

## Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews XXIII

Fred R. Coulter—February 15, 2003

What we are going to cover today is going to, I hope, give you a greater understanding and appreciation for what God has done and is doing. And especially from the point of view that God wants us to have a relationship with Him through the New Covenant that is individual and special and very particular. And He doesn't want us playing religion or church or whatever. But He wants us to worship Him *in spirit* and *in truth*.

Let's see a prophecy in John 4 that Jesus gave about how we are to worship God, which then sets the foundation for what we have here in the book of Hebrews. The book of Hebrews goes into great detail showing how the New Covenant—which is *superior* to the Old Covenant—works.

Jesus is talking to the Samaritan woman at the well, John 4:19. "The woman said to Him, 'Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped in this mountain...'" (vs 19-20). If you need the background on the Samaritan worship and the temple at Mount Gerizim, I've got a section of that in *The Christian Passover* book, and you can see that that was a counterfeit substitution worship in competition with Jerusalem during the days of Ezra.

Verse 20: "...but you say that the place where it is obligatory to worship is in Jerusalem." When it was with the Old Covenant, that was the central place where they were to worship. Everything came out of Jerusalem. The high priest was the one to whom everyone looked to for the finality of law and decisions, the settling of high-level controversies, and so forth. And when they were spread in the Diaspora, they had to come to Jerusalem on pilgrimages to keep the Feasts. They could keep the Feast out in the local areas, but they couldn't keep the Passover because the Passover had to be kept in the land. So therefore, that's how it came about that the Jews in the Diaspora did not keep a 14<sup>th</sup> Passover, because they couldn't keep a 14<sup>th</sup> Passover being outside of the land. So, they renamed the Feast of Unleavened Bread *Passover*, and then they extended it from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 22<sup>nd</sup>—having a false notion of eight days. We cover all of that in the Passover book.

However, Jesus gave the answer, v 21: "Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you shall neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem worship the Father. You do not know what you worship...'" (vs 21-22).

That's quite a statement—isn't it? There are a lot of people who worship and they don't know what they're worshipping. Why do they go to church

on Sunday? *Well, they have a good time*, whatever it may be. Or why do you bow down to this crucifix and statue of Mary? *Because it makes me feel good!* You worship you know not what. And you see, all of those things can never put you in contact with the true God.

I spoke to a man who is a Seventh-Day Adventist yesterday, and he is reading the Bible through. He's one of the partners down here where I do my water therapy, so we talk back and forth every once in a while. He's a 'Laodicean' S.D.A. If you can figure out how bad that is, then you'll know. So he's reading the Bible, and he's asking me questions about it, and so forth.

Jesus says, v 22: "You do not know what you worship..." The book of Hebrews then clarifies Whom we are worshipping, and how we are worshipping, and how we have access to the Father in a very particular way. It is explaining how the New Covenant works after the destruction of the temple, because the temple was the place to go. So He says, 'you don't know what you're worshipping.' And remember, you can just put in your margin there Simon Magus, who the great one, who was giving himself out as a great prophet of God, the great power of God (Acts 8).

"...We know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews" (v 22). That is also a *spiritual* statement in two ways.

1. to the Jew first, then to the Gentile
2. those who have the circumcision of Christ are the true Jews

Are they not? It applies in both cases. In other words:

- salvation is not going to come out of Samaria
- salvation is not going to come out of Rome
- salvation is not going to come out of New Delhi
- salvation is not going to come out of Southeast Asia
- Salvation—the *knowledge of salvation*—comes out from the Jews

*Jesus was a Jew*. So therefore, He is the main One Whom it's talking about. You can put all of those factors together.

"But the hour is coming, **and now is...**" It is pretty well clear, coupled with other things in the book of John, that that was an added thing that John wrote when he finished his gospel, which was finished after the temple was destroyed. It wasn't

*now is*; yet, when Jesus was speaking; *now is* was *after* the temple was destroyed.

The disciples were not worshipping God the Father. Jesus was *in the process of revealing* Him. And they didn't understand the Scriptures even concerning Jesus until after He was resurrected from the dead and He explained it to them, as we find in Luke 24. So all of these things show that the phrase "...and now is..." is an edit by John when he finished the Gospel.

Verse 23: "But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth..."—not in ritual, not in law. People have a very hard time understanding about grace, and I'll explain a little bit about it today. Grace is the most fantastic thing we could possibly receive in this life, and everything that comes with the grace.

"...shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father is indeed seeking those who worship Him in this manner. God *is* Spirit, and those who worship Him **must** [obligatory] worship in spirit and in truth" (vs 23-24). The whole book of Hebrews tells us how this is done, and the circumstances and the covenant under which it was done.

Let's also look at something else leading up to the beginning of the New Covenant. Remember, the Law and the Prophets were the authority until John; there was no higher authority. You could go to no higher authority than the Law and the Prophets. If it didn't state it in the Law and the Prophets, it had no bearing; it had no meaning.

Then when John came something very important occurred. Who was John the Baptist? What was he? *His father was a priest*—wasn't he? That means that John was a priest. So what we are seeing here—in the transition from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant—is that God used the authority that He established beginning with Aaron and the Levitical priesthood coming on down to the time of John the Baptist. And John the Baptist, being a priest, then means that God followed the authority that He gave.

