

## *“A Better Priest”*

### **Fixing Our Eyes Upon Jesus, Our High Priest**

Hebrews 7:11-19

Dr. Jeff Stivason

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**Sig:** Remember, we are recording, if you can wait for a microphone so we can get a good, clear reception. Look, we've got the AV board for you, Jeff. We've got a piano man behind you. *(Laughter)*

**Jeff:** Well, why don't we pray? *(Laughter)* It's good to be back with you. Why don't we pray? Okay, I need to be led through this. Go ahead. *(Music)*

Our gracious heavenly Father, we bow before You this morning remembering everything that You taught us in Your word about Yourself. But Father, of all of those things, we remember how You loved us when we were yet sinners, how You sent Your only-Begotten to live and die for us, that we might have both forgiveness and the imputation of Christ's righteousness as we stand united to Him, and also for Your Holy Spirit who applies the work of the Lord Jesus to us, who unites us to Your Son, and who is indeed Himself a guarantee of better things yet to come, a promise that what You started in us You will bring to completion.

And so, Father, as we gather here this morning, we are mindful of many things about You, but not the least of which is our salvation in Christ Jesus. So we bow to thank You for Him and for His bringing us into relationship with You, that we might know You more fully. Father, we pray as we bow before You today that You will bless not only our study but those we love, those we care about, those we are friends with, those we are siblings in Christ with. And we think about Bruce. And Father, we pray that You will bless him, as we know that You have throughout his life. We pray that You'll continue to abide with him. We pray that You'll continue to minister to his heart and his mind. And even in this setback we pray that You will teach him, indeed instruct his mind and his heart, that he is walking in the humiliation of Christ Jesus. And to walk in the footsteps of Christ is to look forward to an impending exaltation.

Father, we pray for Rich's mom. We ask that Your hand would be upon her. We pray for Rich and his family as they minister to her. And we pray for Your will and Your way to be worked out in that situation.

Father, as we gather again we pray for Your hand to be upon our study. We pray that You will bless to our understanding what can be a difficult text. And we ask for Your leading and guidance by the Holy Spirit. And it's in Christ's name that we pray. Amen.

**Men:** Amen.

**Jeff:** Well, it is good to be back with you. I hate to say this and I'm sorry to say this. But I have an appointment at 8:45 about an hour away from here. So if I look like I'm running afterwards, I am. *(Laughter)* So don't take that offensively.

Let's turn to God's word. Let's turn to Hebrews chapter 7. And I'm going to have somebody else read this. I left my glasses at home. So somebody else can read Hebrews chapter 7:11-19. That would be great. And if you read it, read it nice and loud.

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*“Now if perfection had been obtainable 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? For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well. For the One of whom these things are spoken belonged to another tribe, from which no one has ever served at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests. This becomes even more evident when another Priest arises in the order of Melchizedek, who has become a priest, not on the basis of a legal requirement concerning bodily descent, but by the power of an indestructible life.*

*“For it is witnessed of Him, ‘You are a Priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek.’*  
This is the word of the Lord.

**Men:** Thanks be to God.

**Jeff:** Read two more.

**Ted Wood:** Oh, I’m sorry.

**Jeff:** That’s okay.

**Ted Wood:** I get to say, “This is the word of the Lord” twice. *(Laughter)*

*For on the one hand, a former commandment is set aside because of its weakness and uselessness (for the law made nothing perfect), but on the other hand, a better hope is introduced, through which we draw near to God.”* This is the word of the Lord.

**Men:** Thanks be to God.

**Jeff:** All right. Okay, we are going to look at this particular outline today. We’re going to look at some introductory points. And then we’re going to look at the imperfection of the priesthood, and we’re thinking about the Levitical priesthood. We’re also going to talk about a necessary change in that priesthood and the law, and then that change and how it brings hope.

So that’s our flow. This could have a tendency too—I thought to myself, *what a wonderful time it is for us to think about these kinds of things*. But also we’ve had a little bit of a pause in this. So there’s a sense in which we’re beginning in a text that can be difficult without the background near to us. So we’ll try to do the best we can today.

