

Hebrews 7:1-10

OPEN - Do you have any idea what we (as a church) started doing on October 14th of last year ?

- ➔ **That was the first Sunday that we started studying the letter to the Hebrews.**
 - There have been 35 Sundays since then; at least 30 of them have been spent in Hebrews.
 - Today, we're going to begin chapter seven of Hebrews.
- ➔ **In a very real sense, everything up to this point has been something of an introduction.**
 - Beginning in chapter 7, and continuing through chapter 10:18, the author finally details the main reason for his writing: THE HIGH PRIESTHOOD OF MESSIAH JESUS.
 - He had previously introduced Jesus' High Priesthood, but their spiritual dullness had kept him from immediately delving in to the subject material.
 - a. **2:17-18, 3:1** ~ *Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted. ¹ Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus,*
 - b. **Chapters 3-4** -- After introducing Jesus as High Priest, the author spends most of the rest of chapter 3 and almost all of chapter 4 warning them against unbelief -- like their forefathers.
 - c. **4:14-16** ~ *Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*
 - d. **Chapter 5** -- a High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek
 - e. **5:10-11** ~ *called by God as High Priest "according to the order of Melchizedek,"¹¹ of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.*
 - f. **Chapter 6** -- he warns them not to fall away from the evidence!
 - g. **Chapter 7** -- having sufficiently warned them, the author now believes he is set to instruct them concerning Melchizedek.

➔ In introducing Melchizedek, the author is going to challenge and shake the very foundation of the way they have worshiped GOD and practiced religion for 1500 years!

A. Most Jews understood and accepted that the promised Messiah of GOD would be a KING, after the order of King David – and oh, how they longed for that day!

B. But what most Jews missed was that the very same Messiah would also be a PRIEST.

- But as soon as it is suggested that JESUS of Nazareth is a High Priest (let alone a priest!) -- all sorts of red flags would go up in the Jewish mind.
- Simply put, Jesus is disqualified from the priesthood because He was not born into the priestly tribe (family) of Levi; Jesus was born in the tribe (family) of Judah.
 - Illustrate: Family Tree with Jacob's twelve sons = the house of Israel.

BACKUP FOR A MOMENT -

- ➔ Whether the average Jew understood or believed it, or not, their Scriptures taught very clearly that the promised Messiah of GOD -- their Redeemer, Savior, Lord -- would be all of three things:
 - 1) **PROPHET** -- one who declares, speaks, brings GOD's message to them.
 - 2) **PRIEST** -- one who mediates and intercedes before a holy GOD on their behalf.
 - 3) **KING** -- one who rules and reigns over all their enemies.
- ➔ Because the average Jew could not conceive of any one individual possibly fulfilling all three roles/ functions, the Jews believed GOD was going to send several momentous persons to them in the course of time.
 - ➔ **These persons would probably coincide with one another, and together they would fulfill GOD's glorious purposes for Israel!**
 - Note: Most Jews only anticipated the coming of TWO persons -- a Prophet and a King.
 - For the average Jew, the need for a different High Priest was wholly lost on them.
 - John 1:19-27 ~ *Now this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?"* ²⁰ *He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the [Messiah]."* ²¹ *And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?"* *He said, "I am not."*

"Are you the Prophet?" *And he answered, "No."*

²² *Then they said to him, "Who are you, that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?"* ²³ *He said: "I am 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Make straight the way of the LORD," as the prophet Isaiah said."* ²⁴ *Now those who were sent were from the Pharisees.*

²⁵ *And they asked him, saying, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the [Messiah], nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?"* ²⁶ *John answered them, saying, "I baptize with water, but there stands One among you whom you do not know.* ²⁷ *It is He who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose."*
- ➔ The fact of the matter is that:
 - ✦ Jesus was the Prophet of whom Moses wrote,
 - ✦ Jesus is a great High Priest, according to the order of Melchizedek
 - ✦ Jesus is the "son of David" -- yet "David's Lord".
 - [☼] But the majority of Jews challenged Jesus' right to be any ONE of the three!
 - 1) **PROPHET** -- *They answered and said to [Nicodemus], "Are you also from Galilee? Search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee."* (John 7:52)

"By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority?"
(Matthew 21:23b)
 - 2) **PRIEST** -- will be discussed in Hebrews...
 - 3) **KING** -- must be born in David's royal city (Bethlehem), of the tribe of Judah --
(Matthew 2:5-6)

THE AUTHOR OF HEBREWS IS PRIMARILY CONCERNED WITH JESUS' PRIESTHOOD -

➔ But first, let's understand something of the origin of the current priesthood...

- ➔ **Numbers 3:5-13** – *And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying:* ⁶ **"Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them**

before Aaron the priest, that they may serve him. ⁷ And they shall attend to his needs and the needs of the whole congregation before the tabernacle of meeting, to do the work of the tabernacle. ⁸ Also they shall attend to all the furnishings of the tabernacle of meeting, and to the needs of the children of Israel, to do the work of the tabernacle. ⁹ And you shall give the Levites to Aaron and his sons; they are given entirely to him from among the children of Israel. ¹⁰ So you shall appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall attend to their priesthood; but the outsider who comes near shall be put to death."

¹¹ Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ¹² "Now behold, I Myself have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of every firstborn who opens the womb among the children of Israel. Therefore the Levites shall be Mine, ¹³ because all the firstborn are Mine. On the day that I struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I sanctified to Myself all the firstborn in Israel, both man and beast. They shall be Mine: I am the LORD."

