



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Hebrews 7:11–19

“Melchizedek and Jesus Christ: Part IV”

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we turn to Thee in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and we thank Thee for the great High Priest who has been given to us. We thank Thee for his work of sacrifice, of intercession, of blessing, of the carrying out of the part of the leader of the praises of the children of God. We thank Thee for the hope that we have which is bound up in him and in what he has done for us and we thank Thee for the sense of assurance and security that we have in such a great priest. We thank Thee for the great epistle that the author has written to the Hebrews and for its magnificent presentation of our Lord as one who ever lives to make intercession for us. And we pray, as we study this evening, that the Spirit of God may be our teacher and that we may be responsive to the things that we find in the word of God. We thank Thee for the hope that is set forth for us in the passage that we're looking at this evening; the hope of the assurance of dwelling in the presence of God. We ask, Lord, that we may so grow in our spiritual life that we may know and experience what it means to draw near to Thee and to dwell in the holiest. We commit our study this evening and especially ask Thy blessing upon each one present, each of us, Lord, for we each need Thee. May the Holy Spirit minister through the word of God to us, to meet our needs.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] Well, this is the last of our studies specifically on the title, “Melchizedek and Jesus Christ,” but, of course, we’re just about half way through the Epistle to the Hebrews. The subject for this evening is “Melchizedek and Jesus Christ,” the 4th study, and the passage that we’re looking at is chapter 7, verse 11 through verse 19. And I’d like to read it and ask for you to particularly notice the 19th verse, the concluding verse. The author writes in verse 11.

“If, therefore, perfection were by the Levitical priesthood for under it the people received the law, what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchizedek, and not be called after the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. For He of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah, of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident, for that after the similitude of Melchizedek, there ariseth another priest.”

Incidentally, that term “another” is the term that means essentially “another of a different kind,” not, “another of the same kind.” It’s like I may go into a stationery store and see a Cross pen and buy the Cross pen, go home and find out that it doesn’t suit my sense of how, of my self-esteem, writing with a Cross pen, and so, I go back and I take my Cross pen and put it on the counter and say, “I’d like another.”

Now, if I use one Greek word, *allos*, that would mean another essentially of the same kind. And they would think I was asking for the second because I was so pleased with the first. But if I were to use the Greek term *heteros* from which, incidentally, we get heterodoxy, that would mean a different kind of pen; and they would know immediately that I was looking for a Monte Blanc because that would suit my self-esteem a whole lot better. It also would make my pocket lighter, but, nevertheless, when he says here, “another priest,” he is talking about a different priest. That is, a priest after the order of Monte Blanc and not after the order of Cross.

“Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment.”

Now, carnal is used here as simply in the sense of fleshly, not in the sense of evil. We use the term in both ways carnal and, in this case, it means simply carnal in the sense of fleshly.

“Who is made, not after the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life. For He testifieth, ‘Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.’ For there is, verily, a dis-annulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof.”

Now, those of you that have the Authorized Version, and I’m reading tonight from the Authorized Version, your text says, “For the Law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did.” And you’ll notice the term “did” is supplied by the translator and the rest of the verse is, “by which we draw nigh to God.”

But it is almost certain in fact, it is certain, really, exegetically that the expression in verse 19, “For the law made nothing perfect,” is a parenthesis, and it can be put in parentheses. And then, the “but,” in verse 19, of the Authorized Version, could be translated, “and,” because this picks up verse 18. Let me read it that way.

“For there is, verily, a disannulling of the commandment going before on account of the weakness and unprofitableness thereof, (for the law made nothing perfect) and the bringing in of a better hope.”

That is, there is a disannulling of the commandment going before and there is the bringing in of a better hope. Omit the “did.”

“By which we draw nigh unto God.”

So he is saying two things: There is a disannulling of the commandment going before because of its weakness and unprofitableness, and there is the bringing in of a better hope, by which we draw nigh to God, associated with the second priesthood, the priesthood after the order of Melchizedek.

