

**Hebrews 7: 4-19; “Bringing in a Better Hope”, Sermon # 26 in the series –
“Holding Fast our Confession”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on
January 30th, 2022, in the Morning Worship Service.**

I want to speak to you about hope once again today. In the past few sermons I have been talking to you about hope; the sure hope of the Christian, from Chapter 6, verse 13 to Chapter 7, verse 3. Today we want to look at this phrase – “the bringing in of a better hope”. This phrase relates to the better hope of Christ and His eternal Priesthood, according to the order of Melchizedek. And so 1st of all – I want to compare the greatness of the priesthood of Levi with that of Mechizedek, the One who typically represented Christ in that Old Testament time. (verses 4-10) 2nd – I want to compare the imperfect priesthood of Aaron and Levi with the perfect priesthood of Christ. (verses 11-17) And finally I want to compare the imperfect hope under the law with the perfect and better hope through Christ, under the gospel. (verses 18 and 19) May these verses instruct us as to why we are no longer under the law, but under grace.

1st of all – Let’s compare the greatness of the priesthood of Levi with that of Mechizedek, who represented Christ in that Old Testament time. (verses 4-10)

“Now consider how great this man was, to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils.” “And indeed those who are of the sons of Levi, who receive the priesthood, have a commandment to receive tithes from the people according to the law, that is, from their brethren, though they have come from the loins of Abraham; but he whose genealogy is not derived from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises.” “Now beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better.” “Here moral men receive tithes, but there he receives them, of whom it is witnessed that he lives.” “Even Levi, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, so to speak, for he was still in the loins of his father when Mechizedek met him.”

Now, if you are wondering how the tribe of Levi was incorporated into the priesthood of Aaron you will need to turn with me back to the book of Numbers, chapter 3, verses 1-13. It says here – “Now these are the records of Aaron and Moses when the Lord spoke with Moses on Mount Sinai.” “And these are the names of the sons of Aaron: Nadab, the firstborn, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.” “These are the names of the sons of Aaron, the anointed priests, whom he consecrated to minister as priests.” “Nadab and Abihu had died before the Lord when they offered profane fire before the Lord in the Wilderness of Sinai; and they had no children.” “So Eleazar and Ithamar ministered as priests in the presence of Aaron their father.” “And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: ‘Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may serve him.’” “And they shall attend to his needs and the needs of the whole congregation before the tabernacle of meeting, to do the work of the tabernacle.”

“Also they shall attend to all the furnishings of the tabernacle of meeting, and to the needs of the children of Israel, to do the work of the tabernacle.” “And you shall give the Levites to Aaron and sons; they are given entirely to him from among the children of Israel.” “So you shall appoint Aaron and his sons; they are given entirely to him from among the children of Israel.” “So you shall appoint Aaron and sons, and they they shall attend to their priesthood; but the outsider who comes near shall be put to death.” “Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: ‘Now behold, I Myself have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of every firstborn who opens the womb among the children of Israel.’” “Therefore the Levites shall be Mine, because all the firstborn are Mine.” “On the day that I struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I sanctified to Myself all the firstborn in Israel, both man and beast.” “They shall be Mine: I am the Lord.”

So, what we find here, is that since Nadab and Abihu, the eldest two sons of Aaron, sinned against the Lord in offering strange fire before the Lord, and they died there before the Lord,

that then the Lord Himself had Moses bring the tribe of Levi into the priesthood, it says here, to attend to Aaron's needs and to the needs of the whole congregation, before the tabernacle of meeting, in order to do the work of the tabernacle. That is, He brought them in to help Aaron and the other priests; not to offer sacrifices on the altar of the burnt offering, which stood in the court, nor to burn incense on the altar of incense, nor to set the showbread in the holy place. That was for Aaron and his sons to do. Or to enter the most holy place. That was for Aaron, the high priest, alone to do. But they were to bring the people's offerings to the priest, and they were to assist them in slaying them. And they were to keep all persons out of the tabernacle who had a contempt for sacred things. All the persons who they could see were impure in their speech or actions, they were to keep them out of the tabernacle. And so when these Levites were numbered, at the commandment of the Lord, they came to 22,000 men in that day.

You and I should understand that here was a God-given greatness to this Old Covenant priesthood of the Levites in their service to God and to Aaron. And this is mentioned in verse 5 of our text where it says— "And indeed those who are of the sons of Levi, who receive the priesthood, have a commandment to receive tithes from the people according to the law, that is, from their brethren, though they have come from the loins of Abraham." That was a great privilege for them. But we should understand it as a great earthly privilege with great spiritual blessings attendant to their ministry. As they looked at the types of Christ's sacrifice, and what He would bring someday in the future to all who believed, if they believed, it brought them salvation.

