
Jesus, the Superior Priest

Hebrews 7:11-19

“If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? 12 For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. 13 For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. 14 For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. 15 And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, 16 Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. 17 For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. 18 For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. 19 For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God.”

INTRODUCTION:

† Review

- **The Book of Hebrews was written Jewish people who existed somewhere outside of Jerusalem**
- **These Jews had been “evangelized”**
 - **Some of these Jews had been saved**
 - **But many were still holding on to their Judaism**
 - **For fear of the Jews**
 - **Of persecution**
 - **Of being cut off from their people**
 - **They have been the subject of much of the warning chapters of the book**

2:1-4—*“Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which **we have heard**, lest at any time we should let them slip. 2 For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; 3 how shall we escape, if we neglect so **great salvation**; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was **confirmed unto us** by them that heard him; 4 God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?”*

3:12—*“Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an **evil heart of unbelief**, in departing from the living God.”*

6:4-6—“*For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, 5 and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, 6 if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.*”

- **They were in danger of letting being lost forever**
 - **They were letting the gospel message slip from their grasp**
 - **They were beginning to harden their hearts in unbelief**
 - **They were about to completely fall away from the gospel—and never have another opportunity to be saved**

- **And as Paul will later say to them...**

Hebrews 10:26-27—“*For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, **there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, 27 but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.***”

- **So What Has Paul Been Saying to Them?**
 - **1—He’s been warning them of certain judgment that will come upon them if they don’t get saved**

- **2—He’s been showing to them the superiority of Christ**
 - **Their big hang-up is Judaism**
 - **They see that Judaism was what God gave to them through Moses on the mountain of Sinai**
 - **And that they were to hold on to it with all their might**
 - **Any abandonment of the Law—would be like apostasy in their mind**

 - **So Paul has been telling them that even their own law and the prophets pointed to another SUPERIOR ACCESS TO GOD**

 - **Paul has shown them that Jesus is superior to...**
 - **Angels (which were held in high esteem by the Jews)**
 - **Moses (the savior and lawgiver of Israel)**
 - **Aaron (the first high priest—that all the other high priests came from)**

 - **The Priesthood was the most important element of Judaism**

- **Because they were given access to God through the priest**
 - **They would bring an offering to the priest**
 - **The priest would make atonement for their sin**
 - **He would bring them close to God**

QUESTION: Did that Priest REALLY give them access to God?

- **Did he truly help them be right with God?**
- **The answer is “NO”**
- **He could NOT DO THAT**
- **And that’s what Paul’s argument for Christ’s superiority has been**

† **And That’s Why Paul Introduces His Main Point of the Book—the Priesthood of Christ**

- **Christ is a greater priest than Aaron—because He could do what Aaron’s priesthood could never do**
 - **Bring men to God**

- **Chapter 4 is where he begins speaking of the priesthood of Christ**

Hebrews 4:14-16—“*Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. 15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*”

- **In chapter 5 Paul introduced the person of Melchizedek in**

5:9-10—“*and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; 10 called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.*”

NOTE: After verse 10 all the way through chapter 6, Paul gives a parenthetical invitation to those who were still unbelievers in Christ.

- **But in chapter 7 Paul again picks up the subject of Melchizedek’s priesthood**
 - **we only find 2 small passages that deal with this person**
 - **Genesis 14**
 - **Psalm 110**

- Paul expounds these 2 passages— squeezing out every last drop of truth

Psalm 110:4—“*The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.*”

- That was a prophecy given about the Messiah—that He would be a priest after the order of Melchizedek
- Verse 1-10 Paul shows us how Melchizedek’s priesthood is greater than Aaron’s
 - Thus how Christ is greater than Aaron
 - Melchizedek was a King
 - So also is Christ
 - Aaron could never be a king
 - Melchizedek was a king of righteousness and peace
 - Christ, as priest, can make people both righteous and at peace with God
 - Aaron could never do that

- Melchizedek’s priesthood was universal

- So is Christ’s—both Jew and Gentile can come to Him and be saved
- Not so with Aaron’s priesthood—it was limited to the Jews

- Melchizedek’s priesthood typified an everlasting priesthood

- Christ’s priesthood is eternal—He ever lives to make intercession for us
- Aaron’s priesthood lasted as long as the priest lived

- Christ’s Priesthood Far Exceeded Aaron’s priesthood

CIT: Why Did the Jews No Longer Need the Symbol of the Old Testament Priesthood?

I. It Was Insufficient in Bringing People to God

II. Christ’s Priesthood Was Sufficient in Bringing People to God

QUESTION: Why Then Did They Ever Need to Have Aaron's Priesthood?

† **Why Did God Give Them That Priesthood if it Was Insufficient to do Its Work?**

- † **It was given as a picture—of the perfect priesthood**
- **It was meant to continue keep before them a visual of their sinfulness, and a need for both a priest and a sacrifice that could atone for sin**

QUESTION: How did people, before Christ came, get saved if Aaron's priesthood could not save them?

