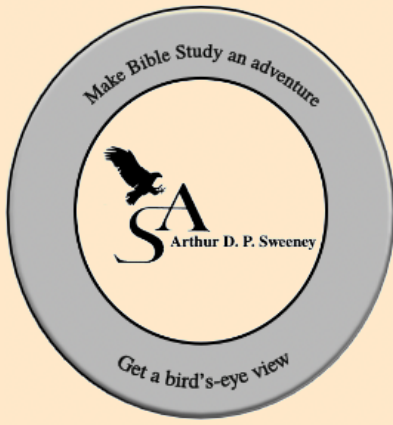




14



Hebrews: Christ the changeless & ageless One



Author of changed communication, creation, covenant & city

Note: Headings in this menu are hyperlinks. Click on them and they will take you to the relevant page

[Introduction](#)

[1. A changed communication](#)

[2. A changed creation](#)

[3. A changed covenant](#)

[The numerical order](#)

[The qualitative order](#)

[Aged and near oblivion](#)

[Why?](#)

[How and when?](#)

[Better, new, and eternal](#)

[Better 1.](#)

[Better 2.](#)

[Better 3.](#)

[Better 4.](#)

[4. A changed country](#)

[5. A changed city](#)

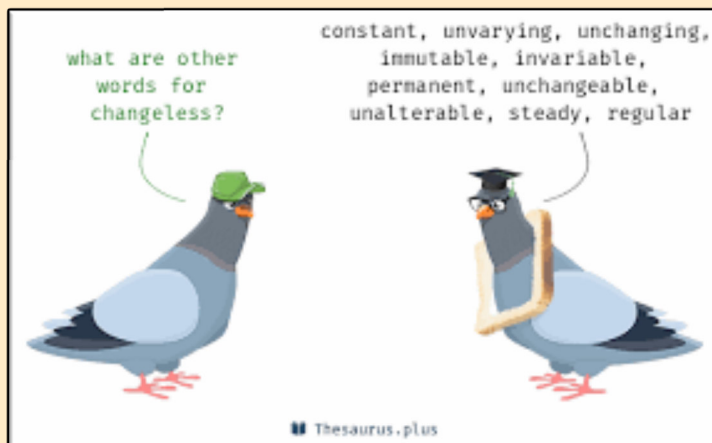
[Conclusion](#)

[References](#)

2/9

[Word meanings are taken from Abarim](#)

[Publications](#)



Introduction

This 14th *sandwich* paper focuses on the letter to the Hebrews. The texts that make it a sandwich are:

But you are the same (eimi), and your years will never expire (ekleipo) (Hebrews 1:12).

Jesus Christ is the same (autos) yesterday, today and into the ages (aionios) (Hebrews 13:8).

1:12

'The same' in 1:12 above is (*eimi*) meaning 'to be'. A second verb (*eimi*), which is spelled identically and perhaps pronounced slightly different, means 'to come'. Of course, the divide between being and coming may not be much, for moving is being, and such doing that defines the doer ([Abarim Publications](#)).

Usually, when we think of someone's end it is passive, but (*ekleipo*) in 1:12 above meaning to expire is active. The subject is referred to by God as Son (1:5, 8), God (1:8), and Lord (1:10), and He will not leave behind or abandon His endless being and doing.

13:8

The familiar pronoun (*autos*) means "self", and may also be used to express sameness, in which case it's usually preceded by the definite article as in this verse. In Romans 10:12 (*autos*) majestically refers to the unique self-hood of the Lord - He is Lord, He is Lord of all.

Moreover, the Lord's sameness continues into the ages (*aionios*). *Aion* the noun is a period of longer or shorter duration, having a beginning and an end, and complete in itself. *Aionios* the adjective describes what belongs to or characterises an age. Neither the noun nor the adjective, in themselves, carry the sense of endless or everlasting. Its character is ethical rather than mathematical. The deepest significance of the life beyond time lies, not in endlessness, but in the moral quality of the aeon into which the life passes ([Vincent](#)). This changelessness of the Lord's sameness is the quality that characterises the future ages.

