

Hebrews 7:18-19 Commentary

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CONSIDER JESUS OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST
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Charts from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission
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| The Epistle to the Hebrews | | | | |
|--|--|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| INSTRUCTION Hebrews 1-10:18 | | | EXHORTATION Hebrews 10:19-13:25 | |
| Superior Person of Christ Hebrews 1:1-4:13 | Superior Priest in Christ Hebrews 4:14-10:18 | | | Superior Life In Christ Hebrews 10:19-13:25 |
| BETTER THAN PERSON Hebrews 1:1-4:13 | BETTER PRIESTHOOD Heb 4:14-7:28 | BETTER COVENANT Heb 8:1-13 | BETTER SACRIFICE Heb 9:1-10:18 | BETTER LIFE |
| MAJESTY OF CHRIST | MINISTRY OF CHRIST | | | MINISTERS FOR CHRIST |

| | |
|------------------------------|------|
| DOCTRINE | DUTY |
| DATE WRITTEN: ca. 64-68AD | |

See [ESV Study Bible "Introduction to Hebrews"](#)
(See also [MacArthur's Introduction to Hebrews](#))

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Hebrews 7:18 For, on the **one hand**, there is a **setting aside** of a **former commandment because** of its **weakness** and **uselessness** ([NASB: Lockman](#))

Greek: [athetesis men gar ginetai \(3SPMI\) proagouses \(PAPFSG\) entoles dia to autes asthenes kai anopheles.](#)

Amplified: So a previous physical regulation and command is cancelled because of its weakness and ineffectiveness and uselessness— ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

KJV: For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof.

NLT: Yes, the old requirement about the priesthood was set aside because it was weak and useless. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Wuest: For there is indeed a doing away with a foregoing commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness,

Young's Literal: for a disannulling indeed doth come of the command going before because of its weakness, and unprofitableness,

FOR ON THE ONE HAND THERE IS A SETTING ASIDE: [athetesis men gar ginetai \(3SPMI\) proagouses \(PAPFSB\) entoles](#)

- Heb 7:11,12; 8:7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13; 10:1-9; Romans 3:31; Galatians 3:15,17

Spurgeon - The old Levitical law is disannulled; it became weak and unprofitable. Now a higher and better dispensation is ushered in with a greater and undying priesthood.

Setting aside (115) (**athetesis** from **atheteo** = to annul, declare invalid, not recognize, make ineffective, inoperative or nonexistent) describes the doing away of something established. To set aside. To disannul. It was used of annulling a treaty, a promise, a law, a regulation. It was also used of removing a man's name from a document. To make as of no value = putting away & "annulling" the former commandment [Gal 3:15] It means to refuse to recognize the validity of something and so to reject it or regard it as invalid (an annulment). It can describe the process of causing something not to continue. It can mean to act towards anything as though it were annulled. **Atheteo** was used commonly in the Greek papyri in a legal sense of making void.

In **Hebrews 9:26** (the only other NT use, once in Lxx = 1Sa 24:12) **athetesis** refers to the fact that at the Cross, the guilt and power of sin were disannulled.

Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested **to put away** sin by the sacrifice of Himself. (note Hebrews 9:26)

At the Cross not only as sin "set aside" or disannulled, but the whole paraphernalia of the sacrificial system, the whole ceremonial system, was canceled, annulled, done away with entirely. God assured its end in 70AD, when He allowed the Temple to be destroyed.

OF A FORMER COMMANDMENT BECAUSE OF ITS WEAKNESS AND USELESSNESS: [proagouses entoles dia to autes asthenes kai anopheles:](#)

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- Heb 7:19; 8:7,8; 9:9,10; 10:1, 2, 3, 4; 13:9; Acts 13:39; Romans 8:3; Galatians 4:9,21; 1Timothy 4:8

Its weakness - Law had no capacity to make men perfect. The Law could not impart strength to fulfill its demands and thus could not bestow spiritual/eternal life. It could not justify a man and therefore could not bring men into fellowship with God (see **note** Romans 5:1).

The former was unprofitable in the sense that no one could be made righteous by keeping the law (See **note** Romans 4:13; 4:14).

Weakness ([772](#)) (**asthenes** [word study] from **a** = without + **sthénos** = strength, bodily vigor) (See study of related verb **astheneo** - note the concentration of asthenes/astheneo in epistles to Corinthians ~50% of NT uses) is literally without strength or bodily vigor. **Asthenes** describes one's state of limited capacity to do or be something and is used literally of physical weakness (most of the uses in the Gospels).

Asthenes is used figuratively here in Hebrews 7 to describe the weakness and powerlessness of the Law to produce righteousness and a life pleasing to God. Paul uses this same adjective asthenes with a similar meaning in his letter to the Galatians writing...

