

## **Hebrews Chapter Seven**

A Better Priesthood, A Better High Priest

## **Hebrews Is A Priestly Book**

- The Author to the Book of Hebrews has been building up to this chapter throughout the letter.
- The main topic is Jesus as High Priest and this topic is discussed more often than any other place in the Bible.
- In chapter 2:17-18, Jesus is the faithful and merciful High Priest able help those who are tempted.

- In chapter 3:1, Jesus is the Apostle and High Priest of our confession.
- In chapter 4:15, Jesus as our High Priest has been tempted like us but is without sin.
- In chapter 5:10-11, Jesus is compared to Aaronic priest but is much better than that order.
- It is here that the priestly order of Melchizedek was introduced but because the Hebrew Christians were dull of hearing the writer could not elaborate to the full extent.
- He said he had much more to say about the topic of Melchizedek

## **What Was The Hang Up?**

- These Christians from a Jewish background were interested in Jesus as their High Priest but had a significant intellectual objection to the idea.
- This is because Jesus did not come from the tribe of Levi or the family of Aaron.
- The writer to the Hebrews wants to remove these intellectual problems the Jewish Christians had with the gospel.
- These intellectual hang-ups kept them from continuing on to maturity in Jesus.

- A lot Christians today are similar to these Hebrew Christians but are hung up on topics like creation and evolution, miracles, inerrancy of the word of God, when does sanctification occur at salvation or is there a second blessing needed, the signs of being filled with the Holy Spirit, i.e., tongues, eternal security or loss of salvation and they need to get these intellectual issues resolved and focus on Jesus so they grow into the grace and knowledge of Jesus.

### **Choices For These Hebrew Christians**

- These Hebrew Christians in chapter Seven are brought to a place by the writer to choose between Jesus or the traditional priesthood.
- During this first century period:
- The Temple was rich but the Church was poor.
- The Temple was accepted but the Church was rejected.
- The Temple was already established but the Church was just beginning.

- The Temple for the Jews represented a national identity but the Church was small and represented persecution by others.
- In order to worship with the Church meant that these Hebrew Christians would lose prestige, position, family, and often death by the most gruesome of ways imaginable.
- Of course it would be in their human nature to want to go back to the old ways!
- We have choices today with a little different twist to them mostly are we going to stick to an unbiblical denomination or are we going to lose that identity to be biblical; are we going to follow a dynamic person or are we going to look unto Jesus.

### **Themes In Chapter Seven**

- Jesus is a Priest like Melchizedek
- Abraham paid tithes to this Melchizedek fellow.
- Levi was in Abraham's gene pool and was not born when Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek.
- David exalted Jesus and the Melchizedek Priesthood in Psalm 110:4, when he stated, "the Lord has sworn and will not relent, "You are priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek."
- Jesus is greater than the Aaronic Priesthood
- The Priesthood of Jesus in the order of Melchizedek is forever.
- Abraham by honoring Melchizedek would honor Jesus as his High Priest.

### The High Priest

- The High Priest is the greatest office in the house of God
- The High Priest was set up by God Himself in Exodus 28:1
- The High Priest represents man before God
- The High Priest is taken from among men
- The High Priest is active for man before God performing sacrifices and gifts for the sins of man
- The High Priest being man knows our struggles, hurts, and hang ups that we struggle with on a daily basis
- The High Priest can offer compassion towards man because we often go astray and our ignorant sometimes
- The High Priest is subject to weakness like each one of us

### The High Priest Is To Be Compassionate

- Since the Lord is full of compassion He made specific commands to help insure that the High Priest was a compassionate individual towards the people
- In the breastplate of the high priest were set twelve stones engraved with the names of the tribes of Israel, and on the shoulder straps were stones engraved with the names of the tribes. In this, the people of Israel were always on the *heart* and on the *shoulders* of the high priest (Exodus 28:4-30).
- However not all of the High Priests exercised compassion, but acted with authority and power in order to subject the people to their control. For instance Caiaphas during the days of Jesus did not rule the people with compassion but instead plotted with the people to have a crucifixion celebration. (Matt. 26: 3-5)

### Jesus is Our High Priest

- Jesus was made like man so that He could be our "... faithful and merciful High Priest in things pertaining to God..."
- As our High Priest He represents us before God
- The High Priest wore a breastplate that had stones engraved with the names of the tribes of Israel on both his chest and his shoulders. The High Priest would therefore be in constant sympathy with the people of God carrying them on his shoulders and on his heart doing the work of God!

### Hebrews 7:1-4

For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated "king of righteousness," and then also king of Salem, meaning "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, remains a priest continually. Now consider how great this man *was*, to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils.