However, where was it that they normally went to worship and be cleansed of sin through giving offerings and washings and things like that? They went to the temple. John being a priest, did he ever officiate at the temple? *No!* Where did he go? *It says he went into the wilderness until the day of his appearance.* Where did he begin his ministry? *The River Jordan*—away from the temple, away from the cleansing of the temple—*out at the River Jordan!* And this becomes a very important thing, because the Pharisees' idea of cleansing and the reason that they had all the laws that they did, was because they

wanted to make the home—all of the eating, all the things, all of the bathing and all of the rituals that they did at the home, all the laws that they added—as nearly like the temple as possible.

So, when John starts out there and begins preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven, we have the transition period between required temple worship and how then God is going to establish and move on over to the New Covenant. He was a messenger sent before *to prepare the way for the Lord*. This is why people don't understand the statement: 'The law and the prophets were until John. They say we don't keep the Law and Prophets anymore.' That doesn't say you did away with the Law and the Prophets. It's just saying that the highest authority was the Law and the Prophets. The highest authority becomes the Kingdom of God beginning with John the Baptist, who was the messenger sent to prepare the way before the face of the Lord.

He wasn't in his priestly garb. What did he wear? *Camel's hair*—didn't he? How do you think one of the priests coming up the way from Jericho would have looked upon John the Baptist? And in addition to show the humility of his office, he was a Nazirite from birth, meaning, he did not cut his hair; he did not shave his beard. So being dressed in camel's hair, he was probably a pretty wild looking man. This gives us some very important points in coming over to understanding more about the book of Hebrews, because God didn't just suddenly do this. He prepared the way, He used the authority that He had used before, to prepare the way with John the Baptist.

Matthew 3:1: "Now in those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, 'Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.' For this is he who was spoken of by Isaiah the prophet, saying, '*The voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight His paths."*'" Now John himself wore a garment of camel's hair, and a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey" (vs 1-4). You talk about a sumptuous diet. Now remember, there was never a man born, as Jesus said, greater than John the Baptist. Yet, Jesus said, 'I say to you, he that is least in the Kingdom of God is greater than John the Baptist' So this is an amazing thing that took place.

Verse 5: "Then went out to him *those from* Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the country around the Jordan..." Why? *They knew that*—whenever it was, probably 30 years before—that *this was a miraculous birth* by a, probably, 75-year-old woman and her husband. He finally showed himself, and they're wondering who he was and what was going to become of him. And can you imagine how

quickly this spread, even without telephones? ‘He’s here! Let’s go down there.’ What do you think all the scribes and Pharisees thought when the temple population was suddenly reduced? The people weren’t coming to the temple to be cleansed, they were going to the River Jordan to be cleansed. This was a direct affront to their power. So, we have to understand some of the politics involved here.

Verse 6: “And were being baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins. But after seeing many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, ‘You brood of vipers, who has forewarned you to flee from the coming wrath? Therefore, produce fruits worthy of repentance’” (vs 6-8)—and don’t say, ‘We have Abraham.’

Let’s look at the account in the Gospel of John, the first chapter. We will see that this was this account here was actually an official delegation from the temple; they wanted to know:

- Why are you doing this?
- Who sent you to do this?
- By what authority do you do this? As they asked Jesus

Then Jesus said, ‘You tell Me by what authority John did it, and then I’ll tell you by what authority I do it.’ The Pharisees and Sadducees and priests would be coming down there with their full dress, meeting a priest who had all this wild hair and beard, and was dressed in camel’s hair and standing alongside the river, and saying, ‘You generation of vipers!’ I mean, this is something! And they were probably really steaming.

John 1:19: “And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him... [This tells us this is an *official* delegation: We have been sent.] ...Who are you? Then he *freely* admitted, and did not deny, but declared, ‘I am not the Christ’” (vs 19-20). He knew they were looking for the Christ sometime around there. They understood the prophecies.

Verse 21: “And they asked him, ‘Then who *are you?* Are you Elijah?’?...” Of course, Jesus later said he was. I think it’s very interesting for all of the Elijah candidates out there, if John the Baptist didn’t know he was Elijah, how do you know that you are? How many people have set themselves up as Elijah? Or Elijah’s message? *No!* Don’t any man appoint himself, especially to the office of Elijah. You’re asking for heap, big trouble. Did heap, big trouble come when that was proclaimed in our church experience? Yea, verily!

“...Are you Elijah?’ And he said, ‘I am not.’ *Then they asked,* ‘Are you the Prophet?’.... [See sermon *Who Is That Prophet?* That’s the one prophesied by Moses (Deut. 18)] ...And he said, ‘I

am not.’ *Then they asked,* ‘Are you the Prophet?’ And he answered, ‘No.’ Therefore, they said to him, ‘Who are you? What do you say about yourself so that we may give an answer to those who sent us?’.... [‘We’ve got to write up a report when we get back.’]. ...He said, ‘I *am* a voice crying in the wilderness, “Make straight the way of *the* Lord,” as Isaiah the prophet said.’ Now those who had been sent belonged to *the sect* of the Pharisees, and they asked him, saying to him, ‘Why then are you baptizing...’” (vs 21-25).

This is for cleansing, because the Pharisees had what? *They had the washings* of cups, washings of pots, washings of hands and arms and feet, and everything else—didn’t they? They wanted to know, “...Why then are you baptizing?” (v 25). The question is really this: Since you are technically a descendent of the priesthood, why are you here doing this in the River Jordan, and you’re not up at the temple doing what you’re supposed to be doing up at the temple? That’s the basic, underlying question.

