

## A STUDY OF HEBREWS

### *The Order of Melchizedek - Chapter 7:11-28*

#### I. Review of Chapters 1-6

##### A. Jesus Christ is the greatest and final Prophet and enthroned Son of God.

1. Therefore we must pay closest attention to His Gospel... (1:1-2:18)

##### B. Jesus Christ is infinitely greater than Moses and gives eternal, not just temporal, rest.

1. Therefore we must persevere in faith lest we fall like those in the wilderness... (3:1-4:13)

##### C. Jesus Christ is our Great High Priest who sympathizes with us in our suffering and temptation.

1. Therefore we who have profound needs must fly to God's throne of grace... (4:14-5:10)

##### D. A SHORT DETOUR due to the dullness of hearers (5:11-6-20)

1. Warning against apostasy (6:1-12)
2. Assurance of God's promise (6:13-20)

**TYPOLOGY:** the interpretation of earlier events, persons, or institutions in biblical history (the 'type') which anticipate later events, persons, or institutions (the 'antitype')

- (1) The meaning of the 'type' must show an organic relationship to what comes later.
- (2) The nature of the 'type' must lie in the main message of the material and not in some incidental detail.
- (3) The fulfillment ('antitype') must be greater than the 'type.'

##### E. The mysterious Melchizedek, the OT priest-king, is a foreshadow, or 'type', of the coming Christ (7:1-10):

1. His name ('king of righteousness' and 'king of shalom/peace') exalts the true King of Kings (v. 2).
2. His role as priest highlights the High Priesthood of the Savior (v. 3).
3. The lack of recorded genealogy or posterity anticipates Christ's perpetual priesthood (v. 3).
4. The blessing he bestows on Abe demonstrates the superiority of Christ to the patriarch of Israel (v. 7).
5. The tithes he received from Abe exalt Melchizedek's priestly order over the Levitical order forever (v. 9).

#### II. Psalm 110: The "Other" Melchizedek Passage

*The LORD says to my Lord:*

*"Sit at my right hand,*

*until I make your enemies your footstool."*

*The LORD sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter.*

*Rule in the midst of your enemies!*

*Your people will offer themselves freely*

*on the day of your power,*

*in holy garments;*

*from the womb of the morning,*

*the dew of your youth will be yours.*

<sup>1</sup> *The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind,*

*"You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."*

<sup>2</sup> <sup>5</sup> *The Lord is at your right hand;*

*he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath.*

<sup>3</sup> <sup>6</sup> *He will execute judgment among the nations,*

*filling them with corpses;*

*he will shatter chiefs over the wide earth.*

<sup>7</sup> *He will drink from the brook by the way;*

*therefore he will lift up his head. (Ps 110:1-7)*

#### II. Text: Hebrews 7:11-19 – The Two Priesthoods Compared

*Now if perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need would there have been for another priest to arise after the order of Melchizedek, rather than one named after the order of Aaron?<sup>12</sup> For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well.<sup>13</sup> For the one of whom these things are spoken belonged to another tribe, from which no one has ever served at the altar.<sup>14</sup> For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests.*

<sup>15</sup> *This becomes even more evident when another priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek,<sup>16</sup> who has become a priest, not on the basis of a legal requirement concerning bodily descent, but by the power of an indestructible life.<sup>17</sup> For it is witnessed of him, "You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek." [Ps 110:4]*

<sup>18</sup> *For on the one hand, a former commandment is set aside because of its weakness and uselessness<sup>19</sup> (for the law made nothing perfect); but on the other hand, a better hope is introduced, through which we draw near to God.*

1. What does the author of Hebrews conclude about the Old Testament Levitical order of priests in light of Ps 110:4, written hundreds of years after Moses' law describes the role of Levites (v. 11)?
2. What were the flaws inherent in the old Levitical order, related to both the sacrifices used and the priests themselves? What does the perfection required for Old Testament priesthood convey? Is this grasped today?



### Some Requirements for OT Priests:

- consecrated by blood sacrifice
- required to wear special garments
- no bodily cuts, blemishes, blindness, itches, scabs, injured limbs, or uneven limbs (!)
- avoid all contact with dead, no mourning, except close relatives
- no shaved head, loose hair, or hanging threads
- sexually immoral daughter is to be burned
- could not marry a widow
- no touching any unclean animal or food without subsequent ritual cleansing
- blood of high priest releases manslayer to return home (Num 35:25-28)
- maintain practice of 7 feast days, ranging from weekly to annually
- maintain 5 major offerings (burnt, grain, peace, sin, guilt)

*“You shall sanctify him, for he offers the bread of your God. He shall be holy to you, for I, the LORD, who sanctify you, am holy.” (Lev 21:6)*

*“As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, <sup>5</sup> you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” (1 Pet 2:4-5)*

3. Why does the author say that the Old Testament priestly system “made nothing perfect”? Didn't Old Testament saints experience the blessings of Christ?

4. How do you think the words “we draw near to God” (v. 18) impacted the reading Jews who had only ever known the Levitical system? What does this have to do with the glorious reality is confirmed by Peter?

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*“Then Moses said to Aaron, ‘Draw near to the altar and offer your sin offering and your burnt offering and make atonement for yourself and for the people... as the LORD has commanded.’” (Lev 9:7-8)*

### III. Text: Hebrews 7:20-28 – The Two Priesthoods Compared (Continued)

<sup>20</sup> And it was not without an oath. For those who formerly became priests were made such without an oath, <sup>21</sup> but this one was made a priest with an oath by the one who said to him:

*“The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, ‘You are a priest forever.’” [Ps 110:4]*

<sup>22</sup> This makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant.

<sup>23</sup> The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, <sup>24</sup> but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. <sup>25</sup> Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

<sup>26</sup> For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. <sup>27</sup> He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself. <sup>28</sup> For the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever. (Heb 7:11-28)

1. What are the four parties involved in any biblical sacrificial offering? Do we ever attempt to replace Christ in one of these roles? What does this practically look like?