

# Better Things (More Excellent Things)

## Hebrews 1:4

### I. Heb. 7:19 Better Hope

(Elpis: anticipate with excitement) The Christian has a confident expectation of Salvation.

### II. Heb. 7:22 Better Testament

Old Testament was weak Rom. 8:3, but the New Testament is more excellent (Matthew 26:26)

### III. Heb. 8:6 Better Promises: A pledge of Divine assurance.

The Old Testament Promises are primarily earthly blessing (2 Chron. 7:12-22),

The New Testament Promises are spiritual things and eternal life. (Ro 6:23 For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.)

### IV. Heb. 9:23 Better Sacrifice

More excellent that the blood of animals in that sins are eternally forgiven. (Guilt and conviction)

### V. Heb. 11:16 A Better Country

Promise to Abraham earthly (Gen. 12:1-3, Gen. 22:17&18), promise to Christian heavenly (John 14:1)

### VI. Heb. 11:35 Better Resurrection

---

Women received their dead raised to life again. As in the case of the woman of Zarephath, whose child was restored to life by Elijah, 1Ki 17:19-22; and of the son of the Shunammite woman, whose child was restored to life by Elisha, 2Ki 4:18-37.

And others were tortured. The word which is here used *tumpanizw* to *tympanize* refers to a form of severe torture which was sometimes practiced. It is derived from *tumpanon*--*tympanum* - a drum, tabret, timbrel; and the instrument was probably so called from resembling the drum or the timbrel. This instrument consisted in the East of a thin wooden rim covered over with skin, as a tambourine is with us. See it described in the See Barnes for Isa. 5:12. The engine of torture here referred to probably resemble the drum in form, on which the body of a criminal was bent so as to give greater severity to the wounds which were inflicted by scourging. The lash would cut deeper when the body was so extended, and the open gashes exposed to the air would increase the torture. See 2 Mac. vi. 19--29. The punishment here referred to seems to have consisted of two things--the stretching upon the instrument, and the scourging. See Robinson's Lex., and Stuart, in loc. Bloomfield, however, supposes that the mode of the torture can be best learned from the original meaning of the word *tumpanon* --*tympanum*--as meaning

(1.) a beating-stick, and

(2.) a beating-post, which was in the form of a T, thus suggesting the posture of the sufferer. This beating, says he, was sometimes administered with sticks or rods; and sometimes with leather thongs inclosing pieces of lead. The former account, however, better agrees with the usual meaning of the word.

Not accepting deliverance. When it was offered them; that is, on condition that they would renounce their opinions, or do what was required of them. This is the very nature of the spirit of martyrdom.

That they might obtain a better resurrection. That is, when they were subjected to this kind of torture they were looked upon as certainly dead. To have accepted deliverance than, would have been a kind of restoration to life or a species of resurrection. But they refused this, and looked forward to a more honorable and glorious restoration to life; a resurrection, therefore, which would be better than this. It would be in itself more noble and honorable, and would be permanent, and therefore better. No particular instance of this kind is mentioned in the Old Testament; but, amidst the multitude of cases of persecution to which good men were subjected, there is no improbability in supposing that this may have occurred. The case of Eleazer, recorded in 2 Mac. Vi., so strongly resembles what the apostle says here, that it is very possible he may have had it in his eye. The passage before us proves that the doctrine of the resurrection was understood and believed before the coming of the Saviour, and that it was one of the doctrines which sustained and animated those who were called to suffer on account of their religion. In the prospect of death under the infliction of torture on account of religion, or under the pain produced by disease, nothing will better enable us to bear up under the suffering than the expectation that the body will be restored to immortal vigor, and raised to a mode of life where it will be no longer susceptible of pain. To be raised up to that life is a "better resurrection" than to be saved from death when persecuted, or to be raised up from a bed of pain.