This is such a new thing. I mean, this is unheard of! Jesus said He confirmed it when the woman said that ‘you ought to worship in Jerusalem’; He didn’t deny it. But He said the time is coming that you won’t. Here’s the first instance of it as a preview with John the Baptist.

“And they asked him, saying to him, ‘Why then are you baptizing, if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?’ John answered them, saying, ‘I baptize with water, but there is one *Who* stands among you Whom you do not know. He it is Who comes after me, *but* Who has precedence over me; of Whom I am not worthy to loose the thong of His sandal’” (vs 25-27).

And then he said there in Matt. 3 that He will baptize with the Holy Spirit. What happened when they were baptized with the Holy Spirit? We need to follow this through; we need to understand. This also helps destroy the proposition of the Mormons that Jesus was sent to the Mayans in Mexico, because they claim that the other people, the ‘other flock’ that Jesus had were the ones that were the descendents of the Mayans, and therefore, that’s part of the Mormon religion.

Let’s understand something: God always follows His own authority, what He’s established. Therefore, the giving of the Holy Spirit and the beginning of the Church started at the temple so there would be no question that this was of God. Had it been done in Samaria, how far do you think it would have gone? Had it been done in Rome no one would have believed, or any other place in the world. This becomes very important, because now this sets the stage of beginning the preaching of the Gospel at the temple.

Where did the apostles teach? They taught everyday at the temple—didn't they? *Yes!* Till they were run out of town! This shows a consistency in what God did in preparing the way for the Church, and also in preparing the way for the future destruction of the temple, which was already prophesied to happen. Let's see that that's what Stephen was preaching (Acts 6). People do not like to be told that their beautiful temple, and their beautiful ceremonies, and their rituals, and their sacrifices, and their gold, and their silver, and everything that they have is worthless. Or as the book of Hebrews says *unprofitable*, but which really means *useless*. Especially when it was God Who said, 'Ok, you can build it, and you come and worship here.' Great affront!

Acts 6:9: "Then certain arose among those of the synagogue who were called Libertines, and of the Cyrenians and Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia; *and* they were disputing with Stephen.... [these were all Jews] ...But they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spoke. Then they suborned men, who said, 'We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and *against* God.' And they stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes; and they came and seized him, and brought *him* into the Sanhedrin. Then they set up false witnesses, who said, 'This man does not cease to speak blasphemous words against this Holy place and the law; for we heard him saying that this Jesus, the Nazarean, will destroy this place, and will change the customs that Moses delivered to us'" (vs 9-14).

Right from the beginning this is what they were preaching. Can you imagine that, right in the area of Jerusalem, and perhaps even standing in the temple saying, 'God is going to destroy this'? And He did, and when that was fulfilled it was awesome!

He was probably preaching out of Isa. 66. Here is a prophecy of what we are getting into in the book of Hebrews. We've gone over this many times in the past. But it becomes very important for us to understand the importance of the relationship with God that we have under the New Covenant, and the importance of the New Covenant itself.

Isaiah 66:1—this probably is where Stephen was preaching from: "Thus says the LORD, 'The heaven *is* My throne, and the earth *is* My footstool. Where, then, *is* the house that you build for Me?'...." What are you going to build for Me? *Especially now that we can look out and see the vastness of the universe in a much clearer form than at any time in the history of man!* What are you going to build for God? What are you going to contain God in?

"...And where *is* the place of My rest? For all these things My hand has made, and these things

came to be,' says the LORD. 'But to this one I will look, to him who is of a poor and contrite spirit and who trembles at My Word'" (vs 1-2). In other words, a humble, worshipful attitude toward God; that's more important than anything else. This is probably Christ speaking.

In the New Testament the collective *body of the saints* compose *the temple of God*. That's where God dwells. ***He dwells in His people!*** He is delighted to dwell in His people. And the only way He can dwell in His people is *through grace*, because we are still physical. And that's why we have an earnest of the Holy Spirit, because a physical body cannot contain the wholeness of the Holy Spirit; you have to be resurrected. So this gets in to be really some things to understand and to fully appreciate, and *especially* when you pray. And I hope that this is going to open up for you a whole new approach to praying, and to understand the access that you have to God, and to comprehend what He is doing in your life, because *it is profound!*

Verse 3—he talks about if you come to the temple and offer something with a wrong attitude: "He who kills an ox *is as if* he killed a man; he who sacrifices a lamb *is as if* he broke a dog's neck... [Who commanded these things to be offered? *God did! Yes, He did!* So even if you do what God commanded, if your heart isn't right, then it's of no worth to Him.] ...he who offers a grain offering *is as if* he offered swine's blood; he who burns incense *is as if* he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delights in their abominations. I also will choose their delusions, and I will bring their fears upon them because when I called, no one answered; when I spoke, they did not hear. But they did evil before My eyes and chose *that* in which I did not delight'" (vs 3-4).

And I can just tell you that summarizes exactly what happened with the destruction of the temple in 70<sub>A.D.</sub> It was awesome! How many here have *Josephus*? Take the time and read about the destruction of Jerusalem and the awesome things that took place. It was something! And one of the things that God entrapped them in their own ways, in their own thoughts; by 70<sub>A.D.</sub> Judaism had completely rejected Jesus Christ as the Messiah. They thought they understood the prophecies that the Messiah would come and save them from the Romans. Therefore, in 70<sub>A.D.</sub> the word went out that, 'As many of you as possible, come and keep the Passover in Jerusalem.'