We see God's declaration of this provision for the Levites in Numbers chapter 18, verses 20-24 if you will turn with me there. "Then the Lord said to Aaron: 'You shall have no inheritance in their land, nor shall you have any portion among them; I am your portion and your inheritance among the children of Israel.'" "Behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tithes in Israel as an inheritance in return for the work which they perform, the work of the tabernacle of meeting." "Hereafter the children of Israel shall not come near the tabernacle of meeting, lest they bear sin and die." "But the Levites shall perform the work of the tabernacle of meeting, and they shall bear their iniquity; it shall be a statute forever; throughout your generations, that among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance." "For the tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer up as a heave offering to the Lord, I have given to the Levites as an inheritance; therefore I have said to them, 'Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance.'"

So, this was a very great blessing to these Levites, to receive these tithes. And we are told in verse 32 that neither Aaron nor his sons were to profane the holy gifts of of the children of Israel, lest they die. But in verse 6 of our text, the greatness of the Levites as priests is compared with the greatness of Melchizedek, and we read this – "But he whose genealogy is not derived from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises." "Now beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better." Or as it is written in the King James and the New American Standard – the greater. In the ESV – the superior. The Levites who were mortal men received tithes, but in verse 8 it says – "But there he receives them of whom it is witnessed that he lives." In verse 4 Paul says that we are to consider how great this man Melchizedek was, to whom Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils.

Melchizedek lives! And we should understand from this statement that it is his high-priestly ministry that lives forever in Jesus Christ our Lord, our Great High Priest. All of the Levites held their office as priest, and they ministered according to the law for a few years, and then they died. Their ministrations ceased. They fulfilled their function according to the law, but it was an earthly ceremonial and typical ministry. Melchizedek, in his office as priest, he lives on forever according to God's appointment, because his life and ministry were designed by God to be a type of Christ's forever ministry. He has been appointed by God to be the Great High Priest of all of

God's elect people, The appointment lasted forever, when God swore by Himself. And so Melchizedek as a man, is greater in the dignity of his office and His spiritual ministrations, than any Levitical priest ever was. He lives on. He lives on, forever honored as being the type of Christ our Lord, in heaven. His order of his priestly ministry has been established forever to Abraham and to all believers, Jew and Gentile, in Christ, because he faithfully represented Christ on the earth in those days. And to this day, and forever, he will be so honored. That is the greatness of this man.

He blessed Abraham who had the promises, and he received tithes of the spoils from Abraham. And so Paul says in verse 9 – “Even Levi, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, so to speak.” Now, Levi did not actually pay those tithes, for he was still in Abraham's loins. But since Abraham paid these tithes, it can be legitimately said, that Levi, in his father Abraham, was with him in acknowledging Melchizedek's greatness. In Abraham's doing this, he was acknowledging that this man's office and ministry were greater than all the Levitical priests that were coming in the future, according to the appointment of God, under the Old Covenant. The greatness of Melchizedek points to the infinite greatness of our Lord Jesus Christ. As our High Priest He ever lives to make intercession for us.

2nd – Let's compare the imperfect priesthood of Aaron and Levi with the perfect priesthood of Christ.

Verses 11-19a say – “Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron?” “For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law.” “For He of whom these things are spoken belongs belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar.” “For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood.” “And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest who has come, not according to the law of fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life.” “For He testifies: ‘You are a Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.’” “For on the one hand there is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness, for the law made nothing perfect.”

So, here Paul is making another argument for the greatness of Melchizedek and Christ, as neither of them were called from the tribe of Levi or Aaron. And since the priestly ministry and instructions in righteousness always had come to the people through the priests and Levites ministering to the Jewish people according to ceremonial law, then if another priest arose, as our Lord Jesus Christ did, from the tribe of Judah, then Paul says, there must have been a change that took place, of the law itself. For Christ came from the tribe of Judah, and Moses spoke nothing concerning the tribe of Judah as regards the priesthood. So, here is Jesus who came to minister as a High Priest, and He did not fit the requirements of a Jewish High Priest, but He came, it says here, according to the power of an endless life.