### **Who Is This Mystery Person?**

- We are told that his name means, “king of righteousness and then also Salem, meaning king of peace”.
- We can draw from this statement he was a righteous and peaceful king of Salem, known now as Jerusalem, the city of God’s love.
- He lived in a very idolatrous and immoral culture in the land of Canaan.
- The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were in the land of Canaan. The Sodomites were the most wicked and ungodly people of that day.
- He had a communion meeting with Abraham giving him bread and wine. (Gen. 14:17-18)

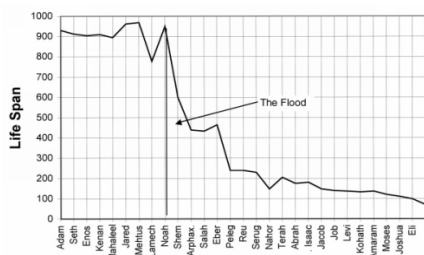
- He blessed Abraham and after the blessing Abraham paid tithe to him.
- He was Priest of the “Most High God” not some man made idol on a hill top.
- He was a worshiper of the only true God.
- Abraham met with Melchizedek after he had “slaughtered” the confederation of kings who had taken his nephew Lot captive.-Genesis 14
- The greatness of God magnified the greatness of Melchizedek’s priesthood exalting his status with Abraham.

- He was not an angel of some kind because we are told that he was a great man. (Hebrews 7:4)
- He was an important type of Jesus as the writer to the Hebrews emphasizes.( Hebrews 7:11)
- Abraham took Melchizedek blessing to heart because after his communion he would take nothing from the defeated king of Sodom because he too worshipped the Most High God Who is all-sufficient to meet Abraham’s needs.

- He was without a genealogy having no father or mother. This is unusual because Jesus had a genealogy having both a father and mother.
- He did not have a beginning of life nor end of days but was like the Son of God.
- "We see but little of him, yet we see nothing little in him." (Spurgeon)
- "Finally, as Melchizedek appears in the record of Scripture with no mention of his parents or his children (though he was a normal human being, certainly with parents and probably with children)---nor does the Genesis account mention his birth or his death---so the risen Jesus has neither beginning nor end, nor a human parentage to his resurrected life." (Stedman)

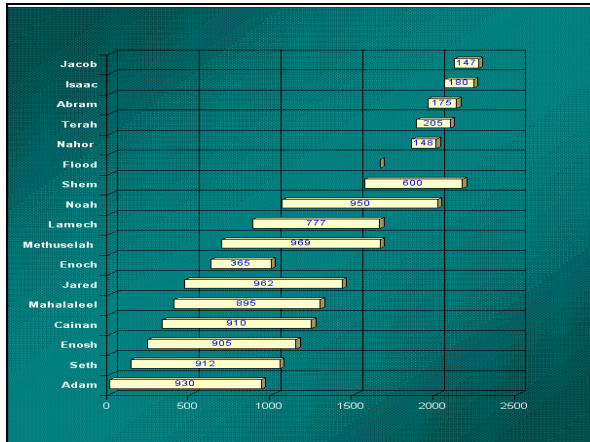
### Some Speculations

- There are some like Joseph Seiss who believe that Melchizedek was Job.
- Job would have lived during the time of the events taking place during the time of Melchizedek.
- In Job's book he does not site any reference to the Sinaitic Law which is important to all Jewish People since the time of Moses
- Seiss also alludes to Melchizedek being a great man as was Job in the land of Uz



### Shem

- The Jewish tradition claims that Shem is the mysterious Melchizedek
- Shem would have lived long into the life of Abraham and his children
- This would also keep the lineage of prophets
- It traces the priesthood in the Semitic family. As they follow the blessing through Scripture we find that in Genesis 9:1,9 Noah is blessed by God and in Genesis 9:26 Shem is blessed by Noah. The next mention of the blessing is in Genesis 14:19 where Abram is blessed by Melchizedek



## Jesus

- Some believe it to be Jesus because Melchizedek had no genealogy.
- They believe it to be an O.T. Christophany
- Hebrews 7:6 clearly says that he had a genealogy: **"This man, however, did not trace his descent from Levi."**
- He is said to be "**made like the Son of God**". Why say this if he is the Son of God? (7:3)
- Melchizedek was a citizen of an earthly city who lived his life as a king and priest in ancient Jerusalem. **Could Jesus have existed within the idolatrous and wicked culture of the Sodomites?**

- Psalm 110:4 says the Messiah will be a priest "after the order of Melchizedek."
- This makes a distinction between the Christ and the man Melchizedek.
- Jesus' had a mother and a father and traced His genealogy back to Abraham and Adam. The genealogy is important for us to know where the Messiah would come from to fulfill Scripture.
- The reality is no one knows because Scripture is silent in regards to Melchizedek.
- Here is an example of an argument from silence. Since Melchizedek's genealogy is not mentioned the author uses it to say it doesn't exist. Part of the inspiration of scripture may have presented him this way to preserve him as a **type** of Jesus, the True High Priest.

