

# (Hebrews) ch.6:16-8:9

by Zac Poonen

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of faith and patience in possessing the promises of God and living a life of victory over sin, highlighting the unchangeable things of God and the role of Jesus as our forerunner.*

**Duration:** 1:18:28

**Scripture:** Hebrews 6:12

**Topics:** "Holy Spirit", "Christian Freedom"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of coming to the end of oneself in order to experience the power of God. He explains that the purpose of the law was to show mankind their helplessness and lead them to Christ. Through Jesus, sin's power in our flesh is overcome, allowing the righteous requirement of the law to be fulfilled in those who walk according to the Spirit. The speaker also highlights the significance of following Jesus and living under the power of the Holy Spirit, rather than relying on the old covenant law.

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## Transcript

We were looking last week at Hebrews, Chapter 6, verses 12-15, where we are exhorted to follow after people like Abraham, who through faith and patience inherited the promises. It is not only essential that we have faith. Beyond faith we need endurance or a holding on until the promise becomes ours.

There are many wonderful promises that Hebrews opens up to us, and we need to remember these verses concerning each of those promises. One of the main themes of the book of Hebrews is to show how the new covenant established and sealed with the blood of Jesus is far superior to the old covenant given by Moses, and the new covenant is established upon better promises, but those promises can be obtained only as we possess them by faith and patience. Something like the children of Israel going into the land of Canaan, where God had promised them the whole land, but they could not possess the whole land in one day.

They had to place their foot down on different parts of that land, and God's promise in the Old Testament was, Every place where the sole of your foot shall tread I have given to you. So we could say under that Old Testament, potentially the whole land of Canaan belonged to the Israelites, but it was only that part which they put their foot down upon and possessed which actually became theirs. The same principle applies under the new covenant, too.

Potentially every blessing of the Holy Spirit is ours in Christ Jesus the moment we are saved, the moment we are born again, but actually it is only that which we possess by faith where we place our foot down and lay hold of and claim as ours, it is only that which actually becomes ours. So it is possible for a believer to have potentially every blessing of the Spirit in heavenly places in Christ as his, and yet in actual life to live in the enjoyment of very, very few of them, and the reason is he may either lack faith or lack patience. But if we have faith and patience and we are wholehearted, like it says in verse twelve of chapter six, if we are not slothful, we can possess or inherit the promises by faith and patience.

Thus it was with Abraham, in whose footsteps we follow. And concerning the promise of God, we are told in verse sixteen that men swear by one greater than themselves, and with men an oath given as a confirmation is an end of every dispute. In the same way, God, desiring even more to show the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed or guaranteed what He had promised with an oath.

It is amazing how God is willing to stoop down to our level and to come down with every encouragement possible to stimulate faith in us so that we can lay hold of His promises. God does not put things upon us without any exercise of faith on our part, the reason being that we would never grow spiritually if we just began to receive things without any exercise of faith. God calls for an exercise of faith because that prepares us for receiving God's gift, and it enables us to grow spiritually too.

And so though it is true that God makes the sun to rise in the just and the unjust, and He causes the rain to fall on the righteous and the unrighteous, yet when it comes to spiritual blessings, He has kept faith as a necessary condition. Unlike material blessings, which He may give freely even to those who have no faith, when it comes to spiritual blessings, faith is essential, faith and patience. And in order to stimulate faith in us, God comes down to our level with every encouragement, and since among men, when a word is not enough, men use an oath to swear, God comes down to that level.

Although He is a God who cannot lie, He swears with an oath, and that is what He did to Abraham, and that is what He has done to us. And so it says in verse eighteen, In order that by two unchangeable things, and what are those two unchangeable things? One is the word of God. That is unchangeable.

Heaven and earth may pass away, but God's word will not pass away. And the other unchangeable thing is the oath. On top of that word, God has promised.

It was enough if God had said, but on top of God having said, He promises. He swears by Himself. Since there is no one greater than Himself, He swears by Himself.

And therefore it says, In order that by these two unchangeable things, God's word and God's oath, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have a strong encouragement, we who have fled for refuge in laying hold of the hope set before us. So the reason why God has given us these two unchangeable things, His word and His oath, is so that as a result of both of them we may have a strong encouragement, so that those who are weak in faith may also rise up to possess the promises. And so God has given us not only one unchangeable thing in His word, but His promise or His oath as well, so that we can have a strong encouragement.

We who have fled for refuge in laying hold of the hope set before us. The encouragement is that we can possess the hope that is set before us. Now what is this hope? We are told in Hebrews, chapter 7, verse 19, that the law made nothing perfect, but on the other hand there is a bringing in of a better hope, which

did give us the hope of becoming perfect, and through this hope we draw near to God.

The law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did. And so there we see what the better hope is. What is this hope set before us? The hope set before us is that here on this earth we can be perfect according to our conscience.

This is made more clear in Hebrews, chapter 9, verse 9, where it says about the Old Testament tabernacle being a symbol for the time then present under the old covenant, according to which both gifts and sacrifices are offered, which cannot make the worshiper perfect in conscience. But under the new covenant we can be made perfect in conscience. In Hebrews 10, verse 1, we are told that the law could not make perfect those who draw near, but we, through the one offering of Jesus Christ, have been perfected, he goes on to say, in the rest of that chapter.

Now this is the better hope, that under the new covenant we can be perfect in our conscience and walk as Jesus walked, with a clean conscience. We cannot be like Jesus until we see Him face to face, for we are told in 1 John, chapter 3, verse 2, that when we see Him we shall be like Him. Not before that, but in 1 John 2, 6 we are told that we can walk as He walked.