In brief, in the first and last chapters of Hebrews the writer frames the theme of his letter as the changelessness of the Lord's sameness - His self-hood, His being, and His unique behaviour that defines Him. In between these two outer chapters, the letter describes things that stand in contrast to Him, namely, a changing creation, a changing covenant, a changing country, and a changing city.

Note: Headings in this menu are hyperlinks. Click on them and they will take you to the relevant page

[Introduction](#)

[1. A changed communication](#)

[2. A changed creation](#)

[3. A changed covenant](#)

[The numerical order](#)

[The qualitative order](#)

[Aged and near oblivion](#)

[Why?](#)

[How and when?](#)

[Better, new, and eternal](#)

[Better 1.](#)

[Better 2.](#)

[Better 3.](#)

[Better 4.](#)

[4. A changed country](#)

[5. A changed city](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[References](#)

3/9

[Word meanings are taken from Abarim](#)

[Publications](#)



1. A changed communication

*We must abundantly incline our mind and will to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. 2 For if **the word spoken through messengers** proved to be so durable that every sidestep or incomplete compliance received its just wage, 3 how will we escape if we overlook such a great salvation? It was **first spoken through the Lord** and was substantiated to us by those who heard, 4 God jointly witnessing with signs, wonder, various abilities and distributions of the Holy Spirit according to his will (Hebrews. 2:1-4).*

Former messages from God to men were fragmentary, given piece-meal, bit by bit, progressive, not all disclosed at once. Those messengers were prophets and even angels (Acts 7:53, Galatians 3:19). Those who heard God's message through prophets or angels and sidestepped them, received the appropriate wage.

Those days of prophets and angels are over. There is a change in God's method of communication. Since the advent of Jesus Christ, God spoke in One who is a son, One Who is of the nature of God Himself (Hebrews 1:1-4). A Son who carries in Himself the Father's nature and does not need to be instructed in purposes which are already His own, nor to be officially commissioned and empowered to do what He cannot but do as *No man knows the Son but the Father* (John 1:18). By speaking Himself He expresses God ([Pett, The Expositor's Greek Testament, Hebrews 1](#)).

Further, the One in Whom God spoke, the First and Last, the aim, the heir, of all things created the ages. Therein God shows that the significant element in creation is not the vastness or the majesty of the physical universe but the gradual unfolding of His purposes progressively through those times and ages that He has called into being.

Moreover, God's message through His Son is of something new. It's the greatest, the highest or perfect salvation of which Jesus is the originator, founder, leader, and cause (Hebrews 2:10, 5:9). And, *salvation* carries all the meaning of these words - safety, deliverance, preservation, security, wholeness and soundness.

Accordingly, considering the enormous upward change in God's method of communication, *we should understand not to resist the one who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they resisted the one who warned them on earth, how much less shall we, if we turn away from the One who warns from heaven?* (Hebrews 12:25).

2. A changed creation

*10 By means of the **beginnings**, Lord, you founded the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands; 11 they will be **terminated** (apollumi), but you are **the same** (diameno); they will all be made old like a garment; 12 and as if a robe you will roll them up, and they will be **transformed** (allasso);*

*See that you do not refuse the one who is speaking; for if they did not escape when they refused the one who warned them on **earth**, how much less will we escape if we reject the one who warns from heaven. 26 At that time his voice **shook the earth**; but now he has promised, "Yet once more I will **shake** not only the **earth** but also the heaven." 27 This phrase, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of what is **shaken**—that is, created things—so that what cannot be **shaken** may remain.*

*28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be **shaken**, let us give thanks, by which we offer to God an acceptable worship with reverence and awe; 29 for indeed our God is a consuming fire (Hebrews 12:25).*

***But you are the same**, and your years will never **end** (Hebrews 1:10-12 quoted from Psalm 102:25-27).*

In contrast to the endurability and unchangeability of the Creator (*diameno*), the creation that had a beginning will be **terminated** (*apollumi*) meaning to exterminate, to destroy, put an end to, to be lost, to perish, and **transformed** (*allasso*).

