

Bringing in a better hope

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[0 : 00] In the, come to the Hebrews chapter 7, Hebrews chapter 7, and we can read together at verse 19.

Hebrews 7 and 19, for the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did, by the which we draw nigh unto God.

Now, this particular epistle is written against the background of apparent apostasy in the Church of Christ.

It's written to Jewish believers who were in danger of turning back from their newfound Christian faith.

Because, after having begun well, they began to find things hard, and to find things tough, being Christians.

[1 : 16] And remember, friends, that the Lord never promises that to be a Christian is going to be easy. The Lord never promises that to be a Christian, you're going to lie in a bed of roses, and you're going to have it easy all the way.

There are times when the Christian life can be hedged up with difficulties and problems and temptations on every side.

And therefore, it takes courage, it takes manliness, it takes virtue to be a real Christian. And these believers among the Jews were finding it hard to live out their lives for the Lord.

And therefore, God sent a message to them with this one of his own messengers. And in the message, what he's been doing is this.

He's been showing to these Jewish Christians the preeminence of Christianity over against Judaism, in all its forms and in all its aspects.

[2 : 33] And here he is dealing with the question of the priesthood in Judaism. And he's contrasting the priesthood of Christ with the Levitical priesthood.

That's what this particular passage, which we have read together, is all about. A contrast between the Levitical priesthood and the priesthood of Christ, which is a priesthood according to the order of Melchizedek.

Now, he says this in our text, The law made nothing perfect. And at the very outset tonight, I want you to examine that statement of the writer to the Hebrews.

The law made nothing perfect. And then secondly, I'm going to turn to the second statement in the text, because I think there are three statements in the text.

The second statement of the text is this, that the bringing in of a breath of hope did. And then thirdly, by which hope we draw near to God.

[3 : 59] Now we're going to begin by looking at this statement concerning the law, which the writer leaves with us here.

The law made nothing perfect. And within the context of Hebrews 7, I would like us to concentrate on the law, particularly the ceremonial law, because it is the ceremonial law that the writer to the Hebrews has been alluding to in chapter 7.

Now, let's begin by mentioning the law. What is it? What does the writer really mean when he says, the law made nothing perfect?

Well, you know that there are three sections of law that were given to the people of Israel in the Old Testament.

There was, first of all, what we call the moral law. And the moral law is summarily comprehended as our shortest catechism teaches in the Ten Commandments.

[5 : 23] The summary of the moral law that we've given is the Ten Commandments. And that was the first section of law that Israel was given.

Now, what did the moral law do for men if it made nothing perfect? What does the moral law do for people?

Well, the moral law can do two things. And it cannot do anything but two things. The moral law does these two things.

It condemns and it threatens. These are the... That's the orbit in which the moral law is at work. It's in the orbit of condemnation and it's in the orbit of threatening. And whatever way you view the moral law, that's the extent of its ministry.

[6 : 21] It's a ministry of condemnation and a ministry of threatening. And then there was a second section of law given to Israel.

And that was the ceremonial law. And we're going to come back and we're going to deal in some detail with the ceremonial law tonight. And thirdly, there was a third section of law given in the Sinaitic Covenant.

And that was the civil law that was given to Israel. So again and again, when you're looking at the orbit of law, you're looking at these three things.

You're looking at the moral law, you're looking at the ceremonial law, and you're looking at the civil law that was given to Israel.

But obviously in Hebrews 7, the writer is concentrating particularly on the ceremonial law.

[7 : 24] Now the ceremonial law is given to us, I think, in three particular ways. It's given to us first of all in the offerings and in the sacrifices that were ordained for sins.

It's given to us secondly in the feasts that were appointed in Israel. And it's given to us thirdly in the priesthood that was instituted by God in Israel under the Levitical priesthood, as we call it.

These are the three areas, the three main areas of the ceremonial law. the offerings and the sacrifices, the feasts of Jehovah, and the Old Testament priesthood.

And the writer to the Hebrews in Hebrews 7 is particularly dealing with the ceremonial law and with that aspect of it, the priesthood.