We can have a perfect conscience. What is the basis of our hope for this? What is the basis of our faith? Two unchangeable things, God's word and God's oath under the new covenant. So there is no excuse for unbelief.

There is no need for us to sink down in unbelief and to imagine that we have to live a defeated life under the new covenant. Sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law, but under grace. That's God's word and God's promises.

He will keep us from falling, so we can enter into that life where we can live a life perfect in our conscience. Let's look today at Hebrews and chapter 6 and verse 18 to 20. We were looking at these two unchangeable things, God's word and God's oath, making it impossible for God to lie, so that we can have a strong consolation or strong encouragement as heirs of the promise to lay hold of this hope set before us.

And we saw that the hope was a better hope than under the old covenant, and the hope under the new covenant is that we can live perfect according to our conscience. In other words, that we can live a life of victory over all conscious sin. This is the distinctive blessing of the new covenant.

Under the old covenant there were those who received forgiveness of sins and who were justified by faith. In Romans chapter 4 we read that Abraham was justified by faith. Romans 4 verses 3 to 5, Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness, and he lived in all testament times.

And David, verses 6 to 8, speaks about the forgiveness of sins in Psalm 32, and of course in Psalm 103 as well, as we know very well. Bless the Lord, O my soul, who forgives all your iniquities. And so we find that forgiveness of sins and justification by faith were blessings that people like David and Abraham and others under the old covenant knew and experienced.

Then what is the better hope under the new covenant? It is not just that our sins can be forgiven, not just that we can be justified by faith, but as it says in Romans 6 verse 14, that sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the old covenant, under law, but under the new covenant, under grace. And so this is the distinctive blessing of the new covenant, that we can come into a life where sin, which exercised

such power over us for so many years, no longer has any power over our life, for Jesus sets us free. Jesus said in John 8 verse 32, You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free.

And He further said in verse 36 of the same chapter, If the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed. This is the better hope under the new covenant, and it is this hope which God sets before us by His word and by His promise. Sin shall not have dominion over you, is a word and a promise of God.

He is able to keep you from falling, Jude verse 24, is a word and a promise of God. And we can lay hold upon these promises of God, and thereby partake of divine nature and enter into a life of victory. And this hope is set before us, but we cannot possess this hope if we do not have faith and patience.

Here is the promise of God set before us, but we are told in verse 12 that if we are slothful, if we are lazy, we are not going to possess this promise. We have to possess it by faith and patience. First of all, to believe that this promise will be fulfilled in our life.

And secondly, to hold on until it is fulfilled, not to give up, like Abraham held on until he had his son. This is the central thing that is taught in the New Testament epistles, that you can live a life where the old man is put off and you put on the new man by faith and thereby all things are new. And you can have the virtues, the character of Christ reproduced in your life.

We are told in verse 19 of Hebrews 6 that this hope is like an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast. Now the lives of most Christians is like a ship tossed about by the winds and the storms and the waves. Sometimes here, sometimes there, sometimes moved by some strong preacher who preaches one doctrine, another times moved to the other extreme by some preacher who preaches another doctrine.

What is the solution to this constant drifting from this side to that side and up and down? We need an anchor like a ship in the middle of a storm. We'll drop an anchor so that it does not drift. We need an anchor and it says here that this hope is an anchor of the soul because it is a hope that is sure and steadfast.

It's a certain hope. It's a steadfast hope and it's like an anchor of the soul. And just like the anchor goes into the depths of the sea and you can't see where the anchor has held, but you know that it has held because the ship stops drifting, even though you cannot see where the anchor has held under the waters.

In exactly the same way, the Christian life is a life of faith. We cannot see where the anchor is holding, but we can see the proof of it in the fact that the ship stops drifting, that we stop drifting. We become steady and we are held by God.

The ship doesn't hold itself. It is the anchor dropped into the ground beneath the waters that holds the ship. And we do not hold ourselves.

It is the Lord who holds us. We cannot keep ourselves from falling, but the Lord promises to keep us from falling. And here is the anchor, this hope, this better hope, that sin need not have any dominion over us, that we can walk as Jesus walked, that we can be perfect in our conscience, free from committing conscious sin.

And we are further told in verse 19 that this hope goes through the veil. Now the veil is, we are told in Hebrews 10.20, the flesh. The reason why we cannot have victory over sin, why the law could not lead us into victory over sin, was because of the weakness of the flesh.

We are told that in Romans, in chapter 8 and verse 3, that what the law could not do, that is, make us perfect, because it was weak because of our flesh. God did. And how did God do it? He sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and condemned sin in the flesh.

And so we see that this flesh in us, which prevents us from entering into a life of victory, is what Jesus took upon Himself. Tempted in all points like as we are, He overcame sin and made a way for us. We are told in Hebrews 10.20, through this veil, that is, through His flesh, He opened up for us a new and a living way, beyond the veil, into the most holy place.

Like in the Old Testament temple, there was a veil, and beyond the veil lay the most holy place. We are told that Jesus has made a way through the flesh and entered in beyond the veil, Hebrews 6.20, where the forerunner has entered for us. Jesus is called here our forerunner.

A forerunner is one who runs ahead of others who are running in the same race, along the same way. And we are told here that Jesus has gone ahead of us, paving the way, coming in our flesh, overcoming sin, tempted in all points like as we are, through the flesh, and overcoming, making a way for us to live a life of victory if we follow in His footsteps. And therefore He is called our forerunner.