## Hebrews 7:5-10

And indeed those who are of the sons of Levi, who receive the priesthood, have a commandment to receive tithes from the people according to the law, that is, from their brethren, though they have come from the loins of Abraham; but he whose genealogy is not derived from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises.

Now beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better. Here mortal men receive tithes, but there he *receives them*, of whom it is witnessed that he lives. Even Levi, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, so to speak, for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.

#### **Four Reasons Melchizedek Is A Better Priesthood**

- Abraham paid tithes to him.
- Melchizedek received the tithes indicating his superior position to Abraham.
- Melchizedek's priesthood is forever but the Levitical priesthood would die and constantly be replaced.
- Israel, Levi, and the priests all paid tithes to Melchizedek through Abraham's because they were still a twinkle in there Momma's eye.

#### **Hebrews 7:11**

Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need *was there* that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron?

#### **The Need For A Better Priesthood**

- The Levitical priesthood was imperfect which makes a need for a better priestly order.
- The word used for "perfection" is *telios* in the original language and indicates a completeness of purpose for which it is designed.
- A priesthood's purpose was to make man acceptable to God by interceding on man's behalf.
- The Levitical priesthood was never designed by God to make man acceptable to God.
- It had to be repeated yearly for it to even work and still there was no guarantee you had been forgiven.

### A Need For A New Priesthood

- The writer is indicating to these Hebrew believers that there would not be a need for a different priesthood if the Levitical priesthood worked.
- The reason given is the priesthood office itself was established long before the Law was given at Mount Sinai.
- Aaron was before the Law. Melchizedek was before the Law.
- The Levitical priesthood was a temporary institution for instruction until the true priesthood would be established by Jesus.

### Hebrews 7:12-13

For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law. For He of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar.

### The Law has Changed

- Jesus came to fulfill the Law.
- “Don’t think that I came to destroy the law or the prophets. I didn’t come to destroy, but to fulfill.”- **Matthew 5:17**
- The Law’s purpose was to show man that he was a sinner and in need of a Savior.
- “But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, confined for the faith which should afterwards be revealed. So that the law has become our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all children of God, through faith in Christ Jesus.”-**Galatians 3:23-26**

### The Tribe Of Judah

- Jesus came from the tribe of Judah which did not have the commandment to officiate at the altar of God.
- In fact, Second Chronicles 26:16 records the account of Uzziah, king from Judah, entering the Temple and being struck with leprosy because he acted like a priest.
- According to the priesthood of Aaron and the Law of Moses Jesus could never be a priest.
- If He is our High Priest it must be under another principle.



### Judah Descendants Are Kings

- A king over Israel was eventually going to take place for God had declared it in the days of Abraham and Jacob
- "And I will bless her and also give you a son by her; then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; **kings of peoples shall be from her.**"--- Gen 17:16
- "**The scepter shall not depart from Judah,** Nor a lawgiver from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes; And to Him shall be the obedience of the people."--- Gen 49:10

### The Davidic Covenant

"... since the time that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel, and have caused you to rest from all your enemies. Also the LORD tells you that He will make you a house. "When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and **I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.**

I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men. But My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. **Your throne shall be established forever.**"---2 Samuel 7:11-16

### The Davidic Covenant is a Messianic Covenant

- In Genesis 3:15 God promised that a "seed" would come that would crush the Devil
- In the Abrahamic covenant God promised a nation from Abraham that all the nations would be blessed through Abraham's "seed"
- In the Davidic Covenant God promises that David's "seed" would rule forever as a king
- These covenants were for the coming reign of Jesus "the son of David, the son of Abraham"--Matt. 1:1
- Melchizedek was both a king and priest. He was king of Jerusalem and priest who's order is forever.

**The Word of God is  
Essential To Knowing The  
Difference between Truth  
and Tradition**

**Hebrews 7:14-17**

For *it is* evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life. For He testifies: “You *are* a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek.”

**Jesus’ Priesthood**

- Jesus is in the “likeness of Melchizedek”.
- Melchizedek was a man.
- Jesus was a man Who was in **the exact image** of the God of the universe. (Heb. 1:3)
- Jesus’ priesthood is not based upon the Law but instead it is based upon the power of the endless life of God.

**Another Priest**

- The writer to the Hebrews states, “...there arises **another** priest...”.
- The word “another” is the Greek word **“heteros”** which means “different of another kind”.
- It is not the word **“allos”** which means “another of the same kind.”

### The Levitical Priesthood Was Of The Flesh

- It was temporary
- It was a type or shadow of the coming reality
- It had physical ancestry
- It had marriage
- It required a diet
- It was based on ceremonial performance
- It was not based on spiritual condition (Eli's sons, Annas, Caiaphas, Ananias, etc.)