And how could he say that the priesthood made nothing perfect? What did he really mean when he was saying that the priesthood, the Aaronic or the Levitical priesthood, made nothing perfect?

[8 : 51] Well, I believe that the writer to the Hebrews is here dealing with the doctrine of reconciliation.

He's dealing with the doctrine of justification, the doctrine of salvation. He's dealing with men that are near to God.

And the question is, is it possible for the Old Testament Levitical priesthood to enable men to draw near to God?

Is it possible for the Old Testament, for the Levitical priesthood to bring men into contact with God? Come along, do this.

Now I said that as far as the, as far as the moral law was concerned, it was a ministry of condemnation and threatening.

[9 : 51] What is the ministry of the ceremonial law? And particularly the ministry of the priesthood under the Old Testament. The ministry of the ceremonial law is a ministry of foreshadowing or of adumbration.

That's what it is. It's a ministry of foreshadowing. And all that the law could do, speaking with all honesty, is that it foreshadowed, it adumbrated another priesthood that was yet to arise.

You see, the whole of the ministry of the priesthood in the Old Testament, the whole of the ministry of the Levitical priesthood was surrounded with weakness, with temporariness.

There was no permanence in it. Because, you see, one priest died and another rose in his place. It was surrounded with weakness, temporariness.

It wasn't something that was going on forever. The law could make nothing perfect. What could the law do then?

[11 : 05] It could foreshadow for these people that were under it, a coming glorious dispensation of gospel grace.

It foreshadowed a priest that would arise after another order. Not the order of Aaron, not the Levitical order, but a priest that would arise after the order of Melchizedek.

And how is it then, is it true that under the Old Testament economy there were those who were drawing near to God?

Is it true that there were those in the Old Testament who were saved? Of course there were. There were many who were saved under the Old Testament.

But when it's saved by the priesthood, whether it's saved by the priesthood, whether it's saved by the sacrifice, whether it's saved by the offerings, no. They were saved by all of that old ceremonial law was foreshadowing.

[12 : 17] They were saved by the Savior by whom sinners are saved in 1992. That's how they were saved. They were saved as saved closed in with Christ.

The law could make nothing perfect. And my friend, what does this mean for you tonight? You're saying, oh, that's alright for a group of Hebrews living in the first century.

That's all very well to tell them that the condemnation and the threatening of the moral law. The foreshadowing or the adaptation of the ceremonial law couldn't save them.

That's alright for them. But what about me? My friend, the message that I've got for you tonight is this. The law can't save you either.

Do you know, my friends, that there are some of you here and you've bound the moral law and the ceremonial law and every other part of the law to yourselves and you're thinking this is the way I'm going to be saved because I believe that there are people in great trials tonight and you believe from the very bottom of your heart that the way in which you'll be saved is that you must do something.

[13 : 48] You must act in some way. You must appease the God of heaven. Isn't that true? Do you believe some way or other there's something that you must do that tonight I've got to tell you from the word of God the law in its moral aspect or the law in its ceremonial aspect it made nothing perfect.

And you know what I've got to tell you my friend if you're trusting to something that you've got to do to appease the God of heaven. Know what I've got to tell you?

I've got to tell you that it's going to fail because just as under the old economy the law makes nothing perfect the law makes nothing perfect in 1992 either.

Oh what a miserable existence is the existence of the man the woman the boy the girl that spends their life thinking that there's something they must do to appease the God of heaven.

What a miserable life this is your life if you're spending it thinking that you must come up to the standard of the point of some law or other in order that you might be saved.

[15 : 15] My friend will you not learn from this text tonight for the law made nothing perfect. You know the law has got a ministry the law has got a ministry and it's not twofold ministry it's either a ministry that shows you how you fall short of God's standard.

Oh but you're saying I'm doing my best I've got to tell you my friend your best isn't good enough for God I've got to tell you that. I'm sorry for you if you think that you're doing your best and your best will be good enough I'm sorry for you because you're going to come short.

The Bible says all have sinned and come short of the glory of God and that's what the law tonight shows you that's what the law proves to you.