- † **They were saved the same way we are saved—they looked to Christ for salvation**
- † **They were foretold that the Messiah would come and save them from their sin**
- † **And so they looked forward to future sacrifice**
- † **And yes, some missed the message of Aaron's priesthood**
- **They saw Aaron's priesthood as the substance rather than the shadow**
 - **They saw his priesthood as the way men were made right with God**
 - **They DID NOT SEE the picture it was portraying**
 - **That is why Paul is writing this letter to the Hebrews**

- **But Aaron's priesthood was NEVER the way men could draw nigh to God**
- **It has ALWAYS been Christ**

I. It Was Insufficient in Bringing People to God (vs. 11-14)—*"If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? 12 For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. 13 For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. 14 For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood."*

A. What God Never Intended

1. He Never Intended Perfection by the Aaronic priesthood (vs. 11)—*"If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?"*

a. The meaning of "perfection"

i. Often times in the NT the word "perfection" or "perfect" refers to spiritual maturity

- ii. But not so in the book of Hebrews
- iii. Perfection carries the idea of being “**drawn close to God**”

- That is speaking of salvation
- Perfection, in Hebrews, was a term that refers to reconciliation
- Reconciliation was the ministry that the priest was called to do
 - He was to bring reconciliation to men
 - He was bring men to God
 - He was to make them right with God
 - That is—bring salvation to men

Vs. 19—Defines that word clearly—*“For the law made nothing **perfect**, but the bringing in of a better hope did; **by the which we draw nigh unto God.**”*

Hebrews 6:1—*“Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ (The Old Testament priesthood), **let us go on unto perfection (Draw Near to God—Be Saved);** not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God”*

Hebrews 10:1-4—*“For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, **can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.** (The OT priesthood could never draw men to God—save men) 2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. 3 But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. 4 **For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.** (They CANNOT PERFECT SOMEONE ETERNALLY)”*

Hebrews 10:14—*“For by one offering he (Jesus Christ) hath **perfected for ever (drew them near to God forever—eternally saved them)** them that are sanctified.”*

b. God NEVER INTENDED the Aaronic priesthood to Save—*“If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise **after the order of Melchisedec**, and not be called after the order of Aaron?”*

i. Paul refers to the promise that God gave in Psalm 110:4

Psalm 110:4—*“The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever **after the order of Melchizedek.**”*

ii. The point Paul is making

- If God intended to save men through the Aaronic priesthood—WHY DID HE PROMISE ANOTHER PRIESTHOOD?
- Why did He say that **Messiah would come after the order of Melchizedek's priesthood?**
- The promise of another priesthood implied that the priesthood that was in existence was NOT SUFFICIENT to do the work—IT COULDN'T SAVE
- There was a NEED FOR ANOTHER ONE TO COME
- What the OT priesthood could not do—CHRIST'S PRIESTHOOD COULD

QUESTION: Asking again...What was the Purpose of the OT priesthood if it wasn't to save?

- **It was to picture perfect**
- **It was to continually point the Jews to the coming priesthood of Christ—that COULD PERFECT SINNERS FOREVER**

2. He Never Intended For the Law to Be Permanent

Vs. 11—Paul indirectly refers to that in this verse—“If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (*for under it the people received the law,*) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?”

Vs. 12—“For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.”

a. A change of the Law

i. What does it mean to “change?”

- ***Metatithemi***
- It DOES NOT MEAN to reorder or make different
- It MEANS to REPLACE
- The replacement of the OT Priesthood demands a replacement of the Law as well

ii. What does he mean by “law?”

- The term “*law*” had several different meanings
 - In its broadest sense it means the entire OT

- It also can mean the moral law—10 Commandments
- And lastly, it can refer to the ceremonial part of the law
- And that is most likely what Paul is referring to

NOTE: The priesthood of Christ did not get rid of the moral law of God. Jesus restated and reestablished this part of the law—stating that it **was still wrong to steal, kill, commit adultery, dishonor father and mother, and use God’s name in a vain way.**

And certainly the priesthood of Christ is not meant to keep believers from being exposed to the OT. It is the OT that we see the foundation upon which the NT is built upon. Paul said that the OT was written for our admonition and learning.

But the part of the law that Paul is referring to is the ceremonial part of the law. It is this part of the law that is very closely connected to the priesthood of Aaron. In the ceremonial law all the types and shadows of Christ were given.

- † The Sabbath Laws
- † Passover, Feast of Tabernacles, Feast of Weeks, etc.
- † Dietary laws

- † The laws of cleanliness
- † And whatever ceremonial laws that set them apart from the rest of the world

iii. The point that Paul was making—was that Israel’s distinction was not to last forever

NOTE: If you remember, one of the identifying marks of Melchizedek’s priesthood was that it was universal. It was not just for one group of people—but for the whole world. Jesus’ priesthood was not just for the Jews—but for all people.

