

Hebrews Chapter 7B

When Toyota changed the design of their Tacoma pickup truck in 2005 those changes captured my attention. At that time my children were all leaving home and I was called upon to move their belongings from place to place.

I began looking at the new Tacoma on the internet, later I stopped by the dealership and picked up a few brochures. (*that's always trouble*)

- When I looked at the images of the cockpit I pictured myself behind the wheel.
- When I watched the videos of the truck 4 wheeling through the mud I imagined how great it would be bursting through piles of snow as I drove down Colebrookdale Road on my way to church in the Winter.
- Well the images of the Tacoma provided a limited measure of satisfaction.
- At that time my restricted financial resources prevented me from actually entering into the holy of holies, that is the actual driver's seat of a Tacoma.
- So I lived the dream vicariously through the pictures that were provided.

Well, there came a day when God provided the resources that were necessary for me to move from the pictures and the videos into the reality of truck ownership.

- When I actually purchased my 2006 Toyota Tacoma I threw away all of the images, all of the brochures all of the pictures that once captivated my attention and I began enjoying the reality of driving my new truck.

The author of Hebrews likens the Old Covenant Ceremonies and sacrifices to mere pictures and images of which Jesus Christ is the full and complete substance.

- When that substance becomes your reality, when your salvation is built on the completed work of Christ,
- WHY in the world would you want to return to the pictures and images?
 - There is no religious ritual, no washing, no sacrifice that can add anything to the finished work of Christ.
- Here in Chapter 7 the author will go so far as to say that the reality of Christ's Sacrifice, His high priestly work brings the Old System of Ceremony and sacrifice to an end.
- Going back to my example, the day I parked my new truck in the driveway I joyfully discarded all of the pictures through which I looked forward to the reality that I now enjoy.

The Key phrase that we will discover today in Hebrews 7:11-19 is: this: **“a better hope is introduced; through which we draw near to God.”**

- Our Hope in Christ brings us all the way into the very presence of God.
- I believe it is the desire of God to bring His beloved children close to Himself.”
When we look at the end of the Bible, we see that He accomplishes His goal:

Revelation 21:3 **He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.**

John MacArthur: “Drawing near to God is the essence of Christianity. Drawing near to God is the Christian’s highest experience, and should be his highest purpose. This is the design of God for Christianity – access to his presence, coming into his presence with nothing between.”

- This access to the presence of God and the hope of eternal glory is now declared to sinful men through the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 2: 17 **And he came and preached peace to you who were far off (Gentiles who did not have the revelation of God) and peace to those who were near. (Jews who possessed the revelation of God in His Word)** 18 **For through him (Through the atoning work of Jesus Christ) we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.**

- Our Access to the very presence of God comes as a result of the work of our great High Priest.

Hebrews 4:15 **For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.** 16 **Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.**

- For those of us who believe, all who have been redeemed, made whole through the work of Christ, the glorious and unapproachable Throne of Almighty God has become for us a throne of grace.
- Into which WE are welcomed, not by any virtue that we ourselves possess but by the grace of God through faith in the atoning work of Christ, the author and finisher of our faith.
- In light of the incredible privilege that Christ has obtained for us, namely, access to the very presence of God WHY would we be so consumed with the affairs, the possessions and cares of this present world that is in fact passing away.

So many Christians hold a very shallow and worldly view of this great salvation. They see their faith as a means of circumventing hell and a way of obtaining that illusive personal happiness in this present life.

- If only they could comprehend, if only they could taste the unimaginable delight and unfathomable pleasures that abide in the presence of God, that joy unspeakable of which Peter writes they could sing with all of the redeemed.

“Turn your eyes upon Jesus, Look full in his wonderful face and the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of his glory and grace.”

In Judaism God came near unto man but we must remember, in the former covenant the presence of God was off limits, restricted by a physical barrier, there was a veil that separated the Holy of Holies and only the High Priest was allowed to enter and even he was only permitted to enter one day out of the year and only after a series of sacrifices and washings.

- The veil could not be taken away because sin had not been completely removed. And the priesthood of Aaron was never able to bring man fully into the presence of God.
- BUT the Gospel writers tell us, the moment that Jesus died that physical barrier, the veil in the Temple was torn in half effectively opening the holy of Holies to ALL who partake of Christ's righteousness by faith.

