priest had access and only once a year) was not the final solution. This sets up a dramatic contrast with the confident access we have into God's presence through the blood of Jesus that will be the focus in Heb. 10:19 (stay tuned!).

Accordingly both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make the worshiper perfect in conscience¹³, since they relate only to food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until a time of reformation (9:9b-10).

Another major deficiency of this system of limited access and perpetual sacrifice and external regulations was that it never left **the worshiper perfect in conscience**. They never had a clear conscience, they were never at peace. One could never have confidence that the blood of animals had adequately dealt with his sins, especially since it was repeated day after day and year after year, and it was focused on externals.

This inferior arrangement was in effect "until the time of setting things right" (literal translation), until the reality (Jesus) came that all these symbols were pointing to.

Hebrews 9:11-15

The time anticipated by **not yet** (v.8) and **until** (v. 10) has now arrived in verse 11!

¹³ This is the first of 4 references to having either an unsettled or cleansed **conscience** in chapters 9 and 10.

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 (9:11).

Jesus brought to pass the **good things to come**, all the **bettors** we have seen in this passage. In verses 11 and 12 we see three major ways the priestly ministry of Jesus is superior to the ministry of the Old Covenant.

(1) As anticipated in 8:2, Jesus entered **the greater and more perfect tabernacle** in heaven. Jesus carried out His priestly ministry in the actual the presence of God the Father.

And not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption (9:12).

(2) Jesus presented **His own blood** for sins (based on His sinless life), not the blood of **goats and calves**.

(3) Jesus **entered the holy place once for all**. In contrast to the daily sacrifices offered by the priests, and the year-after-year sacrifices offered by the High Priest on the Day of Atonement, Jesus' one time offering suffices **once for all: for all time, for all sin, for all people**.

As a result, He obtained **eternal redemption**. Redemption means releasing from obligation by virtue of payment. Jesus made the full payment for our sins, releasing us forever from the debt we owed God.¹⁴

For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh ... (9:13).

Recently Mike Melito shared with several of us his study (spanning three pages of fine print) identifying an incredible number of symbolic connections between the details God prescribed for the Red Heifer offering in Numbers 19 referenced in this verse and Jesus' sacrifice for us. This is another great example of how God sought to prepare Israel for her Messiah and teach us the profound life-giving benefits of the death of Jesus on our behalf.

But if divorced from the fulfilling reality of Jesus Numbers 19 turns into lengthy onerous regulation, it becomes as useless as a proverbial "bridge to nowhere."

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? (9:14)

¹⁴ Redemption "was a word used for ransom money paid to release prisoners of war" (Tanner, p. 1066).

Having now dealt fully and finally with sin, Jesus' redemption **cleanses** the **conscience**, in contrast with the recurring **sacrifices** (v. 9) and **dead works** (here, referring back to v. 10) of the Old Covenant that could do nothing for the conscience. A cleansed conscience is free of the cloud of guilt and shame and empowers us to walk in liberty (Gal 5:13).

For this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that, since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance (9:15).

Mediator is not used here in the contemporary as someone who works to achieve compromise between opposing parties. Instead, it identifies Jesus as the one appointed by God to enact a new covenant which established the framework for a new relationship between God and his people, entirely on God's terms.¹⁵

Called here reflects the high calling to believers throughout Hebrews to faithfully serve Jesus and thereby **receive the promise of the eternal inheritance**, i.e., to reign with Jesus as one of His partners.¹⁶ **Inheritance** is a familiar theme, it is the fifth of eight uses of various forms of the word throughout Hebrews.¹⁷

Application

As we have discussed from the beginning of Hebrews, the "so what?" of the entire book has been: when life gets hard, when following Jesus gets tough, don't shrink back from following Jesus. The Jewish Christian readers of Hebrews were experiencing persecution for following Jesus and were tempted to retreat to the safe and familiar observance of Judaism.

Persecution that seeks to pressure a person to abandon following Jesus and conform to the prevailing culture is not just a thing of the past. It is also a challenge faced today by countless of our brothers and sisters around the world, whether it arises from Islam, Hinduism, or atheistic Communism.

