

STUDIES IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

Part II

STUDY NUMBER TWELVE - Hebrews 7:1-10

**As we direct our attention to Hebrews 7,
we are coming another DIFFICULT PASSAGE.**

**The author has told us several times that he is going to
be discussing the crucial SUBJECT of:**

THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST.

The PURPOSE of chapter 7 is to show:

**THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST IS SUPERIOR
TO THAT OF AARON.**

We have seen that Christ is superior to:

THE ANGELS,

MOSES (THE LAW-GIVER),

and now He is superior to:

AARON (THE LEVITICAL PRIEST).

A few weeks ago we asked the question;

WHO IS YOUR REPRESENTATIVE?

WHO IS YOUR PRIEST?

WHO IS YOUR AGENT?

The sports scene is a dominant part of American society.

Name your favorite sport: golf, tennis, hockey, bowling, baseball, football--they all have their high-priced talent.

In many instances, athletes are hiring men to represent them in contract negotiations with team owners and managers.

These go-betweens are called agents. Their job is to speak in behalf of their clients and to bring about harmony when there is disagreement, usually on matters relating to salary and benefits.

The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia: Vol. IV has this statement to make under the title of "Priesthood":

The institution of the office was God's gracious provision for a people at a distance from Him, who needed one to appear in the Divine presence in their behalf. . . .

It was the chief duty of a priest to reconcile men to God

**by making atonement for their sins; . . .
p. 2439**

**Listen to this verse, in Numbers 18, verse 7.
This is the Lord talking to Moses.**

“I am giving you the service of the priesthood as a gift.”

**We come now in our study of the book of Hebrews
to the HEART OF THE EPISTLE.**

**John MacArthur reminds us of the fact
that Melchizedek is a type of Christ:**

**In biblical study, a type refers to
an Old Testament person, practice, or ceremony that
has a counterpart, an antitype, in the New Testament.**

**In that sense types are predictive.
The type pictures, or prefigures, the antitype.
The type, though it is historical, real, and
of God, is nonetheless imperfect and temporary.**

**The antitype, on the other hand, is perfect and eternal.
The study of types and antitypes is called,
as one might expect, typology.**

**The sacrificial lamb was a type of the Lamb of God,
Jesus Christ, who was sacrificed for the sins
of the world (John 1:29; Rev. 5:6, 8; etc.).
pp. 171-2**

**Chapter 7 is the focal point of Hebrews.
It concerns the central, the most important,
part of Judaism---the priesthood.**

**No sacrifices could be made except by the priest and
no forgiveness of sins could be had apart
from the sacrifices.**

**Obedience to the law was exceedingly important,
but the offering of sacrifices was even more important.
And the priesthood was essential for offering them.
Consequently, the priesthood was exalted in Judaism.**
p. 172

**Job makes this very clear in the midst of all of his
sufferings that he needed someone to represent him.**

In Job 9:32, 33 he says:

**He (God) is not a man like me that I might answer
him, that we might confront each other in court.
If only there was someone to arbitrate
between us, to lay his hand upon us both,**

1 Timothy 2:5

**For there is one God, and one mediator
also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,**

Today's study urges us to recognize the fact that in our arrogance we cannot represent ourselves in court.

We are guilty!

We are doomed for eternity, unless we have someone, to intervene.

v. 1 For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham as he was returning from the defeating of the kings and blessed him,

Now, Melchizedek.

Why is it that Jesus can't be a priest after the order of Aaron?

We understand that Jesus is not of the tribe of Levi.

He's of the tribe of Judah.

The tribe of Judah is the royal tribe.

To be a priest of the Aaronic order two things had to be true:

- 1. You had to be of the tribe of Levi.**
- 2. You had to be of the family of Aaron.**

Only that family had the privilege of functioning as a priest under the law.

Jesus is disqualified twice.

He's not of the tribe of Levi.

And He's not of the family of Aaron.

