

CHRIST HAS A SUPERIOR PRIESTHOOD

HEBREWS 7

Aim of the lesson: To learn how the old priesthood of Melchisedec and the New Covenant of Christ give Christians better privileges than what the Jews had with the Levitical priesthood and Old Covenant.

MELCHISEDEC'S PRIESTHOOD – 7:1-10: God appointed His Son to be a priest in the order of Melchisedec, so it is important to see what kind of a priest Melchisedec was and how his priesthood compares with Aaron's.

I. HIS PERSON – 7:1-3: Melchisedec was a superior priest to those that came out of Levi and Aaron.

- A. He was king of Salem [Jerusalem] – 7:1 No Levitical priest could be a king. Since Christ is a priest of Melchisedec's order, He will be the King of Jerusalem when He returns to earth.
- B. He was priest of the Most High God – 7:1. He was priest of the same God as Aaron, but of an older priesthood. Christ is the great high priest of the Most High God, interceding for all believers.
- C. His name and title are significant – 7:2.
 1. Melchisedec means "king of righteousness. Christ means "anointed." He is the anointed King that will rule the world in righteousness (Ps 2:6-9). No Levitical priest could do that; they were sinners.
 2. "King of Salem" means king of peace. Christ is the true King of peace, because He makes lasting peace between God and sinners. No Levitical priest could do that. They offered temporary peace.
- D. Melchisedec is a type of the Son of God – 7:3: There are two ways in which he is a type of Christ.
 1. Melchisedec is reckoned to be eternal since his birth and death are nowhere recorded. In that way he is a type of Christ, the eternal Son of God. Jesus as a human being was born and died, but not His divine being. All Levitical priests were born and needed a record of their birth to prove that they were in the family of Aaron. Furthermore, all Levitical priests died. So they were not like Christ.
 2. His priesthood is forever, unlike the Levitical priesthood. Since Christ is an eternal priest, He needed to be in a priesthood that could be forever.

II. HIS GREATNESS – 7:4-10: The superiority of Melchisedec's priesthood over Levi's is shown below:

- A. Abraham, Levi's' great grandfather, gave tithes to Melchisedec, showing that Abraham recognized Melchisedec had a higher spiritual position than he had. This would apply to all in his family—7:4; cf. 7:2.
- B. Melchisedec collected tithes from Abraham, even though he was not related to him, which showed he was superior to Abraham – 7:5-6. Levitical priests only collected tithes from fellow Israelites.
- C. He blessed Abraham, who had the promises of God; the greater blesses the lesser. – 7:6-7; cf 7:1
- D. He had the testimony that he lives on, while the Levitical high priests always died – 7:8; cf 7:3.
- E. He received tithes from Levi when Abraham gave it, for he was in the lineage of Abraham – 7:9-10.

PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST—7:11-28: This shows the superiority of Christ's priesthood over Levi's and Aaron's.

I. CHANGE OF PRIESTHOOD – 7:11-14

- A. Levitical priesthood could not perfect the worshippers by the law – 7:11, 19; 9:9; 10:1. Christ's priesthood perfected the worshippers without the law – 7:11, 19; 10:14.
- B. Christ's change of priesthood demanded a change of the law – 7:12.
- C. Christ's change of priesthood was needed, since He was not of Levi, but was of Judah – 7:13, 14.

II. POWER OF CHRIST – 7:15-19

- A. Power of an endless (indestructible) life – 7:15-17.
- B. Power of a better hope than that of the law, because it makes believers perfect – 7:18-19; cf Rom 8:3.
- C. Power for believers to draw near to God – 7:19.

III. OATH OF GOD – 7:20- 22

- A. Christ was made a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec by the oath of God – 7:20-21.
- B. Christ was made a guarantor of a better covenant; He guarantees God's promises will be kept – 7:22

IV. LIFE OF CHRIST – 7:23-25

- A. He lives forever, so He has an unchangeable priesthood, which gives believers security – 7:23-24.
- B. He saves to the uttermost (completely and forever) those that come to God through Him – 7:25.
- C. He always lives to intercede for all who come to God through Him – 7:25.

V. PERFECTION OF CHRIST – 7:26-28

- A. He is holy (no hint of pollution in His life) – 7:26.
- B. He is blameless (morally pure and upright) – 7:26.
- C. He is undefiled (no evil is attached to Him) – 7:26.
- D. He is separated from sinners (never was defiled by sinners) – 7:26
- E. He is made higher than the heavens – 7:26. He passed through the heavens – 4:14; is seated at God's right hand – 1:13; and is crowned with glory and honor – 2:9.
- F. He offered up Himself once to be the sacrifice for the sins of all people – 7:27.
- G. He is God's Son and was made high priest by God's oath after the law was given – 7:28; cf. Ps 110:4.
- I. He has been perfected forever – 7:28; cf 5:5-10.

THE CONTRAST OF THE TWO PRIESTHOODS

The Melchisedec priesthood was before Levi's and is a greater priesthood.