The Romans had another plan. The Romans said, When the 'the pilgrims' come from out in the empire, we'll just stand back and let them go right up to Jerusalem. We're not even going to fight. We're just going to let them go in there. So Josephus records that there were 3-million in Jerusalem. And

then Titus' army surrounded Jerusalem, and they dug trenches so they couldn't get out. It never happened that the Messiah came to rescue them. It was the most horrible destruction of people recorded in the history of the world.

Here's what God wants and desires now, v 5: "Hear the Word of the LORD, you who tremble at His Word, 'Your brethren who hated you, who cast you out for My name's sake...'" That happened during the days of the apostles—didn't it? *Cast them out of the synagogues!* How many times did Paul go in the synagogue and preach, only to end up in a riot? And I think it's really quite humorous in Corinth when that happened, they moved into a hall that was right next to the synagogue. So here, you had the Christians on one side of the wall, and you had the Jews on the other side of the wall. Cast them out. "...said, 'Let the LORD be glorified.'" But He will appear to your joy and they will be ashamed." (v 5)

We'll just summarize this, Heb. 7. What he is doing, he is showing the *superiority* of the priesthood of Jesus Christ. Not just better; *the superiority!* And also what he is showing is this, and this becomes so very, very, very profound and important: *Everyone who has the Spirit of God has direct access to God the Father—individually and directly—without going through another physical human being!* That doesn't mean that they don't have to be taught. That doesn't mean that there aren't ministers, and so forth. This means that today, everything that is found in Judaism, and Catholicism in particular, cuts people off from God because they have to go through a man. God does not want that. God does not want His personal, Fatherly relationship with you—*begettal in your mind*—to be filtered through another man. Why?

1. because we have a perfected High Priest—Jesus Christ
2. all men and women have a sinful nature—they are not fit to filter anything to God

That's important to understand. I want you to grasp the fact that you have a direct relationship to God the Father and Jesus Christ with no man in-between. And that's why prayer and study become so important. And this cuts off relying on a human being. Therefore, anyone who is a true teacher of God is going to say, 'Here are you, and there is God, now get with it.' We come together as brethren and love each other as Christ loved us because God does something special when we get together—especially on the Sabbath Day—through the power of His Holy Spirit with us. We have that individual relationship.

Hebrews 7:11: "Therefore, if perfection was indeed *possible* through the Levitical priesthood—for *the law that* the people had received was *based* on it—what further need *was there for* another priest

to arise according to the order of Melchisedec, and not to be named after the order of Aaron?"

Remember this was prophesied in Psa. 110:4. So this was not something that came as a bolt out of the blue. God already prophesied that He was going to do it. He already prophesied that He was going to make a New Covenant with Israel and Judah. This comes as no surprise. God is acting upon it, and when He acts upon it the old says, 'No, we don't want that.' So, He has to explain it in great detail.

Verse 12: "**For since the priesthood has changed, it is obligatory that a change of the law also take place.**" This is the law of *how you come to God*. This includes the *law of the rituals* that were under the Old Covenant. That is all changed. And this includes the *spiritual laws by which we operate*. *Operating under the New Covenant:*

- it is the *spiritual law*
- it is the *spiritual application*
- it is by *faith*
- it is by *belief*
- it is by the *receipt of the Holy Spirit of God*

That's what it's based upon. And it's based upon that you now live your life according to walking after the Spirit and not after the flesh.

Romans 8:1: "Consequently, *there is* now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who are not walking according to *the flesh*... [live as the world. Just do the things that the world does; do the things that you do automatically as a human being. No!] ...but according to *the Spirit*." With the Spirit of God in you you're concerned with the spiritual thing. You're concerned with loving God. You're concerned with how you serve God. And even though you are in the flesh with the weaknesses that you still have, you are not walking according to the flesh. You're walking according to the Spirit.

And here's what it's described as, v 2: "Because the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus... [That's what the law was changed to. The spiritual application of the law, through Jesus Christ and through His grace brings forgiveness of sin.] "...has delivered me from the law of sin and death."

In other words, by having the Spirit of God and being under the grace of God, He justifies you from the law of sin and death and the carnal nature that you have, that you can have the spiritual relationship with Him. And He's got to do that, otherwise you do not have access to God. That's why the world out here has no access to God. Oh, they can play church, they can play religion, they can do all sorts of things.

But you have to have the Spirit of God, which I think is interesting. Here it is called the

“...law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus...” Quite a thing—isn’t it? That’s a statement! “...has delivered [justified] me.” It doesn’t mean free! ***You haven’t been freed of sin!*** You haven’t been freed of physical death. But as far as God is concerned, ***you have been justified from sin, and you have been given eternal life!***

Let’s come back here to Hebrews 7:12: “For since the priesthood has changed, it is obligatory *that* a change of *the* law also take place.” That’s quite a change—isn’t it? And what does this ‘change of the law’ do? *It takes away every physical apparatus of worship under the Old Covenant!*

- no sacrifices
- no physical temple
- no physical circumcision

Now you have a spiritual requirement which is the law of life and Christ Jesus for *all* of these things:

- a spiritual temple
- a spiritual circumcision
- spiritual worship of God

—and so forth. That is why, at the Passover, we take the bread and the wine; Jesus gave a new definition to it. It is *His body and His blood* of the New Covenant.