Now, notice that expression that concludes verse 19, “By the which we draw nigh to God.” Draw nigh unto God. What a marvelous expression. This is the native atmosphere of the human being, ideally, to draw near to God. It’s the deepest need of the human heart. Most of us who are believers in this auditorium would surely agree. It’s the deepest need of the human heart to draw near to him. It represents the full salvation that Jesus Christ has provided. Is this your desire? Is this the thing that really dominates your feeling, as you get down by the side of your bed and offer your petitions to the Lord God? Is this your expectation? Is this your life? Well, if you can answer those in the affirmative, then these are the things that really make the Christian life what it is supposed to be, the life that is full, indeed.

Now, for some people, Christ Jesus is simply the means to the end of the search for salvation. That is, salvation from hellfire. Occasionally, individuals think of our Lord Jesus as the end of the search for self-esteem. In fact, that seems to be the predominate thought, the predominate concept, in much of evangelicalism today and the preaching of the ministry of the word of God, and so many of our evangelical churches. It is designed to bring us to a sense of self-esteem.

And so when we think of Christianity, a lot of people simply think of Christianity as the way by which we escape hellfire. Now, I don’t want to say that there is nothing in that. Obviously, it’s very important. It’s what an evangelist emphasizes, particularly. He goes out to preach the Gospel that people may get saved. But if you study the New Testament, you will find, that the Apostle Paul, who was a fairly good guide for us, is he not? The Apostle Paul states very plainly that he wasn’t

interested, entirely, in fact, you get the impression he wasn't interested predominately, in getting a person saved. He was interested in bringing them to maturity.

Now, salvation is the first step. But for him, it was the first step and the apostle was interested in bringing a person to spiritual maturity. In fact, what he really wanted to do is to bring an individual to the experience of what our author is talking about when he speaks about drawing near to God.

True happiness in the Christian life is found in fellowship with the Lord God in heaven. Now, the person who enjoys fellowship will have no problem with self-esteem or self-respect, or things like that, because he will know his self-esteem does not rest in himself, but it rests in the Lord God in heaven, and what he has done for him and nothing could ever, possibly, give an individual the kind of self-esteem that is acceptable to God, other than that that represents the position that we have in Jesus Christ. It's not esteem of myself; it is thanks and gratitude for what God has done for me; that produces the kind of attitude toward the Lord God and toward the people with whom we come in contact that is the most rewarding and the most satisfying.

Now, for others, Christ is a person they desire to know and to serve better, and many of our Evangelicals I'm sure would agree with me that we know that the ultimate aim is not simply our salvation from hellfire. We know that the Scriptures do tell us that we should be anxious to know God and serve Him better. And, that certainly is something that all of us should have that desire to know him and to serve him better. But, probably, it is true that relatively few of those that have believed in Jesus Christ think of him as the door to the fellowship with the Father eternally.

Now, I think, you will discover, if you read, for example, read the Gospel of John, and you will note that the Lord Jesus was particularly concerned that men come to know, not so much him, as to know the Father through him. He wanted to bring the believers, the family of God, into fellowship with the Father. He wanted them to enjoy what it was to be related to the Father, to be near to the Father, to live their lives in the presence of the Father, as he did. So when our author

says here, “By the which we draw nigh unto God,” he’s giving us a very important door to just that experience, the knowledge of the Lord God and fellowship with him, moment by moment.

Now, we’ve been saying in our study of Hebrews that the author seeks to lead us into this fellowship by setting out three great contrasts. There are three concentric circles, if you were to put them on a piece of paper. He has been describing, in the earlier part of the Epistle, the contrast between the Son who is the head of the world to come and the angels who were heads of the old covenant age. He did that in the first couple of chapters. And then, he launched into another circle within that widest circle and spoke of the Son, the New Covenant mediator, as head over God’s house, contrasted with Moses, the old covenant mediator, who is in the house of God; the Son “over” the house; Moses, in the house; the Son, the New Covenant mediator as against Moses, the old covenant mediator of the Law of Moses.

But the broadest of the circles, the most significant of the circles is the contrast between the Son, the priest after the order of Melchizedek and Aaron, the priest, I should say, Aaron the high priest, who is given that particular position by the Law of Moses in the Old Testament. In fact, he has said in chapter 4, verse 14, “Seeing then we have a great High Priest that has passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.”