Matthew 27: 50 **And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit.**
51 **And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split.**

- Only Jesus could remove the veil, only the sinless Lamb of God could provide complete atonement effectively removing the burden of sin, providing access to the heavenly holy of Holies for all who believe.
- NOW that men could enter into the presence of God through the sacrifice of the spotless lamb there was no longer a need for the images, the types and shadows, the rituals and ceremonies all found their fulfillment in Jesus Christ.
- So the Levitical priesthood became obsolete yielding to the one who was prophetically declared to be a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

Moving on in Hebrews 7 the author provides us with two very simple points but he communicates those points in a complex manner. Obviously he wants us to think carefully and labor to gain understanding. Two points:

1. The imperfect yields to the perfect. (Ceremony gives way to Certainty)
2. The perfect priesthood requires a different Law)

1 The Imperfect yields to the perfect.

Hebrews 7:11 **Now if perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need would there have been for another priest to arise after the order of Melchizedek, rather than one named after the order of Aaron?**

- The first century Jews regarded their system as perfect. After all it was given to them by God himself, and they were convinced that the system was designed to be permanent, and they were sure that it did not need to be changed.
- BUT the author of Hebrews draws their attention to the O.T. Scriptures in order to show them that the Word of God ITSELF informed us that the system was imperfect and was designed to be temporary.
 - Where do they find this? The writer points them to Psalm 110:

500 years after the Law of God was instituted, 500 years after the Levitical Priesthood was established, King David spoke of a different Priesthood that was yet to come. Psalm 110:1 **The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool."** 2 **The LORD sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of your enemies!** 3 **Your people will offer themselves freely on the day of your power, in holy garments; from the womb of the morning, the dew of your youth will be yours.** 4 **The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, "You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."**

- The Israelites understood that Psalm 110 foretold the promised Messiah.
- What they didn't understand was that this Messiah, when he arrived would be both King and Priest and would bring an END to the old priesthood and the ceremonial law.
- The point that the author of Hebrews is making is this: If the Levitical priesthood and the sacrificial system were able to bring about perfection in man it would have remained. BUT it couldn't.

Romans 3:20 **For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.**

- The simple fact that Jews had to keep coming back to the temple year after year, bringing sacrifice after sacrifice tells us that perfection was never obtained through the Levitical system.

Let's take a minute to consider this idea of "PERFECTION."

- The author said, **Now if perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need would there have been for another priest to arise after the order of Melchizedek,**
- This word perfection (TELEIOSIS) speaks of being fully complete, mature, perfectly whole. It is used in many other places in the N.T.

Colossians 1:27 (NKJV) **To them (To the Saints) God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.** 28 **Him (Christ) we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.**

- The goal of New Testament preaching is to present every man perfect, complete, mature, whole.

This perfection is BOTH the goal of our preaching. It is also the goal of Jesus' High Priestly intercession.

John 17:20 (NKJV) **"I do not pray for these alone, (Original disciples) but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; (That's us)** 21 **"that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.**

22 “And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: 23 “I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

- Because Jesus is a priest after the order of Melchizedek, because he lives forever to intercede for us HE IS ABLE, through his sacrifice and through his prayer to bring all who believe to perfection.
- Let’s take that idea of perfection a step further.

Throughout the New Testament the idea of perfection carries with it a “FINAL” or eschatological perfection. What do I mean by that?

- There is a realm of Christian perfection that will only be realized when we cast off this flesh and enter into our final and glorified state.
- When we stand together around the throne of God we will be fully mature, finally complete, experiencing the full reality of this great salvation that has been purchased for us by the blood and sweat, the sacrifice and intercession of Jesus Christ our great High Priest.

This is the day that Paul refers to in Ephesians 4:

Ephesians 4:10 (NKJV) **He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)** 11 **And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,**

12 **for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,** 13 **till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;**

- The Levitical Priesthood was not designed to provide perfection for man. It was designed to POINT men and women to the one who COULD provide them with perfection, and that is Jesus Christ.
- ALL of the shadows and types, all of the sacrifices and offerings typified the reality that was yet to come in the one who was a priest after the order of Melchizedek.

Now that you know that the Law could not justify man and No one was made perfect through the O.T. sacrifices you might ask, HOW then WERE the people SAVED in the days before Christ came?

- The answer to that is found in the Patriarch of the Hebrews people, Abraham.

Genesis 15:6 **And he (Abraham) believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.**

- Throughout the Bible in both the Old and New Covenants perfection comes as a free gift from God by grace through faith in His promises, more especially the promise of a savior, the seed of a woman, the seed of Abraham, the Son of David, the Branch out of dry ground... Jesus Christ.

- SO we see, concerning the priesthood, the imperfect yields to the perfect.
- NOW we will see that a change of priesthood demands a change in law and that change of law gives us a better hope.

