

Hebrews 7

We finished chapter 6 last week with full assurance of our salvation because we are "...confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in **[us]** you will complete *it* until the day of Jesus Christ; [Philippians 1:6 NKJV](#)

However, there are still questions that need to be answered. Who **IS** Melchizedek? What is this "order of Melchizedek" that is so scripturally obscure? And, why, if the wrath of God was completely satisfied by our Savior's blood which He Himself carried into the heavenly Holy of Holies (so to speak), are we even talking about all of this? What does our true High Priest do in light of this new reality?

Let's see what we can glean from the text before us.

[\(Hebrews 7:1 NKJV\)](#) 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, **(2)** 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,"

[Genesis 14:17-20 NKJV](#) And the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that *is*, the King's Valley), after his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who *were* with him. **(18)** Then **Melchizedek king of Salem** brought out bread and wine; he *was* **the priest of God Most High**. **(19)** And he blessed him and said: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; **(20)** And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And he gave him a tithe of all.

This priest shows up in the Valley of Shavah which is right outside of and north of Jerusalem. He knows Abram and Abram knows him. The Priest blesses Abram and Abram blesses him with a tithe of all he had.

Note that two things that we associate with the Law, predate the Law by about 500 years. The Law, given to Moses, had much to say about

- 1) a priesthood and the High Priest, and,
- 2) The Law also prescribed that a tenth of all that God gave to His people would go back to Him, through the priesthood and all who served in the Tabernacle and then the Temple (that is, the Levites)

But the things we consider as "under the law" existed long before the law was given to Moses and the people of Israel.

[\(Hebrews 7:3 NKJV\)](#) 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.

Many use this verse to say that Melchizedek was an Christophany of Jesus or perhaps an angel. On the surface, this could be the interpretation. After all, Jesus and angels are without mother or father, therefore they are without a genealogy, therefore there is no beginning of

days or end of life. Makes sense....sort of...

It also says that he was “made like the Son of God”. This is where that idea breaks down. The Son of God was not “made”, He was begotten. This man had no divine attributes like the Son of God who was the perfect GOD:MAN.

The initial description must be viewed through the lens of middle-eastern and Jewish thought. To say he is “without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life” is to say that this man was not recorded in any genealogy. He wasn’t “without” parents, we just do not know who they were.

The supposition that this was Shem is also silly. We know him to be one of the sons of Noah! And as to an angel, what angel was ever a king over a city or a priest to God?

Logically Jesus could not be made like the Son of God since He WAS the Son of God. No. what is being said here is “the Son of God is to be considered as King and Priest” based on Melchizedek who was/is the fore-type of this reality.

So who was he? He was just a man who was both the Priest of God Most High (El Elyon), and the King of Jerusalem.

Some debate whether he was a Canaanite. Again, since we are not told, we should let others waste time trying to figure it out. That he was a man ordained by God Himself seems to be lost in our thinking...

[\(Hebrews 7:4 NKJV\)](#) Now consider how great this man *was*, to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils.

Giving tithes was first and foremost an acknowledgement of someone’s authority or position. Melchizedek was **great** as shown by receiving tithes from Abraham. You don’t give tithes to just any man, but it was given to someone who was known to be set apart...to be both a king and priest of God Most High – they were, thru him, given to God.

While we do not teach about tithing, it doesn’t mean that it should be ignored. It is truly between you and God and in our NT economy, it is not fixed to 10%. He will direct your hearts to give. And, even though you are giving to God (it’s all His anyway), it is given to the church to support not only this body of believers but other ministries of the LORD. And unlike the Messianic congregation we used to attend, it is not required for membership. We don’t even have memberships. But it must be said because I believe it to be true, that giving is a way of showing that you trust Him with what He has given to you. That was the issue with the Sabbath – would you trust God for all your needs for 1 day while you rested?

One of the distinctives of a Calvary Chapel church is that the Pastor never knows who gives or how much. This is in recognition of our fleshly natures that tempt us to make judgments about the giver. We rely solely on the Holy Spirit; He knows what we need and we believe Him for it. **BTW:** You have every right to know where the monies are spent. Each quarter I present the budget, income and expenses to the church body to whom I and the Elders are held accountable.