And as I thought about that, I thought about this particular symbol.

**Transcriber’s Note:** A TV color test band.

**Jeff:** This symbol forty years ago and more would put fear into the heart of every child watching his favorite program because when this particular sign would come onto the television set, two things would usually happen. First of all, there would be a loud buzzing noise that would be kind of hard on the ears. And so you’d say to your brother and you’d say to your other siblings, “Run from the TV!” So for you young guys, we didn’t have controllers. *(Laughter)*

So you turned down the television set. And then the second thing that would happen would just drive you nuts! This thing would buzz, and then the program would come back, having been in progress the whole time that thing was up! *(Laughter)* It drove you nuts!

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Well, today we’re going to do what the television programs never did. We’re going to try to recap just a little bit so that you have a sense of what’s been going on, and why we are today in the book of Hebrews. So let’s think about it a minute.

I want you to know that we have an argument in the book of Hebrews. And the argument can be summarized in a very simple way. You can say “Jesus is better,” and you would have the summary of the argument.

Jesus is better, but better than what? Well, He’s better than the angels. And if you look at that out of context, if you look at that chapter, at verses 5 and 13 of chapter 1, there’s an inclusio and it’s bookended.

**Transcriber’s Note:** Hebrews 1:5, 13, NKJV. *“For to which of the angels did He ever say: ‘You are My Son, today I have begotten You’? And again: ‘I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son’?”*

*“But to which of the angels has He ever said: ‘Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool’?”*

**Jeff:** *“To which of the angels did God ever say?”*, and *“To which of the angels did He say?”* In other words, the angels are far inferior to the Son of God. And if you looked at that particular section on its own, you might say, “I wonder why he’s talking about the angels.”

And then if you go further into chapter 2, you realize that the angels have a part in the mediating of the law of Moses. And then in chapter 3 what does he say? He says that Jesus is not only better than the angels who mediated the covenant, but He is better than the one who received the covenant, Moses. And not only is He better than Moses, but He is better than the priesthood that the law established and that Moses received.

And then not only that, but we find that the author of Hebrews says that He is the administrator of a better covenant. But not only that; He’s a better sacrifice than the sacrifices of that old covenant. And not only that; He carries out a better ministry than that old covenant carried out.

So Jesus is better. But what is He better than? He is better than Judaism. And that’s the whole idea. That’s the whole thrust of this particular letter. And I’ve been thinking about this over the last couple of weeks and months. And I’ve been thinking about how it’s interesting that you have two significant letters. All of the letters in the Bible are significant because they’re written by the Lord our God through the inspiring power of the Spirit.

But we have two significant letters in the New Testament. You have the book of Romans and you have the book of Hebrews. And as we think about those two particular books, one of the striking things is this. The book of Romans is really written to Jews and Gentiles. But it’s written to Gentiles in the main. And I say that because all of the Jews had been exiled from Rome under Claudius in 49 A.D. The letter to Rome was written about 55 or so. And so you have a predominantly Gentile church with Jews filtering back in after the exile, because in 54 Claudius dies. And so there is a filtering back in.

But Paul is saying to the Gentiles, “Hey guys, I want you not to be arrogant and conceited about your position in the olive tree. There were those who were Jews who

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were cut off and you were grafted in, though you were a wild olive tree.” So it’s just a very significant letter talking about the Gentiles within the church.

But here we have a letter to primarily Jewish Christians. There are Gentiles there. And these Jewish Christians are tempted to do what? Well, these Jews who are now professing faith in Christ are tempted to leave. They’re tempted because of persecution and because of hostility, they’re tempted to go back to Judaism.

I mean, think about it. You are living in a very hostile environment. And you are sitting in somebody’s first-century living room. There are no priests, no incense. You have a scroll in front of you, a cheap scroll written by the apostle Paul—a single scroll, not a large Torah. You don’t have anything, none of the accoutrements. But most of all, there is absolutely no temple. And you’re sitting in this living room and you know you’re being persecuted.