This is the thing that he’s interested in that we know this great High Priest and live in the light of his presence and power. Now, the ancient figure of Melchizedek, we have seen is a story in history, comes out of the timeless past, meets Abraham, Abraham gives him tithes, acknowledging his superiority, and then Abraham moves off to carry on the work that God has called him to do and Melchizedek moves back into the timeless past, so far as we know, there is no indication of his father, mother, beginning of life or end of life. He’s still living, according to the Bible, that is, there is no genealogy. No genealogy. And, of course, obviously, Melchizedek the historical figure is not still living, but in Scripture he is presented that way, because that’s the only way you can have an illustration of an eternal priest. And so the author sees that and he knows that that is so because in Psalm 110, the Psalmist said, David said, “Thou art a priest forever, according to the order of

Melchizedek.” And the vow is the one referred to in the first verse of the Psalm, “The Lord said unto my Lord, “Sit Thou at My right hand, until,” Well, you know the rest of the text.

So what we have is scriptural statements to the effect that the one who is the Lord is also the high priest according to the order of Melchizedek. And that must have pricked the mind and the spiritual heart of the writer of the Hebrews and so he goes back and studies Genesis chapter 14, and Psalm 110, and has given us this magnificent exposition of the type.

So Melchizedek is the story in history, timeless past, timeless future, story in prophecy, because he’s the eternal divine-human, priest-king, according to Psalm 110, verse 4, “The Lord said to my Lord,” divine and yet priest, after the order of Melchizedek is said of him. So he’s the eternal divine human, priest-king, and now he’s expounding the significance of the type.

Types in the Bible are biblical illustrations. They are made up of correspondence between events or persons or things; like institutions in the Old Testament with similar things in the New Testament. There has to be a correspondence. The reason, incidentally, that there is a correspondence is because the same God is active in the Old Testament and active in the New, so that the same principles govern his activities in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. So types show correspondence between the actions of God; Melchizedek coming on the scene, two thousand years before the time of Christ, God moving him, and then David writing Psalm 110, verse 4, and then the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, giving us this exposition of the significance of it, all superintended by the sovereign God in heaven.

In addition, a type must be historical. It’s not like Bunyan’s “Pilgrims Progress,” an allegory. But a type is one of these persons or institutions in the Old Testament that are in history, historical, in finding a correspondence in the New Testament in the activities of God. So in the case of David, in the Old Testament, David is the type of Christ, he’s an historical figure, there’s a correspondence between David’s work in the Old Testament, as being anointed king and giving the promise of an eternal kingdom later on, that corresponds to the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And, generally speaking, also, in a type there is a kind of predictiveness associated with it but it's particularly correspondence and historicity. And so here we have Melchizedek, what takes place in Melchizedek's life is a type. He, himself, is a type of the great Messiah, priest-king, the Lord Jesus Christ. What happens in Melchizedek's history corresponds to our Lord Jesus Christ, who comes out of the timeless past, in the incarnation, moves off into the timeless future, and will live forever as the second person of the divine Trinity.

You cannot help, when you see something like this, to recognize the fact that the Bible is the inspired word of God, and to think of that historical figure, Melchizedek, approaching Abraham after that military victory, and coming up to his face and then Abraham moved within his own spirit to give tithes to this man, two thousand years before the coming of Christ; you can see that God works in all history, sovereignly and specifically. In that moment in which those two figures came together, you never would have guessed it in the Old Testament how important it was. Don't you know that was a surprise to Abraham later on in heaven? To see David write, “Thou art a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek.” And then, of course, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews. The Bible is a remarkable book. Read it! Keep reading it!

I'm not going to tell you where I am. [Laughter] Well, maybe I ought to. I'm in Ezra, on my second time through. It's very worthwhile reading. You know why? Just finished 2 Chronicles. Over and over again, as the kings come and go, you know, so rapidly, there's a very significant phrase that I've gotten a lot out of. It's, so and so died and slept with his fathers. So and so died and slept with his fathers. So and so died and slept with his fathers. When you get as old as I am, those texts have significance. And I have prayed, “Lord, help me to truly sleep with my fathers,” that is, my spiritual fathers, in the sense of the word of God.

Now, let's look at our passage verse 11 through verse 14, first where the Aaronic Priesthood's inferior access is set forth. Let me read it again.