But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the **weak** (asthenes) and worthless elemental things (in the spiritual sense the rudiments of Jewish religion had no ability to justify anyone), to which you desire to be enslaved all over again? (Galatians 4:9)

The related verb astheneo is used in Romans 8:3 with a similar meaning, referring to the weakness of the Law to save a man.

For what the **Law** could not do, **weak as it was** (astheneo) through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh (See note in Romans 8:3)

The following is a summary the nuances of meaning of **asthenes** (modified from BDAG)...

(1) **Pertaining to suffering from a debilitating illness** - sick, ill

(2) **Pertaining to experiencing some incapacity or limitation** - weak

a) **Of physical weakness** - the flesh is weak = gives up too easily (Mt 26:41, Mark 14:38); weaker vessel = sex (1Peter 3:7); personal appearance is weak = unimpressive (1Cor 10:10)

b) **Of relative ineffectiveness, whether external or inward weak** = feeble, ineffectual (1Cor 4:10); the weaker, less important members (1Cor 12:22); what is weak in (the eyes of) the world (1Cor 1:27)

c) **Of the inner life** -

Helpless in a moral sense (Romans 5:6)

Of a weakness in faith, which through lack of advanced knowledge, considers externals of the greatest importance (1Cor 8:7, 9, 9:10, cp similar use of related verb astheneo in Ro 14:1, 2- note)

To those who are weak in faith I became as they are (1Cor 9:22) ([Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature](#))

Uselessness ([512](#)) (**anopheles** from **a** = without + **opheleo** = to do good, to benefit, to profit) means not beneficial or serviceable and it pertains to not offering any special benefit. Here it speaks of the Law as not accomplishing that which the only the "better hope" could bring.

Wuest - (Hebrews 7:18, 19) These two verses take up the idea of verse 16. They speak of the negative and positive result of the superseding of the fleshly ordinance by the power of an indestructible life. On the one hand there is a setting aside of the previous enactment. On the other, there is the bringing in of a better hope. The word "disannulling" is the translation of *athetesis*, the fundamental idea of which is the doing away of something established. The words, "the commandment going before" could better be phrased "a foregoing commandment." The word "foregoing" does not emphasize mere precedence in time, but rather the preliminary character of the commandment as destined to be done away by a later ordinance. It was set aside because of its weakness and unprofitableness. The Levitical economy was perfect for the purpose for which it was instituted, that of being an index-finger pointing to the High Priest, Messiah. But when it came to the place where a sacrifice would be demanded of it that would pay for sin, it was found to be weak and unprofitable. This is explained in the words, "for the law made nothing perfect." The words "made perfect" are the translation of *teleioo* which means "to carry through completely, to make complete, to finish, bring to an end." The Mosaic economy brought nothing to a conclusion. It could not offer a sacrifice which would pay for sin. Therefore, it could not save anyone.

Therefore, it was set aside. In place of it, there was brought in a better hope. The Greek text has it "a bringing in upon;" that is, the better hope was brought in upon the ground formerly occupied by the commandment. The reason why the new order is better is that through it, men are enabled to draw nigh to God. The old priesthood could not effect this. ([Hebrews Commentary online](#))

Hebrews 7:19 (for the Law made nothing perfect), and on the other hand there is a bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God. (NASB: Lockman)

Greek: [ouden gar eteleiosen](#) (3SAAI) [o nomos, epeisagoge de kreittonos elpidos, di' es eggizomen](#) (1PPAI) [to theo](#).

Amplified: For the Law never made anything perfect—but instead a better hope is introduced through which we [now] come close to God. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

KJV: For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God.

NLT: For the law made nothing perfect, and now a better hope has taken its place. And that is how we draw near to God. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Wuest: for not even one thing did the law bring to completion; and a bringing in thereupon of a better hope, by means of which we are drawing near to God.

Young's Literal: (for nothing did the law perfect) and the bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw nigh to God.

FOR THE LAW MADE NOTHING PERFECT: [ouden gar eteleiosen o nomos](#):

- Hebrews 7:11; 9:9; Acts 13:39; Romans 3:20,21; 8:3; Galatians 2:16

Paul on his first missionary journey was invited to speak in the Jewish Synagogue and one of his topics was the Law...

Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that **through Him** (see study below on "through Him" - the Messiah = the Christ) forgiveness (aphesis = action causing separation. legal term ~repay or cancel debt. Thru shedding of His blood Christ took the sins of world upon Himself and carried them an eternal, infinite distance away with no return possible!) of sins is proclaimed to you, and **through Him** everyone who believes (not a passive assent to truth but an active staking of one's life on the claims of God. Saving faith includes [1] a firm conviction which produces full acknowledgment of God's revelation of Truth [2] a personal surrender to the Truth and [3] a conduct inspired by and consistent with that surrender - in short truth faith is evidenced by genuine repentance or a changed life!) is freed (dikaioo - acquitted, vindicated) from all things, from which you could not be freed **through the Law of Moses**. (Acts 13:38, 39) (Through Christ by faith not through the Law by works!)

In a parallel passage in his great epistle to the Romans in the section in which Paul argues for every man's desperate need to receive the gospel, he says that...

by the works of the **Law** no flesh (here refers to the physical flesh, the body, flesh and blood, not the evil disposition opposed to God - flesh) will be justified (declared righteous before God, a forensic or legal term = acquitted of all sins past, present and future) in His sight (cp Heb 7:19 "*the Law made nothing perfect*"); for through the **Law** comes the knowledge of sin (What then is one function of the Law? see also note Romans 7:7) But now (one of the best "*but now's*" in all time and eternity!) apart from (choris = marker of dissociation indicating a distinct separation from) the **Law** the righteousness of God has been manifested (Paul teaches that the righteousness of God has been made known once for all in the incarnate Christ and His death on Calvary and the perfect tense = "*has been manifested and continues to lie open to view*"), being witnessed (Paul personifies the OT as it were a witness called to the stand to testify!) by the Law and the Prophets (synonymous with entire OT) (see Messianic Prophecy), (See **notes** Romans 3:20; 3:21)

Finally writing to the Galatians who had begun well but were being hindered and encouraged ~walk by sight and works not faith, Paul reiterated what they already knew...

that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified (declared righteous in God's sight and vindicated of any charge of sin in connection with failure to keep God's law) by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified. ([Galatians 2:16](#)) (**Comment:** Some have fallaciously argued that

James contradicts Paul, saying that Abraham was "justified by works" [James 2:21]. However, he was not justified by "works of the law." Abraham even lived before God gave the Law to Moses! How could he be justified by it! In James 2, he also states clearly that Abraham was justified **by faith** in the eyes of God [see James 2:23] and justified by works in the eyes of man. In other words, Abraham was shown by his external works to have experienced justification by faith, which was now manifest before men as a changed life. Justified is used with the same meaning [show to be righteous] in Paul's description of God Who clearly does not need to be declared righteous! [see note Romans 3:4]. In sum, there is no contradiction, for genuine saving faith is inevitably demonstrated before men by "works of righteousness" [see notes Titus 3:5; see notes Ephesians 2:8; 2:9; 2:10]. In any case, Paul makes it clear to the Galatians that no one can ever be justified by keeping the Law. In fact, James himself makes it plain that no one can keep the law fully [James 2:10].

Note the first word in the Greek sentence for emphasis - **nothing!** The Law completed nothing. It was the tutor, the introduction, but not the completion of righteousness which is only by grace through faith.

Nothing (3762) (**oudeis** from **ou** = absolutely not + **dé** = but + **heis** = one) means literally "but absolutely not one" which emphasizes not even one.

Notice the recurrence of the idea of perfecting. The Old Covenant could **REVEAL** sin (Ro 3:20, 7:7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12-see **notes** Ro 3:20, Ro 7:7; 7:8; 7:9; 7:10;; 7:11; 7:12 Gal 3:24,25) but it could never **REMOVE** sin (He 10:4, 8 -see **notes** He10:4, 10:8), and so itself had to be removed. It brought nothing to conclusion. It gave no security (Ro 8:1, 38, 39-see **notes** Ro 8:1, 38; 39). It gave no peace (Ro 5:1, 8:6-see **notes** Ro 5:1; 8:6). A man never had a clean conscience (He 10:22-note)

See related studies on Covenant -

[1] **Covenant: Abrahamic versus Mosaic**

[2] **New Covenant in the Old Testament**

[3] **Why the New is Better**

[4] **Abrahamic vs Old vs New**

Made...perfect (5048) (**teleioo** related to **teleios** from **telos** = an end, a purpose, an aim, a goal, consummate soundness, idea of being whole) means to accomplish or bring to an end or to the intended goal (telos). It means to be complete, mature, fully developed, full grown, brought to its end, finished, wanting nothing necessary to completeness or in good working order. It does not mean simply to terminate something but to carry it out to the full finish which is picked up in the translation "perfected". **Teleioo** signifies the attainment of consummate soundness and includes the idea of being made whole. Interestingly the Gnostics used **teleios** of one fully initiated into their mysteries and that may have been why Paul used **teleios** in this epistle.