And what is your tendency? What’s the draw? The draw is to go back to that which is familiar, to that which appears more solid or stable, more secure.

And when we get to Hebrews chapter 11, one of the things that we’re going to realize is that he builds an argument on this very point. Don’t put your eyes on what you see. Put your eyes on what’s real.

But here’s the point. The point is that the Preacher says to these folks, Look. Jesus is better than all of this. He is the fulfillment of all of this, the climax of all of this. And to leave and go back to the old is to go back to the shadows rather than to remain in the reality.

And so that’s really what this is about. It’s about encouraging men and women and children not to go back to the shadows of the past, but to stay with the reality which is in Christ because Christ is better than Judaism.

Now our text is the Pastor really working out the implications of the priesthood of Jesus Christ as it relates to Psalm 110. That’s where we are, if we can say it like this, in the weeds of the book. But that gives you somewhat of a sense of summary about the book. And now let’s move forward in terms of our particular text.

**Participant:** I know you’re limited for time. But Jeff, could you just talk about the implications of what you just said in everyday life, which is the temptation to go back to the familiar and leave the faith? I mean, how would that apply to us? And you’ve illustrated it very well in the first century. But what about us?

**Jeff:** Yes. Well, you know, what immediately jumps to my mind is a man that I’ve been working with. He is struggling with temptation. I hesitate to say this because he’s struggling with temptation. We may be struggling with everyday temptations. He’s struggling with drug addiction. He’s struggling with the use of prostitutes. He’s struggling with all kinds of things that are more significant. But that’s not to say that we don’t struggle. Maybe we struggle with using alcohol a little more than we ought, or lust and temptation in that regard. Maybe it’s not to the degree that he’s struggling. We may be struggling with those kinds of things. And my guess is that we do struggle with various things in life.

And here is where I’ve been thinking about Hebrews and where he is in his life. He’s asking the question. But does the gospel really work? And what he’s tempted to do is that

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he’s not tempted to go back to any sort of Judaism. But what he’s tempted to do is that he recently asked, “My question is why should I go on living?” So he’s tempted to go back to the dust, right? And he’s basically throwing up his hands and saying, “I’m not sure.”

And he’s been in the church and walked away from the faith. And every once in a while he appears and he talks and he interacts, and he comes for a few weeks and he disappears. And you know that when he disappears, you know where he is.

And so what I keep telling him is this. And one of the things that I wish I could impress upon you more is *the power of words*. And what I tell him is, “You’re living in a world of words, your own included.” And you know, it doesn’t help us that we have all-day news channels that talk about the weather. And you have a guy in five-mile-an-hour winds going like this.

**Transcriber’s Note:** Hand motions.

**Jeff:** And he says, “Is this the worst of it today?” You know, that sort of thing. And he says it over and over and over and over again, right? And it’s just a flood of words. And what do we begin to think about a flood of words? We begin to think that words are pretty cheap in our day and age. And words are not cheap, especially God’s word. And I’m trying to tie this all together.

I’ve been reading Martin Luther. I just love Martin Luther. I’m not a Lutheran, and his theology is partly mine. I’m not Lutheran, I’m Reformed. But one of the things I absolutely love is this. Luther says, *“I am a catechumen and I will be until the day I die. I preach the gospel to myself over and over again.”*

And what he means by that is that he might recite some text from Scripture that he knows. He might recite a number of them. He’ll recite the Apostles’ Creed. He’ll recite the Ten Commandments and examine himself in that light. He’ll say the Lord’s Prayer and he’ll examine himself. But he believes in the words. And he believes that he preaches those words to himself. Then he won’t have the effect of the psychologist who talks about the power of positive thinking. But he’ll actually hear the words of life and they will have a bearing upon his life.

And I want to say to this man, “You need to preach the gospel to yourself over and over and over again.”

You know, think about Joseph. Joseph is in the house of Potiphar and he’s alone, right? And the woman comes to him and says, *“Lie with me!”*

And what does he say to her? Have you ever noticed what he says? We always say that he flees. Well, he does flee. But do you notice what else he does? Do you ever think about this? He says, “This would be an abuse of my own power. This would be wrong in terms of your husband’s authority and jurisdiction.” What is he doing? He’s preaching the gospel to himself!