We need to see Him as Savior, baptizer in the Holy Spirit, and also as our forerunner who leads us beyond the veil of the flesh into this better hope of a life of victory over sin. We turn now to Hebrews 6.20. We were looking at this better hope that comes under the new covenant, and this hope is something that is like an anchor to our soul, we are told in verse 19. This is the only thing that will keep you from drifting.

If you have this hope of the new covenant as an anchor to your soul, you will be kept from drifting. This hope of being freed from the power of sin, and in this matter, Jesus is our forerunner. He is the one who has gone ahead of us and who looks over His shoulder and says to us, follow me, so that we can walk in His footsteps and run in His footsteps the same way that He went, overcoming sin as Jesus overcame in exactly the same way.

This is our encouragement, that Jesus has come in our flesh and has overcome sin. And so there is no need for any of us to be defeated by sin any longer. If we are still defeated by sin, it is either because we have not heard the truth, or we have not understood it, or having heard and understood it, we don't have faith and patience to possess the promise.

Some have faith but no patience. Some have patience but no faith. But when we have both, we can possess the promise, which is that sin shall not have dominion over us, that we shall be kept from falling.

As Jesus did not sin, we need not sin, because we can follow Him who called us, saying, follow me. And so Jesus is our forerunner, and He has entered through the veil. In Hebrews 10, verse 20, it comes out more clearly, that He has made for us a new and living way through the veil, that is to say, His flesh.

He has gone through it, and He says to us who are in the flesh today, that we can walk the same way and go through the veil into a life of victory, and go through the veil into the most holy place of the temple, which lay beyond the veil, and there walk in the light of God and have fellowship with Him, and blessed fellowship with the Father and the Son. And we are told inside the veil, Jesus is our High Priest. Under the old covenant, only the High Priest could go beyond the veil into the most holy place, and that too once a year.

The way was not open for all the others to go through. It was a tremendous privilege under the old covenant to go into the most holy place beyond the veil and to commune with God, and even the High Priest had that privilege only once a year. One man in the whole nation of Israel had this privilege once a year.

Now, that High Priest was a symbol or type of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the true High Priest, and He has gone beyond the veil, but the wonderful thing is He has not gone there to come back out again. He has gone there into the most holy place forever, and He has rent the veil.

When Jesus died on the cross, the veil in the temple was rent from top to bottom, symbolizing that a way had been made through the flesh of man into the most holy place, and we can now enter in, so that it is not only the High Priest who can go in now, but we who walk the same way as the High Priest walked can go through the veil into the most holy place and dwell there. This is the meaning of Hebrews 10, 19, and 20, having their brethren, therefore boldness to enter into the most holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He has opened up for us through the veil that is His flesh. He is our forerunner, and He is our High Priest, and we are all priests under the one High Priest.

Everyone who comes into the new covenant is a priest of God. God makes us kings and priests. There is no special class of priests in the new covenant.

Every believer is a priest of God. When people make a special category of people as priests, they are going back to the old covenant. Under the new covenant, every believer is a priest.

He may not be in full-time Christian work. He may be in a secular job. He is a priest of God, and there is no special category of priests.

There is only one High Priest, and all born-again children of God are priests. We must remember this. It is our privilege.

It is our birthright. It is our inheritance, and we should not allow the devil to take it away from us. Jesus is the High Priest, and He is a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek.

Now, Melchizedek, if you will remember, in Genesis chapter 14 and verse 18, was the man who came to Abraham after Abraham had overcome the enemies who took away his nephew Lot from Sodom, and he blessed Abraham. And Abraham gave him tithes, and he was the priest of the Most High God, Melchizedek. And he brought forth bread and wine, we read in Genesis 14, verse 18.

And there we see him as a type of the Lord Jesus Christ who comes forth to bless the seed of Abraham and all those who walk in the footsteps of Abraham in faith and patience with bread and wine, which is the symbol of the new covenant. You remember in the last supper Jesus took bread and wine, and He said, This cup is the new covenant in My blood. And so Melchizedek in the Old Testament is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ in the new covenant who takes forth the bread and wine, symbolizing His own body which was broken and His blood which was poured out for our sins.

And this Melchizedek, we are told in chapter 7, verse 1, is the king of Salem. He was the king of Salem and the priest of the Most High God. He was a king and a priest.

Now under the old covenant a man could not be a king and a priest. If he was a priest, he was not a king. If he was a king, he was not a priest.

But there was this one man in the Old Testament, Melchizedek, who was both a king and a priest, and thereby symbolizing the Lord Jesus Christ who was a king and a priest. And this man who was a king and a priest, we are told in chapter 7, verse 1, met Abraham as he was returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him. And to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being by interpretation, that is, his name means king of righteousness.

And because he is also the king of Salem, he is called the king of peace. And so we see that Melchizedek, king of Salem, has two meanings, king of righteousness and king of peace. And this is what we read in Psalm 85, verse 10.

Psalm 85, verse 10, we read that righteousness and peace have kissed each other. That took place in the life of Jesus when he died on the cross. And we are told in Romans 14, verse 17, that the kingdom of God is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

And we are further told in James, chapter 3, verse 18, that the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace. In Jesus Christ there is righteousness and peace. The kingdom of God was manifested in righteousness and peace.

These are twins. They go together. And they are our blessings under the new covenant.

As we enter through the veil, following the footsteps of Jesus, who is our forerunner, we can enter into the kingdom of God, into the most holy place. We are told in Romans 14, verse 17, that that kingdom is a kingdom of righteousness and peace. And our lives will be characterized by righteousness and peace as we run after Jesus, who is our forerunner, and enter through the veil by the new and living way.