Note: Headings in this menu are hyperlinks. Click on them and they will take you to the relevant page

[Introduction](#)

[1. A changed communication](#)

[2. A changed creation](#)

[3. A changed covenant](#)

[The numerical order](#)

[The qualitative order](#)

[Aged and near oblivion](#)

[Why?](#)

[How and when?](#)

[Better, new, and eternal](#)

[Better 1.](#)

[Better 2.](#)

[Better 3.](#)

[Better 4.](#)

[4. A changed country](#)

[5. A changed city](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[References](#)

4/9

[Word meanings are taken from Abarim](#)

[Publications](#)



2. A changed creation continued

It seems oxymoronic to assert that a terminated creation will be transformed (*allasso*). How can this apparent contradiction be explained? In the texts above, however, (*allasso*) means to exchange one thing for another, to change the character but not the essence.

Another example of this is 2 Peter 3:6, which says, “the world being deluged with water, perished” (*apollumi*), but the world did not become extinct, it was renewed. That is, the character is changed but not the essence.

Of the five references to 'heaven' in Hebrews, three refer to the abode of God, or the presence of God (9:24, 12:23, 25), one refers to the innumerable stars of heaven (11:12), and one refers to the present created heaven that God will shake.

*See that you do not refuse the one who is speaking; for if they did not escape when they refused the one who warned them on earth, how much less will we escape if we reject the one who warns from heaven. 26 At that time his voice **shook** (*saleuo*) the earth; but now he has promised, “Yet once more I will **shake** (*seio*) not only the earth but also the heaven” 27 “Yet once more,” indicates the removal of **what is shaken—that is, created things**—so that what cannot be shaken may remain. 28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us give thanks, by which we offer to God an acceptable worship with reverence and awe; 29 for indeed our God is a consuming fire (Hebrews 12:25-29).*

Saleuo means to rock, sway or oscillate (up and down, left and right, inward and outward, and so on).

This word may describe the motion of the sea, the effects of an earthquake, or the suffering of either by people on them.

The verb (*seio*) means to shake or move to and fro, such as the movement of trees in the breeze, or a door swinging, chariots bouncing, or the earth quaking (hence our English adjective seismic), or the mind being disturbed by anger or other intense emotions.

Hebrews 12:26 (quoting Haggai 2:6) finds its closest thematic parallel in Revelation 6:12–14 and 16:18–20. During these cosmic upheavals and final judgment from the sixth seal and the seventh bowl; John describes unprecedented, violent global earthquake, simultaneous terrestrial and celestial collapse, where the earth shakes, stars fall from heaven like figs, and the sky is rolled up like a scroll.

Removal and Replacement: Hebrews 12:27 explains that this shaking removes temporary, created things so an unshakable kingdom remains. This points ahead to Revelation 21:1, where the old heaven and earth pass away and are replaced by the new heaven and new earth.

Note: Headings in this menu are hyperlinks. Click on them and they will take you to the relevant page

[Introduction](#)

[1. A changed communication](#)

[2. A changed creation](#)

[3. A changed covenant](#)

[The numerical order](#)

[The qualitative order](#)

[Aged and near oblivion](#)

[Why?](#)

[How and when?](#)

[Better, new, and eternal](#)

[Better 1.](#)

[Better 2.](#)

[Better 3.](#)

[Better 4.](#)

[4. A changed country](#)

[5. A changed city](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[References](#)

5/9

[Word meanings are taken from Abarim](#)

[Publications](#)



3. A changed covenant

The following table shows how and why the covenant changed.

Covenant	Text
First and second	For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no need to look for a second one (Hebrews 8:7). ...he has aged the first one (Hebrews 8:13). The first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly sanctuary (Hebrews 9:1). ...because a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions under the first covenant (Hebrews 9:15). not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood (Hebrews 9:18).
Aged and growing old	...he has aged the first one, and what is being made old and being old is near oblivion (Hebrews 8:13).
Better	Jesus has also become the guarantee of a better covenant (Hebrews 7:22). Jesus...is the mediator of a better covenant legally established on better promises (Hebrews 8:6).
New	The days are surely coming...when I will establish a new covenant (Hebrews 8:8) In speaking of "a brand new covenant," he has made the first one obsolete (Hebrews 8:13). For this reason he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, because a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions under the first covenant (Hebrews 9:15). Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant (Hebrews 12:24).
Eternal	Now may the God of peace, who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant (Hebrews 13:20).

