Introduction:
A. Three lessons in this study:
   1. So Great a Salvation
   2. So Great a High Priest
   3. So Great a Covenant
B. What is a covenant?
   1. A covenant is an agreement between two beings involving promises on the part of both to the other. It is greater than a contract
   2. Covenants between God and humankind are central to every dispensation of time in the Bible
   3. Covenant comes from bereeth - "a cutting; a compact made by passing between pieces of flesh; a confederacy, covenant, league" (Strong's)
   4. It comes from a Hebrew root word that means "to cut." This is the custom of two people passing between the split bodies of slain animals after making an agreement - Gen. 15:9-10, 17; Jer. 34:18
      a. Sometimes accompanied by sharing bread - Gen. 31:54
   5. Abraham and his children were commanded to be circumcised as a "sign of covenant" between them and God - Gen. 17:10-11
   6. At Sinai, Moses sprinkled the blood of animals on the altar and upon the people who entered into covenant with God - Ex. 24:6-8
   7. There were covenants between people who considered each other as equals; the agreement bound them to carefully outlined responsibilities - 1Sam. 18:3
   8. What is remarkable is that God Who is holy, omniscient, and omnipotent; yet consents to enter into covenant with humankind, who is feeble, sinful, and flawed.
C. The covenant of Christ
   1. The New Testament makes a clear distinction between the covenants of the Law of Moses and that of Christ - Gal. 4:24-26; 2Cor. 3:7-9
   2. God accomplished for His people what the old covenant failed to do
      a. Jer. 31:31-34
   3. Jesus is the Mediator of this superior covenant between God and man
      a. Heb. 8:6, 9:15, 12:24
   4. The offering of Christ sealed the new covenant under which we are justified by God's grace - Matt. 26:28; Luke 22:20; 1Cor. 11:25
   5. The new covenant holds God's promise (forgiveness of sin and eternal life) and our promise in return (faith, love, and a lifetime of service)
      a. Heb. 10:2, 22, 12:22-25, 28-29

I. THE OLD COVENANT
A. The first covenant was not faultless - Heb. 8:7
   1. The Levitical priesthood was flawed and powerless - Heb. 7:11
   2. The Law made no one perfect, was weak & unprofitable - Heb. 7:18-19
3. The sacrifices could not cleanse away sins - Heb. 10:4, 11
4. The people of the first covenant were also at fault
   a. Heb. 8:8-9; Jer. 11:6-8
5. God built obsolescence into the old covenant. By calling the promised covenant "new" (Jer. 31:31), God declared the first covenant would become obsolete
   a. Heb. 8:13; 2Cor. 3:13
6. The old covenant continued for about 500 years after Jeremiah, providing an environment in which the new and perfect covenant could come in glory.
   a. The covenant given through Noah had its glory, but it was exceeded by the covenant given through Moses; far above both is the covenant given through Christ

II. THE NEW COVENANT
   A. It is inward and spiritual - Heb. 8:10; James 1:21; 1Peter 1:22-23
   B. It provides a close relationship with God - Heb. 8:10; 1Peter 2:9-10; Rev. 21:3
   C. It is with people who truly know the Lord - Heb. 8:11; John 6:45
   D. It grants full forgiveness of sins - Heb. 8:12; Rom. 11:27, 7:24
   E. It is for everyone - Heb. 7:25; Rom. 1:16

Conclusion:
   A. Will you commit to your half of this superior covenant, made with superior sacrifices, offered by a superior high priest, granting superior salvation?
   B. Heb. 10:19-23, 2:1-3