

"Our Great High Priest"

Part 19

Hebrews 4:14-8:5

Introduction: Tonight in our study of Hebrews we are entering into Hebrews 7 and in the beginning of this chapter the writer is getting back to a thought which he had stepped away from in order to give a warning to the Hebrew believers.

Notice Hebrews 5:10-11

The writer had many things to write concerning Melchisedec but as we saw his readers had become dull of hearing. This was brought on by the divided allegiance which they were struggling with. They were torn between Judaism and Christianity. So this divided allegiance hindered their spiritual understanding. Therefore the writer points out their problem, the remedy, the possible consequences of not pressing forward and then he encourages them at the end of chapter 6 by pointing to the faithfulness of God as seen in the life of Abraham. He then comes right back to the subject of Melchisedec.

Notice Hebrews 6:20-7:1

So the writer is about to launch into a section in which he will point to Melchisedec in order to make 3 points.

1. God had a priesthood before the priesthood of Aaron and therefore He can also have a priesthood after the priesthood of Aaron.
2. Melchisedec and his priesthood are a TYPE of the priesthood of Jesus Christ.
3. The priesthood of Jesus Christ is superior to the priesthood of Aaron.

This 3rd point will be the main focus of the writer of Hebrews in this section.

Notice Hebrews 7:11

Here we get a glimpse of his thought. The Levitical priesthood could not bring one person to spiritual perfection. This is seen in the fact that the high priest's job was never done. He and his subordinate priests were CONSTANTLY offering sacrifices and they were for the same people time after time after time. But we know that the priesthood of our Lord brings you and me to spiritual perfection by ONE sacrifice for all.

Now I need to remind you about why the writer is giving this time to the priesthood of Melchisedec. It started in Hebrews 4.

Hebrews 4:14-16

¹⁴ *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.*

The writer is focused upon showing his readers that Jesus priesthood is far superior to Aaron's and he is doing this because they are considering going back under the Levitical priesthood so as to soften the pressure of the persecution.

Before we get into the verses there are still several thoughts which we need to consider. One thing we need to keep in mind is the importance which the Hebrews placed upon the high priest. The high priest was a man who went into the presence of God to offer the sacrifice for the sins of the people of Israel. He was the only man permitted to enter into the Holy of Holies and therefore he was man's representative to God.

Let me show you something very interesting about the word "priest". In Rome the priest became known as the "Pontifex". Notice what is said about the word in Wikipedia.

"The English term derives through Old French pontif from Latin pontifex, a word commonly held to come from the Latin root words pons (bridge) + facere (to do, to make), and so to have the literal meaning of "bridge-builder".

So under this definition the priest was a "bridge-builder" from man to God and that is a wonderful description of our Great High Priest Jesus Christ. It is through Him that we now have a way into the presence of God. This was also the way in which the Hebrews viewed the high priest under the Levitical system. The high priest was very important and without him there was no way for the common man to have access to God. The high priest was the "bridge-builder".

We are almost ready to get to our text but not quite yet. As we get into our text for tonight the writer will present Melchisedec as a TYPE or a SHADOW of Jesus Christ. There are many types in the Old Testament and in those types there are many things

pictured. But the picture which is seen in Melchisedec is a SHADOW of our Great High Priest.

Notice Hebrews 6:20 one more time.

Keep in mind that Jesus is a High Priest after the order of Melchisedec and that makes Him superior to Aaron's priesthood and this is what the writer is going to show us.

I. The Universality of Melchisedec's Priesthood.

I need to give you some background on the events mentioned in this verse 1 before we look at the verse. Back in the land of Canaan in Abraham's day the land was divided into what we could call regions or city states and each of these regions were ruled by a king. There was one king in Canaan who seemed to be very dominant and his name was Chedorlaomer and he was the king of Elam. There were 5 regions and their kings who served Chedorlaomer for 12 years and then they rebelled. It was in the 14th year that Chedorlaomer and 3 other kings entered into war against the 5 kings who rebelled. One of the kings who rebelled was the king of Sodom. Chedorlaomer and the other 3 kings defeated the other 5 kings and they also took all the spoils of their cities. Now at this time Lot, who was Abraham's nephew, lived in Sodom and therefore he and his family were carried off into captivity. One man escaped and reported what had happened to Abraham and he then gathered 318 men and he pursued after the kings and he defeated them and was able to bring Lot as well as all the spoils back to where they had been taken from.

It was upon his return that Abraham was met by Melchisedec.

Notice Hebrews 7:1

Here we see that Melchisedec who came from Salem met Abraham after the slaughter of the kings and he blessed Abraham. Now I need you to think with me for a moment to grasp the point here.

The priests who served under the priesthood of Aaron were "National" priests which means they were priests of God for the nation of Israel. Now this was not the case with Melchisedec because he existed before the nation of Israel. He did not come from the line of Abraham so when Melchisedec became a priest the nation of Israel did not exist therefore he was a "UNIVERSAL" priest.

Now let me explain how this applies to Jesus Christ. Jesus is a "UNIVERSAL" Priest and by that I mean that His Priesthood is not limited to the nation of Israel but it is for all who will come to Him by faith.

Let me show you the words of the angel when he spoke to the shepherds the night Jesus was born.

Luke 2:9-11

⁹ *And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.*

¹⁰ *And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, **which shall be to all people.***

¹¹ *For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.*

The good news was for ALL people and the news was there was a Saviour born and He was Christ the Lord.

