

There are 7 “Better Things” listed in the book of Hebrews (see notes from week 1).

1. Jesus is superior to (“better” than) the angels as both Messenger and message: **Heb. 1:4-7**
2. Jesus as Son and Builder in God’s House is superior to (“better” than) Moses as servant and builder of God’s house: **Heb 3:1-6**

The book of Hebrews deals primarily with the heavenly realities as a means of encouraging and warning believers concerning their heavenly calling that they might live their earthly lives in such a way so as to lay hold of their full eternal inheritance.

The Old Testament pattern for worship and relationship with God is a “copy and shadow” of “better things”—the true, eternal realities created and established by God in the heavenly sphere.

Our High Priest:

“For indeed He does not help angels, but He helps the seed of Abraham Wherefore He was obligated to become like His brothers in all things, in order that He might become a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, so as to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He has suffered, himself having been tempted, He is able to help those who are being tempted (Hb. 2:17-18 DP Gk).

Hebrews 3:1-2

“Wherefore, holy brothers partakers of a heavenly calling, focus [fasten your attention] upon the apostle and high priest of our confession, Jesus.”

- Jesus was God’s Apostle on earth.
- Jesus is our High Priest in heaven.
- Neither Jesus’ apostleship nor priesthood is without conditions necessary for fulfillment.
- Likewise, Hebrews gives encouragement and warning to Christians about fulfilling the conditions of their calling as Jesus’ disciples.

Apostle has to do with earthly ministry. **High Priest** has to do with heavenly ministry. There is the Apostle and High Priest of something specific—our *confession*.

The Greek word translated as “confession” is *homologéō* (from [3674](#) /*homoú*, “together” and [3004](#) /*légō*, “speak to a conclusion”) – properly, *to voice the same conclusion*, i.e. *agree* (“confess”); to profess (confess) because in full agreement; to align with (endorse). [[3670](#) /*homologéō* (“confess”) means to *speak the same thing*, i.e. “assent, agree with, confess, declare, admit.” Our confession is to be the amen, to be in agreement, alignment, and speaking the same thing as heaven. Disciples are being conformed into the image of Christ so that what others see and hear in us is the same voice as Jesus Himself.

Every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices, and so it was necessary for this One also to have something to offer. If He were on earth, He would not be a priest, for there are already priests who offer the gifts prescribed by the law. They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: “See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.” But in fact the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which He is mediator is superior to the old one, since the new covenant is established on better promises (Heb. 8:3-6).

The High Priest functioned as the religious and political ruler over an order of priests who functioned in various duties related to the sanctuary from prophetic oracle via the Ummîn and Thummin, judge in legal matters, as well as other administrative duties such as tithe collection and maintenance of the tabernacle and its furnishings. All this was to serve on behalf of the entire nation with God present in their midst as the King.

The ongoing nature of the relationship includes judgment: Deut. 17:9, “So you shall come to the **Levitical** priest or the judge who is *in office* in those days, and you shall inquire *of them* and they will declare to you the verdict in the case.

The order of priests continued to serve in the wilderness and for 300 years at various “shrine sites” once Israel entered the Land of Canaan under Joshua. The crossing was led by the priests carrying the ark. As they stepped into Jordan, a miracle stopped the flow so as to give witness to the entire nation that God was in their midst as King (“I will go with you”).

God commanded Israel to depose all the kings of the land. Canaan at that time was a region of city-states, each ruled by a man considered to be their god-king according to their various pagan religious rituals. The total number of kings killed was 31, the names of their conquered cities are recorded in Joshua 12:10-24. The Levites numbered 23,000 males one month and older during the conquest of Canaan. Among them, descendants of Aaron were declared to be priests, and the eldest son of the continuing family was designated High Priest.

The Tabernacle came to “rest” at Shiloh (Joshua 18:1). During this period, Eli becomes the High Priest, the second-to-last Israelite judge. His sons, Hophni and Phineas, died for offering their own version of gifts to God in a manner like Nadab and Abihu, sons of Aaron. Eli was succeeded only by Samuel (1 Samuel 7:15) before the rule of the kings began. Additionally, during this period, God raised up “judges” who fulfilled an office that traced back to a time when Moses followed Jethro’s advice to train and appoint assistants to help him resolve disputes among the Hebrews (Exodus 18:21-22). Deborah was one of these who lived a century or so before David. Many of the judges were considered prophets who spoke “a word from the Lord” in addition to adjudicating legal disputes, serving in various administrative capacities, and leading out to war against Israel’s enemies.

