



JUST JESUS

The Book of Hebrews

Lessons Ten & Eleven

TEXT

¹This Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of God Most High. He met Abraham returning from the defeat of the kings and blessed him, ²and Abraham gave him a tenth of everything. First, his name means "king of righteousness"; then also, "king of Salem" means "king of peace." ³Without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, like the Son of God he remains a priest forever.

⁴Just think how great he was: Even the patriarch Abraham gave him a tenth of the plunder! ⁵Now the law requires the descendants of Levi who become priests to collect a tenth from the people--that is, their brothers--even though their brothers are descended from Abraham. ⁶This man, however, did not trace his descent from Levi, yet he collected a tenth from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. ⁷And without doubt the lesser person is blessed by the greater. ⁸In the one case, the tenth is collected by men who die; but in the other case, by him who is declared to be living. ⁹One might even say that Levi, who collects the tenth, paid the tenth through Abraham, ¹⁰because when Melchizedek met Abraham, Levi was still in the body of his ancestor.

¹¹If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the law was given to the people), why was there still need for another priest to come--one in the order of Melchizedek, not in the order of Aaron? ¹²For when there is a change of the priesthood, there must also be a change of the law. ¹³He of whom these things are said belonged to a different tribe, and no one from that tribe has ever served at the altar. ¹⁴For it is clear that our Lord descended from Judah, and in regard to that tribe Moses said nothing about priests. ¹⁵And what we have said is even more clear if another priest like Melchizedek appears, ¹⁶one who has become a priest not on the basis of a regulation as to his ancestry but on the basis of the power of an indestructible life. ¹⁷For it is declared:

"You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek."

¹⁸The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless ¹⁹(for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God.

²⁰And it was not without an oath! Others became priests without any oath, ²¹but he became a priest with an oath when God said to him:

"The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: 'You are a priest forever.' "

²²Because of this oath, Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.

²³Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in

office;²⁴ but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood.²⁵ Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.

²⁶Such a high priest meets our need--one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens.²⁷ Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself.²⁸ For the law appoints as high priests men who are weak; but the oath, which came after the law, appointed the Son, who has been made perfect forever.

Hebrews 7:1-28

CONTEXT

The “Letter to the Hebrews” isn’t actually a letter at all, but a 1st century sermon that was written and sent to a small house church, probably in the city of Rome following the increased persecution of 65 A.D. under Nero. The recipients were likely Roman Jews who had become Christians, and the author knew them personally.

Hebrews 1:1-2:18

God spoke in various ways to our fathers through the prophets, but now he has spoken his final word to us in his Son, his perfect representative. The Son of God is his agent not only in creation and revelation, but also—and pre-eminently—in the salvation of the human race. He is greater than any prophet; he is greater even than the angels, as the ancient scriptures abundantly testify. It was through angels that Moses’ law was communicated, and its sanctions were severe enough; how much more perilous must it be to ignore the saving message brought by no angel, but by Jesus, the Son of God!

Jesus, the Son of God, is the one to whom the dominion of the world has been committed for all time to come. As the eighth psalm teaches us, God has put everything under the dominion of human beings, and it was the nature of humans—*our* nature—that the Son of God took upon himself in order to win back this dominion. To do this he had to conquer the devil who had usurped it, and rescue those whom he held in bondage; and he conquered the devil when in death he invaded the realm of death, which the devil had controlled until then. It is because Jesus is truly Man, moreover, that he is qualified to serve as high priest on his people’s behalf; he knows all their trials from his own experiences and therefore can give them the timely help they need.

Hebrews 3:1-4:14

But let us beware: those who rebelled against God in the days of the wilderness wanderings were excluded from his rest in the promised land. There is, however, a better rest than that which the Israelites found in Canaan; it is the rest that awaits the people of God. We must take care not to forfeit that rest by rebelling against God, when he speaks to us no longer through his servant Moses, as he did in those days, but through his Son, one greater than Moses.

Hebrews 4:15-6:20

As has already been said, Jesus is our great high priest, able to sympathize with his people and help them. We may safely look for understanding and delivering grace to the one who endured the agony of Gethsemane. He has been called to his high-priestly office by God himself, as an inspired oracle makes clear: “The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, ‘You are a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek.’”