Teleioo means

(1) to complete an activity, bringing it to an end or a point of accomplishment (Lk 13:32 "...**reach My goal**", the Cross) (Lk 2:43 after Jesus' parents celebrated the feast of Passover "they were returning, after **spending the full number of days**" [literally having finished the days]).

(2) To overcome an imperfect state of things by one that is free thus bringing to its goal or accomplishment and make perfect. (as here in Hebrews 2:10, 5:9, 7:28).

(3) Fulfilling or carrying out a promise or prophecy (John 19:28 After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished [**teleo**], in order that the Scripture **might be fulfilled [telioo]**, said, "I am thirsty.")

(4) To initiate - it was used with this meaning in the mystery religions.

Teleioo is used 9 times (out of 24 total NT uses) in Hebrews, often in the sense of to make perfect or fully cleanse from sin in contrast to ceremonial (Levitical) cleansing. The writer is emphasizing the importance of **perfection...** (which should cause any Jew who is contemplating the worth of Christ and the New Covenant to realize his utter hopelessness to every attain perfection under the Old Covenant).

- **Hebrews 2:10** (note) For it was fitting for Him, for Whom are all things, and through Whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to **perfect** the author of their salvation through sufferings.
- **Hebrews 5:9** (note) And **having been made perfect**, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation,
- **Hebrews 7:19** (note) (for the Law **made** nothing **perfect**), and on the other hand there is a bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God. (**Comment:** The old covenant could reveal sin but it could never remove sin, and so it had to be removed. It brought nothing to conclusion. It gave no security. It gave no peace. A man never had a clean

conscience.)

- **Hebrews 7:28** (note) 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.
- **Hebrews 9:9** (note) which is a symbol for the present time. Accordingly both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot **make** the worshiper **perfect** in conscience,
- **Hebrews 10:1** (note) For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never by the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, **make perfect** those who draw near. (Contrast with Jesus in Hebrews 5:9 above)
- **Hebrews 10:14** (note) For by one offering He has **perfected** for all time those who are sanctified.
- **Hebrews 11:40** (note) because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they should not be **made perfect**.
- **Hebrews 12:23** (note) (But you have come...) 23 to the general assembly and church of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of righteous men **made perfect**,

In sum the fundamental idea of **teleioo** is the bringing of a person or thing to the goal fixed by God.

It is interesting and doubtless no mere coincidence that in the Septuagint (LXX) **teleioo** is translated numerous times as consecrated or consecration, especially speaking of consecration of the priests (cf Jesus our "great High Priest") (Ex 29:9, 29, 33, 35 Lv 4:5; 8:33; 16:32; 21:10; Nu 3:3). The LXX translators gave the verb **teleioo** a special sense of consecration to priestly service and this official concept stands behind the writer's use in this passage in Hebrews 5:9 (note). It signifies that Jesus has been fully equipped to come before God in priestly action.

Study the other 15 NT uses of **teleioo** (other than the 9 in Hebrews)

Luke 2:43 and as they were returning, after **spending the full number** of days, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. And His parents were unaware of it,

Luke 13:32 And He said to them, "Go and tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I **reach My goal**.' (Comment: "Today and tomorrow and the third day" means that God's timetable is unfolding for Jesus, and no king like Herod could shorten the time. When His work is accomplished or has reached its intended goal, His death and resurrection will be its perfection.)

John 4:34 Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to **accomplish** His work. (Comment: Teleioo does mean just to bring to an end but to perfect it. The work He had been sent to do was finished on the Cross, and thus He cried "It is finished! [= related verb **teleo**]" John 19:30. Note that Jesus is not saying that He refrained from eating food but that the great goal of His life was not to cater to His body but rather to the will of His Father! Which do you cater to? Are you accomplishing His work in and through you? see **note** Ephesians 2:10)

John 5:36 "But the witness which I have is greater than that of John; for the works which the Father has given Me to **accomplish**, the very works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me. (Comment: The Old Testament testifies to the mission and ministry of Jesus precisely what God said He would do in Scripture and what God told Jesus to do as He ministered.)