That isn't likely the specific temptation we face, at least not presently. But it is likely our temptation to shrink back from following Jesus will also be to something comfortable, something safe, something familiar. As we seek to apply the "I have decided to follow Jesus, no turning back" exhortation found throughout Hebrews, I will share a temptation that lurks for me, and you can see if it resonates with you.

¹⁵ NET Bible, Heb. 9:15, note 19.

¹⁶ Hebrews 3:1 captures a similar concept, "**partakers** (metachoi, partners, companions) **of a heavenly calling.**" In his comments on 1:14 Dave described this as "those who will inherit great enjoyment of God's rich blessings in the life to come because, even when suffering greatly, they are still following Jesus".

¹⁷ Heir, inherit, inheritance: Heb. 1:2,14; 6:12,17; 9:15, 11:7,8; 12:17.

When we studied Hebrews 2, we learned that Jesus defeated death so that He **might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives** (2:15). In our culture staying safe (and its ultimate expression, avoiding death) is the dominant value that often trumps all others. Quoting from Dave's sermon on Hebrews 2:

"For lots of people, the universal human experience - death - controls, the prospect of death enslaves. The enemy wants to use the threat of death against us. When we are facing desperately hard times and huge challenges, he wants to leverage our human fear of death to tempt us to stop following Jesus. He wants us to think that the worst possible thing that can happen to us is death.... What a counter-cultural way to live it would be if we fully embraced the truth: Death - and anything that might lead to death - is not worthy of our fear."

Many of us observed and possibly experienced some aspect of that challenge in 2020 with the response to Covid, when living out Christian "spur one another on" community through interacting in person at church often lost out in competition with staying safe and avoiding the slightest potential risk to one's physical health.

I shared last year the story of being very challenged personally when rereading Safely Home, a fictional novel by Randy Alcorn. The two main characters in the story are:

- "Quan", a Christian in China living faithfully for Jesus despite far-reaching oppressive government persecution that continually threatens his and his family's well-being and even their lives; and
- An ambitious American businessman "Ben", who was his friend and roommate in an American university 20 years earlier.

Throughout the book Ben grapples with trying to come to grips with Quan's life choices to smuggle in Bibles and meet secretly in the middle of the night for worship services. Initially those choices torpedoed Quan's desired career as a college professor and plunge him and his family into deep poverty. Later the consequences escalate to arrest, slave labor in a factory, and ultimately death.

While immersed in the fictional story it became increasingly apparent that my instinctive visceral reactions to threatening situations that Quan faced were far more closely aligned with Ben's "it's not worth the risk, look at the consequences" values than Quan's "I have decided to follow Jesus and I will not shrink back from that no matter the blowback."

That experience ended up being a revealing "look in the mirror" for me. It showed me I was naïve about the extent to which our cultural value of avoiding major hardship or death had permeated my perspectives and values.

Two more brief scenarios for reflection. When we hear of parents with young children following their calling and moving their family to serve as missionaries in a country where it is dangerous to be a Christian, is there any sense of "O no, what are they doing, don't they realize the danger they are putting their children into?" that wells up within us?

And, if we heard on the news this afternoon there had been a drive-by shooting at some church in San Antonio this morning and authorities had no leads on tracking down the perpetrators, would that influence whether we plan to attend church next Sunday?

Jesus was the fulfillment of everything the OT was pointing forward to. He had a better ministry, He was mediator of a better covenant, a covenant that contained better promises.

And now, Jesus freely gives eternal life to everyone who believes in Him. And for all of us who have received that free gift of eternal life, Jesus is the source of true abundant overflowing life as we faithfully follow Him.

By virtue of His faithful life, death, and resurrection as the incarnate Son **God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow** (Phil. 2:9-10a).¹⁸ Jesus will reign in righteousness in the age to come.

Jesus is looking for people who will follow Him faithfully in this life, for people who will fulfill the stewardship He has entrusted to them in this life. Those people will **receive the promise of the eternal inheritance** (Heb. 9:15). Those people will reign with Him as His partners in the age to come.

Following Jesus will often not be easy. It will often not be comfortable. It may not even be safe. But no matter how hard it gets, no matter what the adversity, no matter what the opposition, following Jesus is always the path of life. Following Jesus will always be worth it in this life and will result in profound blessing in the age to come.

¹⁸ In Hebrews that same concept is expressed twice in terms of God **making His enemies a footstool for His feet** (1:13; 10:13).