The priesthood and the nation descended into a time of chaos when “everyone did what was right in his own eyes,” and Israel’s enemies prevailed against them. From the time Israel entered the land until the time of Samuel, the Ark of the Covenant remained in the Tabernacle at Shiloh until the Philistines took the Ark and destroyed Shiloh in 1104 BC (1 Samuel 4:10-11).

“He abandoned the dwelling place at Shiloh, the tent which He had pitched among men, and gave up His strength to captivity and His glory into the hand of the adversary” (Psalm 78:60-61).

The spiritual and national descent continued until, in Samuel's old age, the people of Israel demand a king like other kings of the earth (Saul). God tells Samuel, "They have not rejected you, they have rejected Me" (1 Sam 8:7). God never intended His people to be ruled in a secular manner by a secular king but rather by His representative order of holy priest/rulers selected out of His covenant people.

As the true High Priest, Jesus commissions His priesthood in his disciples as He "anoints" them and charges them with priestly duty as the Levites were anointed: "He breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven" (Jn 20:22-23).

1 Peter 2:9-10: But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A **royal PRIESTHOOD**, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR *God's* OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY.

Covenant:

"This day the LORD your God commands you to do these statutes and ordinances. You shall therefore be careful to do them with all your heart and with all your soul. You have today declared the LORD to be your God, and that you would walk in His ways and keep His statutes, His commandments and His ordinances, and listen to His voice. The LORD has today declared you to be His people, a treasured possession, as He promised you, and that you should keep all His commandments; and that He will set you high above all nations which He has made, for praise, fame, and honor; and that you shall be a consecrated people to the LORD your God, as He has spoken" (**Deut. 26:16- 19**).

The Bible reveals in God's scheme of things there can be no basis for anyone to have an ongoing relationship with God apart from two things:

1. A priest
2. A covenant

God will not entertain a permanent relationship with any human being without these two prerequisites.

Our mentor, Derek Prince, used to say, “If you have an ongoing relationship with God, whether you realize it or not, your relationship is based on having a priest and a covenant.”

Hebrews 5:1 defines the functions of a priest: “For every High Priest being taken from among men is appointed on behalf of men in things pertaining to God in that he may offer both **gifts** and **sacrifices** for sins.”

The function of a priest is to give man an *ongoing relationship with God*: to *offer sacrifices* on behalf of man; to *receive gifts* on behalf of God.

1. To offer sacrifices on behalf of the sins of man. Until the sin issue is dealt with, no one can have access to God. The barrier between God and man is sin. The only remedy for sin is a God-appointed sacrifice. For any person to have access to God, the sin question must be dealt with by a sacrifice. The only person authorized to offer sacrifice is a priest. We are totally dependent upon a priest for access to God.

Only a priest was qualified to offer sacrifice (1 Samuel: Saul, the king, transgressed that regulation, usurped the place of a priest, and offered sacrifice. He was rejected and lost his kingdom as a result.)

2. To receive gifts from men offered to God. We require a priest to offer our gifts to God, otherwise we can't just go up to God and say, “Hey, God, here's my gift.”

As with the Levitical priests of OT order, there are necessary requirements for the priesthood, and the High Priest in particular, for mankind's relationship with God. The nature of the priest able to perform this function requires that he:

- Represent the people; therefore he must be able to identify with them completely.
- Be able to stand before God; therefore he must be completely sinless.
- Be able to make atonement for sins; therefore be able to offer the sacrifice acceptable to God.

ONLY Jesus fulfills these requirements in the better covenant:

- He completely identified with humanity by becoming fully human in the Incarnation.
- He was tempted in all things yet without sin.

- He offered His innocent blood and flesh as the acceptable sacrifice in exchange for us.

THEREFORE: Hebrews 3:1 charges us to focus on Jesus as *Apostle* and *High Priest*.

As Apostle, He was *sent forth* from God to accomplish the task of redemption; as High Priest, He *returned* to God to *represent the redeemed*.

First *occurrence* of **confession** (Greek: *homologia*) = “saying the same as”—i.e. making our words agree with God’s Word—the requirement for invoking the ministry of Jesus as High Priest (compare Hebrews **4:14; 10:21, 23**).

“Holy brothers”—focusing on Jesus is the *key to holiness*.

Our calling is *heavenward*. The whole thrust of Hebrews is *forward* and *upward* (compare **Phil. 3:14**).

Priesthood: Hebrews 5:1-2: “For every high priest taken from among men is appointed on behalf of men in things pertaining to God, in order to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins; he can deal gently with the ignorant and misguided, since he himself also is beset with weakness.” (Hebrews 2:17-18, “Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.”)