John 17:4 "I glorified Thee on the earth, having **accomplished** the work which Thou hast given Me to do. (Comment: Jesus had finished His work of teaching and witness, but His work of redemption had yet to be accomplished on the cross. He would then shout the great victory cry: "It is finished!" John 19:30) (J C Ryle explains how the Cross accomplished God's perfect will "*The crucifixion brought glory to the Father. It glorified His wisdom, faithfulness, holiness, and love. It showed Him wise, in providing a plan whereby He could be just, and yet the justifier of the ungodly.—It showed Him faithful in keeping His promise, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head.—It showed Him holy, in requiring His law's demands to be satisfied by our great Substitute.—It showed Him loving, in providing such a Mediator, such a Redeemer, and such a Friend for sinful man as His co-eternal Son.*")

John 17:23 I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be **perfected** in unity, that the world may know that Thou didst send Me, and didst love them, even as Thou didst love Me. (Comment: "In unity" is literally "unto oneness" and represents the goal of the perfecting action, that goal being believers might be in a state of having achieved the unity intended for them; one which reflects the unity between the Father and the Son)

John 19:28 After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished (related verb **teleo**), in order that the Scripture **might be fulfilled** (teleioo), said, "I am thirsty." (Comment: Here Scripture "reaches

it's goal" or is fulfilled in Jesus.)

Acts 20:24 "But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, in order that I may **finish** my course (dromos = race, the course of one's life), and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God.

2 Corinthians 12:9 And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient (IS = It already is - we don't need to ask Him for more. We need to abide in the sufficiency of what He has already provided) for you, for power is **perfected** in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

Philippians 3:12 (note) Not that I have already obtained it, or **have** already **become perfect** (reached my goal, accomplished), but I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.

James 2:22 You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was **perfected**;

1 John 2:5 but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been **perfected**. By this we know that we are in Him:

1 John 4:12 No one has beheld God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is **perfected** in us.

1 John 4:17 By this, love is **perfected** with us, that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world.

1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not **perfected** in love.

AND ON THE OTHER HAND THERE IS A BRINGING IN OF A BETTER HOPE THROUGH WHICH WE DRAW NEAR TO GOD: epeisagoge de kreittonos elpidos di e eggizomen (1PPAI) to theogizomen to theo:

- Galatians 3:24) (Hebrews 6:18; 8:6; 11:40; John 1:17; Romans 8:3; Colossians 1:27; 1 Timothy 1:1
- Hebrews 4:16; 10:19, 20, 21, 22; Psalm 73:28; John 14:6; Romans 5:2; Ephesians 2:13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18; 3:12

Spurgeon - If God had ever meant that this covenant should be temporary He would never have given His Son to bleed and die as the substance of that covenant. It cannot be that so vast an expense should be laid out upon a transient business. Moreover, Jesus lives, and as long as He lives the covenant must be regarded as a reality. It cannot possibly be that a work should be regarded as a fiction when it has been wrought out by such an one as He is. The ever-living Son of God did not die to perform a mere representation: the abiding essence of the matter is in His work, and He lives to prove that it is so.

Bringing in (1898) (**epeisagoge** from **epí** = upon + **eisagoge** = introduction) means literally leading in upon and thus the bringing in or introduction of something additional. Josephus (Ant XI.6,2) uses it to describe the introduction of a new wife in place of the repudiated one!

Better (2909) (**kreitton/kreisson**) serves as the comparative degree of **agathos** = intrinsically good and thus means excellent, better, more useful, more profitable.

Kreitton - 19x in 18v - 1 Cor 7:9, 38; 11:17; Phil 1:23; Heb 1:4; 6:9; 7:7, 19, 22; 8:6; 9:23; 10:34; 11:16, 35, 40; 12:24; 1 Pet 3:17; 2 Pet 2:21. NAS = better(17), better things(1), greater(1).

A better hope - A better certainty, one which give absolute assurance of future good, an assurance that God will do good to me in the future because I am safe in Christ by grace through faith. In his first epistle to Timothy Paul explained the ultimate Source of the believer's better hope...

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God our Savior, and of **Christ Jesus our Hope** (1 Timothy 1:1)

Hope (1680) (**elpis**) in Scripture is not the world's definition of "I **hope** so", with a few rare exceptions (e.g., [Acts 27:20](#)) but is an absolute certainty of future good. **Hope** is defined as a desire for some future good with the expectation of obtaining it. **Hope** is confident expectancy. **Hope** is the looking forward to something with some reason for confidence respecting fulfillment. See related study on the **Believer's Blessed Hope**.

Hope as the world typically defines it is a desire for some future occurrence of which one is not assured of attaining. The ancient world did not generally regard **hope** as a virtue, but merely as a temporary illusion. Historians tell us that a great cloud of **hopelessness** covered the ancient world. Philosophies were empty; traditions were disappearing; religions were powerless to help men face either life or death. People longed to pierce the veil and get some message of hope from the other side, but there is none outside of Christ.

In the OT there are several Hebrew words translated "**hope**" but each has the idea of inviting us to look ahead eagerly with confident expectation, the same idea conveyed by **elpis**. Each Hebrew word for "**hope**" calls for patience, reminding us that the fulfillment of our hope lies in the future ("hold on...the best is yet to come").