### Hebrews 7:18-19

For on the one hand there is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness, for the law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, *there is the* bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.

### Jesus Is Eternal And The Reality

- Be careful that you don't let anyone rob you through his philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the elements of the world, and not after Christ. For in him all the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily, and in him you are made full, who is the head of all principality and power; You were dead through your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh. He made you alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, wiping out the handwriting in ordinances which was against us; and he has taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross; -**Colossians 2:8-10; 2:13-14**

- "For what the law couldn't do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God did, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh" -**Romans 8:3**
- The law does a great job of setting God's perfect standard but it does not give the ability to hold to that standard.
- The Law is weak and unprofitable when it comes to salvation nor can it help me with my weaknesses.
- Only Jesus can cure the sin problem of the human race.

### A Better Hope

- The Greek word for annulling, **athetesis**, is the same word as in Hebrews 9:26, for the **putting away** of sin 'by the sacrifice of Himself.'
- "The disappearance of the Law is as absolute, therefore, as the putting away of sin!" (Newell)
- This is definitely a better hope in that we can draw near to God and not be afraid because of the sacrifice of Jesus once and for all.

### Hebrews 7:20-22

And inasmuch as *He* was not made priest without an oath (for they have become priests without an oath, but He with an oath by Him who said to Him: "The LORD has sworn And will not relent, 'You *are* a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek'"), by so much more Jesus has become a surety of a better covenant.

### A Better Covenant

- Since God swore an oath and there being no one greater God swore to Himself once again as He did in Hebrews 6:13.
- The priesthood set up in Exodus 28:1 did not come with an oath and it required many priests through the years to replace the dying priests.
- God's plan is set in stone because of His oath.
- The Greek word for **surety** is **egguos** described someone who gave security who cosigned a loan to guarantee payment or put up bail for a prisoner.
- Jesus guaranteed payment though His death on the cross

- It is a better covenant than the old covenant because it is not dependent on what we do but what He has done.
- Jesus is a Priest but also a security blanket for all who believe in Him.
- The word for **covenant** is the word **diatheke** and is not the usual word for covenant **syntheke**. A covenant is a mutual agreement between two parties. The word the writer uses here is more in line with an agreement that is dictated similar to the reading of a will.
- The **agreement** under which we come to God is non-negotiable we either agree to His plan or reject it.

### **Hebrews 7:23-25**

Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing. But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

### **Many Priests**

- Josephus says (Ant.20.227) that there had been 83 high priests from Aaron until 70 AD.
- Numbers 20:28 makes it clear that Aaron's priesthood was not forever.
- "Moses stripped Aaron of his garments and put them on Eleazar his son; and Aaron died there on the top of the mountain. Then Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain."

### **Unchangeable Priest**

- The priesthood under the Law of Moses constantly changed and so was better or worse through the years depending on the character of the priest.
- The priesthood of Jesus is permanent and we have the promise that He will always deal with us through His character of compassion and mercy.
- This ancient Greek word for "continues forever" has the idea of "remaining as a servant."
- Jesus continues as a servant even after He ascended into heaven.

### **Save To The Uttermost**

- The reason Jesus can save completely is because He continues to make intercession on behalf of the believer.
- This is one of the main points of Hebrews that Jesus is not just a priest Who enters into the sanctuary to make sacrifices but He is sitting at the right hand of the Father continually making intercession.
- "The verb 'to save' is used absolutely, which means that Christ will save in the most comprehensive sense; he saves from all that humanity needs saving from." (Morris)

### Jesus Prays For The Believer

- This passage says that Jesus **always lives to make intercession** for the believer.
- This should be a huge encouragement to know that Jesus is always praying for us.
- "Our blessed Lord is interceding for us, but He is in no sense appeasing God. All that God's holy Being and righteous government could demand was once for all, completely and forever, satisfied at the Cross." (Newell)
- His intercession is to support us by providing mercy and grace all the way to our ultimate reward. What a comfort and assurance it is to realize that Jesus Christ Himself is praying for us constantly!

### Jesus Interceded For Peter

- Luke 22:31-32  
And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. 32 But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren."
- Jesus prays to strengthen us in trials and seasons of attack and against Satan's accusations.

### Hebrews 7: 26-28

For such a High Priest was fitting for us, *who is* holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices,

first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. For the law appoints as high priests men who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, *appoints* the Son who has been perfected forever.

### **Jesus Is The Son**

- Jesus offered Himself which makes Him far superior to any man who is a priest.
- "One of the most distinctive themes in the theology of Hebrews is the change from old to new in God's dealings with humankind. In Jesus Christ a decisive shift in salvation-history has occurred according to God's plan. What was provisional and ineffective has been superseded by the final a full salvation in the Son of God, a change anticipated in the Old Testament itself." (Fanning)