“If, therefore, perfection were by the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchizedek, and not be called after the order of Aaron?”

Now, both Aaron and Melchizedek are types of Christ. Aaron is a type of Christ, not in his person. He's a type of Christ in his functions. What did he do? He brought sacrifices. He blessed the people of God. He did intercession as High Priest for them, particularly on the Day of Atonement. So he was a type of Christ in priestly functions.

Melchizedek is a type of Christ in his priestly personality or, let's put it this way leaving out priestly, he is a type of Christ in his person. He is an eternal priest. Aaron was not an eternal priest. This man comes on and as we won't go through it again but comes on as an illustration of an eternal priest. So, both are types; one an example of the functions of a priest, the other an example of the personhood, the eternal person, of the true priest, the Lord Jesus.

One is provisional and ineffectual, the other is permanent and effectual. That is, the one represents that which is provisional and ineffectual, the Old Testament priest, Aaron. The other, representing in illustration, that which is permanent and effectual.

Now, the question is the important thing. Notice the question, verse 11, “If, therefore, perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, what further need was there that another priest should arise after the order of Melchizedek and not be called after the order of Aaron?” Now, that's a dramatic rhetorical question. Just think about it. If perfection took place through the Levitical high priesthood, why do we have another priest coming on the scene? Which we do. What does that tell us? Well, that tells us immediately that the Aaronic priesthood does not bring perfection. That means that the Mosaic Law never brought perfection, for its Law was tied up with its priesthood, its priesthood was tied up with its Law.

So this indicates the superior quality of the priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ or of Melchizedek, who is the example of our Lord. This, I think, you could put this in very interesting

ways by just saying that the Lord Jesus is for many people only their Aaron not their Melchizedek. And in the case of those who have come to a full understanding of the significance of Melchizedek, he is that kind of priest for us, an eternal priest. Perfection. No full access to the Lord God but by the Old Testament priest and sacrifice, a limited covering only.

We know that when the sacrifices of the Old Testament were carried out, such as the Day of Atonement, they did not take away sin. The Old Testament itself specifically says that. By the blood of bulls and goats, no sin can be removed, ultimately. They were anticipations of what the Lord Jesus Christ would do. They did serve a purpose in the Levitical system. In the case of the Day of Atonement, as we will see later on, we'll spend a little time on the aspects of it, it had to be done, that Day of Atonement, had to be carried out with its sacrifices every year, and when they were carried out, Israel was restored to the ceremonial relationship to the Lord every year. And if they had not done that, they suffered for it. But, it did not have any eternal value for them. They maintained relationship with the Lord God, within the Old Testament covenant, but that was all. So no perfection, no full access, by the Old Testament covenant priest and sacrifice. Their sins were covered, but they were not fully removed.

When the Lord Jesus Christ was hanging on Calvary's cross, he was bearing the sins, not simply of the people who were living then, but he was bearing the sins of sinners, those for whom he intended to die, all of their sins, down through the years. So when we talk about the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, we must remember that in the Old Testament, even for those that we know were elect individuals, their sins were never removed until our Lord hung on Calvary's Cross. We'll talk about that later on in a minute.

He says, “For under it the people received the Law.” Verse 12, “For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.” The priestly sacrifice inaugurated the Law and maintained the law, and the law and the sacrifices were bound up together. As you know, the Law was given and with it the sacrificial system was set forth by the Lord to Moses, who brought it to the children of Israel.

“For,” verse 13, “He of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar.” In other words, the very fact that Scripture says there is a priest after the order of Melchizedek, and states it after the priesthood of Aaron, is an indication of the Aaronic priesthood’s inability to do the work that should be done, really remove sins.

Now, what about our Lord Jesus Christ? Could he be such a priest? Well, we read here, it’s evident that our Lord “sprang out of Judah.” Now, this man who writes this, of course, has full conviction that the Lord Jesus is the final priest. And so he is saying, “It is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah, of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.” Jesus Christ could not be an Aaronic high priest. He was of the wrong tribe. He was from Judah. So when we read here, “another priest, arising after the order of Melchizedek,” that, of course, is a door open for him. But, in the case of our Lord, he could not be an Aaronic priest.