Hope is a repeated theme in Hebrews. Study the 5 uses in context...

- **Hebrews 3:6** (note) - but Christ was faithful as a Son over His house --whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end.
- **Hebrews 6:11** (note) - And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end,
- **Hebrews 6:18** (note) - so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us.
- **Hebrews 7:19** (note) - (for the Law made nothing perfect), and on the other hand there is a bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.
- **Hebrews 10:23** (note) - Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful;

Gabriel Marcel said,

Hope is for the soul what breathing is for the living organism.

A study of concentration camp survivors found that those prisoners who were able to hold onto their sense of hope ('things are going to get better' or 'we're going to get out of here one day') were much more likely to survive. Hope then is not optional but for these prisoners proved to be a matter of life and death.

Vincent writes that **hope** "in classical Greek, has the general signification of expectancy, relating to evil as well as to good. Thus Plato speaks of living in evil hope ("Republic," i., 330); i.e., in the apprehension of evil; and Thucydides, of the hope of evils to come; i.e., the expectation or apprehension. In the New Testament the word always relates to a future good." (Vincent, M. R. Word Studies in the New Testament Vol. 1)

Seneca, Rome's leading intellectual figure, tutor of the depraved emperor Nero (who forced Seneca to commit suicide!) and contemporary of Paul tragically defined **hope** as "an uncertain good", the antithesis of Biblical **hope**! What a difference the new birth in Christ makes in one's perspective.

The cynical editor **H. L. Mencken** also inaccurately defined **hope** as "a pathological belief in the occurrence of the impossible."

His cynical definition does not even agree with the secular Webster's Collegiate dictionary which defines '**Hope**' much like the NT declaring that hope means "to cherish a desire with anticipation, desire with expectation of obtainment, expect with confidence."

Biblical **hope** is not "finger crossing", but is alive and certain because of the **resurrection of Jesus Christ** from the dead. Life without Christ is a hopeless end whereas life in Christ is an endless hope.

The book of Hebrews defines **hope** as that which gives "full assurance" (see **note** Hebrews 6:11). Thus we can have strong confidence that God is going to do good to us in future. The opposite of hope is **despair**, (hopelessness; a hopeless state; a destitution of hope or expectation) which is all that those without Christ as Savior can know, for Paul defines hope as "Christ Jesus, Who is our Hope" ([1Ti 1:1](#)). Thus genuine Biblical hope is not a concept but a Person, Christ Jesus!

Jeremiah pleaded with God on the basis of His Name, '**Hope of Israel**' (God's Names all reveal some aspect or attribute of His character), declaring "Thou **Hope of Israel**, its Savior in time of distress. Why art Thou like a stranger in the land Or like a traveler who has pitched his tent for the night?" ([Jer14:8](#))

Again **Jeremiah** says "O LORD, the **hope of Israel**, all who forsake Thee will be put to shame. Those who turn away on earth will be written down, because they have forsaken the fountain of living water, even the LORD." ([Jer 17:13](#))

The **psalmist** declares "Thou art my **hope**; O Lord GOD, Thou art my confidence from my youth." ([Ps 71:5](#))

Paul uses makes an allusion to this OT name ("Hope of Israel") speaking to the Jews explaining that "I requested to see you and to

speak with you, for I am wearing this chain for the sake of the **hope of Israel.**" ([Acts 28:20](#))

Although the Old revealed spoke of the Hope of Israel and predicted His coming to save His people as well as Gentiles, there was no mention that the Messiah of hope would actually live within each member of His redeemed church. Paul explained that in the New Covenant, "God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the **hope** of glory." (see **note** Colossians 1:27) The unsaved are born into the world but have "no **hope** and (are) without God in the world" (see **note** Ephesians 2:12, [1Thes4:13](#)) and if they die without Christ, he will be hopeless forever.

The Italian poet, Dante, in his Divine Comedy, put this inscription over the world of the dead: "Abandon all hope, you who enter here!"

In other words, life without Christ is a hopeless end whereas life in Christ is an endless hope.

Hope in Scripture is the absolute certainty of future good and believers are to be continually, actively, expectantly "looking for the blessed **hope** and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus." (see **note** Titus 2:13).

A living hope should motivate a "looking" hope, so that we are waiting anxiously for Christ's return at any time, this event providing great incentive to "discipline (one's self) for the purpose of godliness" (see **note** 1Timothy 4:7) knowing that godliness "is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come." (see **note** 1Timothy 4:8)

G K Chesterton said that "**Hope** means hoping when things are hopeless or it is no virtue at all...As long as matters are really hopeful, hope is mere flattery or platitude. It is only when everything is hopeless that hope begins to be a strength."

