

HEBREWS 7 pt. 2
Draw Near Through a Better Priest and Better Hope

Have you ever romanticized about something in the past and thought how life was better then?

EX: a SMALL example – homemade ice cream: the old hand churned ice cream vs the modern electric churned. There's something nostalgic about the days we used to be at our family lake house with friends and the men would get the salt, ice and ingredients in the big container and then my brother and I would "get to turn the handle". Wasn't that great fun!!

NO, GIVE ME THE ELECTRIC CHURN ANY DAY.

THAT'S a bit what this section of Hebrews is like.

The Hebrew Christians were looking back at the good old days of priests and sacrifices with longing and the author is saying, "IT IS SO MUCH BETTER NOW. We have a better Priest and a Better Hope. Why would you want to go back?"

**Side ?? – why didn't God send Jesus sooner? ... We don't know.

Hebrews 7:11-19

¹(e) If the Jewish priests and their laws had been able to save us, why then did God need to send Christ as a priest with the rank of Melchizedek, instead of sending someone with the rank of Aaron—the same rank all other priests had?

¹²⁻¹⁴ And when God sends a new kind of priest, his law must be changed to permit it. As we all know, Christ did not belong to the priest-tribe of Levi, but came from the tribe of Judah, which had not been chosen for priesthood; Moses had never given them that work.

¹⁵ So we can plainly see that God's method changed, for Christ, the new High Priest who came with the rank of Melchizedek, ¹⁶ did not become a priest by meeting the old requirement of belonging to the tribe of Levi, but on the basis of power flowing from a life that cannot end. ¹⁷ And the psalmist points this out when he says of Christ, "You are a priest forever with the rank of Melchizedek."

¹⁸ Yes, the old system of priesthood based on family lines was canceled because it didn't work. It was weak and useless for saving people. ¹⁹ It never made anyone really right with God. But now we have a far better hope, for Christ makes us acceptable to God, and now we may draw near to him.

HERE'S WHERE WE'RE GOING TODAY:

- We'll see why the OT SYSTEM AND PRIESTHOOD was insufficient and had to be replaced. Stay with me as we examine the argument of the author. REMEMBER that we are not the original audience, but there is meaning and application for us. We live in an age where "it's all about us". That is so misguided and shallow. As believers, we are part of a MUCH BIGGER STORY of humanity and salvation.
- I want to offer you some pastoral help in thinking about what it means to "draw near to God". Not surprisingly, I'll borrow from a Valley of Vision prayer. Why? Because they say it so well. I don't go looking for a prayer, they come to me in the course of the week. It is providential, i.e. a God thing how a theme of a prayer that I'm reading during sermon prep "just so happens" to fit with the theme of the text.

SUMMARY V. 11-28 Jesus Compared to Melchizedek. These themes carry into Chap 8-10

The Mosaic law was unable to make men perfect, since it was administered by a succession of sinful, mortal priests. Jesus, however, by God's oath, is established forever as the High Priest thus permitting believers to draw near to God on the basis of His person and work.

The old covenant was not able to bring about the fullness which God had in store for His people – a new heart, new identity, new power and new disposition. The old covenant gave hints and types of what was to come, but the fullness came in Christ. The word in v. 25 “uttermost” indicates to fully experience something. That fullness or completion is in Christ.

Under the Old Covenant, access to God was based on the ritual sacrifices offered by the priests. The character of the priest himself was not as important. But Jesus gives us access to God based on His perfection, His once-for-all sacrifice, resurrection, and eternal intercession for us at the right hand of God.

The argument is very simple. **If the old priesthood had been capable of bringing about the kind of believing maturity and assurance that God desires for His people, then there would have been no need for Jesus Christ. And the very fact that Jesus Christ has come is a reminder that the old priesthood was a shadow of the reality to come in the Lord Jesus Christ.**

For me it raises a question...

DID THEY KNOW IT WAS INSUFFICIENT? (short answer) Ex 25:40-; Heb 8:5

To varying degrees. Moses was told that he was to build a tabernacle according to a “pattern” of the real one (in heaven).