The numerical order

The use of "first" and "second" adjectives to describe the covenants, is a reminder that the two are chronologically distinct.

However, Paul does not limit himself to a numeric order of first and second. Much more important for him is a qualitative order of the two the covenants, which we consider next.

The qualitative order

A qualitative order of entities arranges them on descriptive traits, characteristics, or attributes. Accordingly, the first covenant is described as not faultless, obsolete, and growing old. In the table above, 'old' (*palaioo*) means that God has made it old (perfect tense), and being made old (present tense), therefore it is near oblivion (*aphanismos*) meaning it's light has gone out ([Abarim Publications](#)).

Aged and near oblivion

Why? Why has God turned out the lights of the first covenant? God gives the reason when He said that *I took the house of Israel and the house of Judah by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, they did not persevere in my covenant, and so I overlooked them, and did not think about them* (Hebrews 8:8-9).

Note: Headings in this menu are hyperlinks. Click on them and they will take you to the relevant page

[Introduction](#)

[1. A changed communication](#)

[2. A changed creation](#)

[3. A changed covenant](#)

[The numerical order](#)

[The qualitative order](#)

[Aged and near oblivion](#)

[Why?](#)

[How and when?](#)

[Better, new, and eternal](#)

[Better 1.](#)

[Better 2.](#)

[Better 3.](#)

[Better 4.](#)

[4. A changed country](#)

[5. A changed city](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[References](#)

6/9

[Word meanings are taken from Abarim](#)

[Publications](#)



3. A changed covenant continued

How and when? How and when has God turned out the lights of the first covenant? This text, *Once in the completion of the ages he appeared to put away sin through the sacrifice of himself* (Hebrews 9:26), marks the historical climax when Christ's sacrifice completed all the prior ages and fulfilled and replaced the old system of animal sacrifices tied to the first covenant. Christ's sacrificial act ended the age of the first covenant. Further, the New Covenant was inaugurated by the cross ensuring that the first (Mosaic) covenant lost its legal and spiritual validity and authority.

Nevertheless, the texts of Hebrews 10:2, and 11 confirm that at the time of writing the letter, the physical functioning of the Levitical priesthood and sacrifices continued. While the Old Covenant was not efficacious after the death of Jesus, some Jews continued to live under the old covenant. So, it was not obsolete for those who chose not to make it so, but that didn't make it efficacious for them. Moreover, the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in AD 70 brought a permanent, historical end to the physical functioning of the Levitical sacrificial system, confirming visually what had already been accomplished spiritually some 40 years earlier at the cross.

Better, new, and eternal

Better 1. The first of four reasons given for the second covenant being better than the first is found in this text.

*20 ...for others who became priests took their office without an oath, 21 but this one (Jesus) became a priest with an oath, because of the one who said to him, "The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, "You are a priest forever"—22 accordingly Jesus has also become **the guarantee of a better covenant** (Hebrews 7:20).*

The second covenant is better (*kreitton*), because it is stronger or mightier than the first for it has one 'forever' priest, confirmed by God's oath, unlike the priests under the first covenant who were many because they died. Moreover, this forever priest is the guarantee (*egguos*) of a better covenant because He is the pledge of its security.

Better 2. The second reason given for the covenant being better than the first is that Christ is its mediator (*mesites*). Now a mediator is not merely someone who stands in between two unrelated groups but rather someone who is intimately involved with both groups and is able to represent them both. If there is a conflict between two groups, a true mediator embodies this conflict, and suffers the blows exchanged in his own body. As 1 Timothy 2:5 explains:

*For there is one God, and there is one **mediator** between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*

So, there is God, and there is Man, and only Christ Jesus, who is both God and Man can be the perfect mediator between them and, therefore, the mediator of the better covenant.

Better 3. The third reason given for the covenant being better than the first is that this written contract or formal agreement between compatible partners, is legally established on stronger promises (*epaggelia*), or vows. It's at least a binding declaration of intent.

Better 4. The fourth reason for the covenant being better than the first is that its laws are written, not on tablets of stone, but in their minds, and on the hearts of the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It's not external, but an internal transformation.