Hebrews 5: 4-5: “And no one takes the honor to himself, but receives it when he is called by God, even as Aaron was.(Ex. 28:1 Bring near Aaron) So also Christ did not glorify Himself so as to become a high priest, but He who said to Him, "YOU ARE MY SON (eternal, self-existent Creator), TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU (conceived by the Father through the Holy Spirit in the virgin’s womb in the incarnation)...just as He says also in another *passage*,

‘YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER
ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK.’”

Genesis 14:18-20 demonstrates God's order of priesthood to minister to Him in both gifts and sacrifices on behalf of men toward God and as God's representative as His king and priest on earth:

“And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High. He blessed him and said, ‘Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand.’ He (Abraham) gave him a tenth of all (the possessions God had given him through victory).”

Hebrews 6:20-7: “Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham as he was returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, to whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth part of all the spoils, was first of all, by the translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then also king of Salem, which is king of peace. Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, he remains a priest perpetually. Concerning Him (Jesus, His High Priestly service before God on our behalf, and the implications that has on the church and on our lives personally) we have much to say, and *it is* hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes *only* of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.”

Exodus 28: The Priests

All of the symbols and images described in Exodus 28 reveal to us something about the heavenly plane:

Exod 28:1, “Then bring near to yourself Aaron and his sons...to-minister-to-me (*cohen*) as priest.”

The garments:

Exod 28:2-4, “You shall make **holy** garments for your brother for **glory** and **beauty**.”

We see this paralleled in Hebrews 1:3, which lists some of the attributes of Jesus, “Who being the brightness of His glory, the express image of His person, when He had by Himself purged our sins.”

We need to be able to imagine a glimpse of Jesus as He is right now in heaven before God. If we could do that we would see Him in the reality of appearance in His person as One who is “clothed” and functioning in the true things of which these earthly things are a copy and shadow.

“At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him.” Heb. 2:8

As God’s High Priest for mankind Jesus has ‘finished’ the work of offering the completion of sacrifice acceptable to atone for the sin of the entire human race and every person individually. The completion of the outworking of that perfect sacrifice continues until in the fullness of God’s time-frame, Christ shall come to judge the earth and claim those who are His own. At that time, He shall also deal once and for all with the devil and His angels who left their appointed place in the rebellion and who are now appointed for eternal fire of judgment. His sacrifice for salvation from sin does not apply to them. In the meantime, His perfect and complete sacrifice of Himself, sinless and obedient, has cleansed us and gives us ongoing access to God.

The ongoing nature of the relationship includes judgment:

2 Tim. 4:1, “I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with [a]great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths. But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”

Hebrews 4:16 – “Let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.”

Hebrews 7:25 – “He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.”

Exod. 28:2-4, lists six garments to be worn by the High Priest: The breastpiece, ephod, robe, tunic, turban, sash, and gold crown (v. 36-37).

Exod. 28:5, These were to be made out of five materials, “They shall take the gold, and the blue and the purple and the scarlet material and the fine linen”

1. **Gold** represents divinity and holiness (as compared to silver, copper, or bronze).
2. **Blue** speaks of the heavenly realm.
3. **Purple** is a mingling of blue and scarlet, denoting royalty and suffering (compare to Jn 19:2-5 where the Roman soldiers wove a crown of thorns, placed it on Jesus along with a purple robe and began to beat Him. Pilate announced, “Behold THE MAN” representative of Adam. They nailed His sentence, “This is the King of the Jews.” In ancient times, to wear purple was to become emperor of Rome.)
4. **Scarlet** speaks of blood/humanity. Adam (from adamah, meaning earth, dam, meaning blood). (1 Cor. 15:45-47 describes the earthly body and the resurrected body, “the first natural body/second spiritual body).
5. **Fine linen** represents purity and righteousness (compare Rev. 19:7-8). There are two kinds of righteousness. One is imputed/given through Christ. The second is worked out in deeds done in faith. Linen, twined or woven speaks of the “worked out” righteous acts of the saints.

Exod. 28:6, The **Ephod** was worn only by the priest, reaching from the breast down to the hips, and held in place by two shoulder bands and a sash tied around the waist. Everything is “held together” (“He upholds all things by the word of His power” Heb. 1:3).

Exod. 28:7, The ephod was **joined** to make a single garment (“From Him, the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work” (Eph. 4:16).

Exod. 28:8, The **waistband** is part of the ephod. It is not detachable. Exod. 28:9-12, The names of the tribes were engraved on the **shoulder stones**. This placement is upward—toward God. One the shoulder—the place of strength (compare Is. 9:6, “The government shall rest on His shoulders”; Luke 15:5, The parable of the lost sheep carried on the shepherd’s shoulders). The two identical stones indicates *corporate identity*.

