

THE BRINGING IN OF A BETTER HOPE

TEXT: HEBREWS 7:11-22

Introduction:

1. The key word in the epistle to the Hebrews is "better" (cf. 7:19, 22).
2. The word better is found thirteen times in the epistle to the Hebrews (cf. 1:4; 6:9; 7:7, 19, 22; 8:6 twice; 9:23; 10:34; 11:16, 35, 40; 12:24).
3. I have entitled tonight's message, "The Bringing in of a Better Hope" (7:19).

I. WE HAVE A BETTER PRIESTHOOD (7:11).

1. Perfection could not come by the Levitical priesthood. It was incomplete. It pointed sinners to Christ, who alone is perfect (7:11).
2. The Levitical priesthood was temporary. The book of Hebrews emphasizes that we have a much better priesthood now. Christ's priesthood is eternal, i.e., had no successors, no beginning or ending.
3. The priesthood of Christ is "unchangeable" (7:24), and is based on His death and resurrection. This is brought out in the following chapters.
4. By referring to Psalm 110, the author of the epistle (probably the apostle Paul) is showing that God had already intended for another priest, according to the order of Melchisedec, to come and replace the Levitical priests (Heb. 7:11, 15, 17, 21).
5. A major theme in the Epistle to the Hebrews is the superiority of the priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ.
6. He is our "merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God" (Hebrews 2:17).
7. He is the "High Priest of our profession" (Heb. 3:1).
8. He is our "great high priest, that is passed into the heavens" (Heb. 4:14).
9. He is our sympathetic high priest, for He "was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15).
10. Last week we noted that Melchisedec received tithes from Abraham (Heb. 7:4).
11. Even Levi, in the loins of his ancestor Abraham, paid tithes to Melchizedek (Heb. 7:9, 10). This proves that the priesthood of Christ, which is after the order of Melchizedek, is better than the Levitical priesthood.

II. WE HAVE A BETTER LAW (7:11-19).

1. If the priesthood has been set aside then obviously so has the Mosaic law, as they are inseparable.
2. To the recipients of this epistle -- first century Jews -- the law and the priesthood were sacred. They would have difficulty understanding a new priesthood and a new law.
3. "For the law made nothing perfect" (7:19). This verse (and there are many others) refute the SDA cult, and all other religions which teach salvation by law-keeping.
4. We have a better law. The New Testament teaches that the law of Moses has been succeeded by the law of Christ.
5. Galatians 6:2 says, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."
6. Romans 8:2 refers to "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus."
7. James 1:25 refers to "the perfect law of liberty."
8. James 2:8 refers to "the royal law."
9. The New Testament teaches we are now under a better law. This is stressed in the book of Hebrews.
10. H. A. Ironside wrote this in his commentary on the epistle to the Hebrews. "Israel stood or fell with the priesthood. If God accepted the high priest on the great day of atonement, for instance, it involved the acceptance of the nation. If the high priest was rejected then the people were set aside. No high priest was ever to rend his garments (Lev. 10:6). When Caiaphas in his excitement and indignation rent his clothes, the priesthood passed away from the house of Aaron. And with it went the entire legal economy which was superseded by the marvelous dispensation of the grace of God" (*Hebrews*, p. 89).
11. According to the law of Moses, the Lord Jesus Christ had no title to the priesthood. He was not from the tribe of Levi, but from "another tribe," that is, Judah (7:13, 14; cf. Matt. 1:2; Rev. 5:5).
12. But this does not in any way militate against His priesthood, because our Lord's priesthood is of the order of Melchisedec (7:15-17).
13. "Carnal commandment" (7:16) means "fleshly" (see Scofield margin). It pertained to human birthrights in the

flesh. In other words, genealogy determined who would be priest, but with Christ it was "after the power of an endless life" (7:16).

14. Our Lord gained His priesthood by His death and resurrection (7:16, 17).
15. The New Testament teaches that the law of Moses has been disannulled (7:18) -- "set aside" (Scofield margin).
16. This was because of "the weakness and unprofitableness" of the law (7:18). "For the law made nothing perfect" (7:19).
17. The law was weak and unprofitable because it could not give man righteousness before God. Romans 8:2, 3 says, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh."
18. The problem was not the law. Romans 7:12 says, the law is holy, just, and good. The problem is the flesh -- the law "was weak through the flesh" (Rom. 8:3).
19. The purpose of the law is to reveal sin and expose sin and point sinners to Christ, who alone can save sinners.
20. Galatians 3:24, 25 says, "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster."
21. Romans 10:4 says, "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

III. A BETTER TESTAMENT (7:22).

1. Jews do not like it when Christians say the New Testament is better than the Old Testament, but this is what the New Testament teaches (7:22).
2. John 1:17 says, "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."
3. Colossians 2:17 says the law, with all of its ritual and holy days was "a shadow of things to come."
4. "Testament" (7:22) means "covenant" (see Scofield margin).
5. Hebrews 7:19 refers to "a better hope."
6. There are many contrasts -- temporary and eternal, weak and powerful, imperfect and perfect, etc.

7. The Old Testament priests served "without an oath." But Christ was given an oath by God the Father (7:20, 21).
8. Christ established the new covenant when He said, "This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you" (Luke 22:20).
9. When Christ returns, the new covenant with Israel will be fulfilled (cf. Jeremiah 31:31-37).
10. This covenant is unconditional, whereas the old Mosaic covenant was conditional. Therefore, the new covenant is better.
11. Since the new covenant is based upon Christ's finished work on the cross, the church can and does benefit from it. We will study this in more depth as we get into Hebrews chapters 8--12.

CONCLUSION:

1. Priests were essential in Israel. Sometimes they were without a king, and sometimes there were no prophets, but there was always a priesthood.
2. But there are no priests in the local church. In this dispensation, the Lord Jesus Christ is our only high priest, and all believers are priests before God (cf. Hebrews 13:15; I Peter 2:5, 9; Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:6).