They knew there was a disconnect between the vision of relationship put forward in the Torah, Psalms, etc and the reality of the hearts of stone of the people. The prophets spoke of a new covenant to come. The intimacy and proximity to God that is spoken of through the Psalms is not made possible through the blood of bulls and sheep.

At the heart of the bible is the concept that God is glorified most when we most delight in and enjoy Him.

“Better is one day in your courts”. Ps 84:10

“Whom have I in heaven but you..” Ps 73

“Thy lovingkindness is better than life” Ps 63 ; ‘In Thy presence is joy forevermore” Ps 16:11

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart...” Deut 6:5

What kept the people from this joy was not the aloof nature of God, but the sinful hearts of men and women. This was pictured through the veil that hung in the temple. It separated the Holy of holies from the rest of the temple.

APPLICATION POINT...

** We live with an old covenant mentality when we think we need to do something to atone for our sin, that God has put us on the bench, OR when we live with a cloud of floating guilt. We might as well be like the old covenant followers waiting for the right sort of sacrifice on our part to give us peace with God and a clear conscience. The call of Hebrews is to hold fast to Christ.

v.12 -14

The new covenant priesthood is singular – only one priest – Jesus.

This is more than just a disagreement about a word. The function of a priest is that of standing between God and the people and to make a sacrifice. I’m a Pastor, not a priest. This table before us is not a re-sacrifice of Christ. I am not here to represent you to God or God to you in the sense of an old covenant priest (or priests in other modern traditions).

V. 12 The change in the priest means there was a change in the law.

Why was the Levitical priesthood been disregarded in favor of Christ? Why is that line of descent irrelevant? A few quick thoughts from this text. Similar themes will be addressed in upcoming passages.

THE OT priesthood was ineffective in bring people to God v. 11

This theme is going to be repeated several times in Chapters 8-10, so if several sermons sound alike, sorry. I'm just following the text. WHY INEFFECTIVE???

First **was the nature of the priests themselves** who were often corrupt and ungodly. Just look through the history of the old testament and then the priest in the New testament that we see Annas and Caiaphas and we get a glimpse of the sinful men who held that position

Secondly **their offerings were inadequate. How could the blood of a bull or a sheep atone for sin?**

Heb 10:1,4;11

No verse in the OT says that the blood of animals takes away sin. The sacrifices were a type pointing to something greater and better. Those who offered in faith, contrition and obedience to God on the basis of His word experienced "at-one-ment" with God. The sacrifices were subjectively effective, but the sin had not YET been dealt with objectively. (Walter Kaiser – Uses of the OT IN THE NEW p. 139)

The priest and the offerings were inadequate but God who designed them is not inadequate. The old Covenant sacrificial system was inadequate by design. It was never God's intention to save people through that system.

The third reason why this entire Priestly business was non effectual by God's own design is that **the Levitical priesthood was intended to be predictive.**

It was never intended to be the means by which the plan of God was completed, but it was only a shadow of the perfect priest and his perfect sacrifice. – MORE IN CHAP 9-10

The old Covenant system could not get the job done of bringing people closer to God, which ultimately is a heart issue. Isaiah 29:13 "This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me."

The Levitical priesthood is disregarded because the old testament system of sacrifice was attached to an old Covenant that has been replaced.

In Exodus 19 you have the official Covenant document that was given to establish this Covenant relationship between God and the people of Israel.

Prior to that you had promises given to Abraham Isaac and Jacob but there was no officially established Covenant format as we see in Exodus and Leviticus which carried throughout the history of Israel.

In Exodus 34 the ten commandments themselves are referred to as the Covenant.

In Hebrews 7 we see that the law was given on the basis of the priesthood and vice a versa. The two are interconnected so when one goes, they both go.

God was establishing a theocracy with the people of Israel.

The job of the priest was to teach the law to the people and to perform the sacrifices for atonement.

