

# OpenTheo

## April 18th: Job 16 & Hebrews 8

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An advocate for Job in heaven. A better covenant.

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### Transcript

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Job chapter 16. Job chapter 16. drinks their poison, the terrors of God are arrayed against me.

As if God's own arrows didn't suffice, God as a military commander has set Job up as a target for many archers under his command. God seems to be playing the part of the accuser to Job and God has established lots of little accusers in the friends to accompany him. It doesn't seem enough for God to bring one breach upon him.

He has breached him in so many places. In his speech in the preceding chapter, Eliphaz has spoken about the wicked man as like an obese warrior, recklessly running towards God to attack him. Job's response seems to be suggesting that the contrary is the case.

God is the one who is running at him like a warrior. Job is utterly broken. He is in mourning.

He knows he is innocent, that he has done nothing wrong, and yet blow upon blow falls upon him from God's hand. In his earlier speech, Job has spoken about his wish that he might deal directly with the Lord and that his case might be addressed in such a fashion. He had even spoken about his wish that he might be covered up in Sheol for a time until the anger of the Lord had passed by and then he might be summoned and restored to life and he might find some vindication.

Now he presents another possible hope. He calls upon the earth not to cover up his blood, that his cry, his appeal for justice would not be laid to rest. We might think here of the story of Cain and Abel, where Abel's blood called from the ground against Cain his

brother.

From addressing the earth, he looks to the heaven, where he believes that there is one who will plead his case, someone who will go between him and God, who will be an advocate for him, appealing for justice to be done in his case. Verse 20 could be translated along these lines. John Hartley translates verses 20 and 21 as follows.

Behold my interpreter is my friend, to God my eyes drip tears, and he argues for a man with God, as between a man and his fellow. David Clines translates the verses as follows. It is my cry that is my spokesman, sleeplessly I wait for God's reply, it will argue a mortal's case before God, as a man argues for his friend.

There are clearly differences between the commentators in how to understand this. Some see it as a reference to a third party that is going to intercede on Job's behalf. Norman Harvel takes this approach, seeing the mediator as an imagined third party, perhaps like the angel of the Lord.

In Zechariah chapter 3 verse 1 we have an example of this. Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. In chapters 1 and 2 Satan had been the heavenly accuser.

Job is now looking for a heavenly advocate to speak on his behalf. Hartley argues that the advocate must be God himself. He writes, the interpreter is one who advocates a party's case, explaining the situation to the court and defending him against any charges.

Who could that party be save God himself in the light of the last verse? That is, as Job's interpreter, he will argue the merits of his case with God just as between a man and his fellow, i.e. just as human beings do. Since Job's earthly friends have failed him, God will take their place by defending his accused friend, even before himself. No wonder these great thoughts cause Job's eyes to flow with tears.

Klines argues that Job's own cry is going to be that that speaks before God. To my mind the positions of Klines or Harvel are both more likely than that of Hartley. I would lean in favour of seeing this as a third party, perhaps an angelic figure of some kind, the angel of the Lord being the perfect candidate.

Of course, from a broader Old Testament and New Testament theology, we can see that the angel of the Lord is identified with God himself, so Hartley's position may be theologically accurate, even if it is not the most exegetically convincing reading. Job's statement here ends with a note of urgency. Job will soon pass away, so his cry needs to be heard as soon as possible.

A question to consider, how might reflecting upon this chapter help us better to understand what it means for Christ to be our advocate, as we are told that he is as our

High Priest in the New Testament? Hebrews chapter 8 Now the point in what we are saying is this. We have such a High Priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, a minister in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up, not man. For every High Priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices, thus it is necessary for this priest also to have something to offer.

Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law. They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things. For when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God saying, See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain.

But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old, as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second. For he finds fault with them when he says, Behold the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt.

For they did not continue in my covenant, and so I showed no concern for them, declares the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord. I will put my laws into their minds and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God and they shall be my people, and they shall not teach each one his neighbor and each one his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, for I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.

In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete, and what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away. The author of Hebrews has been contrasting the priestly order of Melchizedek with the Levitical priesthood, and continues to do so into chapter 8. In chapter 8 he moves into a contrast between the old covenant order in terms of which the old Levitical priesthood operated and the new covenant with its Melchizedekian priesthood. He also contrasts the nature and the context of their service.