So if Jesus is a priest, He is a priest of a different order.

And if He is a priest, is His order superior to the order of Aaron?

Now, what about Melchizedek?

Melchizedek, comes out of nowhere and then he disappears just as fast.

You only see him three times in the Bible:

- 1. Historically, Genesis 14.**
- 2. Prophetically, the psalmist describes him in Psalm 110:4**
- 3. The book of Hebrews explains some things about him.**

In this first verse, it says, "Melchizedek" and it tells us two things about him:

- 1. He is the "king of Salem" and**
- 2. He is the "priest of the Most High God."**

**He is a “king of Salem” which is Jerusalem.
And He’s a “priest of the Most High God.”**

**And he “met Abraham as he was returning from
defeating of the kings and [He] blessed him.”**

OK, we have to go back to Abraham.

**We were with him last week. Remember?
He was the one who received the promises.**

Through faith and patience, he inherited the promise.

**Let’s talk about Abraham and bring this up to speed
and put some flesh on this experience.**

**In Genesis 13, there comes a conflict between Abraham
and his nephew Lot.**

**Over pasture land, there’s not enough.
And the cowboys are fighting each other.**

So, they decide they’re going to separate.

**And Abraham being so generous and so good, he says,
“Lot you choose first and I’ll take what’s left over.”**

**Well Lot just puts the binoculars on the well-watered
planes of Jordan, not even considering the cities
of Sodom of Gomorrah there.
And he makes that his choice.**

**And he moves down there in Genesis 13.
Now they've separated.**

**No sooner does he get down there and gets moved in
to Sodom than there is a political upheaval.**

**Five kings organize themselves to want this
pastureland too.
And they're going to whip the kings that are in the
valley.**

**This is the story; let me pick it up,
in Genesis 14, verse 11-12.**

**"The four kings were fighting the five in the valley and
seized all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all
their food, then they went away. They also carried off
Abram's nephew Lot and his possessions since he was
living in Sodom."**

**These four kings blow in there and take everything.
Now, word gets back to Abram that this has happened.
And this is what we read beginning at verse 14-16.**

**"When Abram heard that his relative had been taken
captive, he called out 318 trained men born in his
household [the green beret military] he went in
pursuit as far as Dan.
During the night Abram divided his men to attack them
and he routed them, pursuing them as far as Hobah,
north of Damascus.**

He recovered all the goods and brought back his relative Lot and his possessions, together with the women and [all] the other people.”

Incredible!

Wipes out four kings with 318 men!

Under the cloak of darkness, he frees all of these who've been held hostage and brings them back.

Now, here comes Melchizedek into the picture. Here Abram returns, he's the victorious general. He's has all of this plunder and everything that he's taken from war.

Genesis 14, verse 17-20

“And Abram returned from defeating Chedorlaomer and the kings allied with him. The king of Sodom came out to meet him in the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's valley). Then, here he comes, Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, and he blessed Abram, saying, “Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. And blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand.” Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.”

And so, as he's there, Melchizedek reminds him of the fact that God is the One who did this for him and he's there to celebrate with him.

Now, two things about Melchizedek in verse 1:

- 1. He is a “king” and**
- 2. He is the “king of Salem”**

**He is also a “priest,” the “priest of the Most High God.”
And he comes out to meet Abram in the moment
of his victory.**

Now you typological students.

Did you notice anything?

**Was there anything that stood out in what Melchizedek
did?**

**What did Melchizedek the priest bring with him
to sustain and bless Abraham?
Bread and wine.**

Does that do anything to you?

**To think that another priest who's getting ready to
make a sacrifice of himself the night before in the
upper room would choose to take a loaf of bread and a
jug of wine and say, “Do this is remembrance of me!”**

**Patriarchal period, Genesis 14, and
over in the New Testament you have
our great High Priest doing the very same thing.
Tell me the Bible's not inspired and a beautiful book!**

It's like a picture of the patriarchal communion table and Melchizedek the priest ministers to Abraham.

v. 2 to whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything, is first of all, by the translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then also king of Salem, which is king of peace.