(I should like to enlarge on this subject, but really I do not know if I can; you are acting so spiritually immature. I must warn you solemnly that there are some who look exactly like true believers until the “fruit of their faith” is seen; when that happens it is clear that they never truly believed at all. Not that I think you actually mean to be like them, that is to say apostates; I have better hopes of you than that. I want you rather to press on from the point you have reached, so as to attain full maturity, instead of sticking there, or slipping back.)

Summations adapted from F.F. Bruce, *Hebrews*, pp. xix-xxii

SUBTEXT

The previous section (5:11-6:20) concludes with an assurance that God's promises for us and about our salvation are true. The author uses the OT priest Melchizedek as one of the "proofs" that we can rely on God (6:20). In Chapter 7, he now explains why Jesus as our high priest, in the order of Melchizedek, demonstrates this.

A Few Things To Know

"Typology as it relates to Christ's person and work is the study of the correspondences between persons, events, and things that first appear in the Old Testament to preview, prepare, or more fully express New Testament salvation truths."

Chapell Christ Centered Preaching, p. 274

Melchizedek is a "type" of Christ. He foreshadows the importance of key truths about Christ's ministry in a way that helps us see how God's plan for salvation was working out all along.

Also, *Hebrews* is the one book of the New Testament that gives rise to the doctrine of Christ being our high priest. It is the only place where it is explicitly taught.



Jesus... God... The Bible... and Mel-kiz-a-dek?!

The following chart is based largely on Lane, *Hebrews*, p. 101ff

Melchizedek	Relates to Jesus	Why It Matters
Priest and King <i>This Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of God Most High. (v1)</i>	(Prophet), Priest and King	Jesus, like M., stands above and beyond the Law, which prohibited the king from performing priestly duties. These were confined only to members from the tribe of Levi, who could not be kings. M. existed before the tribes, as did Christ, although Christ's lineage through Joseph is to the tribe of Judah and not Levi.

Melchizedek	Relates to Jesus	Why It Matters
<p>Appointed Directly by God <i>...priest of God Most High (v1)</i></p> <p><i>Without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, (v3)</i></p>	<p>God the Son, Ordained by God the Father as Priest</p> <p><i>And what we have said is even more clear if another priest like Melchizedek appears, one who has become a priest not on the basis of a regulation as to his ancestry but on the basis of the power of an indestructible life. For it is declared:</i></p> <p><i>"You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek."</i> (v 15)</p>	<p>Jesus, like M., stood outside of the Levitical priesthood. They were not priests based on legal qualifications (neither were they from the tribe of Levi), but based on God's direct appointment of them. They represent something different than the Law/Levitical priesthood.</p>
<p>Precedes the Law — Superior to Law <i>He met Abraham returning from the defeat of the kings and blessed him, and Abraham gave him a tenth of everything. (v1-2)</i></p> <p><i>Just think how great he was: Even the patriarch Abraham gave him a tenth of the plunder! (v4)</i></p> <p><i>This man, however, did not trace his descent from Levi, yet he collected a tenth from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. ... One might even say that Levi, who collects the tenth, paid the tenth through Abraham, because when Melchizedek met Abraham, Levi was still in the body of his ancestor. (v6, 9)</i></p>	<p>Supercedes the Law — Superior to Law</p> <p><i>If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the law was given to the people), why was there still need for another priest to come-- one in the order of Melchizedek, not in the order of Aaron? For when there is a change of the priesthood, there must also be a change of the law. (v11-12)</i></p> <p><i>And what we have said is even more clear if another priest like Melchizedek appears, one who has become a priest not on the basis of a regulation as to his ancestry but on the basis of the power of an indestructible life. For it is declared:</i></p> <p><i>"You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek."</i></p> <p><i>The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless (for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God. (v15-18)</i></p>	<p>M. points to the fact that the Law and its regulations, including the priesthood, were never going to be enough to bring people into a right relationship with God through the cleansing of their hearts. That could only happen through Christ's death on the cross. Like M. who preceded the Law, Jesus stands in stark opposition to the Law because he is superior to it. Christ has fulfilled the demands of the Law (which could not save us) on our behalf and now offers us his perfect forgiveness and righteousness (which can save us).</p>