The law condemns it shows you how you fall short and the law is also your schoolmaster to bring you to Christ. And how is the law the schoolmaster of men and women to bring them to Christ?

Well you know the word schoolmaster in that text in Galatians is a very interesting word because it's a word that means a Hebrew slave that was kept in the villages and in the towns of Israel.

[16 : 46] And you know what his work was this Hebrew slave? He wasn't a patient schoolmaster who taught in the classroom. No, no.

This slave had a work to do and the work that he had to do was to come and to take through by the scruff of the neck and draw them back to school when they failed to go to school.

And I believe there are some of you here and you've tried to walk on the broad way that leads to destruction. You've tried to go your own way but the law has come and has taken you by the scruff of the neck and has brought you back and it said to you you must do this or you die.

My friends you know what this law being our schoolmaster is like. It's like a person that was employed at one time in many of the villages of Scotland.

There was a man employed in the villages of Scotland long ago called the Whipperin. And that was the Whipperin's job. He had to go after the boys that played to us.

[18 : 03] And that's the way it is with the law of God. It can make nothing perfect but it runs after the students tonight and it says to the students do this and you'll live.

It's living in a world of condemnation. It's living in a world of threatenings. It's living in its own orbit. But tonight it's the schoolmaster that brings men to Christ.

And I wonder how the work of the law is going on apace in your own life my friend. I wonder if God in his law is condemning you and showing you your lostness and showing you that you're undone and showing you that you can't save yourself.

That's true. Live. you can't save yourself. What purpose then serveth the law? That's the question Paul asks the Galatians.

The purpose of the law is to bring you by the scruff of the neck back to the terms of God. You're there and you're trying to appease that God by the works of the law but you're failing miserably.

[19 : 28] You're failing all together and the law then comes and it does something else it foreshadows the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

And tonight my friend doesn't the law in the priesthood show you a picture that God has devised a way over against you best efforts that are going to land in failure and that God has devised a way by which sinners will be saved.

And that brings me to the second point in my text tonight the bringing in of a better hope did. You know my friend this world is gathered together under two covenants.

I think it was Thomas Boast in some way that said that tonight this world is hanging on the girdle of two men.

There are those who are hanging on the girdle of others lost and undone and there are those that are hanging on the girdle of Christ the Lord.

[20 : 51] Where are you tonight? Are you in Adam or are you in Christ? Tell me my friend where do you stand? Are you under the condemnation of a covenant of law that can make nothing perfect?

Or are you under the blessing of the covenant of grace which brought in a better hope? Where are you tonight?

Are you in Adam or are you in Christ? Where do you stand in the name of God I ask you? Where do you stand?

Are you in Adam tonight or are you in Christ? Because the Bible says as in Adam all die and so as in Christ shall all be made alive.

Where are you tonight? Are you living under the ministration of death and condemnation? Or are you living under the ministration of life and blessing?

[22 : 00] I ask you in the name of God that question tonight. And I pray that you'll spend time thinking about it because the law could make nothing perfect but the bringing in of a better hope did.

And how was this better hope brought in? It was brought in just as the law was brought in as a covenant. The law was brought in in the Sinai covenant and the Mosaic covenant.

And so the better hope was brought in in the new covenant in the covenant of redemption in the covenant of grace in Christ. That doesn't mean that the law the Sinai covenant was of course it was administration of the covenant of grace of course it was.

Don't you go thinking that the Mosaic covenant was anything else but an administration of the covenant of grace of course it was.

But it was an administration of the covenant of grace that could make none perfect. It couldn't justify. It couldn't reconcile. That's where it falls short tonight.

[23 : 20] The law will not justify because all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. The failure isn't in the covenant the failure isn't in the law the failure is in those that are under that law.

that my friend there's a better hope brought before you in the gospel and it comes in the form of a covenant engagement to sinners tonight.

I believe implicitly in a covenant gospel. I believe implicitly tonight in the fact that everyone in this building is in one of two covenant circles.