Verse 13: “Because the one of Whom these things are said belongs to another tribe, from which no one was appointed to serve at the altar.” As long as Jesus was on the earth *He followed the law that He established through the covenant that was made with Israel and the Aaronic priesthood.* He did not put Himself forward to become a priest. Remember what happened to Uzziah back in the Old Testament, when he decided that he was going to offer incense, and the priest told him, ‘No, you’re not; don’t offer incense.’ As soon as he walked in to offer it he was struck with leprosy and died a leper.

Christ, being on earth, did not even intimate that He was going to be the priest. The closest He came to it was when He was talking to the Pharisees and He said, ‘Tell Me, whose son is the Christ?’ And they said, ‘David’s’ And He said, ‘Well then, tell Me, how does he in the Spirit call Him Lord, if He’s his son?’ They couldn’t answer it. So that’s about the closest that He came to it; Psa. 110:4 talks about Melchisedec.

Verse 14: “For *it is* quite evident that our Lord has descended from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning *the* priesthood. And it is even more evident because a different Priest arises according to the order of Melchisedec; Who was not invested according to *the* law of a fleshly commandment...” (vs 14-16).

God said, ‘Aaron, you’re the high priest. I establish your descendents as the high priest. The

rest of the Levites, who are descendents of Levi, will be your servants.’ Remember, they had a great rebellion about that, and it was settled with the staff of Aaron that budded. Remember that? So it was a fleshly commandment. They were to be physical descendents. They were to be priests by birth. And when they died another one had to succeed.

But now then, compare that to what the Priesthood we have is, v 16: “Who was not invested according to *the* law of a fleshly commandment, but by ***the power of indestructible life***.... [You can’t have a greater power than that—can you? *No, you can’t!* I mean, the whole foundation of it is lifted so much higher—isn’t it? *Yes, it is!*] ...For He testifies, ‘You *are* a Priest forever... [perpetual; continuous; never changing; never running out] ...according to the order of Melchisedec.’.... [is greater than Levi (Heb. 7)] ...For there is indeed an annulment of the earlier commandment *delivered to Aaron* because of its weakness and unprofitableness... [or actually, the *uselessness*] ...because the law brought nothing to perfection...” (vs 16-19). Now hear and understand this very clearly:

- What is the function of law? *Law defines what sin is! Law cannot save!*
- Why cannot law save? *That’s not a function of law! Law cannot bring salvation!*

We are required to keep the commandments of God; we are to keep them *in spirit and in truth*—are we not? *Yes!* Commandment-keeping cannot of itself save you, because commandment-keeping is required. Law can’t save you. Repentance—an operation of the heart and mind through Jesus Christ, and the receipt of the Holy Spirit from God the Father—that saves you. That is an *operation of grace*, which is separate from the Law and Prophets. Within that scope God does something greater. He puts in our hearts and our minds His commandments and His laws, where it ought to be. So it was useless!

Verse 19: “Because the law brought nothing to perfection; rather, *perfection* is brought about by a superior hope...” What was the hope of the Israelites? *When they left Egypt the hope was to go into the ‘promised land’;* because they sinned and so forth, they were 40 years getting there. That’s a long detour, but they eventually got there. Their hope was that if they obeyed God—as you read the blessings and cursings in Deut.28 and Lev. 26—that they would be blessed physically, they would have all kinds of physical goods, they would have blessings of children, freedom from their enemies, and all of this. If they didn’t, then they would lose that hope and they would have curses and captivity, and so forth.

What is our hope? *It is a superior hope!* The King James says ‘better,’ but the Greek there means

*superior*. Can there be any comparison between having a calm, blessed, physical life, and you die? or Having the promise of eternal life? And at the resurrection you are given a spiritual body, and a spiritual mind and share in the glory of Christ? Which is greater?

That's why when you read the parables—the parable of the pearl of great price, you go sell all that you have—because all of the physical goods that you have are not equated to anything that can be compared to eternal life. What this *superior hope* is supposed to do with the Spirit of God is to help us to understand that, regardless of the circumstances around us. God did not say we are going to be blessed with peace and security. What did Christ say to His disciples on that Passover night? *He said, 'In Me you will have peace, in the world you'll have tribulation. But be courageous; I have overcome the world.'* So with a *superior hope* we do not make a judgment based upon the physical circumstances. And this *superior hope* does this, v 19: "...through which we draw near to God."

Now, let's look at a comparison here. Here's another account of receiving the Ten Commandments. And after they heard the voice of God they said to Moses, Deuteronomy 5:27: "You go near and hear all that the LORD our God shall say. And you speak to us all that the LORD our God shall speak to you, and we will hear *it*, and do *it*." They never did it! Today when we draw near to God, how do we understand the Word of God? How does God speak to us through His Word and His Spirit to lead us and guide us? It's a whole lot different. Where is the law to be written? *In our hearts and in our minds!* It's a greater, more superior thing.

But notice what he said here, v 28: "And the LORD heard the voice of your words when you spoke to me. And the LORD said to me, 'I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken to you. They have well *said* all that they have spoken.'" In other words, they were sincere and well intentioned. Sincerity is absolutely no proof of right or wrong. You can be sincerely convinced in something that is wrong, and your sincerity is no guarantee of truth. Truth stands by itself without feeling. So they intended well.