7:12. when there is a change of the priesthood there must be a change of the law as well. The two are interconnected

The old testament priesthood has been superseded by a greater priest and a greater Covenant.

V 15 - his life is the guarantee.

To be a priest you had to be born of a legitimate marriage from a father who is of the line of Levi and you could have no external physical defect. Leviticus 21 gives a long list of blemishes that could disqualify a man from priesthood. It was very much focused on the externals and not on the character.

But Jesus had a life that was without dispute. He was flawless. God didn't send an airtight argument he sent an airtight person.

Jesus had an indestructible life. He did pass through death, but death could not hold him. **He was not qualified based on externalities but on eternity.** (Art Azurdia). He is the eternal son of God who lives and reigns forever and to intercedes for us forever.

v18. The former regulation is set aside (a word that speaks of legal annulment speaks of an abolition of a law needs to render a contract null and void). A former regulation is a now abolished because it was weak and useless.

The old Covenant system served its purpose as a shadow but not the substance. The substance has now arrived, and he is called a “better hope.”

The Better Hope is Someone we meet before it is something we experience.

Under the New Covenant the priest gets the job done. He draws us near to God.

v. 19 “But now we have a far better hope, for Christ makes us acceptable to God, and now we may draw near to him.”

Based on the work of Christ, we can draw near to God. What does that involve? It is a posture of the heart and a way of life.

Some of us are continuing to get short circuited in our lives, in our relationships, in our battle with besetting sins because we don't draw near to God in our hearts. We may draw near externally and through attendance at the right activities, but in our hearts, we are not near to God. We are “near enough” in our minds, but deep down, we know we're keeping Him at arm's length.

What is the language of drawing near to God? What does it sound like, look like, feel like? A Posture of the heart.

THE VALLEY OF VISION PRAYER ENTITLED Need of JESUS

<https://banneroftruth.org/us/devotional/need-of-jesus/>

LORD JESUS,

I am blind, be thou my light,

ignorant, be thou my wisdom,

self-willed, be thou my mind.

this shows our need of Jesus, and a posture of humility – Prov 3
“lean not on your own understanding”

**Open my ear to grasp quickly thy Spirit's voice,
and delightfully run after his beckoning hand;**

Heart focus

**Melt my conscience that no hardness remain,
make it alive to evil's slightest touch;**

Heart focus

**When Satan approaches may I flee to thy wounds,
and there cease to tremble at all alarms.**

Gospel Promise – Rom 8:1

**Be my good shepherd to lead me into
the green pastures of thy Word,
and cause me to lie down beside the rivers
of its comforts.**

Heart that trust in the God's supernatural
grace, not in circumstances.

**Fill me with peace, that no disquieting worldly gales
may ruffle the calm surface of my soul.**

A takeaway from Heb 7 is to simply pray for yourself and OTHERS that you would actively draw near to God, in times of joy and trial. If devotional resources like the VOV don't work for you, then use the Psalms, a hymnbook or songs we regularly sing here at Highlands. Whatever it takes, make it practice to bring your HEART to God.

One way is to Come to the Table – if you come in a right frame of heart.
Ju-jitsu and communion (7-9-19 candidate at TVP)– “How do you get better at Ju-jitsu?”
“Keep going to the mat on a regular basis and learn to ‘tap out’.”

Same for spiritual growth – keep at it, keep pursuing God, keep drawing near and learn to “tap out.”

This table is a form of that. We come and say, “God, I can’t do it, but I trust and rest in you. I’m tapping out as I cling to Jesus my all-sufficient High Priest, my Savior, the one who brings me to you.”

Don’t come because others are doing so. Don’t come if you are not drawing near to God but are running from Him.

This is the Lord’s Table and we invite all who know him and have been admitted to the Table by an evangelical church to come – not just externally, but from the heart. God knows our hearts. He knows if we are in a place of resting in His grace and provision or if we’re trying to live as our own boss in our own lives.

Silent prayer of preparation.

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