The Kingdom of God Zach Fuller, Return to Hebrews, chapter 7, verse 1. Speaking about the Lord Jesus Christ, the antitype of Melchizedek in the Old Testament, this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being by interpretation king of righteousness and after that also king of Salem, which is king of peace, without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the son of God, he abides a priest perpetually. What that means is that there is no record of his genealogy in the book of Genesis. The book of Genesis is a book of beginnings and it is full of genealogies.

Everybody in the book of Genesis is traced back to Adam, except Melchizedek, who suddenly appears in the book of Genesis without any trace as to where he has come from. And in a book which is full of genealogies and where everyone related to God's purposes in that book is traced back to Adam, we find this one person who is related to God's purposes not traced back to Adam. It does not mean that he was not a human being, but what it means is that there is no record of his genealogy, and therefore in that sense he is made a type of the son of God who is eternal, who has neither beginning nor end.

Jesus, being the son of God, existed with the Father from eternity past and unto eternity future, one with the Father and the Holy Spirit as the second person of the Trinity, existent from eternal ages to eternal ages, and therefore Melchizedek is an appropriate type of him in that he comes into the book of Genesis from nowhere and disappears into nowhere, like Jesus who came down into time from eternity and went back out of time after thirty-three and a half years back into the eternity in which he dwelt with the Father. And so we see in verse four that this man is compared to Abraham. Now, in the following verses, upon to verse nineteen, a contrast is drawn between the Lord Jesus and Abraham and Aaron and Levi, and a

contrast is drawn, and Jesus is shown as the one who is superior to Abraham, superior to Aaron, and superior to the law.

Superior to Abraham, first of all, verses four to ten, more than Aaron in the Levitical priesthood, and Levi included, in verses eleven to fourteen, and also more than the law, verses eleven to nineteen. First of all, greater than Abraham. He says about Melchizedek in verse four, See how great this man is, to whom Abraham the patriarch gave a tenth of the choice of spoils.

He says that Abraham gave Melchizedek a tithe. And then, verse five, those indeed of the sons of Levi who received the priest's office have commandment in the law to collect a tenth from the people, that is, from their brethren, although these are descended from Abraham. They are all descended from Abraham, and yet the sons of Levi collect a tithe from the other children of Abraham.

But here is one, the apostle says in verse six, whose genealogy has got nothing to do with Abraham, who comes in and collects a tithe from Abraham, and not only collects the tithe from Abraham, but blesses the one who had received all the promises. And so what does this mean? In verse seven he says, Surely the lesser is always blessed by the greater. Now, we see, therefore, that Melchizedek is superior to Abraham.

This is the whole point of the argument, that Melchizedek is greater than Abraham, and therefore, typically, the Lord Jesus is greater, and therefore, typically, the new covenant which Jesus brings us is far superior to that which the physical children of Abraham received under the old covenant. He goes on to say here in verse eight, And in this case mortal men receive tithes, but in that case one receives them of whom it is witnessed that he lives forever. And so to speak, through Abraham even Levi, who received tithes, paid tithes, for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.

You see, Levi was not yet born, but Levi was in the loins of Abraham, his father, and therefore, through Abraham, paid tithes to Melchizedek, and therefore the priesthood of Melchizedek is far superior to the priesthood of Levi and Aaron. This is the point of the argument. The old covenant priesthood was the priesthood of Aaron and Levi, but the new covenant priesthood is the priesthood of Melchizedek, and the reason why the apostle goes into this argument is to prove to those who were boasting in the old covenant priesthood that the new covenant priesthood was superior, that the old covenant priest who descended from Levi, including Aaron, offered tithes to Melchizedek, and so the priesthood of Melchizedek is superior.

This is the whole point of the book of Hebrews, to show that the new covenant is superior to the old covenant, that to be under grace is better than to be under law. To be a priest after the order of Melchizedek is far superior to being a priest after the order of Levi, and he explains that in verse 11. If perfection, you see, this is the subject of Hebrews, perfection, and if this perfection was possible through the priesthood of Levi, or the Levitical priesthood, on the basis of which the people received the law, what further need was there for another priest to arise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not to be designated according to the order of Aaron? Under the old covenant priesthood, people could not be made perfect, but under the new covenant priesthood of Melchizedek, we can be made perfect.

This is the burden of the apostle, and he uses various arguments to establish the same point, and then he says in verse 12, when the priesthood is changed of necessity, that takes place a change of law also, not an abolition of the law, but a change of the law also. We are under grace, not under that old covenant law, for that old covenant law could not make anyone perfect, and those who want to live under it, and who want to live under that priesthood remain defeated, but those who will enter into this new priesthood of

Melchizedek, of the Lord Jesus Christ, the priesthood of righteousness and peace, enter into the new covenant, come under grace, and go through the veil into the most holy place, and enter into a life of victory over sin. It says further in verse 13 that the Lord Jesus, the one concerning whom these things are spoken, belongs to another tribe from which no one is officiated at the altar, for it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, a tribe with reference to which Moses spoke nothing concerning priests, and this is clearer still if another priest arises according to the likeness of Melchizedek.