What does Jesus do when He’s tempted?

**Participant:** He embraces God’s word.

**Jeff:** He appeals to God’s authority, the Word! I think words are considered cheap in our day and age. They are. But I think that every time we open the Scriptures we need to tell ourselves things. It’s just like what you guys say when we finish reading the Scripture. I’m Presbyterian and I can’t remember the words from week to week. But I

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think that’s it. I don’t use the same words when I open the Scriptures and read them to my congregation. But every time I read them to my congregation I say, “This is the word of God. And this is what that means.” And that’s so important. To me that’s where the rubber meets the road. If you have anything to add to that, I’d love to hear it. Yes? Go ahead, Don.

**Don:** I know there are several places—and you’ve talked about them before, Jeff,—that warn us against drifting.

**Jeff:** That what?

**Don:** That warn us against drifting.

**Jeff:** Oh yeah, yeah.

**Don:** In chapter 2 and chapters 3, 6 and 7. And I think those are very important for us to realize. There are so many temptations that would cause us to have a tendency to do that.

**Jeff:** Yes, absolutely.

**Participant:** Jeff?

**Jeff:** Yes?

**Participant:** You said that today words are cheap. But actually I think they’re quite powerful, but they’re powerful in a very negative way.

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Participant:** I’ve just been through this Kavanaugh hearing. And the negativity of words puts people in a rage. It puts them in anger. I actually looked it up on the Internet. There is an addiction to rage and anger. And so I think you’re talking about positive words.

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Participant:** But there’s also a negative. And I’ve not only found the negative in talking about the left, but there’s also the right side of the politics as well that does the same thing. So words are very negatively powerful.

**Jeff:** Yes. You’re right. And you know, one of my favorite stories is in Mark’s gospel when Jesus goes ashore. It’s in chapter 5. He goes ashore and he confronts the demoniac. And if you notice, the demoniac comes toward Jesus. Just look at Mark chapter 5 a minute. This is illustrative of what we just heard. Listen to this. And I won’t be able to read it.

**Participant:** I know you don’t have your glasses.

**Jeff:** Okay. This looks to me like it’s in verse 7. The demoniac comes. And if you have a New American Standard, there are four words that are translated there, and all of them by “*beg*.” But there’s one word that’s translated differently if you have an ESV. The other three are translated “*beg*.” You’ll have to read chapter 5. But in the seventh verse it’s translated differently. The demoniac comes toward Jesus and he is saying to Jesus, “Get away from me!” And Jesus is saying repeatedly in the tense of the verb, “*Come out of him!*”

And what does the demoniac say? The demoniac says, “*I adjure You.*” In other words, “I place You under oath.”

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What’s the demoniac doing? Think about this. I think of a professional wrestler. You know what I mean. He’s bound by chains. He’s running around in the tombs. He’s a wild man. He’s the ultimate warrior of the 1980s. You know what I mean? (*Laughter*) Remember that?

And I think to myself, when Jesus comes out of that boat, that the best thing that He can do is to pick him up and put him in the camel clutch and break him—you know, that sort of thing. But you know the demoniac has demons. And the demons know how Jesus is going to be defeated, if he can be defeated at all. And how is that? It’s by words. He’s got to beat Him by words. And so he tries to place Jesus under oath. “I place you under oath!”

That’s not going to work with Jesus, right? (*Laughter*) Because it’s not a battle of volume. It’s a battle of authority. Who’s word is authoritative, right?

And so you’re right. There are these negative words, and they have their effect. And look, we would be crazy to think that the flood of words is just what is happening today. This is the device of the enemy, right? The strategy of the enemy is to flood our world with words so that we think they mean nothing. And you’re right to say that’s not that at all. It’s that they’re powerful. And the tactic is powerful. Yes?

**Participant:** It reminds me of James, where he talks about our tongues being a rudder, in essence a small rudder steering a large ship. I think that a lot of times in this world that people tend not to slow down and talk and think about what they’re going to speak, and it just floods and floods and floods.