Now, let me tell you an illustration of an event that really happened. When I came to theological seminary here, one of the members of the faculty, although I never got to hear him, he still was listed as a member of the faculty. I think he had just died. No, he hadn’t; he was still living the first year or so I was there, was A. C. Gabeline. Dr. Gabeline wrote many books, forty or fifty books, he wrote one series of books called “Annotations on the Bible.” About twelve volumes. And every year he came to teach the students at the seminary, spoke for a month. He was a man who was known for his egotism. He was a Jewish man in background, but a fine Jewish Christian, but he was known for his egotism. And, everybody loved him but, nevertheless, they kidded him. And they also said things behind his back that were designed to be humorous.

I remember sitting in a class with Dr. Chafer, and he came in one morning and he said, “I got a postcard from Dr. Gabeline yesterday, and Dr. Gabeline said he was at a Bible conference, and he said he was enjoying it very much and his next sentence was, ‘I’m the only speaker.’” [Laughter] So everybody laughed at that. And it was well-known around the seminary that when Dr. Gabeline came for his month of lectures every year, that the students frequently would ask him, “Dr. Gabeline, what do you recommend on the book of Isaiah?” And he would say, with a slight German accent, he

would say, “Mine Annotations.” And then they would, later on, a question would come, “What do you think, Dr. Gabeline, about that statement in Esther? Where should I go for help for that?” “Mine Annotations.” It was always, “Mine Annotations.” Anything that a student ever need would be found in those volumes that he wrote through the bible. He was a marvelous Christian man and I got to know his son very well, Frank Gabeline, who was a very important Christian man who’s now with the Lord and rejoiced very much in him.

I can remember Dr. Ironside coming and having the lectures on Daniel, and one of the students at the end of one of the hours on Daniel, asked Dr. Ironside, “What was his opinion of the best book on the book of Daniel?” He said, “Well,” I wrote this down and I have it in quotes and I took it from the lecture. “There are many good books on Daniel,” he said, “such as Larkin’s, Sir Robert Anderson’s, and Kelley’s.” He said, “As a matter of fact, I’ve written a volume myself which may be of some use to you. However, Dr. Gabeline’s book on Daniel is the best. He told me so himself.” [Laughter]

So now, you can appreciate this about Dr. Gabeline. He was in a meeting speaking. He gave Sabbath lectures in New York for many years, for Jewish people, hoping, of course, to win many of them to the Lord. And he did win many of them to the Lord. He was also the editor of *Our Hope* magazine, for many years. And in one of the lectures, in the early years of his ministry there, he said a Rabbi came to the meeting and in the course of the time for questions, he asked if he could say a word. And Dr. Gabeline said, “Yes, you certainly can.” And he said that the man spoke and said these words. He said, “You have told us that your Jesus is now doing what our Aaron did as High Priest. That Jesus is the priest through whom we are represented before God. But tell me, Mr. Preacher, how can your Jesus be a priest, when he is of the tribe of Judah? To be a priest, he must be of Levi.”

Now, he was absolutely right about that, of course. And, he said the Rabbi looked around rather triumphantly, that he had stumped the speaker. And he said, “I answered him by quoting in Hebrew a verse from the 110th Psalm. ‘Thou art a priest forever, according to the order of

Melchizedek.’ And I went on to say that the ancient Rabbis called that individual, the Messiah, in their literature. And, you can go and find justification for that. That Melchizedek, that the priest after the order of Melchizedek, was the Messiah and that the Rabbi’s themselves had interpreted that verse as meaning the Messiah would do the work of a priest and a king.” And then he said, “I used the same argument that is found in Hebrews chapter 7.” And he said, the questioning Rabbi sat down and behaved very well for a few moments, but finally got up and left, followed by a hundred or more of his heroes, who had evidently come from the Synagogue, and they left also. But, he said, “The next week when I had my class, the hundred came back. The Rabbi didn’t, but the hundred came back.” You can see, this particular chapter was just perfect for Dr. Gabeline at that point. Our Lord sprang out of Judah; he could not be a priest after the order of Aaron, and he wasn’t. He is a priest, after the order of Melchizedek.

