

Hebrews: A Bridge from the Old to the New

Hebrews Chapter 7a

Jesus Christ: A Superior Priesthood – A Better Order

Melchizedek, the Priest and King (Verses 1-3)

1 As mentioned earlier Hebrews 5:6, Melchizedek was unique, because he was both a king (of Salem Genesis 14:18, most likely Jerusalem Psalms 76:2) and a priest (of God Most High Genesis 14:18, Mark 5:7). Melchizedek met and blessed Abram* as he returned home from a military victory over several kings in the area Genesis 14:17.

*At the time of the original version of this story Genesis 14:17-20, Abraham was still referred to as Abram, because God did not change his name to Abraham until the covenant of circumcision Genesis 17:3-14.

2 Abram obviously accepted Melchizedek as having been sent by the same God who had directed him to leave his home and journey to the land promised to him and his descendants Genesis 12:1-9, because he voluntarily gave Melchizedek a tenth of his victory spoils Genesis 14:20. The titles “king [prince] of peace” Isaiah 9:6 and “king [Lord] of righteousness” Jeremiah 23:5-6, 33:15-16 are Messianic-like, and a foreshadowing of Jesus.

Abram’s giving a tenth to Melchizedek Genesis 14:20 is the first time this concept is mentioned in the Bible.

3 There are two major interpretations: (1) the appearance of Melchizedek was a Christophany, but the use of the phrase “like the Son of God” Mark 15:39, John 1:32-34 makes this seem unlikely and (2) also, the Hebrew construct appears to indicate that Melchizedek had parents, but his genealogy was not what brought him the title of priest (as in the Levitical line): he was simply appointed by God to serve in this permanent role.

The Superiority of the Melchizedek Priesthood to the Levitical Priesthood (Verses 4-10)

4 The giving of a tenth was proof Melchizedek was greater than Abram ^{v.7}, father of the nation of Israel Acts 7:2.

5 Under the Mosaic Law, the Lord required the Israelites to tithe to the Levitical priests, in return for their work in the Tabernacle Numbers 18:21 (21-24); however, not in order to honor the priests, but to honor God’s law.

6-7 Repeated for emphasis, the priesthood of Melchizedek did not result from him being in the line of Aaron Leviticus 8:1-3, 6-7a (1-9), but was established by Divine appointment Hebrews 5:1, 4-6 (1-10). Moreover, both Melchizedek’s receiving the tenth from and giving a blessing to Abram, proved Melchizedek’s superiority.

8 Scripture did not note Melchizedek’s death, but did specify when Aaron Numbers 20:27-29 and sons died. These details symbolize the superior eternal Melchizedek priesthood Hebrews 5:6, 6:20b over the Levitical priesthood.

9-10 The Israelites tithed to the Levitical priests, and Abraham, the Father of the Israelites and the Levites, tithed to Melchizedek; therefore, it was as if all the Israelites had tithed to Melchizedek. The author used this logic to emphasize one more time that, just like sin & death came through one man (Adam) and grace & righteousness through one man (Jesus), the superior priesthood came through one man (Melchizedek).

Genesis 14:17-20 ¹⁷ After Abram returned from defeating Kedorlaomer and the kings allied with him, the king of Sodom came out to meet him in the Valley of Shaveh (the King's Valley). ¹⁸ Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, ¹⁹ and he blessed Abram, saying, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. ²⁰ And blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand." Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

Leviticus 8:1-3,6-7a The LORD said to Moses, "Bring Aaron and his sons, their garments, the anointing oil, the bull for the sin offering, the two rams and the basket containing bread made without yeast, and gather the entire assembly at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting." ... Then Moses brought Aaron and his sons forward and washed them with water. He put the tunic on Aaron, tied the sash around him, clothed him with the robe and put the ephod on him.

Numbers 18:21 "I give to the Levites all the tithes in Israel as their inheritance in return for the work they do while serving at the Tent of Meeting."

Numbers 20:27-29 Moses did as the LORD commanded: They went up Mount Hor in the sight of the whole community. Moses removed Aaron's garments and put them on his son Eleazar. And Aaron died there on top of the mountain. Then Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain, and when the whole community learned that Aaron had died, the entire house of Israel mourned for him thirty days.

Psalms 76:2 His tent is in Salem, his dwelling place in Zion.

Isaiah 9:6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Jeremiah 23:5-6 "The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. ... This is the name by which he will be called: The LORD Our Righteousness."

Jeremiah 33:15-16 "In those days and at that time I will make a righteous Branch sprout from David's line; he will do what is just and right in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. This is the name by which it will be called: The LORD Our Righteousness."

Mark 5:7 [The evil spirit] shouted at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Swear to God that you won't torture me!"

Mark 15:39 And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, heard his cry and saw how he died, he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!"

John 1:32-34 Then John [the Baptist] gave this testimony: "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God."

Acts 7:2 To this [Stephen] replied: "Brothers and fathers, listen to me! The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was still in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran."

Hebrews 5:1,4-6 ¹ Every high priest is selected from among men and is appointed to represent them in matters related to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. ... ⁴ No one takes this honor upon himself; he must be called by God, just as Aaron was. ⁵ So Christ also did not take upon himself the glory of becoming a high priest. But God said to him, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father." ⁶ And he says in another place, "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek."

Hebrews 6:20b [Jesus] has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.