Verse 29: "Oh, that there were such a heart in them that they would fear Me and keep all My commandments always, so that it might be well with them and with their children forever!" With the *superior hope* we have a way of drawing near to God. And we're going to see when we get into Heb. 8 how near that is.

Hebrews 7:20: "And according to this *superior* measure, *it was* not without *the* swearing of an oath *that He was made a Priest*. (For those who

*descend from Aaron* are made priests without *the* swearing of an oath... [again showing the superiority of the Priesthood of Christ] ...but He *was made a Priest* with *the* swearing of an oath by Him Who says concerning Him, '*The Lord swore...*'" (vs 20-21). We have two times when the Lord swore—don't we?

1. to Abraham when he offered Isaac
2. to Christ to be High Priest after the order of Melchisedec.

Those are the only two times that God swore by Himself; showing the absolute finality of these things, and the spiritual reality of it, because God swore. God cannot lie, so He doesn't need to swear. But in swearing an oath, that makes it that much more binding, that makes it that much more powerful.

Verse 21: "...and will not revoke *His Word*, 'You *are* a Priest forever according to the order of Melchisedec.'" By such a greater measure then, Jesus was made the Guarantor of a superior covenant" (vs 21-22). Everything about it is superior. There can be nothing greater. That's why we read there in John 14 that Jesus said that, 'I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life, and none can come to the Father except through Me.' *Superior covenant!* We don't need to go around and hang our heads asking, 'What are you?' *Well, I'm...um...one of these...um...I go to the Church of God. 'I'm a Baptist!'* No!

- We belong to God!
- We have *the Spirit of God!*
- We have a *superior High Priest!*
- We have a *superior hope!*
- We have a *superior covenant!*

Not because we're greater; because in order to impart the blessing of this superior status with God, *God calls the individual*. It's not of the choosing of the individual. Yes, we have to respond and repent, that is true. *God has to call!*

He gives another comparison, v 23. "Now in the one case, there were many priests because they were not able to continue *to serve* by reason of death; but in the other case, because He is living forever, His priesthood never changes" (vs 23-24).

You don't have to worry about praying one week, and then the next week you go to pray, and all of a sudden, 'Uh oh. Who is this new guy?' *Well, the one you confessed your sins to last week died.* 'Well did he pray for me before he died?' You can see the uselessness of having a system like the Catholic Church has. It doesn't get any further than the confession booth. And besides, a lot of the priests' amorous overtures are made in the confession booth to the ones that he is taking the confession from. The corruption of human nature corrupts that process

entirely, as it did with the priesthood under the Old Covenant. His priesthood never changes. We can add in there: *He is a heart-knowing God*. He knows our hearts; and that when we come to Him, everything He knows, and is able to judge the thoughts and the intents of the heart. So therefore, when you come to Christ and really repent, it's a true repentance to the core of your being. It is no pretense to gain favor. It is no pretense to get rid of the 'heat.' It is true and deep and profound confession to Him.

Verse 25: "Therefore, He has the power throughout all time... [Here it gives the indication of absolute power. In other words, *there is no other power to forgive sin*, or to save.] ...to save those who come to God through Him *because* He is ever living to intercede for them" We'll cover some of that when we get into our relationship with grace and confession of sin, and how God looks at us, and so forth, concerning that.

Verse 26, "For it is fitting that we should have such a High Priest..." In other words, if you're going to have a superior covenant, you're going to have a superior hope, you have to have a superior High Priest—don't you? You have to have one that fits the covenant, and *Christ is*.

"For it is fitting that we should have such a High Priest, *Who is Holy*, blameless, undefiled, set apart from sinners and made higher than the heavens... [as compared to]: ...Who has no need, as *do the other* high priests, to offer up sacrifices day-by-day, first for his own sins *and* then for the *sins* of the people..." (vs 26-27). You know what the priest had to do every day before he started? *He had to offer up a sin sacrifice for himself!* Now he's ready to start offering for the other people. Christ doesn't have to do that.

"...for this He did once for all time when He offered up Himself. For the law makes high priests of men who have weaknesses; but *by* the word of the swearing of the oath, which supersedes the law, *the Son*, Who has been perfected forever, *has been made High Priest*" (vs. 27-28).

Hebrews 8 begins setting the stage—chapters 7-10 all come together. Hebrews 8:1: "Now, *here is* a summary of the things being discussed: We have such a High Priest Who sat down at *the* right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens... [can't get any greater, can't get any higher than that] ...a minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord set up, and not man. For every high priest is ordained to offer both gifts and sacrifices; therefore, *it is necessary for* this one also to have something that He can offer" (vs 1-3). He offered Himself.

If anyone wants to talk about a work, no one can do better than the work that Christ did when He

was on earth—correct? Of all the things to sacrifice and give up to show love of God, He did the greatest—didn't He? *Yes, He did!* That's why He offered Himself. Now, being the Creator of all human beings, that becomes all the evermore awesome, all the greater or superior. If someone does a wonderful thing for you, you thank them, and you know they have love and concern for you—right? *Yes!* Christ has done greater: *He gave Himself!* Not only for you and me, but for the whole world, because God has a greater plan than men give Him credit for.