Hope is an essential and fundamental element of Christian life, so essential indeed, that, like faith and love, Peter refers to it in this verse to designate the essence of Christianity

Hope is one component of the great triad of Christian virtues, along with faith and love. "But now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love" ([1Cor 13:13](#); see **note** 1Thessalonians 1:3; [5:8](#); [Gal 5:5, 6](#); see **notes** Ephesians 1:15 1:16; 1:17; 1:18, Ephesians 4:2; 4:3; 4:4; 4:5; Colossians 1:4; 1:5; Hebrews 10:22; 10:23; 10:24; 1 Peter 1:21; 1:22).

Faith and **hope** are inseparably linked. We **believe** and so we **hope**.

Paul prayed for believers "that the eyes of (our) heart may be enlightened, so that (we) may know what is the hope of His calling." (see **note** Ephesians 1:18)

Hope is a "**helmet of salvation**" for we know that "God has not destined us for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ" ([1Th 5:8](#)).

Hope as you can see is a deep well, which is well worth lingering over if you have time. To renew your mind with this great Biblical truth go over the following Scriptures, asking what each teaches about the "source" of hope, the stabilizing effect of the truth, the sanctifying effect, etc. Then study the chart summary at the end of the references -- (Job 8:13, 27:8, Ps 31:24; 42:5, 6; 71:5; 119:49,50; 130:7, 146:5 Pr 10:28, 13:12, Jer 14:8, 29:11; Jn 5:45, Acts 2:26,23:6, 24:15, 26:6, 28:20; Ro 4:18, 5:1, 2; 8:25, 12:12, 15:4, 15:13, 1Co 13:13, 15:19, 21, 22, 23, 2Co 3:12, Eph 1:15, 16, 17, 18, 2:12, 4:2, 3, 4, 5; Gal 5:5, 6, Col 1:4, 5, 1:27, 1Th 1:3; 2:19; 4:13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 5:8; 2Th 2:16,1Ti 1:1; Titus 2:11, 12, 13; 3:7, Heb 6:11, 18, 19, 20, 7:19, 10:22, 23, 24; 1Pe 1:3, 1:21,22; 3:15; 1Jn 2:25; 1Jn 3:2, 3; Jude 1:21)

Through ([1223](#)) (**dia**) the channel through which we draw near is ultimately the Person of our High Priest (see **Hope** as our **Anchor** - He 6:18, 19, 20-notes He 6:18; 19; 20)

For there is one God, and one Mediator also between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus Who gave Himself as a ransom for (huper = in place of, for the sake of = speaks of substitution) all, the testimony borne at the proper time. (1Timothy 2:5, 6)

Through which - better is **through Whom!** - There is no other avenue to Him (God the Father) then through Him (God the Son) Who became sin for us, bearing the wrath we deserved and Who now intercedes for us sitting forevermore at the right hand of the Majesty on high. See the following passages for a Scriptural survey of Christ's role as Mediator...

A Simple Study On the Phrase "Through Him"

Consider the following simple study - observe and record the wonderful truths that accrue **through Him** - this would make an edifying, easy to prepare Sunday School lesson - then take some time to give thanks for these great truths by offering up a sacrifice of praise...through Him.

John 1:3 [NIV reads "through Him"], John 1:7, John 1:10, Jn 3:17, Jn 14:6, Acts 3:16, Acts 7:25, Acts 10:43, Acts 13:38-39, Romans 5:9 [note], Romans 8:37 [note], Ro 11:36 [note]; 1Cor 8:6, Ep 2:18 [note], Php 4:13 [note], Col 1:20 [note], Col 2:15 [note], Col 3:17 [note], He 7:25 [note], He 13:15 [note], 1Pe 1:21 [note], 1John 4:9

Would you like more study on the wonderful topic of **through Him**? [Click](#) the NT uses of the parallel phrase **through Jesus** or see (John 1:17, Acts 10:36, Ro 1:8-note, Ro 5:1,2-note v1; v2 Ro 5:21-note, Ro 7:25-note, Ro 16:27-note, Gal 1:1, Ep 1:5-note, Php 1:11-note, Titus 3:6-note, He 13:21-note, 1Pe 2:5-note, 1Pe 4:11-note, Jude 1:25)

All things are from Him, **through** Him and to Him. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.

We draw near ([1448](#)) (**eggizo** from **eggus** = near) means to move nearer to a reference point, draw near, be nigh, come near, approach.

The priesthood of Jesus Christ made all of what Israel looked forward to a reality. It brought access into the presence of God the Father. This hope has entered within the veil! Once and for all. And our souls are "tethered" to this anchor. We can now DRAW NEAR through Jesus to God.