“to whom” ,verse 2, that's Melchizedek.

“Also Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything.”

Now, the author is going to explain the meaning of his name.

His name, “is first of all, by the translation of his name,” “king of righteousness,” and then also he is the “king of Salem, which is king of peace.”

Your two words that you want to look at are “righteousness” and “peace.”

These words are never reversed.

You always have “righteousness” first and then you have “peace.”

You don't have peace and then righteousness.

“Melchiz,” is the Hebrew word for “king.”

“Tsedek” is the word for “righteousness.”

**In Jeremiah we have the statement:
“The Lord our righteousness.”**

**If you're going to win your day in court,
you must have a “king of righteousness” who can
acquire a righteousness for you that will make you
acceptable in court.**

Isaiah 64:6 says:

All of our righteous deeds are like filthy rags.

We lose before we start.

**But, if someone who's representing us
has the righteousness that is acceptable to the Father,
and by what he does, he gains that righteousness for us,
we can go to court in peace.**

So He is a “king of righteousness.”

That's his name.

He is a type of Christ.

And he brings peace.

Righteousness precedes peace.

And this is our king.

The word “king” is mentioned three times here.

**Telling you that Christ is not only a priest,
but He's also a King.**

**This reminded me of a favorite piece
by a black minister called “My King Is!”**

**The Bible says my King is a seven way King.
He’s the King of the Jews, that’s a Racial King.
He’s the King of Israel, that’s a National King.
He’s the King of Righteousness.
He’s the King of the Ages.
He’s the King of Heaven.
He’s the King of Glory.
He’s the King of Kings.
And He’s the Lord of Lords. ...**

**My King is a sovereign King, ...
He’s endurably strong.
He’s entirely sincere.
He’s eternally steadfast.
He’s immorally graceful.
He’s imperially powerful.
He’s impartially merciful. ...**

**He’s a sinner’s Savior. ...
He’s unparalleled, He’s unprecedented.
He’s the loftiest idea in literature.
He’s the Highest personality in philosophy.
He is the supreme problem in high criticism.
He’s the fundamental doctrine of ... theology. ...
He supplies strength for the weak.
He’s available for the tempted and the tried.
He sympathizes and He saves.**

**He strengthens and [He] sustains.
He guards and He guides.
He heals the sick.
He cleansed the lepers.
He forgives sinners.
He discharges debtors.
He delivers the captives.
He defends the feeble.
He blesses the young.
He serves the unfortunate.
He regards the age, and He rewards the diligent.
And He beautifies the meek. ...**

**Well, this is my King.
He's the key to knowledge.
He's the well-spring of wisdom.
He's the doorway of deliverance.
He's the pathway of peace.
He's the roadway of righteousness.
He's the highway of Holiness.
... the gateway of Glory. ...**

**... His office is manifold.
His promise is sure.
His life is matchless.
His goodness is limitless.
His mercy is everlasting.
His love never changes.
His word is enough.
His grace is sufficient.
His reign is righteous.**

**And His yoke is easy and His burden is lighter.
I wish I could describe Him [for] you! (laughing)
But He's indescribable.
He's incomprehensible.
He's invincible.
He's irresistible.**

**... you can't get Him out of your mind.
You can't get Him off ... your hands.
You can't out live Him.
And You can't live without Him.**

**Well, the Pharisees couldn't stand Him.
But they found out they couldn't stop Him. ...
The witnesses couldn't get their testimonies to agree.
[Pilate couldn't find any fault in Him.]
Herod couldn't kill Him.
Death couldn't handle Him.
And the grave couldn't hold Him.**

[That is] My King! ... My King!

**Yes, He is the last prophet.
He spoke the last words in Hebrews 1.
He is the priest of the order of Melchizedek.
But He is the soon-coming King of kings and Lord of lords.**

**In verse 3 we begin to see the unfolding
of the type.**

v. 3 Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but having been made like the Son of God, he is remaining a priest for all time.