Melchizedek	Relates to Jesus	Why It Matters
<p>Eternal Ministry; No Successor <i>without beginning of days or end of life, like the Son of God he remains a priest forever. (v3)</i></p>	<p>Eternal Ministry b/c Jesus is Eternally Alive <i>Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. (v 23, 25)</i></p>	<p>Unlike the Levitical priests who died and needed their sons to carry on their work, Jesus, because he has been raised from the dead, is “indestructible”; he, himself, is always our high priest because he has been raised to life, never to die again. His work on our behalf continues today!</p>
	<p>The Prophecy (Ps110:4) Demonstrates Old Priesthood Insufficient <i>If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the law was given to the people), why was there still need for another priest to come-- one in the order of Melchizedek, not in the order of Aaron? For when there is a change of the priesthood, there must also be a change of the law. (v11-12)</i></p> <p>JC is Superior to Levitical Priests b/c:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Indestructible Life” <i>one who has become a priest not on the basis of a regulation as to his ancestry but on the basis of the power of an indestructible life. (v16)</i> <p><i>Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. (v23-24)</i></p>	<p>The Law was insufficient to produce lasting peace between God and humans. It was always intended to be the thing that led us to our need for Christ. The Law’s institutions point forward to Jesus.</p> <p><i>Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law. You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Gal 3:23-27</p> <p>Jesus is uniquely qualified to be a high priest because he possesses a unique quality of life—he has overcome death through his resurrection!</p>
Melchizedek	Relates to Jesus	Why It Matters
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers “better hope” 	

	<p><i>The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless (for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God. (v18-19)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guarantees New Covenant now and in Future <p><i>Others became priests without any oath, but he became a priest with an oath when God said to him: "The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: 'You are a priest forever.'" Because of this oath, Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant. (v20-22)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Salvation <p><i>Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. (v23-25)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is Himself the Ultimate, Unblemished Sacrifice <p><i>Such a high priest meets our need - one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself. For the law appoints as high priests men who are weak; but the oath, which came after the law, appointed the Son, who has been made perfect forever. (v26-28)</i></p>	<p>Jesus is uniquely qualified to be a high priest because he possesses a unique quality of life—he has overcome death through his resurrection!</p> <p>The Gospel (new covenant) is superior to the Law (old covenant) in that it not only brings us to a conviction of sin, it offers a true remedy for it.</p> <p>The Gospel (new covenant) is guaranteed by Christ's work which is being applied to us even now, and which will stand the test of time. It is not going to be superseded the way the Law (old covenant) was. We now have direct and lasting access to God the Father through God the Son.</p> <p>Just as Jesus is the "final revelation" from God, he is also the "final salvation." He is able to meet our every need with regard to God and our lives (save completely).</p> <p>Unlike former times, Jesus' sacrifice on our behalf is absolutely perfect. It was offered by someone perfect and it was perfectly done because Jesus himself both offered it and <i>was the sacrifice</i>. Because of this it is a once for all, completed, never needing to be repeated or updated guarantee of our new right standing with God.</p>
--	---	---

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE

Lesson 10

This passage lists several things that it says Christ does for us. Which of these caught your attention the most? Why?

The Hebrews were feeling like they had been left alone by God to face a cruel fate. How specifically does this passage speak to those concerns?

Lesson 11

Where are you most tempted to feel like God has left you alone in your spiritual journey? How does this passage speak to these feelings?

It is easy to take for granted our relationship with God. What does this passage tell us about what was necessary to even have this relationship in the first place?

Lord, help me. My boat is so small and Your sea is so immense.

Thomas Merton

Dear God,

I have no idea where I am going. I do not have sight of the sea shore ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think that I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so.

But I believe this. I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. I hope that I have that desire in everything I do. I hope I never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will lead me to the sandy shore though I may know nothing about it at the time. Therefore I will trust you always for though I may seem to be drifting and lost as a ship without a rudder, in that moment of important decision, I will not be afraid to take action because I know you will never leave me to face the future alone. By my prayers you will guide me to accept your Holy Will.

Thomas Merton