Now this looks like an involved argument, but the whole burden of the passage is to prove the same point, that the priesthood of Melchizedek or the priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ is far superior to the Old Testament priesthood, and therefore to follow in the footsteps of Jesus is far superior to be trying to justify yourself by the law or to save yourself from sin's power by the Old Testament law, and so we are called to enter into this priesthood like the sons of Aaron were priests under him who was the high priest, Aaron himself, even so we are to be priests under the Lord Jesus Christ in a priesthood of righteousness and peace that should characterize every priest of the new covenant, every believer, and God gives us grace that we might enter into this priesthood. Zach Fuller. We turn again to Hebrews and chapter seven, continuing our study in the Lord Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of Melchizedek, who was a type of him in the Old Testament, and the reason why the apostle uses the figure of Melchizedek is to prove that the covenant instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ is the and sealed by the blood of Jesus, the new covenant is far superior to the old, and Hebrews 7 15 we read, this is clearer still, that is, the fact of the priesthood of Melchizedek being superior to the priesthood of Levi, very clear, another priest arises according to the likeness of Melchizedek and not from the tribe of Levi, but from the tribe of Judah, verse 14, the tribe with reference to which Moses spoke nothing concerning priests, this is the tribe from which the Lord Jesus came, and he has become a priest not on the basis of a law of physical requirement, but according to the power of an indestructible life.

Now there you see the fundamental difference between the old covenant and the new, beautifully described in verse 16, it was a physical requirement under the old covenant that unless you descended from the tribe of Levi, you could not be a priest, you have to be a descendant of Levi, but the Lord Jesus Christ has instituted a new priesthood which has got nothing to do with physical descent, we are told very clearly in John chapter 1 verse 13, those who are born again are not born of the will of man, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of blood, but of God, it's not a question of physical descendancy, it's not a question of heredity, a man's father may be a glorious Christian and the man himself may be a child of the devil, your son need not necessarily have the same faith as you have, got nothing to do with physical descendancy like it was in the old testament, where if you were born in the tribe of Levi, well you could be a priest, but not under the new covenant, here the requirement is different, he was not made a priest according to the law of a physical requirement, but according to the power of an indestructible life, that is a life that could not be touched by sin, a life over which the devil had no power, that was the life of Jesus, a perfect life, a sinless life, a life lived in the power of the Holy Spirit which was indestructible, and so his body also saw no corruption, this is the power by which Jesus has become a high priest after the order of Melchizedek, and that is written not just for us to look at Jesus and to admire him, but it's written for our sake in the sense that for us too we are not called after that old testament priesthood of requiring a physical requirement, but according to the new covenant priesthood which is based on the power of an indestructible life, and we are told in Romans chapter eight concerning this matter of being freed from sin's power, Paul says, Romans eight, verse four, verse two, the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death. So there it is. What is it that sets us free from the law of sin and death? It is the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

That life which was in Christ Jesus through the Holy Spirit, that life which was in Christ Jesus which enabled him, when he walked on this earth in our flesh as a man, to live a life of victory, that same life is offered to us today through the Holy Spirit in every situation so that we can live in the power of this indestructible life which cannot be touched by the powers of death. This is the basis of the new covenant priesthood. This is the change of law which is spoken of in verse twelve.

Under the old covenant the law was a physical requirement. Under the new covenant it's a different law. It's power of an indestructible life.

It's got nothing to do with going through rituals. Under the old covenant a man was made a priest through many rituals, but under the new covenant it is no ritual that makes a man a priest. It's not baptism or confirmation or any such thing.

A man is made a priest by receiving this indestructible life of Jesus into him through the Holy Spirit, and this is the law of the new covenant. Jesus said to his disciples in John fourteen, verse nineteen, Because I live, you shall live also. You notice in verse sixteen one fundamental contrast between the old covenant and the new covenant, and that is the old covenant is described by the word law, not on the basis of a law.

The new covenant is described as a life, but according to the power of a life, and this is essentially the difference between the old covenant and the new covenant. One is law, the other is life, or in other words, one is law and the other is grace which gives life, and when we are under law we are defeated by sin. When we are under grace, Romans six fourteen says, sin shall not have dominion over us, and so therefore it is witnessed of him, verse seventeen, thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek, not according to a physical requirement, but according to the power of an endless life.

Four, on the one hand, verse eighteen, there is a setting aside of the former commandment because of its weakness and uselessness. Now why was the former commandment weak and useless? Because it made no way for man to overcome the weakness of his flesh. There was absolutely nothing.

This comes out very clearly in Romans eight, and we have looked at it before. We need to see it again. The law could not do this.

The law could not set us free from the power of sin. Romans eight three. The law could not make us perfect because of the weakness of the flesh, of our flesh.

There was nothing wrong with God's law, but it could not make a way to overcome the weakness of our flesh, and so what did God do? God sent his own Son in the likeness of our flesh and condemned sin, overcame, deprived sin of its power in the flesh. Sin's power in our flesh was deprived and overcome by the Lord Jesus, so that now, verse four, Romans eight four, the righteous requirement of the law can be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. And so if we run after Jesus, who is our forerunner, then we do not walk according to the flesh.

We walk according to the Holy Spirit, and we don't live under the old covenant law, which could not make us perfect, but we come under the power of the Holy Spirit, who communicates to us the indestructible life of Jesus and makes us priests of the same order as Jesus by the power of an indestructible life, the order of Melchizedek, and thereby brings us into a better hope. This is what we read in verse nineteen. For the Lord made nothing perfect.

That is the old covenant. On the other hand, there is the bringing in of a better hope, which is that we can be made perfect in our conscience, through which we draw near to God. And inasmuch as it was not without an oath, for they indeed became priests without an oath, but he with an oath, through whom the one has said to him, The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind.

Thou art a priest for ever. So much the more also Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant. We are told in verse twenty-one that those priests under the old covenant were made without an oath, because it was a temporary priesthood, not a permanent one.