**Jeff:** Yes?

**Participant:** Hey, Jeff?

**Jeff:** Yes?

**Participant:** In chapter 6, the chapter we covered a while ago, the writer talks about the oath that God makes and swears “*by two things, in which it is impossible for God to lie.*” Is that the same kind of oath that you’re talking about?

**Jeff:** Yes. I mean, the gospel is built on that very foundation: that God has promised. That’s the gospel promise, right? That’s exactly what I’m talking about. Okay, well let’s go on. Good discussion.

Let’s go on and think about *the imperfection of the priesthood*. If we think about the priesthood, we think about the Old Testament priesthood built on Levi, the Levitical priesthood. And one of the things that we learn from this text is that the Levitical priesthood is both inferior to the priesthood of Jesus Christ, which is described as the Melchizedekian priesthood. And I’m not going to go back into what we looked at in the first ten verses of chapter 7 except to say this. Who was Melchizedek? Melchizedek was a historical figure. And Jesus is the Son of God.

And remember the comparison. The comparison that we made back then when we looked at this was that Melchizedek, by virtue of the scarcity of his biography, is used as a type of Christ. Why? Well, because we’re not told in any literature that we have who Melchizedek’s father or mother were. We’re not told about his genealogy. It just seems like he appears out of the middle of nowhere. He does his thing in Genesis 14 and then disappears.

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One of the things that the Biblical authors do is they say, “Doesn’t that remind you of Jesus, this eternal figure?” And that’s really the comparison. So Melchizedek has what we called a *literary eternity*, in the sense that his genealogy is not listed. His father and his mother are not listed though he has them. And that is taken to the advantage of the Biblical writer who says, “Now think about this. Jesus is eternal.” And so, like this figure in the Old Testament, Jesus has an eternal priesthood. But His priesthood is a real priesthood, and it’s eternal.

So that’s the inferiority of the Levitical priesthood, as it pales in comparison with the Melchizedekian one. But it’s not only inferior to Jesus’ priesthood. We also realize that it’s imperfect.

Now I want you to think about this. The imperfection is given to us in the text. When you think about this text, verses 11-19, think about how it’s built upon, or even that the idea of the text is roped off by imperfection.

Look at this: verse 11. “*Now if perfection.*” And verse 19. “*The law made nothing perfect.*”

So he begins with this idea. Can this perfection be obtained in the Levitical priesthood? And the law makes nothing perfect. So both verses 11 and 19 sort of rope off the idea of imperfection, okay?

But why is it imperfect? That’s really the question that we have to ask ourselves. And it’s one we’ve been answering, so I’m not going to spend a lot of time on it. It’s this. It’s imperfect because it was always meant to be a shadow of the reality to come, right? I mean, you know, think about this. Well, I’m not going to. It was a chancey kind of illustration I was going to give. I might spend a little more time with that than I necessarily want to. Go ahead, Tom.

**Tom:** Wouldn’t you think also that it was to show that it was temporary?

**Jeff:** Yes, it was temporary, not eternal. Now what were the two imperfections related to this priesthood? What were the two imperfections related to what we’ve been looking at? Well, one is the *priesthood itself*, and the other one is *the law*. The priesthood and the law are imperfect.

Now the question is, would this have surprised the Jews? Would it have surprised the Jews to find and to discover that their priesthood and their law was in fact imperfect? And you know, I’m going to give you and sort of take you through this in a brief way. I want you to think about this for a minute. How would they have known? What would have been the indicator that their law and their priesthood were imperfect?

Well, I’m going to argue that Psalm 110’s use of Genesis 14 might have been an indicator. Why is that? Because there seems to be this idea that the Priest who arose from the Melchizedekian line would be a Priest forever. And it seems to me that when you read Psalm 110, that this Priest transcends the existing priesthood. You would think that the Jews would have said something like this. Where does this Melchizedekian priest come from? And what is it? I mean, we know so very little about it, but we do have this figure in Genesis 14. And how does Psalm 110 connect with him?

