

**"Our Great High Priest"**

**Part 23**

**Hebrews 4:14-8:5**

**Introduction:** Last week in our study of the book of Hebrews we were looking at Hebrews 7:11-19. Before we step back into these verses I need to refresh your memory on the context of what we are looking at. When we looked at Hebrews 7:1-10 the writer explained that the priesthood of Melchisedec was superior to the Levitical priesthood. This was seen in many ways but one major way this was seen was in the fact that Abraham paid tithes to Melchisedec and Melchisedec blessed Abraham. The writer even showed that Melchisedec was greater than Levi because Levi also paid tithes to Melchisedec because he was in the loins of Abraham when Abraham paid tithes.

Now the idea in the mind of the writer through all of this was the words he recorded in at the end of chapter 6.

**Hebrews 6:20**

<sup>20</sup> *Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.*

Jesus is a High Priest after the order of Melchisedec and not after the order of the Levitical priests. So if the priesthood of Melchisedec is superior to the Levitical priesthood then that means that the Priesthood of Jesus Christ is Superior to the Levitical priesthood also. That is the thought the writer is setting forth in this section. As the writer moves on he will show the how and why the Levitical priesthood was inferior to the Priesthood of Jesus Christ.

This is what we started to look at last week.

**I. The Need for a Better Priesthood**

**Part 2**

**Hebrews 7:11-19**

**Notice Hebrews 7:11**

We looked at this verse last week so I will just touch briefly on what is here. There are 2 key words within this verse. The word "perfection" here needs to be understood in order

to understand the point of the writer. The word "perfect" refers to "complete communion" with God. This is something which the Levitical system could never provide. Under the Levitical system the common man could never come into the presence of God. It was only the high priest who could enter the Holy of Holies once a year as he represented man to God. But the common man was always separated from God by the veil. Therefore, under the Levitical system man could never enter into the "complete communion" with God.

For this reason there was the need for ANOTHER Priesthood.

**Notice Hebrews 7:11 again.**

The word "another" is also very important. There are 2 words in the Greek that are translated "another" one means "another of the same kind" the other means "another of a different kind". The word "another" here in Hebrews 7:11 means "another of a DIFFERENT kind". This means that Jesus was a High Priest but He was not a High Priest like the Levitical Priests. He was a High Priest of a DIFFERENT kind. He was a High Priest after the order of Melchisedec and He was a High Priest that could bring the common man into complete communion with God. Let me remind you where this section started and show you what the writer is showing to the Hebrews.

**Hebrews 4:14-16**

<sup>14</sup> *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.*

<sup>15</sup> *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.*

<sup>16</sup> **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 words here in 4:16 were words that were difficult for the Hebrews to grasp because under the Levitical system this was not possible. This is exactly why in Hebrews 7 the writer is explaining that Jesus is ANOTHER HIGH PRIEST OF A DIFFERENT KIND.

Now the question in the mind of the Hebrews would have been twofold. They would have asked about the requirements of the Law pertaining to the priesthood and they would have inquired about Jesus being of the tribe of Judah and not Levi.

**Notice Hebrews 7:12**

Here the writer points out that the priesthood was change as well as the Law. The word "changed" here is very important. It literally means that the Priesthood of Jesus Christ COMPLETELY took the place of the Levitical priesthood. Another way to explain this is that Christianity has completely replaced Judaism. This is what the readers of Hebrews needed to grasp.

It was not only the priesthood that was changed but also the Law. This is NOT talking about God's moral Law. The moral Law is still in effect. This is speaking of the part of the Law that pertained to the Levitical priesthood system. In other words it was the rituals and the ceremonies and all animal sacrifices that were no longer needed. The reason was Jesus made ONE SACRIFICE for all.

**Notice Hebrews 7:13-14**

Here is the reason the Law and the priesthood were changed. Jesus came from the tribe of Juda and the tribe of Juda had no place in the priesthood under the Old Covenant. Therefore it had to be changed. The Levitical priests were from the tribe of Levi and the family of Aaron so under the Old Covenant Jesus would not qualify. But Jesus was not a High Priest of the Levitical priesthood. He was of the tribe of Juda and the writer tells his readers that this was evident. Jesus was therefore a Priest after the order of Melchisedec and the priesthood of Melchisedec was ANOTHER priesthood of a different kind that was superior to the Levitical priesthood.

Now the writer is going to take these thoughts even further.

**Notice Hebrews 7:15**

Here the writer gathers the thoughts of his readers and he points back to all he has said in this chapter and he points to the obvious. The obvious was that there had to be ANOTHER priesthood (another of a different kind) and that OTHER priesthood had to be after the order of Melchisedec.

The writer tells his readers that it is far more evident. In other words there was overwhelming evidence that the Levitical priesthood needed to be replaced and it was therefore obsolete. It was clearly evident that Jesus came from the tribe of Juda and it is even more evident that the Levitical priesthood was inferior and needed to be set aside. It was evident that the Levitical priesthood was only temporary but the Priesthood of Jesus which was after the order of Melchisedec was eternal.

So with all of that said the Hebrew believers needed to let go of the Levitical sacrificial system. It had served its purpose as a TYPE but now the fulfillment of that TYPE was here and His Priesthood was far superior to Aaron's.

Now let me stop here for a moment and point out something very interesting about Aaron and Melchisedec. Both of these men were types of Jesus Christ. Now I know that some people would want to respond by saying, "How can Aaron be a type if his priesthood was inferior to Christ's? Someone else may say, "How can both men, who are so different, be types of Jesus Christ?"