So our author first, then, tells us that the Aaronic priesthood’s inferior access is because the priest is inferior to the priest after the order of Melchizedek. Now, in verse 15 through verse 17, he says, the Melchizedek priesthood has a superior priest. Notice how he puts it, verse 15, “And it is yet far more evident, for that after the similitude of Melchizedek, there ariseth another priest who is made not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. For He testifieth, “Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.”

Now, you see, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews is just arguing his case from Scripture, from the Old Testament actually, specifically from psalm 110 in verse 4, and especially the word “forever.” “Thou art a priest forever.” No Aaronic was ever a priest forever. This is a forever priest. So verse 16, “Who is made not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.”

Now, the reference to a “carnal commandment” is very interesting because what the Aaronic priesthood requirements were, were laws or a law of a fleshly commandment. Let me just go through some of the things that a person must be to be an Aaronic priest.

First of all, you'll remember, when he was ordained, he was bathed in water so that he would be ceremonially clean. He was clothed in the four priestly garments; the linen britches, the knee britches, the long linen garment woven in one piece, the girdle around the breast and the bonnet or the turban. And then, he was anointed with oil. You may remember also, that he was touched on the tip of the right ear, the right thumb, and the right great toe with the blood of certain sacrifices, which had been made. Every single aspect of this ceremony was a physical thing affecting the priest's body. First of all, of course, he had to come from a certain tribe; not only of a certain but from a certain family in the tribe. He had to be a descendant of the High Priest to succeed to the high priestly office. So every single item is a fleshly thing. That's what our author means when he says, “who is made not after the law of a carnal commandment,” carnal not in the sense of evil but in the sense of fleshly. Fleshly commandment!

Now, the case of the priesthood “after the order of Melchizedek,” is different, because he is made, he says, “after the power of an endless life.” In other words, Aaron and the high priests that followed were priests who met a certain fleshly requirement. There were, of course, as you know, various things that kept a person from being a priest, physical blemishes of various kinds set forth in the Old Testament. But in the case of Aaron, everything is that he has to be of a certain line and meet certain fleshly qualifications. Nothing about his inner being! He may be a very evil man, as the person who was to succeed Eli. I imagine that the children of Israel, I know this to be true, they were very disturbed when they saw a good priest's children, high priest's children, behaving in an evil way. Because they would a soon come under the jurisdiction of that evil successor.

Now, in the case of the Lord Jesus, he is a person who exists in the power of an endless life. In his case, he's the kind of person who experiences no change, no aging, you'll never read of him that he “slept with his fathers,” like you will of me. No fading! He's the Ancient of Days, according to Daniel, chapter 7. I think that is a clear reference to Him. The Ancient of Days! Yet the youngest of all, for he ever lives in the freshness of eternal strength that knows no past. He lives forever! His ministry is a ministry that never ceases. He has offered the once and for all sacrifice.

He utters the continuous, continual prayer for the saints, forever, and he continually blesses those who are related to Him. What a magnificent priest we have! What a magnificent priest, eternal priest, who stands for us and prays for us at this very moment! Think of it! My present, my future, are absolutely secure in the Lord Jesus Christ. Why this should not be the most exciting thing in human life is an underlining of the nature of the human heart. It's astonishing.

So a ministry that never ceases; a ministry that is rooted in life and in the strength of God. We, certainly, need life. We need strong life! We need the strong spiritual life as well as the life that never gives way. And as our Lord lives, which is forever, so he works.

Thomas Watson said something concerning the Lord Jesus Christ that, I think, was very striking. I've referred to it from time to time in the past. “No one,” said Watson “has yet discovered the word Jesus ought to have said. None suggested the better word he might have said. No action of his has shocked our moral sense. None has fallen short of the ideal. He's full of surprises but they are all surprises of perfection. You are never amazed one day by his greatness and the next, by his littleness. You are quite amazed that he is incomparably better than you could have expected. He is tender, without being weak, strong, without being coarse, lowly without being servile. He has conviction without intolerance; enthusiasm without fanaticism, holiness without Phariseeism, passion without prejudice. “This man, alone, never made a false step; never struck a jarring note. His life, alone, moved on those high levels where local limitations are transcended. And the absolute law of moral purity prevails. It was life at its highest.” It's a magnificent statement of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Bronson Alcott was a New England dreamer. He once went to Britain and when he was over there, he had a conversation with Thomas Carlyle and in the conversation with Carlyle, Alcott who was a well-known liberal said that he could sincerely say, just as much as Jesus, that he was, “one with the Father.” “Yes,” replied Carlyle, “but Jesus got men to believe him.” [Laughter] That's the difference. That's the real difference.