Our High Priest, Jesus Christ, is High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek. He is a priest in the heavenly places, in the true tabernacle of the heavens, high above any earthly priest. Hebrews works with a sort of vertical typology.

When we talk about typology we are generally talking about horizontal typology, where former events anticipate later events, and later events explore or develop the patterns of earlier ones. However, there are other ways in which typology can operate. A vertical typology thinks about the relationship between different levels of reality.

A heavenly reality above is impressed upon an earthly reality beneath. So the tabernacle of Moses does not just anticipate things that are to come, it also relates to something that already exists in the heavens above. Heavenly realities are mirrored in the earthly realities of the sanctuary.

The Levitical priesthood operates in the realm of the earthly model, the copy and the shadow of the heavenly temple, according to the order of which the pattern for the tabernacle was given to Moses on Mount Sinai. The book of Hebrews has both horizontal and vertical elements of typology, which often come together. The copy and the shadow are not empty of meaning.

They are, however, like a replica of a great heavenly reality, through which people could relate to the heavenly realities in an indirect manner. Christ would not qualify as a Levitical priest on account of his coming from the tribe of Judah. Consequently, for him to be a priest, some change would need to occur in the terms of the covenant order, or it would have to relate to some other covenant order entirely.

Christ comes with a new covenant, a new covenant with much better promises. As it is concerned not just with the earthly model and replica but with the heavenly realities, it is much more effective, much more powerful in bringing people near to God. The first covenant was hamstrung by the sins of the priests and by the unfaithfulness of the people.

In verse 8 we read that he found fault with them. Where was the problem with the old covenant? It was with the people. For they did not continue in my covenant, and so I showed no concern for them declares the Lord.

We see in verse 9. A new covenant had to deal with the most fundamental problem, which was with the rebellious and resistant hearts of the people. The Lord had to write his law upon their hearts, so that the core problem, the problem of the people turning astray could be dealt with. The tabernacle and the temple were among other things, not just models of the heavens above, but also models of the true person, the person who has the word of God treasured within, the word of the covenant that is stored in the treasure house of the heart.

They bear the light of the Lord's truth like the lampstand of the temple, and then they also feed upon the word of God like bread. Like sacrifices ascending they offer themselves up to God, their prayers ascend like incense to his house, and living water flows out from them as they give life to all around them. However, under the old covenant this was not realised.

There was an architectural replica of the faithful people, but there was no actual people to correspond with it. In the new covenant we have a new temple. The new temple is Jesus Christ himself and the people formed in him by his spirit, and that new temple has

the law of God dwelling in its heart, the work of the spirit by which people are transformed.

The core problem of the old covenant was seen all the way back in Deuteronomy. The Lord offered countless blessings to a faithful people and promised them life. However, the people consistently rebelled and failed.

Deuteronomy chapter 30 verses 1 to 6, And when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the Lord your God has driven you, and return to the Lord your God, you and your children, and obey his voice in all that I command you today, with all your heart and with all your soul, then the Lord your God will restore your fortunes and have mercy on you, and he will gather you again from all the peoples where the Lord your God has scattered you. If your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of heaven, from there the Lord your God will gather you, and from there he will take you, and the Lord your God will bring you into the land that your fathers possessed, that you may possess it, and he will make you more prosperous and numerous than your fathers, and the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live. Facing the reality of exile, the Lord later promised that he would restore his people and deal with the fundamental problem of the covenant, their hearts.

In Ezekiel chapter 36 verses 24-28, And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and be careful to obey my rules. You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God. Christ is the mediator of this new covenant.

He is sinless and entirely faithful. He is ever living to intercede for us before God's very throne, so we are preserved in relationship with God. His spirit is writing the law of God upon our hearts, so that we are conformed to him.

Now that the old covenant has been surpassed, it is about to be removed altogether. The old covenant will finally be removed in the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple in AD 70, when the sanctuary is destroyed and sacrifice is rendered inoperative. A question to consider.

Implicit in this passage is a contrast between the people of the old covenant and the people of the new covenant. In what does this contrast consist? How might this contrast inform our reading of Hebrews more generally?