I supposed I could boil this all down to “Where God guides, God provides”.

(Hebrews 7:5 NKJV) 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; (6) but he whose genealogy is not derived from them received tithes from **Abraham and blessed him who had the promises.** (7) Now beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better. (8) Here mortal men receive tithes, but there he *receives them*, of whom it is witnessed that he lives. (9) Even Levi, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, so to speak, (10) for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.

This passage is given to contrast the priestly office of Melchizedek and the office of Aaron's priesthood. Israel was commanded by the Law to give tithes to the Levites. Melchizedek received tithes from a grateful and willing Abram. And in an allegorical way, Melchizedek even received tithes from Levi when he was in Abraham's body generations before he was born! Therefore, even the Aaronic priesthood could be thought of as having continued tithing to Melchizedek...a very strange thought.

V7: the lesser is always blessed by the better. Not as we think of better or lesser but in terms of either 'rank', 'age', or 'office' not according to morality or religious adherence. Even though Abraham as a great man and even called a friend of God, he was still a nomadic shepherd. Melchizedek was both Priest and King of God most high, therefore, his blessing was given under the authority and agreement of God Most High.

V8: Here mortal men receive tithes, but there he *receives them*, of whom it is witnessed that he lives.

First, Here=Now; there=Then.

This is a very difficult verse that provides a contrast of the Levitical priesthood with that of Melchizedek. **Here and now** (at the time of the writing), the priests would die just as everyone did. These "mortal men" were just like their brethren who had spots and blemishes and imperfections. **But then** (at the time of Abram), the Priest was known as one who lives (because we do not really know if he died).

One thousand years after the incident in Genesis 14, King David, through the Holy Spirit says, "*The LORD has sworn And will not relent, "You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek."* (Psalms 110:4 NKJV), alluding to the understanding that no one really knew for sure if he died (or was taken up by God).

(Hebrews 7:11 NKJV) **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?

While written rhetorically, the question only has one answer: ***If it ain't broke, don't fix it!*** **But David**, one thousand years before Christ, wrote about Messiah and how He would be a priest forever under a different order, that is, not Aaron's order but Melchizedek's!

(Hebrews 7:12 NKJV) For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law.

Even though the Aaronic priesthood was to be “forever”, the Hebrew allows for an understanding of it being for a “disposition of time”. There is a reference to such a time in 2 Chronicles 15:3:

2 Chronicles 15:3 NKJV For a long time Israel *has been* without the true God, without a teaching priest, and without law;

Clearly there was a cessation in the priesthood and even the law when Israel forsook their God in favor of dumb idols. This verse might refer to the time when the 10 northern tribes were captured or prophetically to the time of the Babylonian captivity.

of necessity there is also a change of the law.

Some believe that this refers to the WHOLE LAW. Some believe this refers to just the LEVITICAL laws only. Normally, when the word Law is singular, it is understood as the whole Law as recorded in the Torah (1st 5 books). **But**, can we say that the entire judicial law or the moral law was changed when Jesus was sacrificed for our disobedience to it? Well, Yes and No...

For sure there was a change to the Levitical law when Jesus provided a perfect sacrifice for our atonement, our reconciliation with God. And surely it stopped altogether when the Temple was destroyed in 70AD and the nation of Israel was dispersed throughout the empire.

But the moral and civil law? Do you say “well, I’m not under the law, but under grace” – which 9 times out of 10 is said when we have sinned or intend to... But we often neglect to quote the entire verse:

Romans 6:14 NKJV **For sin shall not have dominion over you**, for you are not under law but under grace.

The point is, we have His Grace to keep us from the slavery of sin. The Law cannot because of the weakness of our flesh...and we certainly have been taught that the Law **reveals** sin in us and the need for true atonement. **We** have an internal motivation (the recognition of God’s grace and the Holy Spirit) to obey because, it is written, “the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, (23) gentleness, self-control. **Against such there is no law.** Galatians 5:22-23 NKJV

The law is powerless to make a man perfect. If it could, there would not have been continual sacrifices, and the yearly “Day of Atonement”.

(Hebrews 7:13 NKJV) For He of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar. **(Hebrews 7:14 NKJV)** For *it is* evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood.