The answer is that Aaron was a type of Christ in his position and in his operation. In other words he was the mediator between men and God and in his operation he offered sacrifices on behalf of the people. Melchisedec was a type in his person. He was not of the tribe of Levi and he was also both king and priest. So both men can be seen as types of Jesus Christ.

#### **Notice Hebrews 7:16**

Now as the writer speaks of Jesus he tells his readers that Jesus was made a High Priest NOT after the law of a carnal commandment. But what does he mean by this?

We have already talked about this before so I will not spend a great deal of time on it. But under the Old Covenant the requirements for the priesthood were all about the FLESH. That is what the word "carnal" means here. In other words the priests of the Levitical priesthood were chosen based upon their genealogy. They had to be of the tribe of Levi and of the family of Aaron. Then in Leviticus 21 there is a long list of FLESHLY qualifications that those of the family of Aaron had to meet to be the High Priest. Let me show you a few.

#### **Leviticus 21:17-23**

<sup>17</sup> *Speak unto Aaron, saying, Whosoever he be of thy seed in their generations that hath any blemish, let him not approach to offer the bread of his God.*

<sup>18</sup> *For whatsoever man he be that hath a blemish, he shall not approach: a blind man, or a lame, or he that hath a flat nose, or any thing superfluous,*

<sup>19</sup> *Or a man that is brokenfooted, or brokenhanded,*

<sup>20</sup> *Or crookbackt, or a dwarf, or that hath a blemish in his eye, or be scurvy, or scabbed, or hath his stones broken;*

<sup>21</sup> *No man that hath a blemish of the seed of Aaron the priest shall come nigh to offer the offerings of the LORD made by fire: he hath a blemish; he shall not come nigh to offer the bread of his God.*

<sup>22</sup> *He shall eat the bread of his God, both of the most holy, and of the holy.*

<sup>23</sup> *Only he shall not go in unto the veil, nor come nigh unto the altar, because he hath a blemish; that he profane not my sanctuaries: for I the LORD do sanctify them.*

Then there were the ceremonies which the priests went through in Leviticus 8 but the point is it was all about the FLESH. There were those who qualified to be priests and who went through the ceremonies and they were still corrupt. There are 2 such men who come to mind and they were Hophni and Phinehas who we read of in 1 Samuel.

Now we need to grasp the thought here. These men were not chosen based upon character or holiness. They became priests because of a carnal/fleshly commandment. They were of the right tribe and the right family.

But Jesus was different.

**Notice Hebrews 7:16 again.**

Jesus became a Priest because of the power of an endless life. But what does this mean? This is absolutely amazing!!

The Levitical priests functioned in the power of the flesh and when they became old they died. But Jesus functions in the POWER OF THE RESURRECTION LIFE and He is a High Priest FOREVER. Let me show you where the writer is going with this.

**Hebrews 7:23-25**

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

<sup>24</sup> *But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.*

<sup>25</sup> *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.*

Let me explain what the writer is saying in all of this. The Levitical priesthood could never bring man into perfect/complete communion with God. The blood of bulls and goats could never do it. The blood of those sacrifices only made "atonement" for sin which means the blood only covered the sin. It was not washed away by the blood of the sacrificed animals.

**Hebrews 10:5-10**

<sup>5</sup> *Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me:*

<sup>6</sup> *In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure.*

<sup>7</sup> *Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.*

<sup>8</sup> Above when he said, *Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law;*

<sup>9</sup> Then said he, *Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. **He taketh away the first**, that he may establish the second.*

<sup>10</sup> *By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*

The sacrifice of Jesus Christ has sanctified us ONCE FOR ALL. Now listen to this!! The Levitical priests functioned in the power of the FLESH but Jesus functions in His High Priestly role in the **endless power of the resurrection**. Now here is what that means to you and me. There is no greater power and when He rose from the grave He conquered the most powerful enemy of man and that was death. Therefore, we are FOREVER secure under the Priesthood of Jesus Christ.

### **Hebrews 6:18-20**

<sup>18</sup> *That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:*

<sup>19</sup> *Which hope we have as an **anchor of the soul**, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;*

<sup>20</sup> *Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.*

Jesus has taken us into the Holy of Holies and He has anchored us there.

Now let us get back to the verses again.

### **Notice Hebrews 7:16-17**

The word FOR introduces the reason why the writer can say that Jesus is a Priest after the power of an endless life. It is because He is a High Priest FOREVER after the order of Melchisedec and this was testified of by God.

### **Psalms 110:4**

<sup>4</sup> *The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.*

### **Notice Hebrews 7:18**

Here the writer tells his readers that truly there is a "disannulling" of the commandment. This means that the Mosaic Law had to be "abolished/set aside". Why? It was weak and unprofitable and it could not do what Jesus did.

### **Notice Hebrews 7:19**

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Here is the reason. It could not make one person perfect. Now we need to look closely at this verse. The word "perfect" here in the beginning of the verse is defined at the end of the verse. It is defined as "DRAWING NEAR TO GOD".

Here is the idea which is communicated by the writer: *God has set aside the Old Covenant and He has introduced a New Covenant and this New Covenant which is ratified by the blood of Jesus Christ is able to bring us into complete communion with God.*

**Conclusion:**

I want to remind you that *God's purpose in giving His only begotten Son to die for us was not just to save us from the penalty and the power of sin. It was not just to save us from the fires of hell. It was not just to assure us of a home in heaven. God had something else in mind of which many believers miss. It is to bring us into complete communion with Him. God longs to have fellowship with the crown of His creation which is mankind.*