2 The Perfect Priesthood requires a Different Law

Hebrews 7: 12 **For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well. 18 For on the one hand, a former commandment is set aside because of its weakness and uselessness 19 (for the law made nothing perfect); but on the other hand, a better hope is introduced, through which we draw near to God.**

- Because the Aaronic priesthood and the Mosaic Law were so closely connected to one another a change in one demands a change in the other.
- All of the ordinances for worship prescribed by God in the Law were carried out by the Levitical Priests.
- Therefore any change in priesthood would naturally demand a change in Law.
- So what exactly changed in the Law?
- I think it is important that we understand what the Author means when he speaks of the Law.

The word “LAW” itself can hold several meanings in the Scripture. In its broadest sense the Law refers to the entire Old Covenant.

- But there are times when Law CAN simply refer to the 10 commandments.
- Still other times, Law can specifically refer to the rituals and ceremonies of the Old Covenant.

We have to ask, which of these is the Writer of Hebrews referring?

I believe that the writer is referring to the Ceremonial Law here in Hebrews 7. Let me tell you WHY.

- God’s “Moral Law” described for us in the 10 commandments and the accompanying context is a revelation of God’s holy character, His divine nature and therefore those standards cannot possibly change. (God doesn’t change)
- The problem with the Old Covenant was not God’s Moral Law.

Paul tells us in Romans 7: 12 **So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.**

- The problem with the Law was that people are unable to keep it, they broke the covenant because they were sinful by nature and corrupt at the core.
- There were no washings, no animal sacrifices that were able to transform the sinful nature of man.
- What man really needed was a new birth and a new covenant that would provide him with a new nature.
- The prophet Ezekiel actually foretold a New Covenant that would change the heart of man.

Ezekiel 36: 25 I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. 26 And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

- Through the New Covenant the sacrifice of Jesus did what NO animal sacrifice could do. It broke the power and the penalty of sin in those who believe. It gave those believers a new heart and placed a new spirit within them.
- NOW by faith in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ every man who is born of God is declared to be righteous, enabled to enter the presence of God.

Hebrews 7:19 (for the law (Ceremonial Law) made nothing perfect); but on the other hand, a better hope is introduced, through which we draw near to God.

- By this New Covenant we who were once far away are able to draw near to God.
- RIGHT NOW: 1Co 13:12 We see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.

This portion of Hebrews 7 is actually “Bookended” by the word “Perfection.”

- IN both places it speaks of the imperfect nature of the Old Covenant and leads us to a better HOPE.
- Our better Hope is in the New Covenant which brings us into a living union with Jesus Christ whereby we have access to the very presence of God.

Our “Better Hope” is LIKE that of a Bride, engaged to her beloved bridegroom, waiting patiently for the day when they will be ONE. When he will arise and take her to the Father’s house where they will dwell together in an everlasting love relationship.

Dwelling together in perfect, unending, uninterrupted peace.

- Here is an illustration that might help us understand the “Better Hope” that we have in Christ.

A young woman had run up a lot of bills and charged beyond what she was able to pay. She was in debt over her head and saw no way to get out. She was in trouble and the situation looked helpless. Then a young man came along and fell deeply in love with her. After some months he proposed. She also loved him deeply but she knew she should tell him about her debts before she agreed to marry him. When he learned of her situation he said to her, “Don’t worry. I’ll pay all of your debts, just leave them to me.” The next week he gave her an engagement ring and reassured her many times that he would take care of her and pay all of her debts. She trusted him implicitly and knew that he was a man of his word. The integrity of her beloved gave her every reason to be confident and hopeful even though she was not yet free from her mountain of debt.

Finally they were married and just as he said he paid off all of her debts. Not only that, on their wedding day he told her that he was wealthy beyond her wildest dreams. He opened

a joint checking account comforting her with the words, “**You will never have to be concerned about debt again.** From that moment on she lived in the security of the one who loved her the one who rescued her and set her free from every debt.

- We were drowning in the debt of sin when the Lover of our Souls called us to follow Him.
- We observed the measure of his perfect love when he yielded his body to death in order to free us from the bondage of our debt.
- He bore the wrath, he endured separation from God so that we could have access to the presence of God.
- He rose from the dead, he ascended to the right hand of the Father, the highest position of authority over all of creation. From that position of power he constantly prays for us.
- Before he died he said:

John 14:1 "**Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.**

- The High Priestly Ministry of Jesus Christ assures our forgiveness, imparts his righteousness. His constant intercession energized our perseverance.