What does this mean? Well our minds are meant to be directed immediately to how Christ came into the world. He was begotten by the Father in eternity past, He was sent into the world in His Incarnation. Entering this world through the womb of the Virgin, He came as a sinless and a perfect Man by nature, in order to fulfill the law in every respect. He was fully God and fully Man, and He had come to minister as a Priest who would offer Himself up on the altar of cross as a sacrifice for our sins. He was, in these eternally purposed acts of the Father, appointed to be a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. What happened to the law? Well, when Jesus came into the world as the High Priest of a different order, He came with the full approval of the Father, His having the most impeccable of character qualifications, and He was, in His obedience to the Father, impeccable in His love for God and men. He had the

strength of Almighty God to perform miracles, the perfect nature of a Man in order to obey and to suffer to the glory of God. As the eternal Son, He had power of an endless life.

In addition to this He was given the Spirit without measure, and so He did what no Levitical or Aaronic Priest could ever have done. He fulfilled all of God's holy law. And God, through His High Priestly work, then annulled the priestly ministrations of the priests and the Levites by His raising Jesus from the dead, and then having Him ascend to sit at His right hand until He makes all His enemies His footstool. All of God's dear people need the perfect ministrations of a Perfect High Priest, as He is. Under the Old Covenant, there was weakness and unprofitableness in the ministrations of all of those priests, in that they could not fulfill the righteous requirement of the law themselves. When they offered sacrifices for sins, they offered the blood of bulls and goats, and rams and lambs, and they were offering for their own sins as well as the sins of the people.

Those ceremonial cleansings and purifications could never really cleanse the heart. Indeed, during all the time of the Old Covenant, these things were pointing forward in a typical fashion to the glorious work which Christ would come and do. But now that He had come, their ministrations were no longer needed. His being the perfect Priesthood, now established, the imperfect priesthood was no longer needed. The law made nothing perfect. But Christ's priesthood and sacrifice was perfect, and therefore, the old priesthood with its old sacrifices offered up year by year was not needed any longer. The law was the shadow of the good things to come; that is, the good things that would be brought in by Christ.

The ceremonial law was a scaffolding which was erected for a season so that Christ would be pointed at, through it. And when He came and fulfilled the law, being the High Priest appointed by God, of this different order, then the scaffold was taken down. In His one sacrifice for sins, Christ broke down the barrier between Jew and Gentile and made them one New Man in the Church. Now the ceremonial law was done away with forever because it was fulfilled in Him. This great work required a different order of priesthood to take the scaffold down.

As John says in Revelation 5, verses 1-10 – “And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals.” “Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, ‘Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?’ “And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it.” “So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it.” “But one of the elders said to me, ‘Do not weep.’ “Behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.” “And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth.”

The Lion of the tribe of Judah prevailed not only to open the book and its seals. He prevailed by His being slain as a Lamb, to establish His High-Priestly work in the hearts of all of God's people, unto their salvation, and His becoming their Intercessor and Advocate with the Father. This is why John goes on to say in verses 9 and 10 – “And they sang a new song, saying: ‘You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign upon the earth.’” Let us glory in the fact that this High Priest and this priestly order of Melchizedek is perfect and it will last forever.

3rd – Let's compare the imperfect hope under the law with the perfect and better hope through Christ, under the gospel.

Verse 19 says – “For the law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, there is the bringing in a better hope, through which we draw near to God.” Even though the law could make nothing perfect because it cannot convey life and grace, still there was hope in the hearts of the Old

Testament saints. Whence did this hope come from? It came from God's promise of Christ. God's law, His word, promised Christ who would someday fulfill the law. The law being the scaffolding, as I said before, Christ became the workman, through His finished work, to begin the building of His New Testament Church. The scaffolding of the ceremonial law and priests offering animal sacrifices, gives way to a New and Living Way to draw near to God. Here is the real issue; drawing near to God. Under the Old Covenant it was difficult to draw near to God, and it had to be done through the ceremonial law being administered by priests who were imperfect.

We have seen in Numbers chapter 18, verse 22, that the children of Israel could not draw near the tabernacle of meeting, lest they bear sin and die. But in Hebrews 10: 29, it says that we, because of Christ's sacrifice, we New Testament believers have boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

This is most certainly a better hope than those under the Old Covenant had. By it we can draw near to God, even come boldly into the most holy place. In this temple of the New Testament Church we offer spiritual sacrifices because each of us who believes in Jesus is a priest and a king unto God, through Christ. This most certainly is a better hope which Christ has brought in through His ministrations. May each of us hope in Him continually, and praise Him yet more and more, for His help. For with it, God's countenance is favorable to us at all times.