He doesn’t come from the line of Aaron; But rather from Judah. According to the law, Jesus could not be a High Priest. Therefore, there would have to be a change in the law to accommodate this new Priesthood. And only the One who **made** the Law can **change** it.

(Hebrews 7:15 NKJV) And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest **(Hebrews 7:16 NKJV)** who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life.

In his likeness: not the same as Melchizedek, not of the same lineage as Melchizedek, but like him being both a king and priest that had always been separated.

Our High Priest came according to the power of an endless life which He proved when He rose from the dead.

(Hebrews 7:17 NKJV) For He testifies: "YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK."

The Aaronic priests were responsible for all the sacrifices made to God. The High Priest was considered the ruler of these priests who came from the line of Levi as Aaron had. The High Priest was the only one allowed into the Holy of Holies and only once a year on the Day of Atonement. The priests had other duties like ensuring that those with skin diseases were truly clean before being allowed back into the camp/city. They were, in effect, a type of mediator between God and man providing the appropriate sacrifices for sin and/or thanksgiving, peace etc.

The High Priest was responsible for the correct running of the temple sacrifices and the accurate interpretation of the Law. He was over all the other Levites who ministered in the tabernacle and temple. He also wore duties were wearing the Urim and Thummim to assist in determining the will of God and overseeing the other priests.

The terms "Urim" and "Thummim" have traditionally been understood as "light(s)" and "perfection(s)" or as "perfect light." The Urim and Thummim were a means of revelation entrusted to the high priest. The High Priestly breastpiece housed the Urim and Thummim. Since the Urim and Thummim were a physical means of revelation, it appears that God eventually took His priests away from a mechanical means of revelation to the more consistent use of prophecy and the Word alone.

The Aaronic Priesthood was set apart and consecrated for such service unto the LORD.

Why is our Savior, our Messiah, our God also a High Priest? If He is declared to be so, it must be important and have some impact to our lives.

First, He made a once-for-all sacrifice for our sin. Unlike the Aaronic priest who sacrificed continually for atonement. His sacrifice was perfect and complete.

Second, He is our mediator forever. We don't have to deal with a man chosen to be mediator by men. Our mediator, ordained by the Father, is eternal and perfect.

1 Timothy 2:5 NKJV For *there is* one God and one Mediator between God and men, *the* Man Christ Jesus,

Third, **through** the Spirit of Christ in us, He communicates to us the will of the Father. He teaches and leads us into all Truth. He can help us in our most dire time of need because we have already read:

Hebrews 4:15-16 NKJV [For]...we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are*, *yet* without sin. (16) Let us therefore

come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

While the author has laid out the reasons and logic of Jesus being of the order of Melchizedek, this technical chapter also gives us a glimpse of the mysterious ways God deals with man. Like I said, the Word was silent for 1000 years after the passage in Genesis when King David uttered those strange words “order of Melchizedek”. And then it was another thousand years after Psalm 110 when this author made every effort to explain the mystery in light of Messiah’s rightful place in our lives.

One of the side-effects of the Law is narrow-mindedness and a tendency to put God’s thoughts and ways into a man-sized box. You don’t even know you are doing it...you think that you are just obeying the commandments. But legalism strangles us; it restricts our thinking and it restricts God’s revelations to us.

No one would even consider this King-Priest as legitimate because the Law prescribed that they would come ONLY from the line of Aaron!

Many are yoked to the law and refuse to believe that our God would ever come to earth and die for the sins of man. Many would not believe that the King Messiah would not take out His enemies when He came. Many, after they understood Him to be the Suffering Servant, would not believe Him to be our High Priest, always interceding on our behalf to the Father. And now, many do not believe that he will come again for His Bride without putting her through hell first.

Why do we do this? Because in our pride, we do not let God be God and allow Him to lead us into ALL truth in whatever way He chooses best for each of us.

For today, and this includes me, let us surrender our willful mind and hearts to Him who knows best. He WILL never leave us nor forsake us. He WILL always walk us through whatever lays beyond our sight, so that we continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of our LORD God Most High – Christ Jesus our perfect King and High Priest.