Verse 4: "Now on the one hand, if He were on earth He would not even be a priest since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law; who serve as a representation and shadow of the heavenly things..." (vs 4-5). We're comparing the true tabernacle in the heavens, compared to the shadow or the representation the shadow of it. Which would you rather have: a toy Cadillac or the real thing? Let's use that as a comparison.

"...exactly as Moses was Divinely instructed when he was about to construct the tabernacle: 'For see,' says He, '*that* you make all things according to the pattern that was shown to you in the mountain'" (v 5). This indicates that He had plans; God had them all drawn up to give to him. When you make a replica of it, that is only just a shadowy representation of the true. Now if you want to know what it's really like at the throne of God, the closest we can come to it is Rev. 4 & 5, when John saw the vision of the throne of God, and so forth.

Verse 6: "But on the other hand, He... [Christ, the heavenly Priest] ...has obtained a *supremely* more excellent ministry, as much greater as the superior covenant of which He is also Mediator, which was established upon superior promises." This then brings us right back to how he opened the book of Hebrews.

Let's come back to Hebrews 1, where he set the stage. What he's telling us is that all the way through the book of Hebrews he's showing us how then our relationship with God needs to be on the highest level possible, because of what God has done and how He has set up the New Covenant to operate.

Hebrews 1:1: "God, Who spoke to the fathers at different times in the past and in many ways by the prophets, has spoken to us in these last days by *His Son*, Whom He has appointed heir of all things, by Whom also He made the worlds; Who, being *the* brightness of *His* glory and *the* exact image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His own power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at *the* right hand of the Majesty on high" (vs 1-3).

You talk about an opening. You talk about getting your attention instantly. This is something! Until John the Baptist it was the Law and the Prophets, and after John the Baptist it's the Kingdom of God and Christ.

Verse 4: "Having been made so much greater than *any of* the angels, inasmuch as He has inherited a name exceedingly superior to them." These are superlatives which cannot be defined any greater in English. I want you to be inspired in prayer when you come to God; to know that you have this access through Jesus Christ. There is nothing between you and God. Therefore, we should have

- the faith
- the hope
- the understanding
- the confidence

in God, regardless of the outward circumstances in which we find ourselves, because this is so fantastic. If you ask people, if you just ran a survey and said, 'How would you like to be an angel?' They would immediately equate it with the TV programs where there are supposedly angels that do things. Of course, they'd like to be angels. But he's saying here, this is greater. *This is greater!*

Verse 5: "For to which of the angels did He ever say, 'You are My Son; this day I have begotten You'? And again, 'I will be a Father to Him, and He will be a Son to Me'? And again, when He brought the Firstborn into the world, He said, 'Let all *the* angels of God worship Him'" (vs 5-6). Didn't that happen right after Jesus was born? The host of the angels appeared unto the two shepherds and were singing praises and worshipping God, and telling about the One Who had been born?

Verse 7: "Now on the one hand, of the angels He says, 'Who makes His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire.' But on the other hand, of the Son *He says*, 'Your throne, O God, *is* into the ages of eternity; a scepter of righteousness *is* the scepter of Your Kingdom'" (vs 7-8). You can quote that back there in Psa. 45. That's something. Of course, then there are people who say Jesus was not God.

Verse 9: "'You loved righteousness and hated lawlessness... [that has to be the attitude we come to] ...because of this, God—even Your God—has anointed You with *the* oil of gladness above Your companions.'" So, that ties right in with what we're reading back here, *a more excellent ministry*. There we have a tremendous and profound thing that we look to, brethren.

Hebrews 8:7: "For if the first *covenant* had been faultless, *then* no provision for a second *covenant* would have been made." But God made

provision—didn't He? He even prophesied of it. He prophesied of the Priesthood of Christ, the order of Melchisedec; He prophesied of the New Covenant—didn't He? And here's what He did:

"But since He found fault with them..." Not only them, but the whole physical system of the temple was flawed by the very fact that imperfect human beings were running it. It served temporarily for the purpose. One of the biggest mistakes that people assume in the world is this: those who are *professing* Christians assume that under the Old Covenant they were given salvation through the physical things that they did at the temple, and so forth. No, they were not given that. He did not give the promise of the Holy Spirit.

Most people assume today, and the universal religion that they're wanting to create, that all religions have truths, and they all lead to the same God. Now that statement is only true insofar as it relates to Satan being the 'god of this world.' It is not true insofar as relating to the true God the Father and Jesus Christ. Here's what God wants to do with us. He's going to cure the fault. The fault is carnal nature—isn't it? The fault is the law of sin and death—isn't it?

Here's how He's going to cure it, v 8: "But since He found fault with them, He says, 'Behold, *the* days are coming'... [from Jer. 31] ...says *the* Lord, 'when I will establish a New Covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in *the* day that I took hold of their hand to lead them out of *the* land of Egypt because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them,' says *the* Lord. 'For this *is* the covenant that I will establish with the house of Israel after those days,' says *the* Lord: 'I will give My laws into their minds, and I will inscribe them upon their hearts'" (vs 8-10).

What does that do for you? *That can only be done with the Spirit of God!*

- that gives you the heart
- that gives you the attitude
- that gives you the willingness
- that gives you the consciousness

so that when you do sin you can repent rather than just ignoring God.