Therefore they were made without an oath. But under the new covenant the Lord has been made a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. Therefore, he says, this is a permanent priesthood, and Jesus has become the guarantee or the surety of a better covenant.

This is what he has been leading up to in all this argument. As we come into this living relationship with Jesus, we come into a far better covenant, into a life of victory, which people in the Old Testament could not have. We turn again to Hebrews chapter seven, and we saw in verse twenty-two last week how Jesus has been made for us the guarantee of a better covenant.

As much better, to follow the argument from verse one to twenty-one, as the priesthood of Melchizedek is better than the priesthood of Levi, or the law of the spirit of life leading us into something higher than the law given by Moses in the sense that it sets us free from the power of sin and makes us perfect in our conscience, as we read in chapter nine, verse nine, or chapter seven and verse nineteen. So Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant, and it is important for us to see this so that we do not live at the level of people under the old covenant. Under the old covenant they had forgiveness of sin, they were justified by faith, but under the new covenant we can enter into something more and something greater, something superior, because Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant than people could live under in former days.

We are told further in verse twenty-three, and the former priests on the one hand existed in great numbers because they were prevented by death from continuing. Under the old covenant there were many of these high priests right through the centuries because they all died, but in the case of the Lord Jesus, verse twenty-four, He abides forever and holds His priesthood permanently, and this we saw last week was the reason why the old covenant priests, verse twenty-one, were made without an oath because they were temporary, but under the new covenant Jesus has been made a priest according to the order of Melchizedek, it says in verse twenty-one, with an oath by God, and He abides forever and holds His priesthood permanently. There is no change.

He does not pass from one to the other like under the old covenant. Hence He is able to save forever or completely those who draw near to God through Him. He can lead us into an eternal salvation because He Himself lives eternally.

This is the whole significance of the Lord Jesus Christ becoming one like unto us and becoming the mediator between God and men and becoming our forerunner so that we can follow after Him and obey Him. And to all those who obey Him, we are told in chapter five, verse nine, He has become the source or the author of eternal salvation. He has become the source or the author of eternal salvation, and the reason is He lives forever.

Therefore He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. Since He lives to make intercession for them forever, therefore He is able to save them forever. Verse twenty-six, we are told, It was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens, who does not need daily like those high priests to offer up sacrifices first for his own sins and then for the sins of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.

For the law appoints men as high priests who are weak, but the word of the oath which came after the law appoints a son made perfect forever. And this is the conclusion of that section where the priesthood of Melchizedek is proved to be superior to the priesthood of Levi, and thereby showing how Jesus, as the high priest, is far superior to all the high priests under the old covenants. Now this is very obvious, and there is no need for us who have come into a Christian tradition for any proof on this point.

And we would have a tendency to skip through Hebrews chapter seven, because it's a fairly heavy chapter and a difficult one to go through, because we say, Well, we don't need any proof that the Lord Jesus Christ is superior to Aaron or to Abraham. We already know that. This is true, that we already know.

But there is something that derives from this truth which we may not be experiencing, and that is this, that because the Lord Jesus Christ is superior to Abraham and to Levi who came through Abraham, therefore His priesthood is superior to the priesthood of Levi. Therefore our priesthood as priests under the new covenant is also superior to the priesthood of the old covenant. This is the point.

Therefore we can live at a higher level spiritually than the people who lived under the old covenant. For example, under the old covenant God permitted divorce. Jesus told the Pharisees in Matthew chapter nineteen that the reason why Moses permitted divorce, God permitted it under the old covenant, in verse eight of Matthew nineteen, He said, was because of the hardness of your heart.

Men's hearts were hard. Why were they hard? Because the Holy Spirit had not yet been given as He would be given on the day of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit came upon certain people and anointed them, but He never came in to dwell, to change people's hearts like He did on the day of Pentecost, because the new covenant had not yet been sealed with the blood of Jesus.

The new and living way through the flesh of man had not yet been opened, so man's heart was hard. Therefore many things were permitted under the old covenant. People could have more than one wife, even though it was not God's perfect will.

People were permitted divorce, even though that was not God's perfect will. Many things God overlooked. We are told in Acts chapter seventeen and verse thirty that God overlooked those times of ignorance.

He, as it were, shut His eyes to what went on in those days, but now He calls every man to repent. Acts seventeen thirty. God overlooked those times of ignorance, but now the truth has come forth and there is no excuse for being ignorant now.

Therefore we cannot live under the level of the old covenant. We are not to be like David, who fell into adultery under the old covenant. We are not to be like Elijah or Moses, depressed and gloomy and saying, Take away my life.

We are not to go to these Old Testament people and look at their faults and say, Well, we can live like them. We are not even to look at the faults of the apostles that we may see, like Paul disagreeing with

Barnabas in Acts chapter fifteen, for we find the apostles themselves were in a transition period between the old covenant and the new covenant, and as the new covenant became clearer and clearer through the writings of Paul and the other apostles and as revelation was increasingly given, we find that the apostles themselves, as we read in the epistles, entered into a life of victory and so that we cannot look at even the faults of the apostles and find excuse for our sin. Paul says in 2 Corinthians two fourteen, Thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ.

That was the life Paul came into when he fully understood the new covenant, so we cannot look at Paul's disagreement with Barnabas as an excuse for our committing sin. No, today under the new covenant we come into a far higher life than the old covenant. Our high priest, we are told in verse twenty-six, is one who is holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens.

We are to walk after him and be holy and innocent and undefiled and separated from sinners and we too will be exalted above the heavens. He has made a perfect sacrifice and once for all he has made that sacrifice. There is no need for him to offer up that sacrifice again.