Note: Headings in this menu are hyperlinks. Click on them and they will take you to the relevant page

[Introduction](#)

[1. A changed communication](#)

[2. A changed creation](#)

[3. A changed covenant](#)

[The numerical order](#)

[The qualitative order](#)

[Aged and near oblivion](#)

[Why?](#)

[How and when?](#)

[Better, new, and eternal](#)

[Better 1.](#)

[Better 2.](#)

[Better 3.](#)

[Better 4.](#)

[4. A changed country](#)

[5. A changed city](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[References](#)

7/9

[Word meanings are taken from Abarim Publications](#)



Better, new, and eternal continued

*8 But showing its (first covenant's) fault, God says to them, "Look, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will complete a **new covenant** with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. 10 This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: **I will put my laws in their minds, and write them on their hearts**, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 11 And they shall not teach one another or say to each other, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. 12 For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more (Hebrews 8:8, 10-12).*

As the new covenant is made with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, the statement in Hebrews reaffirms the promise God made to Israel through Jeremiah (31:31-33). However, many Christian commentators on Hebrews interpret 'house of Israel and house of Judah', to be the church. The supreme difficulties that I have with are these. Words spoken some 700 years BC, are quoted exactly as given by the writer of Hebrews, but 2000 years on from there, the same words are given a meaning that bears no resemblance to the original. Moreover, what the Lord went on to say through Jeremiah shown next, don't leave any doubts as to His intention.

*35 Thus **says the Lord**, who gives the sun for light by day and the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar—the Lord of hosts is his name:*

*36 If this fixed order were ever to cease from my presence, **says the Lord**, then also the offspring of Israel would cease to be a nation before me forever.*

*37 Thus **says the Lord**: If the heavens above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth below can be explored, then I will reject all the offspring of Israel because of all they have done, **says the Lord**.*

*38 The days are surely coming, **says the Lord**, when the city shall be rebuilt for the Lord.*

40 It shall never again be uprooted or overthrown (Jeremiah 35-40).

Notice the expression '**says the Lord**', that occurs five times. '**Says the Lord**' is surely more important than 'says the commentators'.

New. There are two words for new to describe the second covenant; (*kainos*) and (*neos*). Of the four references to a new covenant, three (Hebrews 8:8, 8:13, 9:15) use (*kainos*) and only 12:24 uses (*neos*). The difference between (*kainos*) and (*neos*) is that (*kainos*) expresses qualitative newness, something that is fundamentally different, of a superior kind. It's new in a way that transcends what came before entirely. A *kainos* thing doesn't just replace the old; it operates on a different level altogether. [Abarim Publications](#) translates it as 'brand new'. In contrast, (*neos*) tends to express new in time, recently made, fresh off the shelf, not yet aged.

Eternal. The adjective (*aionios*), means lasting an age, a life-span, age or epoch. It describes any length of clearly defined span of time, whether one person's life or some era of certain renown. As general point of referral, this word may also apply to the vast span of history: the ages, the times of old .

So, the "eternal covenant" means permanent, being the outcome of the unshakeable characteristic of Christ's sacrifice in contrast with the temporary nature of the old Mosaic system.

Note: Headings in this menu are hyperlinks. Click on them and they will take you to the relevant page

[Introduction](#)

[1. A changed communication](#)

[2. A changed creation](#)

[3. A changed covenant](#)

[The numerical order](#)

[The qualitative order](#)

[Aged and near oblivion](#)

[Why?](#)

[How and when?](#)

[Better, new, and eternal](#)

[Better 1.](#)

[Better 2.](#)

[Better 3.](#)

[Better 4.](#)

[4. A changed country](#)

[5. A changed city](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[References](#)

8/9

[Word meanings are taken from Abarim](#)

[Publications](#)



4. A changed country

14 For those who say such things make it clear that they are strenuously seeking that country (fatherland). 15 And indeed if they had been remembering that from which they went out, they have had opportunity to return. 16 But now, they aspire to a better country, that is, a heavenly one (Hebrews 11:14-16).

The country described in Hebrews 11:14-16 is a heavenly fatherland, meaning that the patriarchs see their origin as heavenly, not earthly, and strenuously seek it. For, if they had been thinking about the earthly country they left behind (Ur of the Chaldeans / Mesopotamia), they would have had the chance to go back, but they did not. No, these Old Testament worthies have changed countries - they have chosen the heavenly over the earthly.