Christianity is the "religion" of good hope because by it men first enter into intimate fellowship with God. The old priesthood could not effect this.

God's ultimate desire for men is for them to come to Him. His ultimate desire for believers is that they continue to draw nearer to Him. God's goal in all that He does in behalf of men is that they might come into His presence. Drawing near to God is the essence of Christianity. Drawing near to God is the Christian's highest experience, and should be his highest purpose. This is the design of God for Christianity-access to His presence, coming into His presence with nothing between. Sometimes we forget this.

Some Christians seem to look at Jesus Christ only as a means to salvation and personal happiness. If they believe they are saved and are fairly happy with their circumstances, they consider their lives fulfilled. They are looking for happiness and security. They find these in Christ and are satisfied. Others see their Christian lives as a continuing, growing relationship to God through study of and obedience to His Word. This view of the Christian life is much more mature than the first. But the key to the Christian life is drawing near to God. The fullest expression of faith is to enter into the presence of God in His heavenly Holy of Holies and to fellowship with Him. That is something Judaism was limited in enabling men to do. That is the basic goal of the gospel. Judaism brought a man into the presence of God, but not in the purest and fullest sense. The veil was always there. Only in the New Covenant is complete entrance possible.

Octavius Winslow's Devotional on Hebrews 7:19 - The Holy Spirit teaches the believer to plead the atoning blood of Christ. He puts this great and prevailing argument in his mouth; and when sin seems a mountain, when unbelief would suppress the aspiration, and a deep consciousness of unworthiness would cause the soul to "stand afar of," He opens to his view this precious and encouraging truth, the prevalency of the blood of Jesus with God on behalf of His people. In a moment, the mountain is leveled, unbelief is checked, and the soul, unfettered and unrestrained, draws near to God, yes, to the bosom of its Father. What a view does this give us of the love of the Spirit, as the Author of prayer! Who has not experienced it who is not yet a stranger to the blessed exercise of communion with God? How often has guilt caused the head to hang down, and the sense of utter vileness and worthlessness has covered the soul with shame, and even the very destitution has kept back the believer, just as the penury, the wretched covering, the loathsomeness of the poor beggar have kept him from the door-then does the blessed Spirit, in the plenitude of His grace and tenderness, unfold Jesus to the soul, as being all that it needs to give it full, and free, and near access to God. He removes the eye from self, and fixes and fastens it upon the blood that pleads louder for mercy than all his sins can plead for condemnation; he brings, too, the righteousness near, which so clothes and covers the soul, as fits it to appear in the presence of the King of kings, not merely with acceptance, but with delight. Beholding him thus washed and clothed, God rests in his love, and rejoices over him with singing.

Nor must we overlook the understanding which subsists between God the Father and the Spirit. The Father, the searcher of hearts, knows the mind of the Spirit. He understands the desire and the meaning of the Spirit in the souls of His saints. He understands the "groanings which cannot be uttered." He can interpret their sighs, yes; He can read the meaning of their very desires. And, when feeling has been too deep for utterance, and thought too intent for expression, when the soul could but groan out its needs and requests, then has God understood the mind of the Spirit. Oh the inconceivable preciousness of a throne of grace! To have a God to go to, who knows the mind of the Spirit-a God who can interpret the groan, and read the language of desire-to have promise upon

promise bidding the soul draw near; and when, from the fullness of the heart, the mouth has been dumb, and from the poverty of language, thought could not be expressed-that then, God, who searches the hearts, and knows what is the mind of the Spirit, should say, "Never did you, my child, pray to me as you did then-never was your voice so sweet, so powerful, so persuasive, never were you so eloquent as when my Spirit made intercession for you with groanings which you could not utter." It was, perhaps, your last resource; refuge failed you, no man cared for your soul; friends failed you, your heart failed you, all forsook you and fled; and, in your extremity, you did betake yourself to God, and He failed you not. You did find the throne of grace accessible; you did see a God of grace upon it, and the sweet incense of the Redeemer's precious merits going up; and you did draw near, and sigh, and groan, and breathe out your needs, and did say, "It is good for me to draw near to God." Yes! "He knows the mind of the Spirit." The secret desire for Jesus, the longing for Divine conformity, the hidden mourning over the existence and power of indwelling sin, the feeblest rising of the heart to God, the first sigh of the humble and contrite spirit, all are known to God. Oh, let this encourage you, dear reader, when you feel you cannot pray by reason of the weakness of the flesh or the depth of your feeling; if the Spirit is interceding in you, your heavenly Father knows the mind of the Spirit, and not a sigh or a groan can escape His notice.