

# Candlelight Christian Fellowship

Hebrews (Chapter 7)

## Hebrews 7 (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.*

*11 Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron? 12 For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law. 13 For He of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar. 14 For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood. 15 And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest 16 who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life. 17 For He testifies: ‘You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.’ 18 For on the one hand there is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness, 19 for the law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, there is the bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God. 20 And inasmuch as He was not made priest without an oath 21 (for they have become priests without an oath, but He with an oath by Him who said to Him: ‘The LORD has sworn and will not relent, “You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek” ’), 22 by so much more Jesus has become a surety of a better covenant. 23 Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing. 24 But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. 25 Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. 26 For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; 27 who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people’s, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. 28 For the law appoints as high priests men who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, appoints the Son who has been perfected forever.”*

## Who is Melchizedek?

Theologians have long argued the identity of Melchizedek.

Dating back to at least the Dead Sea Scrolls (1<sup>st</sup> Century BC), Melchizedek has been thought by some to be a Christophany—a pre-incarnate visible manifestation of Christ in Old Testament times. The

thought can be said to date back to the times of Abraham—as suggested by some Rabbinical writings, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and by the works of many early church fathers. Since then, many Christians have held the view—even amidst varied theological opinion.

The author to the Hebrews lists several identifiers supporting the Christophany claim. He said, *“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, 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,’ 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. Now consider how great this man was, to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils. (vss. 1–4)*

Here in these verses we can see 9 items of note:

- 1) The name Melchizedek means “King of Righteousness” (vs. 2).
- 2) Melchizedek was “King of Salem” (Jerusalem [Psalm 76:1–2]) meaning “King of Peace” (vs. 1).
- 3) Melchizedek is Eternal Priest of the Most High God (vss. 1 and 3).
- 4) Melchizedek was without father or mother (vs. 3).
- 5) Melchizedek was without genealogy (vs. 3).
- 6) Melchizedek had neither beginning of days nor end of life (vs. 3).
- 7) Melchizedek remains a priest continually (vs. 3).
- 8) Melchizedek was greater than Abraham (vs. 4).
- 9) Melchizedek received tithes from Abraham (vs. 4)

All of these attributes can be said of Jesus. The only omitted mention here is the expression, *“made like the Son of God.”* This we will examine later.

### **A Little Background**

The final 2 points in our list (numbers 8 and 9) are used by the author to illustrate just how great Melchizedek is, saying *“Now consider how great this man was, to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils”* (vs. 4).

The spoils referred to here are those taken during the battle of the kings. We read about this in Genesis 14. Abraham gave a tithe (tenth) of all he gained during this battle—showing the greatness of Melchizedek. The fact that Abraham related to Him as greater than himself should tell us much about who He was.

Abraham was the man with whom God had made an everlasting covenant (see Genesis 12:1–3; 15; 17:9–14) and yet, he saw Melchizedek as greater and therefore honored Him with his tithe—showing respect for His office and the greatness of His authority. (It is of note to recognize that this occurred long before the Law of Moses instructed the Children of Israel in the practice.)

The tithe belongs to the Lord and to those He has appointed to His work. *“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”* (vs. 5), *“but he whose genealogy [Melchizedek] is not derived from them [the Levites] received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the [covenant] promises”* (vs. 6). *“Now beyond*

*all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better*" (vs. 7). Herein the author points out "*without contradiction*" that Melchizedek is greater than Abraham.

If "[h]ere mortal men receive tithes, but there [in the days of Abraham] he [Melchizedek] receive[d] them... it is witnessed that he lives" (vs. 8). Please note the fact that the expression is "he lives," not that "he lived." This indicates the living and eternal nature of Melchizedek. Moreover, "[e]ven Levi, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, so to speak, for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him" (vss. 9–10). This indicates the fact that even Levi paid tithes to Melchizedek by proxy through his great grandfather Abraham. (Much can be said here about federal and natural headship and the fact that God accounts the children through the father rather than through the mother. This is yet another example of the deconstruction of truth we see in our culture. For example, a father has no right to stop a woman from aborting his child if she so chooses to terminate her pregnancy, yet the Bible recognizes the child in the seed of the father—without discounting the role of the mother.)