This verse says five things:

- 1. “without father,”**
- 2. “without mother,”**
- 3. “without genealogy”—that’s a word they had to conjure up because it was not in the Greek language. This is the only place in the New Testament it occurs. And it doesn’t occur anywhere else in Greek literature. Because everybody has a genealogy.**
- 4. “having neither beginning of days”**
- 5. “nor end of life.”**

Five things.

There are two ways you can consider that.

Some say that Melchizedek, had no court records.

**There’s no evidence of his birth,
no death certificate of his death.**

And there's no genealogical records.

And to the Aaronic priesthood, that was so crucial because you had to be of the family of Aaron and of the tribe of Levi.

Some writers just stop there, and they say, "That's just the case. It's not that important."

I personally believe that when you see something like this and it's playing out the perfect type of Christ, these things are true of the person.

He is "without father, without mother, without genealogy" and he is an eternal being.

In Genesis 18, Abram had no problem recognizing those three visitors who came and one of them was the Lord come in human flesh. Remember, he entertained them?

And then the Lord said, "I'm going to destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah." And he stood there and interceded with the Lord about His destruction of the city.

Abram said, if there's 45 there and then if there's 40 and if there's 30, and he gets all the way down to 10. And the Lord says, "I won't destroy it."

**And so just like Genesis 18,
I take it that Melchizedek, is a type of Christ,
and that's the reason these things are said about him.
Notice all these things are true of the Lord Jesus.**

**When we're talking about a priest
from the order of Aaron,
and in the priesthood
this is the only place
where you have retirement
recognized in Scripture.**

**A priest can only function for 25 years.
He must retire at the age of 50 and he becomes a priest
at the age of 25.
So his priesthood is a tenure of 25 years.**

**Remember the Aaronic priesthood ended
with the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D.**

**Your key phrase in verse 3, is the phrase
"having been made like the Son of God, He is remaining
a priest for all time."**

**The Son of God is the eternal Son of God
and He is a priest forever and therefore
He can be your priest.**

**Now, having said all of that,
he's instructed you about Melchizedek,
he's going to tell you what to do in these last verses.**

v. 4 Now be giving careful consideration to how great this man must have been to whom Abraham, the patriarch, gave a tenth of the best part of the plunder.

“Now,” a command “be giving careful consideration to how great this man must have been to whom Abraham, the patriarch, gave a tenth of the best part of the plunder.”

In other words, Abraham, this great man, who's the founder of the Jewish faith, he turns around and he pays tithes to this priest.

He had to be great because the lesser always pays tithes to the greater.

And so the argument is, Abraham had to be the lesser and he recognized this great person.

v. 5 And those indeed of the sons of Levi, who are receiving the priestly office are having commandment in the Law to be collecting a tenth from the people, that is, from their brethren, although these are descended from Abraham.

**The law said that the priests, under Aaron received their sustenance through the tenth, the tithe, that was given by the people.
The priests didn't have any inheritance in the land.**

They received it from the tithe.

v. 6 But the one who is not having his descent from them has received a tenth from Abraham, and has blessed the one who is having the promises.

“But” contrast “the one who is not having his descent from them” Melchizedek “has received a tenth from Abraham, and has blessed the one who is having the promises.”

We talked about all those promises last week. Now, here comes the end in these remaining four verses.

They all go together. Look how he argues.

v. 7 But without any dispute the lesser is being blessed by the greater.

Abraham, who is the founder of Judaism, is being blessed by the greater, Melchizedek.

v. 8 And in this case mortal men are receiving tithes, but in that case one is receiving them, of whom it is being witnessed that he is living.

**“And in this case” the key word is “mortal.”
“mortal men are receiving tithes, but in that case one is receiving them, of whom it is being witnessed that he is living.”**

The difference between an Aaronic priest and Melchizedek is Melchizedek is living forever. Aaronic priests are mortal. They're going to die.

