

"Our Great High Priest"

Part 21

Hebrews 4:14-8:5

Introduction: We are currently in chapter 7 of our study of the book of Hebrews and we are looking at the argument which the writer sets forth to show the Hebrew believers that Jesus Christ is better than anything of the Old Covenant. Jesus is better than the prophets, the angels, Moses, and Aaron. In the section we are currently looking at the writer is explaining to the Hebrew believers that the Priesthood of Jesus is superior to the Levitical priesthood. But the question in the mind of the Hebrew believer would have been, "How can Jesus be a High Priest when he was not of the tribe of Levi and certainly not of the family of Aaron?"

In the mind of the Hebrew they saw the Levitical priesthood as the only priesthood that was able to build a bridge from man to God, and to them there could be no other priesthood. That is where the 7th chapter of Hebrews makes its entrance. In this chapter the writer is reminding the Hebrews that there was a priesthood that existed before the Levitical priesthood and it was the priesthood of Melchisedec. This priesthood of Melchisedec was a TYPE of the Priesthood of Jesus Christ. It is in this 7th chapter that the writer is explaining that this Melchisedec was superior to the priesthood of Aaron and since Jesus is a Priest after the order of Melchisedec He is also superior to the Levitical priesthood.

Tonight we have come to a very deep portion of this section.

Notice Hebrews 7:4-10

This is the passage which we shall look closely at tonight.

I. The Superiority of Melchisedec over the Levitical Priesthood.

Notice Hebrews 7:4

Here the writer sets out to show the Hebrews that Melchisedec was greater than Abraham. In this verse the writer refers to Abraham as the "Patriarch" just as a reminder of who Abraham was. At first this thought would have been difficult for the Jew to grasp. The reason was because Abraham was the father of the Jewish Nation and to the Hebrews there was none greater than Abraham except God.

So here in this section the writer invites them to consider just how great Melchisedec was and he points to the event found in Genesis 14 when Abraham returned from the slaughter of the kings and when he returned from the battle he was met by Melchisedec and it was then that Abraham gave to him a tenth of the spoils. The spoils were the plunder which Abraham had taken from the kings which he had defeated but there is far more here that we need to see. Let me show you the meaning of the word "spoils".

According to Vine's Expository Dictionary it is defined as:

Primarily "the top of a heap" (akros, "highest, top," and this, "a heap"), hence "firstfruit offerings," and in war "the choicest spoils,"...

From this definition of the word "spoils" we can see that Abraham gave a tenth from the "top of the heap" which means he gave a tenth of the very best to Melchisedec. This "top of the heap" was later to be given to the Lord.

Exodus 23:19a

¹⁹ *The first of the firstfruits of thy land thou shalt bring into the house of the LORD thy God.*

Proverbs 3:9

⁹ *Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase:*

The Hebrews whom received this letter would have known all of this. They would also have known that the one who paid the tithes was less (in position) than the one who received the tithes so in the case of Abraham and Melchisedec they would have understood that Melchisedec was greater than Abraham because he received the tithes from Abraham.

Notice Hebrews 7:5

Now the writer is going to build upon his thought to reach a marvelous conclusion which will solidify the superiority of the priesthood of Melchisedec. Here in this verse the writer points to the order of position. Abraham is great in position because he is the father of the nation of Israel. Then there is Levi who is the great grandson of Abraham and from him came the priests namely from the family of Aaron so the Levites were considered to be greater in position than the all the other tribes and this was seen in that the people of Israel paid tithes to the Levites.

So in position there was Abraham, the father of the nation. Then there were the Levites who were the descendants of Abraham and from them came the priests. Then there were the other 11 tribes who all paid tithes to the Levites. This was all commanded by God and that is why the writer says it was "according to the Law".

Notice Hebrews 7:6a

Now he points to a contrast which is introduced with the first word of the verse. The writer gets us back to Melchisedec. Melchisedec was not of the genealogy of the Levites because he was a priest before the nation of Israel ever existed. But he still received tithes from Abraham which makes him greater in position than what Abraham was.

Now let me bring something else into this thought. Abraham paid tithes to Melchisedec which means that he was superior to Abraham. Now let me show you a verse that we have already looked at previously.

Hebrews 7:3

³ *Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; **but made like unto the Son of God**; abideth a priest continually.*

Melchisedec was made like unto the Son of God. So if Melchisedec is greater than Levi and he is greater than Abraham how much GREATER must the Son of God be, seeing that Melchisedec is made LIKE the Son of God? Let me say this another way. If Melchisedec is greater than Abraham who is the father of the Nation of Israel and Melchisedec is just a TYPE of Jesus Christ how much GREATER must Jesus Christ be in His Priesthood than the priesthood of the Levites? Melchisedec was great but he is just a SHADOW of Jesus Christ. And Melchisedec was greater than Abraham who was the great grandfather of Levi and we know this because Abraham paid tithes to him so just think about how much greater the Priesthood of Jesus Christ is over the Levitical priesthood. This is the very point which the writer of Hebrews is making. But he is not finished.