### **Melchizedek is...**

Having established the fact that Melchizedek is the "King of Righteousness," the "King of Jerusalem," the "King of Peace," the "Eternal Priest (mediator) of the Most High God," was "without father or mother," "without genealogy," has "neither beginning of days nor end of life," and is "greater than Abraham" should give us a lot to work with.

Moreover, in the pre-incarnate eternal economy of the Godhead, Jesus could be described the same way. He was, is, and will be the "King of Righteousness," the "King of Jerusalem," the "King of Peace," the "Eternal Priest (mediator) of the Most High God," "without father or mother," "without genealogy," with "neither beginning of days nor end of life," and "greater than Abraham."

It is understood that when Jesus came into the world at His incarnation, He was born according to a detailed genealogy (see Matthew 1:1–17; Luke 3:23–38), had a Father (God) and mother (Mary), had beginning of days (at His physical birth) and end of (mortal) life (at the cross). However, in describing a Christophany, these attributions would not apply.

### **Made Like the Son of God**

The earlier mentioned omission in our list of evidences for Melchizedek being a Christophany is the expression "*made like the Son of God.*"

Jesus was *literally* the Son of God at His incarnation, but in the eternal economy of the Godhead He was and is the eternally self-existent God. However, in the "divine management" of the triune nature of God, Jesus functions in His role as God the Son. (See Note 1) This could be one way of understanding the expression "*made like the Son of God*" as ascribed to Melchizedek. This does not suggest that either Melchizedek or Jesus was at any point made, created, or had a beginning, etc. This has been clearly detailed. However, it would relate to Jesus' future incarnational ministry as the Eternal High Priest of the Most High God—now being given priority by the author. That is the point: Jesus' ministry is greater than and distinguished from the Levitical Priesthood. He is the "better," and His ministry is superior (see Hebrews 1:4, 7:19 and 22, and 8:6).

**Note: (1)** For the economic methodology within the Godhead, refer to "As Heir of All Things" and "Incarnate and Firstborn" in Chapter 1 Lesson 3.

## Why Not a Christophany?

Inasmuch as some may argue, may I suggest that Melchizedek (The King of Righteousness) might easily be understood as a Christophany, and therefore, the pre-incarnate, self-existent One, the King of Jerusalem, etc. It seems that there is no reason to reject the proposition. There are other Christophanies in Scripture easily supported by Theologians across the board. There seems to be no valid reason to disqualify Melchizedek—other than by pointing out a few particular variables. For example, other Christophanies mention no definitive name, or attribution to a specific ministry location or any political rule. However, His name as described fits Jesus, as does the ministry location and rule.

## Of Bread and Wine

In keeping with the thought set forward, we see that Melchizedek served Abraham bread and wine. It seems too familiar not to associate with Jesus. Moreover, recognizing “The Law (or Principle) of First Mention” in Scripture, the connection to Jesus is significant. *“Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said: ‘Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand’ ”* (Genesis 14:18–20a).

The fact that Melchizedek served bread and wine should not be considered the tell-all—but is certainly telling. The former items seem inescapable.

## Before Abraham was, I AM

When being questioned and accused by the Pharisees, Jesus said, “ *‘Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.’ Then the Jews said to Him, ‘You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?’ Jesus said to them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM’ ”* (John 8:56–58). Understandably, this could relate to Jesus’ preexistence as God the Son, whom Abraham saw by faith, and not to Melchizedek. However, it is a valid point of reference.

## Perfect

Finally, since Jesus is the “Perfect,” and, as the author points out is the Priest who would arise *“according to the order of Melchizedek,”* we have to conclude that Melchizedek was perfect too. The text will bear nothing less. Moreover, the comparison between Melchizedek and Jesus against the Levitical Priesthood only makes sense if the contrast is the perfect against the imperfect. The author makes this clear when stating, *“if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest [Jesus] should rise according to the order of Melchizedek”* (vs. 11). Therefore, we must conclude that Jesus, who comes in the order of Melchizedek, is the perfect, in replacement of the Levitical priesthood, and therefore the final and perfect mediatorial Great High Priest described in Hebrews. *“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”* (Hebrews 4:14).