Now, thirdly, verses 18 and 19, the Melchizedek priesthood has a superior access. Verses 18 and 19, they are magnificent verses.

“There is, verily, a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof.”

The Mosaic Law was a marvelous expression of the will of God. The Ten Commandments? Well, they are marvelous expressions of moral law. The Mosaic system, itself, was magnificent. What it taught was magnificent, because it pointed forward to Jesus Christ. The liturgy of the Mosaic Law is the most beautiful of all liturgies. I know that people think the Roman Catholic Church has impressive liturgy and the Anglican Church and the Episcopalian Church has impressive liturgy. Baptists, Presbyterians and Methodists have never gone in for liturgy much; although, in recent years, there's a little bit of that appearing in some of those churches. But, one has to admit that the liturgy of the Mosaic Law, the Day of Atonement, the sacrificial system; all of the things that God set forth in specific fashion with Moses, delivered to the children of Israel, is the most magnificent outwardly appearing religion that we have ever had. The purity of it, as it was designed to be expressed by the Lord God, was magnificent. Those great ceremonies, the tabernacle, the priesthood; all of the things designed to point forward to the coming redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ.

We don't for one moment criticize what God did. It was a great expression, it was a great lesson, it was a great overhead projector, so to speak, of Christianity to come. It couldn't express perfectly that, for the simple reason that something of this creation cannot express perfectly someone who comes from outside of this creation. But it was remarkable. So, there is “a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness.” Weak in itself? No, no! Weakness was because it dealt with men. It dealt with you and it dealt with me.

It's what Paul talks about in Romans chapter 8, for example, in verse 3, where he says, “For what the Law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the

likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh.” It was weak because it dealt with flesh. The anchor of the law, one New Testament scholar once said, “will not hold in the mud bottom of the human heart.” So the weakness was because of man. “And the unprofitableness thereof.” Unprofitable because, of course, it does not do what it was designed to represent. It cannot take away sin. It could not take away sin. It could keep individuals in harmony with God’s will for a time; but it could never finally take away sin. Christ must come and bear the punishment on Calvary’s Cross.

Now, he says, “it made nothing perfect.” Well, I should have said, he says “There is a disannulling,” because of the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. “For the law made nothing perfect, but there was also a bringing in of a better hope by which we draw nigh unto God.” The better hope? What better hope? In the Old Testament, did not they have access to God? Do not we read in the Old Testament of individuals who were near to God? Yes, they were. You’ll find them. I read last night, in 2 Chronicles, that expression, “Draw near to God.” But the point is that the drawing near to God is not an ultimate one, it’s not a final one, that can only take place through the Lord Jesus Christ.

And when an individual drew near to God in the Old Testament, he didn’t do it through the Law. He did it through the work of the divine Spirit in his heart. The Law made no provision for drawing near to God in the sense of personal fellowship. The Law didn’t have anything to say about that. It couldn’t! You get my point? We’re not saying there’s no drawing near to God in the Old Testament. There was a lot of it. With Abraham, and David and others, read David’s Psalms, but you don’t hear him say he drew near by keeping the requirements of the Law. The Law was marvelous; it just couldn’t do that. It wasn’t designed to do it. It looked forward to someone who would do it.

Now, “a better hope,” verse 19. Well, back in chapter 6, verse 18 and 19, he alludes to something like this because he said there.

“That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, which entereth into that within the veil.”

The word of God and the oath of God and they bring the better hope. Through this Melchizedekian High priest, we have a better hope by which we draw near to God. So the Old Testament access was provisional, incomplete. This is better. You’ll notice, he says, “A better hope,” better hope than they had, this one is the hope of eternal fellowship.