Exod. 28:13-14, The **gold settings** (divine/purified faith) and “twisted chains” indicated relationships worked out, the three-fold cord that is not easily broken, and fellowship that is divine and inseparable. (Heb. 1:3, “holds all things together by the word of His power.”).

Exod. 28:15-21, The **breastpiece** is constructed of the same materials as the ephod, representing God’s *total, unchanging requirements*. The names of the tribes are also over the heart, the place of *love* and *loyalty*. A different stone is used for each tribe, recognizing *individuality* (compare to Eph. 4:4-7). The twelve together represent that individuality proceeds out of corporate identity. (Eph. 4:7, “But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.”) Span, foot, and cubit are all measurements taken from the human body.

Exod. 28:22-27, Again, **gold chains and settings** describe the *divine/inseparable*.

Exod. 28:28, The breastplate is bound to the ephod by a **Blue Cord**, signifying that it is joined in *heaven* and unaffected by events on earth.

Our High Priest always carries our names on His heart and shoulders before God. We are bound to Him by heavenly realities. He “ever lives to make intercession for us,” and “by him we have access ...to draw near to the throne of grace for help in time of need” (Heb 7:25, Heb 4:16).

Exod. 28:29-30, **Urim (lights) and Thummim (perfections)** were the priest's means of making judgements and decisions. The stones would give the priest a form of *supernatural response* to make judgment. This Yes or No typifies the "witness of the Holy Spirit" in the heart. Was for word of wisdom, counsel, judgment, and spoke of the ability to distinguish between (compare Num. 27:21, "[Joshua] shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire before the Lord for him by the judgment of the Urim. At his word they shall go out, and at his word they shall come in, he and all the children of Israel with him—all the congregation."; Deut. 33:8-10, The Thummim and Urim spoken in the blessing of tribe of Levi; 1 Sam. 23:6-12, priest fled to David with an ephod in his hand; Ezra 2:62-63; Neh. 7:64-65.).

Exod. 28:31-32, **Robe all of blue** represents a *heavenly* ministry (compare Heb. 9:24). It was not to be torn, representing it was *complete/indivisible*.

Exod. 28: 33-34, **Pomegranates** (fruit) and **Bells** (confession) adorned the hem of the robe. The pomegranates were woven of **blue, purple and scarlet** speaking of *heavenly* and *human* combined (compare 1 Tim. 2:5).

Exod. 28:35, The bells were a continual *attestation of holiness*.

Derek Prince used to say, "If you don't have a fruit, then don't have a tinkle." The fruit and bells on the robe are to be equally represented. Every move made in holiness to have fruit and confession.

Exod. 28:36-37, **The gold plate/crown** was hammered from the inside with the declaration, "Holiness to the Lord." Holiness was hammered inside out, speaking of the perfecting of the saints, worked out through our testimony that we are consecrated, set apart, holy. It was connected to the turban by a Blue cord, joined in heaven (compare to Exod. 28: 28).

Exod. 28:38, "So it shall be on Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things which the children of Israel hallow in all their

holy gifts; and it shall always be on his forehead, that they [the gifts of the people] may be accepted before the Lord.” The offerings of the people were accepted because of the *holiness of their High Priest* (**not** their own holiness).

Exod. 28:39, “You shall skillfully weave the **tunic of fine linen thread**, you shall make the **turban of fine linen**, and you shall make the **sash of woven work**.” The woven fine linen speaks again of the outworked righteousness (compare Rev. 19:8). The three garments are significant:

Tunic: *under* everything.

Turban: *above* everything.

Sash: holds everything *together*.

Exod. 28:40, Only the high priest wore the breastpiece, ephod, and turban. **But all the sons of Aaron wore tunics, sashes, and hats.**

Exod. 28:41, There were four stages for Aaron and his sons to enter the priestly ministry:

1. Clothed (speaks of personal qualifications).
2. Anointed (supernatural grace).
3. Ordained—literally means to “fill the hands” (equipping for ministry).
4. Consecrated (set apart).

Exod. 28:42-43, The final priestly garment listed is **Linen Breeches**. This speaks of sexual purity. It was not visible outwardly, but known only to God and the wearer.

Progression:

Ex. 30:1–10, First, the High Priest must be ordained; then we start moving into the furnishings of the Tabernacle. The first piece described is the golden altar of incense, typifying worship. Our worship requires our High Priest (compare Rev. 8:1–4). When Jesus said, “It is finished,” the veil in the Temple was rent. The earthly copies were responding to the heavenly realities. A door was opened that no man can shut. If you believe in Jesus, you have passed through that door and go in and out because our High Priest is fulfilling His ministry, and has called you to be ordained in Him as a royal priesthood.

“But you are a chosen people, **a royal priesthood**, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9).