I believe implicitly tonight that there's no middle ground between the law and the gospel. I believe implicitly tonight that there's no sitting on the fence between being in Christ and not being in Christ. You might think that you're sitting on the fence but my friend let me tell you tonight there's no hope and to sit on because the law could make nothing perfect.

[24 : 34] That the bringing in of our better hope is what is in this covenant. It's the bringing in of our better hope. What is it then?

Well let me tell you what this better hope is. It's the hope that is set before us in the gospel. That's what it is. It's Christ in you the hope of glory.

That's the gospel. Because tonight in your heart there is one of two things. It's a heart given over to the service of Satan and the devil and the world and a heart that is void of God.

Do you know something very pathetic about that heart of you that's void of God and converted man, woman, boy and girl? Do you know something about it?

I'm going to tell you something that someone said about the heart of man void of God, full of the service of Satan. Someone said there's a God-shaped void in the human heart.

[25 : 47] Do you know this? There's only one thing can fill that empty heart of yours, my dear friend, and it's a personal relationship with the personal God of heaven in Christ.

It's the better hope, that's all that can fill your heart. The hope that is brought before you in the gospel, it's Christ in you, the hope of glory, that's all that can fill your empty heart.

Now let me speak to some of you young people here tonight. I know that you young folk in this gathering tonight have made all sorts of efforts to fill the empty heart that you have.

I know that you go here and there and you go to your pastimes and you go to your recreations and you go to your pleasures and you go to your pastimes and you think this and that and the next thing will fill the void in my heart.

Are they? Are they? Are they really filling the void in your heart? No, they're not. Do you know how? Because the void in your heart and existence is God shaped.

[27 : 01] And there's nothing but God and the revelation that he has given of himself in Christ that can or will ever fill the void in the human heart.

The law can't do it. the pleasures of this world can't do it. The money and the riches of this world can't do it. You know I bought a book last year I was browsing over there in Harchar one day and I bought a book it's called The Book of the Rich and I thought this is going to be a really interesting read The Book of the Rich and the claim of this book is that it gives a parted biography of 400 of the richest men and women in Britain today.

And you know what I found when I read the book of the rich? I found it. That it's a book pulled to overflowing of disillusionment and unhappiness.

Why? Because the riches and the gain of this world couldn't fill the void in the human heart. That's why. Because the riches of this earth don't fill the void.

There's only one can fill the void in the human heart. And it's the bringing in of the hope that is set before us in the gospel the coming of Christ.

[28 : 29] Listen listen my friend to the testimony of angels that became glory to God in the highest they sang peace on earth good will towards men.

And there's only one place tonight where that peace is to be found. It's to be found in the hope that is set before you tonight in the gospel. It's found in the Christ that came and in the Christ that died and in the Christ that rose.

And I offer him to you tonight and I say to you why would you not follow this Jesus? And I ask you tonight why is it that you're prepared to carry on trying to appease an hungry God and refusing the claims of Jesus in the gospel.

Why is it? Because the glorious message of the gospel of redeeming great is this. The bringing in of a better hope can make men reconcile to God.

Make men perfect in the sense in which this text speaks of it. My friend there's only one message in the world tonight that I have confidence in to bring a man to heaven.

[29 : 51] There's only one message in the world tonight in which I have confidence that you can get peace with God. If I didn't believe it I wouldn't stand in this pulpit this evening I have nothing to stand here for.

But tonight I claim in the name of Christ on the authority of the Bible that there's peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ because he brought in a better hope.

The only way that this new covenant could be brought in is at the hands of a mediator and in the hands of a mediator. Do you know the message of the gospel is that the Jesus who is there in yonder stalls at whose feet the shepherds fall tells the Christ oh wondrous story.