Let me show you the words of John in 1 John.

1 John 2:1-2

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

² *And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also **for the sins of the whole world.***

The Priesthood of Jesus Christ is not limited to one nation but Jesus was appointed by the Father to be the High Priest of anyone who is willing to repent of their sin and come to Him by faith. So Jesus priesthood was foreshadowed in Melchisedec in that Melchisedec was a "universal" priest and so is Jesus therefore, the Priesthood of Jesus is superior to Aaron's priesthood because all who served as priests in the line of Aaron were national priests.

II. The Authority of Melchisedec

Notice Hebrews 7:1

Here we see that Melchisedec was not only the priest of the Most High but he was also the king of Salem. These 2 offices could never be found in one man under the priesthood of Aaron. In 2 Chronicles 26 there is an example of one man who desired to hold both

offices and he died of leprosy. So under the Levitical priesthood no man could be both priest and king.

But Melchisedec was both priest and king. Now I want you to understand what this means. As the KING he had power with God and as the PRIEST he had power with men. You see as the KING he ruled Salem and he manifest the authority and the righteousness of God. He was given the power to rule men for God. As the PRIEST he had power with man for he represented man to God, he was the "bridge-builder" for man.

This is a wonderful picture of our Savior. Jesus is not only Priest but He is also King. This would have been so foreign to the Hebrews. You see the priests ALL came from the tribe of Levi and from the family of Aaron. The kings came from the tribe of Judah and from the family of David. Under the Jewish community Jesus could be KING because He was from the tribe of Judah but He did not qualify to be the High Priest. But He was not a Priest after the priesthood of Aaron, but He was a Priest after the order of Melchisedec.

Zechariah spoke of Jesus as a King and a Priest.

Zechariah 6:12-13

¹² *And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD:*

¹³ *Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.*

Now let me share with you the point I believe God is making when He points to Melchisedec as both priest and king. Israel believed that God worked through them and no one else. To the Hebrews there could be no other covenant and there could be no other priesthood. But in this section we are in the writer, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, wants them to realize there was a priesthood which existed before Israel existed and there can be a Priesthood which can replace the priesthood of Aaron and there needed to be. Why? Because the Levitical priesthood could not bring ANY man to spiritual perfection.

This thought brings us to the next point.

III. The Power of Melchisedec

Notice Hebrews 7:2

We will come back to the first part of this verse. It is the second part we need to consider. Here in this verse we see that Melchisedec was a King of righteousness and a King of Peace. His name Melchisedec means RIGHTEOUSNESS. He was the King of Salem which became Jerusalem and that city is the city of PEACE. Therefore, it is said of Melchisedec that he was a King of RIGHTEOUSNESS and a King of PEACE. Now we really need to grasp what I am about to say. In this man RIGHTEOUSNESS and PEACE met making him an absolutely amazing type of Jesus Christ. He is a type/shadow of Jesus Christ and in these 2 attributes we can clearly see this.

Now let us get our mind on Jesus Christ since He is the One to be seen in this typology. Jesus Christ is THE King of RIGHTEOUSNESS and THE King of PEACE. Jesus, as the Great High Priest, is the Perfect blend of righteousness and peace. This is exactly what the priests under the Old Covenant attempted to accomplish. But there was none who could provide perfect righteousness and peace. That is exactly why the Levitical priests worked non-stop. It was a never ending system that could not provided perfect righteousness and perfect peace.

That is where Jesus comes in. In Him is perfect RIGHTEOUSNESS and perfect PEACE. When Jesus Christ went to the cross of Calvary He paid the sin debt for all of mankind and when we came to Him and received Him as our Savior He gave to us His very own RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Romans 3:22-26

²² *Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ **unto all and upon all them that believe**: for there is no difference:*

²³ *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;*

²⁴ ***Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:***

²⁵ *Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, **to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins** that are past, through the forbearance of God;*

²⁶ *To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.*

The moment we accepted Jesus Christ as our Savior we were covered with the RIGHTEOUSNESS of Jesus Christ. We were also justified which means to be DECLARED righteous by God. Now listen to this! The RIGHTEOUSNESS given to us is PERMENANT!

Hebrews 10:11-14

¹¹ *And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:*

¹² *But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;*

¹³ *From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.*

¹⁴ *For by one offering **he hath perfected for ever** them that are sanctified.*

Jesus did what no priest of the Levitical priesthood could ever do and that is He provided ETERNAL RIGHTEOUSNESS for ALL who will receive Him as their Savior. But that is not all. Melchisedec was a King of righteousness AND PEACE. So is Jesus.

Romans 5:1

*Therefore being justified by faith, **we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:***

Because of the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross we have been JUSTIFIED by faith and we are no longer enemies of God but now we have peace with God.

In Jesus Christ RIGHTEOUSNESS and PEACE have met finally and forever. I believe we can also include in this thought the PEACE OF GOD.

Philippians 4:6-7

⁶ *Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.*

⁷ *And the **peace of God**, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

Conclusion:

The order of these attributes in Melchisedec is also very important. We are told he was King of righteousness and King of peace. Until a person comes to Jesus Christ and is DECLARED righteous as they are covered in the RIGHTEOUSNESS of Jesus Christ, they will never have PEACE with God or the PEACE of God in their lives. Righteousness must come first!

This, by the way, is exactly why Jesus' Priesthood is superior to Aaron's priesthood.