LEVITICAL PRIESTHOOD [AARON'S]

Levitical priests tithed their brethren (Israelites) – 7:5.

Levitical priests received tithes, but died – 7:8.

Levitical priests paid tithes to Melchisedec thru Abraham – 7:9-10.

MELCHISEDEC PRIESTHOOD [CHRIST'S]

Melchisedec tithed Abraham – 7:1-2, 6.

Melchisedec blessed Abraham – 7:1, 6.

The lesser is blessed by the better – 7:7.

Melchisedec received tithes, but "lives" – 7:8.

Abraham gave tithes directly to Melchisedec – 7:4.

The Melchisedec priesthood is able to make a perfect society.

This priesthood could not perfect the people – 7:11.

These priests are called after the order of Aaron – 7:11.

This priesthood operated under the old law – 7:11.

These priests were from the tribe of Levi.

These were made priests by a physical law – 7:16.

The law was annulled, being weak, unprofitable – 7:18.

People could not be made perfect by the law – 7:19.

Men were made priests without an oath – 7:21.

These priests could not continue due to death – 7:23.

The high priests sinned, needed daily sacrifices – 7:27.

Offered daily sacrifices for the people's sins – 7:27.

Law appoints men high priests who are weak – 7:28.

Christ arose to perfect the people – 7:11.

Christ: called after the order of Melchisedec – 7:11, 15.

Christ operates under a new law – 7:12.

Christ was from the tribe of Judah – 7:13-14.

Christ is a priest by an indestructible life – 7:16-17.

Hope (God's promise-8:6) replaced the law – 7:19.

The message of hope draws us near to God – 7:19.

Christ was made a priest by an oath – 7:20-21.

Christ is the guarantee of better covenant – 7:22.

Christ remains a priest forever; He lives forever – 7: 24.

He saves forever all who come to God by Him – 7:25.

He makes intercession for those coming to God – 7:26.

Christ is holy, blameless, undefiled, separate from sinners, exalted above the heavens – 7:26.

Being holy, He needed no sacrifice for Himself – 7:27.

He made one sacrifice (Himself) for all sinners – 7:27.

God's oath appoints a Son as high priest who is perfect forever – 7:28.

CHRIST HAS A SUPERIOR MINISTRY AND COVENANT

Hebrews 8

I. CHRIST MINISTERS IN HEAVEN – 8:1-5

A. Christ is the great high priest – 8:1

1. The main point: we have such a priest as described in 7:26-28
2. He is in the highest place in Heaven; He is at the right hand of the throne of God.
That makes Him the great high priest (see Heb 4:12).

B. Christ is high priest in the true sanctuary – 8:2-5

1. Christ ministers in the sanctuary that God built, not man – 8:2.
2. Christ offered (aorist Greek tense) one sacrifice in the true sanctuary – 8:3; cf 7:27; 9:12, but Levitical high priests needed to continually offer (present Greek tense) gifts and sacrifices.
3. Christ ministers in Heaven, not on earth, where Levitical priests were still serving in the temple when this letter was written – 8:4.
4. Christ ministers in the true tabernacle, which was the pattern for the earthly tabernacle that Moses was shown on Mt. Sinai – 8:5 (see Ex 25:40).

II. CHRIST MEDIATES THE NEW COVENANT – 8:6-13

A. The New Covenant is a better covenant – 8:6-9, 13; cf 2 Cor 3:6-18

1. New Covenant is far more glorious than the Old – 8:6; 2 Cor 3:6-18
2. Old Covenant was faulty in that it depended on the believer's works to succeed – 8:7-9
3. New Covenant was faultless in that it could guarantee a spiritual transformation – 8:8; cf 8:10-13
4. New Covenant replaced the Old; Christ's sacrifice and ministry made the Old obsolete – 8:13

B. The New Covenant is based on better promises – 8:10-12

1. God promises to put His laws in the minds and hearts of believers – 8:10
2. God promises believers that He will be their God and they will be His people – 8:10
3. God promises believers that no teachers are needed to know Him – 8:11
4. God promises believers total forgiveness so that their iniquities are not remembered – 8:12

III. COMBINED MESSAGE OF THE NEW COVENANT

A. It is addressed to the future nation of Israel (8:8, 10; Jer 31:31).

1. It will be fulfilled when Israel receives Jesus as its Messiah-King.
2. Israel will enjoy the blessings of the New Covenant when Christ comes to set up His Kingdom (Luke 22:18).

B. It is applied to the present believers in Christ (1 Cor 11:23-26; 2 Cor 3:6).

1. The Bible only speaks of one New Covenant, so the covenant with Israel must apply to all believers.
2. Jesus is the Mediator of the New Covenant for all believers in the Church and in Israel – 12:23-24.
3. When Jesus instituted the New Covenant at the Last Supper, it was to be observed in the churches that would be established by the preaching of the Gospel (Lk 22:19-20).