He is our high priest who has been made with a word of an oath a permanent high priest, and if we walk in his footsteps we can enter into the new covenant and be saved completely as it says in verse twenty-five. He is able to save us completely from sin if we draw near to God through him, not only from hell but from sin's power. This is the new covenant.

We turn now to Hebrews and chapter eight and verse one. He says here, now the main point in what has been said is this, and this is the chief point of the episode. We have such a high priest who has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister in the sanctuary and in the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man.

For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices, hence it is necessary that this high priest also have something to offer. Now, if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer the gifts according to the law, who serve as a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned by God when he was about to build and erect the tabernacle. For see, God said, that you make all things according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain.

But now he has obtained a more excellent ministry by as much as he is also the mediator of a better covenant which has been enacted on better promises. And he goes on in verses seven to twelve to describe that new covenant, and at the end of that description he says in verse thirteen, that when he said a new covenant, he has made the first covenant obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.

The apostles were in a transition stage where the old was disappearing and the new was being established. We are in the days when the old covenant is gone completely. We are living in the days of the new covenant.

We do not say today that the old is ready to disappear. It has disappeared. It has gone.

We are under the new covenant completely. And chapter eight is in a sense the main point of the whole episode of the Hebrews, that the new covenant is better than the old covenant, that the one who has instituted the new covenant, the mediator of this new covenant, is superior to the high priest under the old covenant. This is the main point, and he says that in verse one of chapter eight.

The main point in what has been said is this. We have a high priest, a permanent high priest, who is the guarantee of a better covenant, in verses twenty-two and twenty-four of chapter seven we see that, who has taken a seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, who is sitting there at the right hand of God as a king and a priest. This was prophesied concerning the Lord Jesus in Zechariah and chapter six and verse thirteen.

Zechariah chapter six, verse thirteen, we read these words in the Old Testament prophecy concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, that He will build the temple. And it says there in the last part of that verse, He will rule on His throne, He will be a priest on His throne, and the council of peace will be between the two offices, that is, the two offices of king and priest. And that's what we see in chapter eight, verse one.

We have a high priest who is sitting on the throne. This was never true under the old covenant. No priest sat on the throne, and no one who sat on the throne was a priest.

And the Lord Jesus has become a king and a priest, and He makes us, we are told in Revelation chapter one, verse five, and also in Revelation five, ten, He makes us kings and priests because we follow in His footsteps. Those who follow in His footsteps and obey Him and walk behind Him are also kings and priests, like He is our great king and our high priest. And this king and priest, we are told in verse two, is a servant.

This is the wonderful thing about the Lord Jesus. Quite different from the leaders of this earth. Verse two, He's a servant in the sanctuary, a minister or a servant in the sanctuary.

Though He's a king, He is still a servant. He's a king and a servant. We are told in Romans 15, verse 16, that Paul himself is a servant of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles.

It's the same word which is used here concerning the Lord Jesus Himself in chapter eight, verse two. As Paul was a servant of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, the same word is used here, a servant in the sanctuary, in the true sanctuary, which God has established, not man. That true tabernacle is in heaven.

The one which man established was here on earth, which Moses did. And we are to be priests of this heavenly sanctuary. We are not to think of earthly buildings as sacred places.

No, that's under the old covenant that they had a sacred building on earth. There's no building on earth today which is sacred. No church building is sacred.

The temple of God today is the human body. God dwells in our hearts, not in buildings made with hands. It's very clear.

It's amazing to see how many, many Christians have drifted back to the old covenant. They have sacred buildings, special class of people who are priests, live in defeat, listen to one man, many things like this which mark people of the old covenant, and many Christians are living today at that level. But our high priest is a minister in the sanctuary which the Lord has established in heaven.

And we are told in verse four, if he were on earth, he would not be a priest, since there are those who are offering gifts according to the law on earth. But all these things which Moses established on earth, we are told in verse five, is only a copy and a shadow of the heavenly thing. Moses is told to erect everything according to the pattern which was shown him on the mountain, because that was a pattern of the true sanctuary in heaven.

We are not to be taken up with anything earthly. Our sanctuary is in heaven. Our high priest is in heaven, in there, at the right hand of the Father, and there he has obtained, verse six, a more excellent ministry by which he is a mediator of a better covenant which has been enacted on better promises.

And so we see he is there in heaven as a mediator of a better covenant which has been established on better promises. What is the better promise? We have to see. This is what we have been repeatedly stressing in this study.

The better promise under the new covenant is so clearly described in Romans 6, verse 14. Sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law the old covenant, but under grace the new and better covenant. This is the better promise.

And so if there is a Christian today, and there are many like this, whose sins are forgiven, but who is defeated by sin, he is still living under the old covenant. It is almost as though he has never heard about the new covenant. The new covenant is established on better promises, and we are called by the Lord Jesus, through his Spirit, to enter into the better promise of the new covenant.

We are told that we are not under law, but under grace. John's Gospel, chapter 1, we read these words, that the law came through Moses, was given through Moses, John 1, 17, but grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. Moses brought the law, but Jesus brought grace.

And the difference between the two is what we have seen in Romans 6, verse 14, that if you are under law, you live a defeated life. If you are under grace, grace gives you power to overcome sin. Therefore sin does not have any power over you.

This is the better promise, and this is what we are to enter into through grace. And when we don't enter into this, we frustrate the grace of God. Paul speaks in Galatians 2, verse 21, about frustrating the grace of God.