The author is saying, "What's going to happen to you, if your priest is not Jesus Christ?"

"Your priest is going to die and you're going to be hung out to dry in court without anybody to represent you."

**"Christ is never going to die.
And He fully qualifies and He's never lost a day in court."**

**We have the lesser and the greater in verse 7.
And mortal and immortal in verse 8.**

Now, it's wrapped up, in verse 9 and 10.

v. 9 And, so to speak, through Abraham even Levi, who is receiving tithes, has paid tithes,

v.10 for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.

The point is now reached:

if the father is obligated to recognize the superiority, the sons ought to also.

Long before the Levitical laws had been established, where a special family was set apart in Aaron and Levi, we have evidence of the priesthood of Melchizedek of which the Lord Jesus Christ is a great High Priest.

What the writer is saying, is that when Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek, Levi, who is descendent of Abraham, was also paying tithes through that identification.

J B Phillips says:

The writer of Hebrews is inexorably pursuing his goal, forcing his readers to see how much more they have in Christ than they ever had in Judaism and the Levitical ritual.

Why go back to an inferior priesthood when, in the Lord Jesus, they have a supreme and sovereign Priest acknowledged, in type if not in actual fact, by no less a person than Abraham himself, the founder of their race?

Who would want a high priest drawn from among Aaron's sons when they can have something far better in Christ?

p. 102

MacArthur says:

Jesus Christ, of course, is the reality, the true Priest who is eternal, of whom Melchizedek is but a

picture.

Jesus Christ is a priest, the only Priest, who is alive forevermore.

He is a greater priest because He is a living priest, not a dying one.

Christ is Priest of a better priesthood than Aaron's.

He is Priest of a better priesthood even than Melchizedek's.

He is the only Priest of the only priesthood that can bring God to men and men to God.

This was a great word of assurance to those Jews who had come to Jesus Christ.

p. 181

When Abraham paid those tithes to Melchizedek, in his loins were the unborn children of Levi and the family of Aaron.

And they literally are responsible, for the act of Abraham in paying those tithes to Melchizedek.

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

LESSON #1: In the Lord Jesus Christ we have not only a great High Priest, but also a soon-coming King.

LESSON #2: Jesus Christ is a King of Righteousness and also a King of Peace.

LESSON #3: Have you availed yourself of His righteousness and thus experiencing His peace?

LESSON #4: May I use a phrase from verse 4 to admonish you: “Be giving careful consideration” of the Lord Jesus Christ and your relationship to Him.

LESSON #5: The Priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ is superior to that of Aaron.

LESSON #6: The bread and wine brought by Melchizedek to Abraham in Genesis 14 reminds us of the broken body and shed blood that we memorialize at the communion table.

LESSON #7: Jesus Christ our Savior lives forever, so there is no end to His priestly reign.

LESSON #8: Just as Levi paid tithes because he was a descendent of Abraham, so you and I are born sinners because we were in Adam when he sinned in the garden.

LESSON #9: You can be taken out of Adam and put in Christ by receiving Him as your Savior.

**LESSON #10: Where are you at this moment?
In Adam or in Christ?**

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QUESTIONS:

- 1. Read Hebrews 7:1-10 and summarize in your own words what Paul is saying in this section.**
- 2. How is Melchizedek described for us in verse 1?**
- 3. What did Abraham do for Melchizedek, according to verse 2?**
- 4. How is Melchizedek described in verse 3?**
- 5. What are we to “be giving careful consideration” of, according to verse 4?**
- 6. What are the “sons of Levi” commanded to do in verse 5 when they become priests?**
- 7. What has Melchizedek received and given, according to verse 6?**
- 8. What argument does Paul use to show that the priesthood of Melchizedek is superior to that of Levi in verses 7-10?**
- 9. What verse in the study has meant the most to you?**
- 10. What lesson have you learned from this study?**

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