5. A changed city

Abraham was anticipating the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God (Hebrews 11:10).

Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has made ready a city for them (Hebrews 11:16).

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, the global congregation, and assembly of firstborns having been registered in the heavens, and to God the judge of all, and to righteous spirits having been made fully complete and whole (Hebrews 12:22-23).

For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the one to come (Hebrews 13:14).

Similarly, a change in the country requires a change in the city (*polis*). In the classics, (*polis*) described a large urban center, usually walled, with an interlinked collective of people, as in "the whole city came out to meet Jesus" (Matthew 8:34).

Every city has a foundation but the figurative sense is probably what is meant here as in Ephesians 2:20. There the foundational roles of apostles and prophets with Christ as the chief cornerstone are in view, so the foundations of Hebrews 11:10 are God's spiritual truths, a moral groundwork.

Also, God is the architect, the artisan or craftsman. Moreover, He is also the builder (*demiourgos*), someone who works for the people. It is God who made His city ready for the community of His believing people.

The writer also names it, saying you have approached mount Zion. Originally, Zion was a Jebusite stronghold but David captured the fortress of Zion, and renamed it *the City of David* (2 Samuel 5:7). David captured this stronghold, renamed it, and made it his royal capital. Geographically, it referred to the specific hill in Jerusalem located to the south of Mount Moriah (the Temple Mount). Further, Isaiah mentions that Yahweh dwells on Mount Zion (8:18). So, Hebrews 12:22 above equates Mount Zion with the heavenly Jerusalem where the city of the living God is populated by myriads of God's messengers, and people whose names are registered in heaven, whose righteous spirits have been made fully complete and whole, living securely with God.

Finally, to reinforce the change between the earthly and heavenly cities, the writer records that *here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the one to come*. By lasting he meant *remaining* as he did in 12:27: "*Yet once more,*" indicates the removal of what is shaken—that is, created things—so that what cannot be shaken may remain'. That is, the city of the living God is unshakeable, and so secure.

And, just as they were strenuously seeking their spiritual fatherland (11:14), so they are strenuously seeking the lasting city that for them is about to be their lasting home.

Note: Headings in this menu are hyperlinks. Click on them and they will take you to the relevant page

[Introduction](#)

[1. A changed communication](#)

[2. A changed creation](#)

[3. A changed covenant](#)

[The numerical order](#)

[The qualitative order](#)

[Aged and near oblivion](#)

[Why?](#)

[How and when?](#)

[Better, new, and eternal](#)

[Better 1.](#)

[Better 2.](#)

[Better 3.](#)

[Better 4.](#)

[4. A changed country](#)

[5. A changed city](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[References](#)

9/9

[Word meanings are taken from Abarim Publications](#)



Conclusion

In drawing this 14th sandwich paper on the letter to the Hebrews to a conclusion, let's remind ourselves that the overall theme is of the sameness of Jesus Christ, His unchangeableness yesterday, today and into the ages. It's a reinforcement of Malachi 3:6: ***For I am the Lord, I change not.***

Set in contrast to His unchangeableness, the writer to the Hebrews brings to our attention five things that changed; a changed communication, a changed creation, a changed covenant, a changed country, and a changed city.

As we noted, God's message through His Son Jesus Christ is of something new. It's the greatest, the highest or perfect salvation of which Jesus is the originator, founder, leader, and cause. And, *salvation* means these words - safety, deliverance, preservation, security, wholeness and soundness. Or, if you like, salvation is embodied in a changed creation, a changed covenant, a changed country, and a changed city.

When you think of it like that, who wouldn't want to be part of that scheme of things?

References

Abarim Publications. Same (to be). <https://www.abarim-publications.com/DictionaryG/e/e-i-m-i.html>

Marvin R. Vincent (*aionios*), Word Studies in the New Testament.

Peter Pett, and The Expositor's Greek Testament, Bible Commentaries, Hebrews 1.

Abarim Publications. Old. <https://www.abarim-publications.com/DictionaryG/p/p-a-l-l-om.html>