Tis the Christ the King of glory at his feet we'll humbly fall and we'll crown him Lord of all. My friend is this Christ the mediator who brings in the better hope in his hands tonight this is your Christ have you found him as yours or are you still a stranger to grace and to God do you know your danger do

you feel your Lord no you don't but oh my friend will you not return to this Christ while he still offers you life everlasting in the gospel will you not return to him the bringing in of a better hope did better hope than the law could hold out to you the law can only hold out its condemnation and its threatening its promises undissolved and fearful looking to have judgment but tonight the gospel covenant in

Christ holds out to you a promise of life everlasting why why will you not close with Christ in the promise of this gospel what does the gospel really hold out to you tonight listen to the third claim of our text the bringing in of our better hope by which we draw near to God you know really friend what you need above everything else in the world tonight unconverted soul is that you should draw near to God do you remember that same of Psalm what Esau made Psalm 73 do you remember it surely he says God is good for two Israel to each pure hearted one but as for me my feet near slipped they were almost gone why because I looked at the wicked and

[32 : 56] I was envious of the wicked and Esau finishes this Psalm by things but surely it's good for me that I draw near to God my friend tonight I ask you have you ever considered how you can draw near to God because really you know in a state of nature without God and without Christ the Bible tells me that you and I are far off from God we're strangers we're far off and I believe if you were really honest that's what you would tell God tonight as you fall on your knees by your bedside you would tell him tonight that really so far in your life unconverted you are far off from God far away but how can a man that is far away be brought near how can you draw near to

God listen to the word of God wherefore he says having a great high priest that is passed into the heavens Jesus the son of God it's by coming to know this great high priest it's by coming to know this mediator it's by closing in with the gospel covenant in Christ by answering in to that better hope that's how you can draw near to God and tonight that Jesus says to you let us therefore come boldly to a throne of grace how can you draw near to God I'll tell you how sinners have drawn near to God from all time they've come to Christ and they've fallen before Christ and they've prayed to Christ and they've asked desperately for mercy and they've asked God to change these hearts that are under the law and they've asked God to come into these hearts that are so empty and so void with a

God shaped void and they've asked God to fill the emptiness of their heart have you ever asked him to fill the emptiness in your heart my friend what makes you stray from God what makes you turn away what makes men and women trust in other things what makes them trust in drugs and drink and all the other panaceas that the world has to offer what is it it's this that they haven't they've failed in drawing near to God failed in drawing near to God but tonight my friend you're invited by the God of all grace to drawing to but you're saying how can I do it we have a great high priest that has entered into the heavens Jesus the son of God therefore let's come boldly to a throne of grace that's what

I'm asking you to do tonight I'm asking you in the quietness of your heart in this church tonight to come boldly to a throne of grace and I'm asking you tonight if you've never prayed to pray and I'm asking you to pray a simple prayer ask God to have mercy on you as a sinner but do it boldly and ask him for grace to help in your time of need that's what you need tonight my unconverted friend more than anything else in the world you need grace the grace of God in the gospel that's what you need the bringing in of a better hope into your poor heart that's what you need you need Christ ask him tonight to come to you oh come to us and live with us oh Lord

Emmanuel do you know what Emmanuel means tonight Emmanuel means that great great acclamation God with us and wouldn't it be a lovely thing if you came into this building tonight a stranger to the God of his grace and if you went out and you could say from the very bottom of your heart you're my Emmanuel God with us wouldn't it be lovely would there be anything to compare with it for yourself my friend to go home tonight knowing Emmanuel and saying Emmanuel God is with us and don't make any mistake of his head God is with some in this building tonight and there are others with whom he is not but this evening

[38 : 25] I invite you and I plead with you in the name of my Emmanuel that he will become your Emmanuel and that we'll go home both of us together with that tie that binds our hearts one with another that will never ever be broken isn't that a wonderful prospect for you tonight that your heart and mind would be united together not just with one another but united together with Emmanuel God with us oh that's what I pray for you that's what I long for you my hearers more than anything else in the world that you'll know this Emmanuel and that you'll be able to say he's mine he's mine

let's pray oh blessed be thy name that the gospel can do what the law could never do do to bringing in of our better hope in the hands of our mediator who died on the cross and the only way that the gulf that stands between men and

God could ever be breached was by the son of God experiencing a breach between him and his father in which he said my God my God why hast thou forsaken me blessed be thy name that the forsaken Emmanuel of the cross is the Emmanuel of his church tonight who says I will never leave thee and I will never forsake thee bless us in him Amen Amen Amen