He says, I do not nullify the grace of God. No, we can nullify the grace of God if, having heard of the new covenant, we do not enter into it. Let us wholeheartedly ask God to give us revelation, to understand in our spirit, not just in our head, but in our heart, this better covenant.

Concerning the Lord Jesus, it says here, He has obtained a more excellent ministry byasmuch as He is also the mediator of a better covenant which has been enacted on better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second. For finding fault with them, He says, the whole days are coming, says the Lord, when I will effect a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, for they did not continue in my covenant, and I did not care for them, says the Lord.

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord. I will put My laws into their minds, and I will write them upon their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. They shall not teach everyone his fellow citizen, and everyone his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest of them, for I will be merciful to their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.

When He said a new covenant, He has made the first obsolete, but whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear. Now, this is a description of the new covenant that we have been

speaking of during these past weeks and that the apostle in writing this letter has been leading up to. He says in the main point of all that we have been saying, We have such a high priest who is a king on the throne in heaven, a king and a priest, and he is a servant of the sanctuary, and he is a mediator of a better covenant established on better promises, and then he goes on to describe that covenant.

He finds fault with the old covenant, not that God's law, which was in that old covenant, had anything wrong with it, but man's flesh prevented him from entering into the requirements of God's law. Man's flesh left him weak and helpless, and so as he saw the standards of God's law, he found himself unable to fulfill it. Therefore God made a new covenant.

It is not that God changed His mind, but that God had to lead man to the place where man discovered his own weakness, the limitation and impotence and helplessness of man's flesh. Man had to see that, and that is why man had to be under law initially, and there is a sense in which we all go through that stage of being under law, of trying to perfect ourselves through the flesh. The Galatians were in that stage, and Paul writes such strong words to them, saying, Can you become perfect through the flesh? It is impossible, but we go through that stage and realize that we cannot make it, and then we turn to God.

Something like the apostles who went fishing for a whole night, we read in John 21, and they caught nothing, and the Lord had to allow them to spend a whole night trying, trying, trying, and catching no fish so that they would realize their helplessness and then be enabled by the power of God, which was in His word when He told them the next morning to cast their nets on the right side and suddenly find plenty of fish. Or look at another example we see of the man who lay at the pool of Bethesda for thirty-eight years, described in the first fourteen verses of John chapter five. He had tried many times to get into that pool before anyone else jumped in, when the angel had stirred the water, and he never succeeded.

After thirty-eight years he had given up all hope, and then Jesus came in and made him stand up and walk and healed him, but he had to first come to an end of himself, and so too with us. That is the reason why God gave the law, so that man may come to the end of himself. The Bible says the law was our schoolmaster or tutor.

Galatians chapter three, the law was our tutor to lead us to Christ. This is the reason for the second covenant. Though the Lord says, I will effect a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, which is now the church, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand and led them out of Egypt, for they did not continue in My covenant.

Verse nine. You see, the emphasis is on what they could not do, what man could not do, but now He says in verse ten, I will put My laws in the middle of their heart. I will write them upon their heart.

I will be their God. Verse twelve. I will be merciful to their iniquities.

I will remember their sins no more. The contrast between the old covenant and the new covenant is seen in those words. Verse nine.

They continued not. Man could do nothing. Under the new covenant, God says, I will do this for you.

So the contrast is between man's impotence and God's power. Man's impotence is highlighted under the old covenant, and God's power is highlighted under the new covenant. This is the significance of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

God gives us power to enter into the new covenant and to live according to the new covenant. It is not the old covenant of man struggling, but the new covenant of God enabling man to live according to His laws. And so we read in verses ten to twelve the new covenant, which could be summed up as, verse twelve first of all, forgiveness of sins, pardon, total and complete, and the writing of God's laws upon our hearts and minds, verse ten, which we could call holiness, victory over sin, freedom from sin's power, and thirdly, fellowship.

I will be their God, they shall be my people. They shall not teach everyone his fellow citizen, everyone his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for all shall know me from the least to the greatest. So we see that in these three things of the new covenant there is, first of all, pardon, the promise of pardon, God pardoning us.

Secondly, the promise of holiness, God writing His law in our hearts and minds. This is through the Holy Spirit. And thirdly, God promising to have fellowship with us as our God and we being His people and without any human mediator, but Jesus, God coming down to earth and taking up our flesh, the mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, through Him, everyone who comes into the new covenant having direct fellowship with God without any human intermediary like Moses or any other human priest.

There is no necessity for a human priest or preacher to teach you the word of God or teach you about God today. You can have a knowledge of God, of theology, which is the true knowledge of God through the Holy Spirit. This is the significance of the gift of the Holy Spirit.

So we could say that under the new covenant, to sum it up, one, we are given forgiveness of sins, and second, we are given the gift of the Holy Spirit, who leads us into holiness of life and brings us into a living fellowship with God where we know God personally. First of all, forgiveness of sins, Hebrews 8.12, total and complete, the promise is, I will remember their sins no more. Let's just look at this first part of the new covenant.

I will remember their sins no more. I will be merciful to their iniquities. God not only promises to forgive us our sins, but He also says that He will not remember our sins any more.

He has buried them. Christ has died, the blood has been shed, and Jesus was buried, and our sins are buried too. And we don't have to go digging up our past any more.

Many people keep on confessing their sins because they don't seem to believe that God does not remember their past any more. It's a glorious thing when we realize that God does not remember our past any more. I will not remember their sins any more, says the Lord.

I will be merciful, and we can rejoice because our sins are forgiven, God does not remember them any more, and that is the beginning of entering into the new covenant. And we shall look at the remaining parts of the new covenant.

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