➤ Jesus is not from the tribe of Levi; He is from the tribe of Judah.

↳ **The author of Hebrews freely acknowledges this –**

▷ Hebrews 7:14 ~ *For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood.*

↳ **Rather than being a deal-breaker, the author uses it to his own advantage -- to make his point!**

JESUS IS A GREATER HIGH PRIEST THAN ANY PRIEST THEY HAVE EVER KNOWN !

➤ He is a High Priest of a completely different order --

↳ **But isn't that like changing the rules in the middle of the game ?**

▷ It could be --

▷ But in Jesus' case, it's not -- because the priesthood to which He belongs was established and set in place by GOD long before the Levitical priesthood was ever founded..

↳ **It all goes back to the Old Testament person of ... Melchizedek <?>.**

MELCHIZEDEK

P Melchizedek is a name that barely registers in the average Jew's (or Christian's) mind.

▶ Not many sermons have been preached on Melchizedek; not many books written.

▶ His name occurs a grand total of TWO times in the Old Testament, and then another 9x in Hebrews.

- By contrast, Abraham, 200+ // Moses, 700+ // David, 900+

▷ Two possible reactions:

(1) Why is so much made out of so little ? (2) Why did the Holy Spirit see fit to include him at all ?

1. Melchizedek's first mention is in Genesis 14:18.

2. Melchizedek's second mention is 1000 years later! -- in Psalm 110.

- The #1 most quoted Old Testament passage in all of the New Testament.

3. Melchizedek's third mention is still another 1000 years later -- in Hebrews!

- 9 mentions!

- 7x the author says that Messiah (Jesus) is "a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek".

By demonstrating the superiority of Melchizedek to Abraham, and the superiority of Melchizedek's priesthood to the Levitical priesthood -- the author is going to establish the superiority of Jesus' priesthood.

y He is going to present three basic proofs (arguments):

- 1) **Historical argument**..... 7:1-10
- 2) **Doctrinal argument**..... 7:11-25
- 3) **Practical (utilitarian) argument**..... 7:26-28

Historical argument

► Genesis 14:13-24 - (New Living Translation)

But one of Lot's men escaped and reported everything to Abram the Hebrew, who was living near the oak grove belonging to Mamre the Amorite. Mamre and his relatives, Eshcol and Aner, were Abram's allies.

¹⁴ *When Abram heard that his nephew Lot had been captured, he mobilized the 318 trained men who had been born into his household. Then he pursued Kedorlaomer's army until he caught up with them at Dan.*

¹⁵ *There he divided his men and attacked during the night. Kedorlaomer's army fled, but Abram chased them as far as Hobah, north of Damascus.*

¹⁶ *Abram recovered all the goods that had been taken, and he brought back his nephew Lot with his possessions and all the women and other captives.*

¹⁷ *After Abram returned from his victory over Kedorlaomer and all his allies, the king of Sodom went out to meet him in the valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). ¹⁸ And Melchizedek, the king of Salem and a priest of God Most High, brought Abram some bread and wine. ¹⁹ Melchizedek blessed Abram with this blessing:*

"Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. ²⁰ And blessed be God Most High, who has defeated your enemies for you."

Then Abram gave Melchizedek a tenth of all the goods he had recovered.

²¹ *The king of Sodom said to Abram,*

"Give back my people who were captured. But you may keep for yourself all the goods you have recovered."

²² *Abram replied to the king of Sodom,*

"I solemnly swear to the Lord, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, ²³ that I will not take so much as a single thread or sandal thong from what belongs to you. Otherwise you might say, 'I am the one who made Abram rich.'

²⁴ I will accept only what my young warriors have already eaten, and I request that you give a fair share of the goods to my allies — Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre."

Hebrews 7:1-10 - (NKJV)

For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, ² to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated "king of righteousness." and then also king of Salem, meaning "king of peace." ³ without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually.

⁴ Now consider how great this man was, to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils.

⁵ And indeed those who are of the sons of Levi, who receive the priesthood, have a commandment to receive tithes from the people according to the law, that is, from their brethren, though they have come from the loins of Abraham;

⁶ but he whose genealogy is not derived from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises.

⁷ Now beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better.

⁸ Here mortal men receive tithes, but there he receives them, of whom it is witnessed that he lives.

⁹ Even Levi, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, so to speak, ¹⁰ for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.

A) Melchizedek, his name and titles:

1. King of Salem.....Jerusalem (Psalm 76:2) // Jebusites took over Salem
 2. Priest of the Most High God.....
 3. Melchizedek = "king of righteousness"..... melek (king) + tzedeq (righteousness)
 4. King of Salem = "king of peace"..... "shalom" = "peace"
- ➔ Melchizedek is unique in that he is both a King and a Priest.
 - Under the Mosaic law, the throne and the altar were separated.
 - If/when a king attempted to officiate as a priest, he was sternly judged/rebuked by GOD.
 - ➔ Note the order: 1) righteousness 2) peace
 - A necessary order --
 - righteousness leads to, produces peace; peace never precedes righteousness.
 - The trouble is, most people want peace without righteousness -- they want to avoid or eliminate the consequences of sin, without dealing with their own sin, unrighteousness.

B) Melchizedek his ancestry: verse 3

C) Melchizedek, his life:

- ➔ **Abraham paid tithes to him.**
 - So too, Levi paid tithes (and the entire Levitical priesthood!)
- ➔ **Melchizedek blessed Abraham.**