

The Priesthood of Christ is Superior To Any Other Priesthood

Hebrews 7:11-28

Hebrews 7:11-28 - 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? ¹² For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law. ¹³ For He of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar.

¹⁴ For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood. ¹⁵ And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest ¹⁶ who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life. ¹⁷ For He testifies:

“You are a priest forever

According to the order of Melchizedek.”

¹⁸ For on the one hand there is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness, ¹⁹ 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. ²⁰ And inasmuch as He was not made priest without an oath ²¹ (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”),

²² by so much more Jesus has become a surety of a better covenant.

²³ Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing. ²⁴ But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. ²⁵ 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.

²⁶ For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; ²⁷ 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. ²⁸ 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.

Background Notes

If God and man are to have a relationship, there must be a mediator. A priest must mediate between a holy God and sinful man. In the Old Testament there was a priesthood, but it was imperfect. In Christ, a better priesthood has been established - a perfect and eternal Priesthood. That’s what Hebrews 7 is all about.

In order to establish this truth, the author of Hebrews needed to show that the Priesthood of Christ was of a different “order” than the Aaronic priesthood. As rightful king, Christ was in the line of David. But as High Priest, Christ was not in

the line of Aaron. So the author wanted to show that Christ's Priesthood was of the "order of Melchizedek" - and that the order of Melchizedek was a better order than the order of Aaron.

In our study of Hebrews 7:1-10, we saw that Melchizedek is a "type" of Christ - a portrait or illustration of Christ. He prefigured or foreshadowed Christ. Melchizedek was a real human being, but he pictured Christ. Now, to verify that the priesthood of Christ is greater than the priesthood of Aaron, the author quoted twice from Psalm 110:4 in verses 17 and 21: "*You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.*"

Doctrinal Points

1. Christ's Priesthood is superior because it replaced an imperfect priesthood.

The author gave four points that show that the old Aaronic priesthood was imperfect:

a. The Old Testament priesthood was changed by God.

Verses 11-12: "*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?*"

With the coming of Christ's priesthood, there was a change. The point of verses 11-14 is that you don't need to change something that's perfect – you only change something if it's imperfect.

The Aaronic priesthood was imperfect. It was not morally imperfect, because God Himself instituted it. But it was imperfect in that it wasn't "the last word" on priesthood. It was a "shadow." There was more to come! Christ's perfect Priesthood, which is "*after the order of Melchizedek,*" has replaced the imperfect priesthood that was part of the Old Testament Law.

b. The Old Testament priesthood failed to give a person true access to God.

Verses 18-19: "*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.*"

Under the Law, priests were the only people who could enter the Tabernacle or Temple. And only the high priest was allowed to enter the Presence in the Holy of Holies - and that only once a year. What a difference in access to God we have in Jesus Christ!

c. The Old Testament priests died - they could not continue.

Verse 23: "*There were many priests because they were prevented by death from continuing.*"

The ancient Jewish historian Josephus wrote that there were eighty-three high priests between the time of Aaron and the destruction of the Temple in 70AD. They all died - giving evidence of an imperfect priesthood.

d. The Old Testament priests were weak – they themselves were sinners.

Verses 27-28: "*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.” The Old Testament priests had to offer up sacrifices for their own sins before they could offer up sacrifices for the sins of the people.

The priesthood under the Law was imperfect. Christ’s Priesthood is superior because it replaced an imperfect Priesthood.

2. Christ’s priesthood is superior because it established a perfect Priesthood.

Christ’s Priesthood is a perfect Priesthood, as shown in the following six points:

a. Christ’s Priesthood has replaced the old order forever.

Verses 15-17: *“You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.”*

Christ’s Priesthood is **forever**. It’s here to stay - and it will never change!

b. Christ’s Priesthood draws us near to God.

Verse 19: *“For which we draw near to God.”*

Under the Law, only the high priest could go into the Holy of Holies, and only once a year. Now **all** believers can enter the Holy of Holies and draw near to God! The dividing veil has been torn, and the way into God’s presence is open. Now all believers can confidently *“enter the Holy of Holies by the blood of Jesus” (Hebrews 10:19)*.

c. Christ’s Priesthood has been established forever with the oath of God.

Verses 20-22, *“The Lord has sworn and will not relent, ‘You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.’”*

God’s oath was given in Psalm 110. That was 400 years after the Law was given and after the Aaronic priesthood began: *“The word of the oath, which came after the law” (v28)*. There was no question that God fully intended to replace the temporary and imperfect priesthood with an eternal perfect priesthood.

d. Christ’s Priesthood is superior because Jesus lives forever.

Verses 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.”*

Jesus Christ will never die, as did the High Priests of Old Testament days. To *“save to the uttermost”* means to save **completely** and **forever!** He has saved us from the **penalty** of sin, and as our High Priest, Jesus Christ lives forever to save us from the **power** of sin.

e. Christ’s Priesthood is superior because Jesus was and is sinless.

Verses 26-27: *“For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens.”*

Because Jesus was sinless, He was able to offer up Himself as the perfect once-and-for-all sacrifice to take care of our sins **forever**.

f. Christ's priesthood is superior because Jesus, the High Priest, is God Himself. Verse 28: "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." Our great High Priest is the Son of God Himself. Because of His perfect work on this earth, He is wholly and perfectly qualified to be our High Priest forever.

If you're a believer, the Lord Jesus is not only your personal Savior, but He's also your personal High Priest. He "*always lives to make intercession*" for believers! What an amazing fact! Jesus Christ is in Heaven making intercession before the Father for you right now! He knows all about us. He knows about our strengths and weaknesses. He knows and cares about all our ups and downs. And He can save us from the power of sin to the uttermost! He's a **great High Priest**.

Melchizedek brought out bread and wine and communed with Abram. This pictures the Lord's Supper, where we celebrate and commune with our great High Priest. And our High Priest communes with us whenever we pause to remember how much He has done for us. Christ's Priesthood is superior because it established a perfect Priesthood.

Practical Application

Let's practice the lost art of meditation.

I'm talking about **meditation on the Word of God** - not the mindless meditation practiced by Eastern religions, yoga, and the like. In this busy day and age we don't spend enough time meditating on Scripture. But where is that practical application taught here?

Did you realize that this entire chapter, and the truth about Christ being the High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, is based on just four Old Testament verses - three verses in Genesis 14 and one verse in Psalm 110? But think of all the truth that was gleaned from those four verses! Of course the Holy Spirit inspired the writing of Hebrews 7, but surely the human author must have meditated quite a bit on those Old Testament verses.

I'm always amazed at how much more I get out of the Bible when I take time to meditate on Scripture. I drive a 3 ½ hour commute between our home in the Chicago area and Emmaus Bible College in Dubuque, so I often read a portion of Scripture before I leave. Then I meditate on it as I drive.

It's a great method! Why don't you try it? Read a portion of Scripture in the morning and think about it during the day - while you're driving, while you're working, while you're shopping, or while you're at the gym! Let's practice the lost art of meditation