The apparatus of worship of the Old Testament was, if anything, a hindrance, because it kept men at a distance. Why is that? What do you mean by that? How did it keep men at a distance? Well, let’s say you were a member of the tribe of Judah, and the day came for the observance of one of the feasts, let’s say, the Day of Atonement. Are you free to enter into the tabernacle area? Could you go in? No, you couldn’t, you were shut out. The gate into the tabernacle was something you could never go through. Well, but Aaron could. Yes, Aaron could, once a year, enter into the holiest of all. As a matter of fact, there were two gates, two gates for the people, one gate for others. So one veil for the priest, which shut him out except on that one day, two veils for the people, so in the tabernacle, itself, was the teaching, you cannot draw near to God, who dwells in the holiest of all, typically. Do you get the point? Do you get the point?

Now, when we come to the New Testament, and we read here of a “better hope,” the bringing in of a better hope, by which we draw near to God, you see the difference. A better hope, a past, present, future, secure access into the very presence of God. We may actually not only enter into the holiest of all, my Christian friends, but as we shall see later on, we may dwell there. Dwell there! Live our lives, potentially, as the Lord Jesus did, moment by moment, in communion with the Father in heaven. Draw near to God.

I tried to illustrate one time this difference and, I constructed a little illustration. I don’t know exactly how good it is. I think it’s pretty good. [Laughter] If I were Rush Limbaugh, I’d say,

“It’s the best I’ve ever seen because I’m the one who did it.” But I’m not Rush. [Rustles papers] But I’ve got it written down here, like him. Let me illustrate. We have five minutes.

The difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament peace of conscience by contrasting of feelings of a young woman, heavily in debt, who becomes engaged to a rich young man, who is, as we say, loaded. Loaded. Maybe his last name is Perot or Gates, but, at any rate, loaded. She’s heavily in debt but he’s loaded. And now, they’re going to be married and she unfolds to him her financial condition, and he assures her, “I’m going to take care of all your debts.” And, as a matter of fact, this he does. He keeps the receipts, but he pays all of her debts. Then the time comes when she marries him, and after she’s married to him, some significant things have taken place. But let’s go back and say what she, how she thought about this. First of all, when he said, “I will pay your debts,” and she believed him, she had faith in his ability and his desire to pay the debts because he loved her. She knew that. That’s the Old Testament picture. The saints of the Old Testament, reading the Old Testament, having the promises of God of the forgiveness of sins, believed them. But the debts had not been paid. They weren’t paid. But they had confidence in the word of the Lord God in the Old Testament, through his prophets, that they would be paid. And then, the time came for the marriage itself, and as the marriage takes place, the young man, who is the husband, reaches into his pocket and takes out all of the receipts that he received, for paying all of her debts, and handed them to her, with the words, “It’s all done.” Like our Lord, on Calvary’s Cross: “It is finished!” He had paid the debts.

But, more than that, he reached in his pocket and he took out a checkbook, and he said, “Incidentally, I have established a joint account.” Mind you, he’s loaded! “I’ve established a joint account, and all of my money is in this joint account.” And he hands it to her, and she reads, “Dr. and Mrs. S. Lewis Johnson, Jr.” or something like that, you know. In other words, she had faith in his word to pay the debts. They were paid. He married her. Gave her the receipts. Not only that, enriched her with all of the riches that he, himself, had. That’s what’s taken place when we have believed in our Lord Jesus Christ.

What he promised to do, what God promised to do through him has been done. We have the receipt of the word of God, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The sins have been paid. And, not only that, we're joint heirs with Jesus Christ, the Bible says. And, we have what he has. My Christian friends, we are loaded! We are loaded! We are loaded with the riches of heaven, and the doors open to draw near and to draw near forever. May God help us to do that each of us.

Let's bow in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are so grateful to Thee for all that Thou hast accomplished for us in our great High Priest. We thank Thee for all that Aaron represented; for he pointed forward to our great High Priest. We thank Thee for the marvelous revelation of Thy intent that we should know all that we have, through redemption, and that great sacrificial system was an evidence of Thy love for us and the desire that we enter into a relationship with Thee. And then, Lord, we thank Thee for Him who has come and has in his saving death on Calvary's cross, has paid the debts, has taken over the responsibility of the eternal priest, praying for the people of God, forever. O God, by Thy grace enable us to truly draw near and live in Thy presence.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.