

The Patio Pulpit For January 20, 2021
Hebrews
“Building Back Better With Jesus”

As you all know, today was a very important day for our nation as Joseph R. Biden, jr., was sworn into the office of the President of the United States of America and Kamala Harris was sworn in as Vice-President. 76 million Americans are without a doubt very happy; 75 million aren't. That makes President Biden our 46th President and Vice-President Harris America's first woman vice president and our first Black vice-president. So Vice-President Harris is our first woman vice-president, our first black vice-president, our first female black vice-president, and our first black female American/Latino vice-president. And now I will be praying for them and their administration as they exercise the rule over our great nation.

Everyone remembers Trump's campaign slogan, “Make America Great Again,” MAGA, with the now infamous red baseball caps. We will never forget that. Now if one chooses to wear a red baseball cap one is taking one's own life in one's hands, even if it isn't a Trump MAGA hat. American citizens wearing Trump's red caps with that slogan on them were targeted by Trump haters, and many of his supporters were physically attacked and had their hats knocked off their heads, even children.

Do any of you remember Biden's campaign slogan? It was “Building Back Better.” Building back better. Personally, I thought it was the worst slogan I've ever heard of, at least in my lifetime of observing politicians. That is until I googled worst campaign slogans ever. “In your heart you know he's right.” He lost. “Jeb can fix it.” He lost. Or how about, “I'm not a witch, I'm you.” She lost. And a really prophetic slogan by the Nixon campaign, “Nixon's the One.” He won. Of course he followed Lyndon Johnson. I think our local dog catcher could have beat Johnson in '68.

Biden's campaign was going for alliteration that he and his supporters could remember and throw their support behind and it worked for the Biden campaign. Building back better. Maybe that's

what the author of the letter to the Hebrews had in mind, “**building back better with Jesus.**”

Here’s why I said all that. There is a distinct theme running throughout this letter and as I mentioned last week that theme can be summed up in one word, “Better.” Actually, it is Jesus, but there is an underlying theme that emphasizes how much better the finished work of Jesus is as God’s way of justification.

The word “better” occurs 13 times in this letter and we will concentrate on just 3 of those occurrences tonight.

First, Jesus is much better than the angels.

Well, of course He is. That goes without saying...for most of us. Did you know that there are many, many people who profess faith in Christ who put angels on the same level with Jesus? The Roman Catholic Church has a day set aside each year to celebrate angels. Are you familiar with the late singer/song writer Dottie Rambo? Of course, you are. Ms. Rambo had an “angel room” in her house where she went almost every day, to hear her tell it, to talk with the angels.

It’s easy to understand how vulnerable people can worship angels after reading about Gabriele and Michael in the Bible and how powerful they were. And the Bible says that they are ministering spirits sent to help the saints.

*NAU Heb. 1:4 having become as much **better** than the angels, as He has inherited a **more excellent** name than they.*

Hebrews 1:7 *And of the angels He says, "WHO MAKES HIS ANGELS WINDS, AND HIS MINISTERS A FLAME OF FIRE." (Heb. 1:7 NAU)*

Hebrews 1:13 *But to which of the angels has He ever said, "SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, UNTIL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR YOUR FEET " ? (Heb. 1:13 NAU)*

¹⁴ *Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation? (Heb. 1:14 NAU)*

And do you remember how John the apostle once fell down before an angel and the angles rebuked him?

Second, We have a better hope that no one ever had under the law.

Have you ever been told that if you can do such and such you will get a special reward knowing all the time you couldn't do what was required? Let's say you were told to solve the Rubic's Cube and you would win a million dollars. I would have to say, "Well, I've lived without a million dollars this long, I guess I can live without now." Or, and more in line with our text, what if you were told your very life depended on your solving the Rubic's Cube puzzle? Talk about being hopeless.

¹⁸ For, on the one hand, there is a setting aside of a former commandment because of its weakness and uselessness

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.

NAU Heb. 7:19

Why didn't the law make anyone perfect? First, it wasn't designed to make anyone perfect. But you know that. In fact, the law of Moses zapped the hope right out of the Jews who lived under its oppressive and impossible demands. It was a burden that even the best of them couldn't bear. ¹⁰ *"Now therefore why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? (Acts 15:10*

If you ever feel hopeless and defeated by sin in your life and yet you have by the grace of God come to faith in Jesus, it's because your hope is temporarily in your own merit instead of the finished work of Christ. You're looking at yourself rather than the cross. Do not allow sin to be the determining factor in your life as a disciple of Christ. Let Jesus be that factor.

Third and finally, We are living under the new covenant, the new will, written in the blood of Jesus.

NAU Heb. 7:22 so much the more also Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.

Far too many Christians have never realized that they are heirs of the will of God. And I can certainly understand that. How so? This is how so. If we inherit something from a relative it means that that relative has died. That's just the way it is. But we just can't wrap our brains around how it can be that we are heirs of God when we know that He can't die. **Or can He?** He can if He is the God-Man. And that is exactly what has happened. Jesus, God the Son and the Son of God died. And it's His will that we receive our inheritance from. ¹⁵ *For this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that, since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.*

¹⁶ *For where a covenant is, there must of necessity be the death of the one who made it.*

¹⁷ *For a covenant is valid only when men are dead, for it is never in force while the one who made it lives. (Heb. 9:15-17 NAU)*

So, who died? Jesus did.

I had a relative who was supposed to leave me a little something in her will, but she was persuaded that I wasn't fit, by another relative. So I was cut out of her will and the other relative got it all. I didn't know this until many years after she died. And now that lying relative has died. And I haven't it on good authority that he didn't take any of it with him.

But, beloved, we don't have to be fit, thank God, we just have to be in the One who is fit, that One being Jesus.

¹⁵ *For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!"*

¹⁶ *The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God,*

¹⁷ *and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him. (Rom. 8:15-17 NAU)*

What we have by the grace and mercy and love of God in Jesus Christ is so much better than anything you and I could have ever imagined or hoped for. If God ever ran a campaign and needed a slogan, it could be “Building Back Better With Jesus.” And we are building back better alongside Him.