And you know, if David wrote this Psalm, there’s a sense in which you might think to yourself that David would have talked about this a little bit in terms of being king of



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Israel. So you might think to yourself that they would have had some idea. And if not Levi, then who?

Well, think about it like this. I actually have it. Look at Mark 12:35. *“How is it that the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David? David himself said in the Holy Spirit, ‘The LORD said to My Lord: ’”,--and here it is!—“Sit at My right hand until I put Your enemies beneath Your feet.” “David himself calls Him Lord. So in what sense is He his son?”*

Now all of a sudden Jesus is helping them. What Jesus is doing is that He’s saying, “You know the idea that there might be another priesthood that far exceeds the Levitical priesthood? Well, guess what! I want you to think back to Psalm 110. It’s the Melchizedekian priesthood.”

But notice what Jesus does. Jesus here unites the Davidic line with the fulfillment of that Melchizedekian priesthood. And what is Jesus saying? He’s all of a sudden saying that if this is the Son of David that we’re talking about, then He’s not just a Priest, but He’s also a King, very much like Melchizedek back in Genesis 14. And so the Person that you are looking for that would far exceed the Levitical priests and the priesthood is One who is both a Priest and a King in the Melchizedekian priesthood.

So if they would have examined the Scriptures, they might have had inklings about this. Maybe not a fully developed theology, but certainly some of them had an understanding of it. David would be included in that number. And if they had, at least the author of Hebrews says that if you understand that there’s going to be a change in the priesthood, then you must understand that there’s going to be a change in the law.

Now why would that be? Well if there is a change in the priesthood, and the priesthood is built on the law, then the law has to change. And that leads us to the very thing that we’re going to look at next. And that’s *the necessary change that needs to take place*.

The change is for redemption. Now why is that? Well, I want you to think about it like this. Why is the priesthood tethered to the law?

Well, think about it like this. Think about men and women and children. Are they born righteous?

**Participant:** No.

**Jeff:** They are absolutely not born righteous. If they’re not born righteous, then what do we have? We have the conclusion that they’re sinners, because they don’t meet up with the righteous standard of God. Where do we find the righteous standard of God? We find it in the law, right? And so the law points out our sin.

But if the law points out our sin, then the priesthood is what? It’s what brings healing to the breach, right, because the priest, in recognition that people aren’t righteous and need a mediator in order to bring them to God, the priest functions in that role. He brings people to God. He brings God to the people.

Now there’s a problem here. What is the problem with the Levitical priesthood in regard to that way of functioning? Well, there are two problems. First of all, the priests themselves were sinful.

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I mean, think about the establishment of the priesthood itself. If you read about it in Numbers 10, Nadab and Abihu, the very first time they offer sacrifices, right? The very first time, and what happens to them? Fire comes out of the altar and consumes them. Why? Because *“they offered strange fire before the LORD.”*

Think about that! At the very moment of ceremonial consecration under the Mosaic Covenant the priests were laughing! The priests are not sinless, which is why they—and it’s in the law that they have to do this—they have to offer sacrifices on their own behalf before they offer sacrifices on behalf of the people, right?

So the priests have a major problem. You remember how they had to put the incense around them before they go into the temple once a year. Why do they have to put the incense around them? Well, some scholars have speculated that it’s a barrier between them and the Holy One, right? There’s a mist, a fog, an incense barrier so that they can’t see the Holy of Holies clearly when they enter into that holy place once a year.

And so they’re imperfect. They’re unable to stand before God in that sense. And so the priests were sinful. That was the first problem.

The second problem is that *animals can’t take away sin*. Animal sacrifices cannot take away sin. Hebrews 10:4. Does somebody have that handy so they can read Hebrews 10:4? I don’t have it. Yes, I do have it. *“For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.”* Hebrews 10:4.

The problem is that the priests were sinful. The problem is that the sacrifices can’t take away sin. And so what is the priesthood of the Levites? The priesthood of the Levites is simply a picture of the cure, but not the cure itself.