"...inscribe them upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they will be My people.... [The ones that have the Spirit of God are the people of God.] ...And they will no longer teach every man his neighbor... [of course, that's a prophecy yet to be fulfilled] ...and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord' because all will know Me, from *the* least to *the* greatest of them; for I will be merciful toward their unrighteousnesses, and their sins and

their lawlessness I will not remember ever again” (vs 10-12). That’s quite a promise—isn’t it? And with this promise then, we should never go before God and say, ‘I wonder if You can forgive me, God?’ ***If you repent there is always forgiveness!*** God promised that, and He cannot lie. He will grant you a clean heart and a clean mind, and will forgive you. That’s quite a promise. “For I will be merciful toward their unrighteousnesses, and their sins and their lawlessness I will not remember ever again” (v 12).

Let’s go to Psalm 103; here’s what God does with them. The reason there needs to be the forgiveness of sin is because ***as long as sin dominates in the mind and in the heart you cannot have the laws of God written in your heart!*** That’s why with repentance and a change of heart, then with the change of heart these things can be added to you.

Psalm 103:1: “Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His Holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits; Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from destruction; Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies” (vs 1-4).

Verse 8: “The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in mercy. He will not always chasten, nor will He keep His anger forever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities, for as the heavens are high above the earth, so is His mercy toward those who fear Him. **As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us**” (vs 8-12). This is how David stood before God, but it is also a prophecy that applies to us today. There’s no way.

Verse 13: “As a father has compassion upon his children, so the LORD has compassion upon those who fear Him, for He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust. As for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourishes, for the wind passes over it, and it is gone; and its place shall know it no more. But the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting... [that’s how far the east is from the west] ...upon those who fear Him, and His righteousness is unto children’s children, to those who keep His covenant, and to those who remember His precepts to do them” (vs 13-18).

- If you have the laws and commandments written in your heart and your mind, will you remember them? to do them? *Of course, you will!*
- Do you remember the Sabbath, to keep it? *Yes!*

- Do you remember to worship God because He is our God and Father? *Yes!*
- You have no problem with idols and statues—do you? *No!* You’re not swearing and cursing—are you? *Except may be you may slip, and can repent of that.*
  - ✓ you’re not breaking the third commandment
  - ✓ you’re not breaking the fourth commandment
  - ✓ you’re not breaking the fifth commandment
  - ✓ the sixth commandment
  - ✓ or any of the commandments.

Why? *Because they are in your heart and in your mind!*

Now then, the challenge with having it within your heart and mind and the Spirit of God is this: is that you learn through the power of the Spirit of God, and exercising the Spirit of God, and the laws and commandments of God through the *superior covenant*, through the *superior relationship* with Jesus Christ, then you learn through your faults and mistakes to overcome the source of sin, which is *the law of sin and death* within you. And the ultimate victory over that is the resurrection. So this is why the New Covenant is so fantastic and superior.

Now next time we’ll get into how Christ mediates for us, because this is very important. And always remember: ***Christ is always there!*** He doesn’t need to sleep. You don’t have to worry about like you do when you call someone on the phone, ‘Oh, did I wake you up?’ or, ‘Did I catch you busy?’ ***God is always there!*** And He is ever there to answer our prayers. That’s quite a thing when you really grasp and understand this, and you have this in your heart and mind and attitude when you come to pray. This opens up a great deal of understanding and truth and knowledge, and your relationship with God then is so important. You can build on it. You can know

- God loves you
- Christ loves you
- He has created this relationship in the New Covenant so that you can be in His family and live forever.

*That is the greatest thing!*

So with that then, we need to understand that as we go down the rusty trail and we get older. I think a whole lot more of us senior citizens—and being 68-½, I give myself ten year life, maximum; if it’s more than that, that’s fine. I’m figuring what I need to do and what God wants me to do, I better plan on doing it within the next ten years, if I have that long. And I am going to treat my ‘bionic’ hips

as if they are solid gold and be most careful with them. That we are going to find that the brethren among us are going to die. That should come as no great surprise, because no one yet has lived forever in the flesh. The ultimate last step—next to the last step, the last step in this physical life, and the next to the last step—is that you die and are put into the grave. If you do, look upon it as a blessing, because you don't have to go through the things that the rest of us who are living still have to go through. And they're going to be horrendous indeed.

Transcribed: 06/16/2003  
MDS/cis  
Reformatted/Corrected: bo—5-15-11

We need to take a view of death as God does, that God is pleased in the death of His saints. He knows that *the final step is going to come at the resurrection*. That is the *superior hope* that we are looking to. Therefore, ***anything that happens to this flesh is never going to deter that promise or take away that hope.***

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter (except where noted)

#### Scriptural References

- 1) John 4:19-24
- 2) Matthew 3:1-8
- 3) John 1:19-27
- 4) Acts 6:9-14
- 5) Isaiah 66:1-5
- 6) Hebrews 7:11-12
- 7) Romans 8:1-2
- 8) Hebrews 7:12-19
- 9) Deuteronomy 5:27-29
- 10) Hebrews 7:20-28
- 11) Hebrews 8:1-6
- 12) Hebrews 1:1-9
- 13) Hebrews 8:7-12
- 14) Psalm 103:1-4, 8-18

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Acts 8
- Luke 24
- Deuteronomy 18
- Psalm 110:4
- Deuteronomy 28
- Leviticus 26
- John 14
- Revelation 4; 5
- Psalm 45
- Jeremiah 31

#### Also Referenced:

##### Books:

- *The Christian Passover* by Fred R. Coulter
- *Josephus*

Sermon: *Who Is That Prophet?*