So the law that set Israel apart was no longer in place. Another law was in its place. It was a new covenant with all those who would believe.

iv. The Confirmation (**vs. 13-14**)—“*For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. 14 For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.*”

- The Law said that the priesthood had to come from the tribe of Levi
- But Jesus did not come from Levi, but Judah

- Jesus was not a priest bound to the law of Moses—but was a priest after another order

NOTE: This setting aside of the Old way was not easy for the Jews to accept.

- **Stephen being stoned—because the Jews wouldn't accept that**
- **Paul continually faced opposition all the way through his ministry because of this**
- **And this was a continual problem even for believing Jews to accept**

Acts 21:20—“ *And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; **and they are all zealous of the law*** ”

- **It got so bad that some of the Jews who absolutely hated Paul—followed him trying to turn his gentile converts into Jews**

Galatians 3:1-4—“ *O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? 2 This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? 3 Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? 4 Have ye suffered so many things in vain?* ”

- **So what Paul was saying here was not easily accepted by the Jews**
 - **God is putting aside the OT priesthood**
 - **And is putting aside all the laws that are connected to it**

II. Christ's Priesthood Was Sufficient in Bringing People to God (vs. 15-19)—“*And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, 16 Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. 17 For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. 18 For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. 19 For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God.*”

A. God's Other Priest—“*And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, 16 Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. 17 For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.*”

1. The word “*Another*”

a. The meaning of the word

i. There are actually 2 different Greek words for another

- Heteros and Allos
- Heteros deals with another of the same kind
- Allos deals with another of a total different order

ILLUSTRATION:

- **Esther’s dad would every other year trade his Toyota Camri in for another newer Toyota Camri**
- **He did this over a period of several years**
- **But his last trade in that he made before he passed away was not a Toyota Camri—but a Honda Civic**
- **For most the time Fred was trading in his Toyota to get an Heteros Toyota (Another of the same kind)**
- **But his final trade in was not a Heteros trade, but an Allos trade (he got something of a total different kind)**

ii. When Paul said that there was another priest arising he wasn’t saying that there was another one like Aaron arise—but there was one of a total different order

- One from another tribe
- One after totally different order

2. God’s Evidence is in—“*And it is yet far **more evident**: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest*”

a. The Scripture was crystal clear on the issue

- i. It spoke of Messiah being a priest from a different order
- ii. It spoke of where he would come from
- iii. It gave prophecy after prophecy about this new priest—in which were fulfilled in Jesus Christ
- iv. And if anyone had any questions—they could review the facts

b. And even God gave much evidence outside of the Scripture to verify the claims of Jesus Christ—as a priest after a different order

- i. The signs and wonders
- ii. The diverse miracles of the Holy Ghost

NOTE: For the Jews to so tightly cling to the OT priesthood while claiming to be believers in Christ was absolute foolishness. The evidence said that they were to forsake the Old and embrace the New with all their heart.

Paul was calling them to genuine repentance.

3. The Arising priest—“*And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there **ariseth** another priest, 16 Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. 17 For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.*”

a. Jesus’ priesthood vs. the OT priesthood

i. The OT priests were given their office after the law of a carnal commandment

- All that was required for them to be priests was that they fit into the physical lineage of Aaron—and they be without certain physical blemishes in their body
- There were **no spiritual** requirements for them to be priests
- It was truly a non-spiritual appointment (carnal commandment)
- And it was a destructible priesthood

- They were priests only until they died
- Then another priest would arise and take their place

ii. Jesus’ priesthood was not after the order of Aaron’s which was physically passing away—but was an eternal priesthood

*“there ariseth another priest, 16 Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. 17 For he testifieth, **Thou art a priest for ever** after the order of Melchisedec.”*

- There will never be a time in which Jesus will cease to be our priest
- For all eternity he will be our priest who makes intercession for before God

Hebrews 7:25—“*Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing **he ever liveth** to make intercession for them.*”

B. The Necessary Passing Away of the Old Way—*“For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. 19 For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God.”*

1. The Old Could Never Save
2. But the New Could

CONCLUSION:

- **The Need For Genuine Repentance**
 - **To the Jews it was a need to forsake the shadows of the Old Covenant and embrace the New found in Christ alone**
 - **For a Gentile it is to forsake the Old sinful life—and embrace the new life that comes in Christ**

Mark 8:34-38—“*Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. 35 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it. 36 For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? 37 Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? 38 Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.*”

- **Have you truly repented of the Old life—or are you still tightly clinging to it?**
- **If someone was to put your life on trial could they prove that you were genuinely a believer?**

- **That’s the challenge that Paul is giving to these Hebrews—and that’s the challenge he is giving to us who have no connection to Judaism**

- **Have you repented?**
- **Repentance isn’t easy**
- **But it must happen if we will be saved**