And so there needed to be a change. There needed to be a change in the priesthood and the law. There needed to be a change in the priesthood, and there was by necessity a change in the law because the priesthood is built on the law. But there needs to be a change in the priesthood because the priesthood is imperfect and so are the sacrifices. And that leads us to *the hope of the new covenant*. Does anybody have any questions? I realize that it’s a little bit—Yes, go ahead, Don.

**Don:** Jeff, you were saying that this chapter talks about the imperfections of the law.

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Don:** And yet Psalm 19 verses 10 and following says that the law is perfect.

**Jeff:** Yes. And Romans 7 says that the law is not the problem.

**Don:** Right, yes. Good. If you want to say anything more, go ahead.

**Jeff:** Well, no. Is that where you were headed?

**Don:** Yes. How do we reconcile those two ideas?

**Jeff:** Yes. So I think it’s the implementation of what the law says. So the law is not the problem. The law is perfect in the sense for which it was given. What’s the problem?

The easiest way I can say this is that the law of the covenant of Sinai had signs and things signified by the signs, okay? And so the sign of my marriage is my wedding ring, okay? But it’s a sign of something that it signifies. It signifies my promise to my wife and my wife’s promise to me.

Now if I get in my car and drive away and never talk to my wife again, and somebody says, “Are you married?”, and I say, “Yes, I’m married. I’m a good husband and I have

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this sign to prove it.” *(Laughter)* All right? That’s the very same thing somebody does when they get baptized and walk out of the church and never return. And somebody says, “Are you a Christian?”

“Yes, I’m a Christian. I’ve been baptized.”

What’s the difference? There’s no difference. Do you see the point? And so the point is that there’s nothing wrong with baptism. There’s nothing wrong with the law. They were given for a certain purpose. But the imperfection comes in how we deal with them. Does that make sense, Don?

**Don:** Yes.

**Jeff:** Okay. There was somebody else.

**Participant:** I had the same question.

**Jeff:** Okay. Who’s got a mic. We have two guys with mics. We can only go for one. *(Laughter)*

**Participant:** Of course the problem with your analogy *(laughter)* is that baptism is a sacrament while marriage is not a sacrament. But that’s another subject.

**Jeff:** That is very true. Come on, now!

**Participant:** But I don’t want us to get distracted, because there’s a more important point. You were saying that the law was insufficient—

**Jeff:** Inferior.

**Participant:** Inferior because it couldn’t get the job done.

**Jeff:** Right.

**Participant:** So if an observant and thoughtful Jew would have said, every time he went to the temple, “I’ve done what God has commanded, but it’s not getting the job done. In a sense I’m living in limbo, because I’m trusting God that He does have a solution. But I discern that this is not the solution.” I’m struck by the fact that it leaves them hanging. I think this is true—

**Jeff:** I don’t think that it leaves them hanging, though. For instance, I think that the law was given so that the law would show them their sinfulness. And I think the sacrifices were given as a sign of the Mediator. So the promise was given that a Mediator would come. And by practicing the sacrificial system they were believing the promise of what would—

**Participant:** Not yet to be fulfilled. Not yet fulfilled.

**Jeff:** Right. But they could cling to the promise as they participated in the system that God had given them up to that point. So as they looked forward to the Messiah, they could be assured of their salvation, looking forward to that Messiah.

So I don’t think they were left in limbo. I think they had the gospel just previously.

**Participant:** But it would be very easy to slide into thinking that satisfied everything.

**Jeff:** I think that’s the problem.

**Participant:** And that is the application today, where I see many people who are doing this. They say, “You know, I just don’t know if all this really makes sense and if it works. But it’s the only thing I’ve got. And I’m just going to trust this and keep on doing the ritual or whatever it is.”

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**Jeff:** Yes, absolutely. I mean, the same danger then is the danger today, that you invest in the sign and not the reality. That’s right.

**Participant:** If you have a headache, you take an aspirin. But that only kills the pain for a while. You have to take another aspirin.

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Participant:** What you’re looking for is the one step which is going to deal with whatever is causing the headache. So you live in the aspirin, but somehow anticipate and hope for that which will deal with the problem.