Notice Hebrews 7:6-7

Here we have the second way in which the writer proves that Melchisedec is superior to Abraham. Melchisedec BLESSED Abraham and therefore we can know that the LESS is blessed of the GREATER. When the writer tells us it is "without contradiction" he means that the blessing of Melchisedec upon Abraham solidifies that Melchisedec was superior to Abraham in his position as the high priest of God and the king of Salem.

So the writer presents 2 ways in which the superiority of Melchisedec over Abraham is seen. The first is that Abraham paid tithes to him and the second is that Abraham was blessed BY Melchisedec. But there is another.

Notice Hebrews 7:8

Now in order to understand this verse we must not allow our minds to lose sight of the context of what is being presented here.

He tells his readers that in this life (here) the Levites received the tithes of their brethren and they were men who died.

Hebrews 7:23

²³ *And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death:*

The Levitical priests all eventually died. But while they were alive they received tithes of their brethren. Let me now show you the verse we are looking at so I can point to the contrast and what it means.

⁸ *And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth.*

The HE in the second half of this verse refers to Melchisedec. He received tithes and it is witnessed that in contrast to the dead priest HE is still alive. Does this mean that Melchisedec never died? No. He did die but the writer is referring to him in his type.

Hebrews 7:3

³ *Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually.*

This is the thought which is in the mind of the writer. There is no record of the birth or the death of Melchisedec. There is no record of the genealogy of Melchisedec. But he did have a birthday and he did die on a certain day. BUT in TYPE he APPEARS to be eternal just like Jesus Christ.

Notice Hebrews 7:8 again.

The third way that the writer shows the superiority of Melchisedec is by pointing to him in his TYPOLOGY as being eternal. All the Levitical priests eventually died but in TYPE

Melchisedec is eternal and since Jesus Priesthood is after the order of the priesthood of Melchisedec that means that Jesus' Priesthood is eternal.

Hebrews 7:25

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.

Now this is all very deep spiritual Truth but we are about to dive even deeper.

Before we move on to the next 2 verses let me just present to you a possible objection from the Hebrews who received this letter. They may have replied to all of this by saying, "Well, Abraham paid tithes and he was blessed by Melchisedec but Abraham was not a priest. Had he been a priest of the Levitical priesthood he would have not have been inferior to Melchisedec." That objection brings us to the next verse.

Notice Hebrews 7:9-10

Here the writer tells his readers that not only did Abraham pay tithes to Melchisedec but so did Levi! But how could Levi pay tithes to Melchisedec when he was not yet born at that time? As I said before Levi was the great grandson of Abraham. So how was this possible?

When Abraham paid tithes Levi was present in the loins of Abraham. He had not yet been born but he was in the loins of Abraham. Levi was "seminally" present when Abraham paid tithes to Melchisedec so he too paid tithes in Abraham.

Let me illustrate this so that you can better get your mind wrapped around this marvelous Truth.

Illustration:

Let me take your mind back to the Garden of Eden and to Genesis 3. When Adam sinned in the garden were we there? This answer may shock you but "YES" we were there. We were "seminally" present in the loins of Adam when he ate the forbidden fruit. Adam and Eve are our original parents so we were in the loins or the reproductive system of Adam when he sinned in the Garden of Eden. That is the very reason we are born sinners. We are not sinners because we sin but we sin because we are born sinners.

The sin nature is passed on through the seed of the man. So every descendant of Adam is now born with the sin nature. That is why Jesus did could not have an earthly father

because if He would have had an earthy father then He would have been born with a sin nature. He had an earthly mother (Mary) but His Father was God.

Now let me take you a little deeper into this thought. We are descendants of Adam and so we are born sinners who are spiritually dead which means we are born separated from God. This is exactly why we must be BORN AGAIN.

John 3:3

³ *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, **Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.***

This happens when we hear the Word of God and we accept Jesus Christ as our Saviour. Now when this happens we are then BORN AGAIN. Now watch these verses.

1 Peter 1:22-23

²² *Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:*

²³ ***Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible,** by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.*

The first time we were born we were born of CORRUPTIBLE seed which was from the sinful seed of Adam. When we are BORN AGAIN we are born of INCORRUPTIBLE seed. Now catch this. When we are BORN AGAIN we are born of GOD.

1 John 3:9

⁹ ***Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.***

Physically we are children of Adam and so we are born of a sinful/corruptible seed. Spiritually we are literally born of God so we are born of an INCORRUPTIBLE SEED.

Now let me get back to Hebrews.

Notice Hebrews 7:9-10

Abraham paid tithes to Melchisedec and so did Levi. Even though Levi was not yet born he was seminally present in the reproductive system of the loins of Abraham.

Conclusion:

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Therefore the entire point of the writer of Hebrews is to help his readers to see that there is a Priesthood that is superior to the Levitical priesthood. The Superior Priesthood is the Priesthood of Jesus Christ. He is a Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.

Melchisedec was greater than Abraham because Abraham paid tithes to him. He is greater than Abraham because he blessed Abraham. He is greater than the Levitical priests because in TYPE he is eternal and all the Levitical priests died. He is greater than Levi because Levi paid tithes to him when Levi was in the loins of Abraham.

So if Melchisedec is greater and he is MADE LIKE the Son of God how much greater must the Priesthood of the Son of God be?