**Jeff:** Yes. That’s good; I like that. Anybody else?

**Participant:** But aspirin is not a sacrament. *(Laughter)*

**Jeff:** Okay.

**Second Participant:** I can’t Bayer that, Ted. *(Laughter)*

**Jeff:** Oh! Let’s pray! *(Laughter)* No, that’s good. All right. Let’s talk about *the hope*. I want you to notice something. I think this is just an interesting little insight into the way in which the Pastor builds the idea that there is a hope to come, and that hope was in the Old. And look at what he says. He talks in verse 11 about “another priesthood to arise.” In verse 14 he says, “The Lord descended,” and then in verse 15 “another Priest arises.”

The interesting thing is that if you look at the Greek, that word *descended* in verse 14 is really not the typical word for *descended*. But you can translate it *has arisen*.

So when you look at it like that, you go, Oh, this is pretty cool! Verse 11—to arise, has arisen, arises. And you go, “I wonder why that’s the case?”

Well, if you wonder that, then you go back to the Old Testament. And when it talks about “*the Sun of Righteousness will arise*”, and in Numbers 24 when it talks about the Messiah coming from the line of Judah, “*a scepter will rise from Judah*”, and Jeremiah 23:5, “*I will raise up for David*”, right? These ideas that a Messiah, a Priest, a King will arise. What you have is simply the Preacher recognizing the mode of speech assigned to the Messiah in the Old Testament and employing it in his sermon.

And so those Jews who would have understood that a Messiah would arise will hear this repetition of this new Priest arising and say, “How?” So the Lord Jesus is the One who is raised up. And I want to say a couple of things about Him.

First of all, He is *the perfect Priest*. And we notice that He is the perfect Priest because, if I can take you back to Hebrews chapter 1 verse 3 for a minute, if you remember Hebrews 1 verse 3, you remember that verse spoke about His being the eternal Son of God. And you remember what it said. It was this wonderful proof for the Trinity. He is what? “*He is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact imprint of His nature.*”

And what does that tell you? It tells you two things. First of all, it tells you that His glory is not derived. Moses’ glory was derived. He came down from the mountain and he shone. His glory was a derived glory. Jesus’ glory is not derived; it’s original. It’s His glory because He shares in the Godhood of God.

But here’s the interesting thing. Hebrews tells us that He’s a different Person than the Father. He is the exact impress or imprint of the Father’s nature. In other words, He shares in the substance of Deity, but He’s a different Person than the Father is. And that’s

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remarkable! That talks about the Father and Son. But that’s proof of the Trinity right there.

Now that’s talking about the Son as He is in His eternal Being. But in the next verse he talks about this Son coming and making purification for sins. And so we have the idea that it’s this Son who will arise from the line of David, who will make purification for sins in the way that was prophesied in Psalm 110 in the way that Melchizedek prefigures Him. So He’s the perfect Priest who will make purification for sins. And He’s perfect because He is God’s Son.

Second *He came to be a perfect sacrifice*. It’s not just that He came to be a perfect Priest. And if He did, that wouldn’t help us. He came to be a perfect sacrifice. And not only did He bridge the gap between God and us, but He offered Himself as a sacrifice that what? Our sins might be imputed or reckoned or counted as His. God would pour out upon Him the punishment for us. And therefore in Him we could have the forgiveness of sins.

But it’s not just the forgiveness of sins. Remember that we have the reckoning or the counting of His obedience that is ours, too. So it’s a twofold exchange. It’s that our sins are counted as His and His righteousness is counted as ours. Therefore we are forgiven and reckoned righteous. It’s a beautiful thing.

And so He is *a better way*. And why? Well, you notice that He is a better way because the priests could only go in once a year. They had to do the incense. And there were bells that were tied off to the priests. We read about that in Exodus. Why? So that his fellow priests would know that he was still alive even as he was in the presence of God, clouded as it was. And if he died for some reason, the bells stopped ringing. Then they would know he was dead. In Jesus there’s hope because the bells never stopped ringing.

So that’s all I have. We’ll continue in He brews next time. Thank you. (*Applause*)