## Alternate Views

Some might suggest that since Melchizedek is *“made like the son of God”* He is therefore not a Christophany. However, this leads to one of two other options:

- 1) Melchizedek was simply an early human king who reigned in Salem (Jerusalem) at the time of Abraham. However, this argument will fall apart by the other descriptions given to him: *“king of righteousness,” “king of peace,” “without father, without mother,” “without genealogy,”* and *“remains a priest continually,”* etc. (vss. 2b–3).
- 2) Melchizedek is an angelic being who serves as a created being before the Lord in heaven, but came to serve as the King of Salem and Priest of the Most High God prior to the Levitical. However, this will fall apart based upon the fact that Melchizedek is said to have *“neither beginning of days nor end of life”* (vs. 3). All angels have a beginning! Therefore, Melchizedek could not be an angel. Furthermore, Jesus is *“better than the angels”* (Hebrews 1:4) not *“according to the order of”* (vss. 11, 17, 21) or *“in the likeness of”* (vs. 15) an angel. This proves that Melchizedek could not have been an angel.

Of note is the suggestion that *“without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life”* simply means we have no record. However, the text itself would need a lot of massaging to make this stick!

Finally, if Melchizedek was a man or an angel, then Jesus is the one who comes as second to the first, and would then be considered the one who is a “stand in” for Melchizedek rather than the actual—thus making Jesus “second in the lineup,” “a follower in succession,” or the “model” made after the original. However, Jesus is the original, the Creator, the Perfect, the King, the Righteous, etc., and Melchizedek is the one *“made like the Son of God,”* not the other way around.

Based upon all that is stated above, I would suggest that Melchizedek was a Christophany. However, because we do not have an absolute declaration in Scripture, I suggest we gently hold this view.

### **Out with the Old and in with the New**

Having established the greatness of Melchizedek and the fact that the Messiah’s role as Priest and King is in the order of Melchizedek, the author now moves to the *“main point”* (Hebrews 8:1) he is attempting to communicate: the greater priesthood of Jesus the Messiah over the temporary nature of the Levitical priesthood. He wrote, *“Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron?”* (vs. 11).

The Law could not make man righteous. In fact, through the Law was the knowledge of sin (see Romans 3:19–20). We know that the law was weak: *“For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son”* (Romans 8:3a). We also know that the Law was temporary: *“What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made... For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law. But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith”* (Galatians 3:19–24 excerpted).

Therefore, *“What further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not...according to the order of Aaron?”* Simple—it employed fallen man.

As a result of the temporary nature of the Law, its employment of fallen man, and its by-product of weakness, another Law and another mediator/mediatorship was required. Therefore, *“of necessity there [was] also a [needed] change of the law”* (vs. 12b). This required the annulling of the Old Covenant Law and the establishing of *“a new and living way”* (Hebrews 10:20). *“For on the one hand there is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness, for [that] law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, there is the bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God”* (vss. 18–19). That *“better hope”* is Jesus and the New Covenant. *“For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law”* (vs. 12). *“And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life”* (vss. 15–16). The Hebrews would need that *“better”* and perfect Law, that *“better”* and perfect priesthood. Therefore, *“by so much more Jesus has become a surety [guarantee] of [that] better covenant”* (vs. 22). Moreover, He is the Priest who conquered death, and now, as the result of an *“endless life,”* would need no insufficient or temporary replacement. Jesus is the one who would serve continually as the result of a perfect and *“endless life”* (vs. 16). For *“there were many priests [in the Old Covenant], because they were prevented by death from continuing. But He, [Jesus] because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. Therefore, He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them* (vss. 23–25).

That Priest is Jesus, the Messiah! This the Hebrews needed to know! Moreover, they should have easily known, for God Himself testified of Him: *“You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek”* (vs. 17).

### **The Great Intercessor**

Intercession is the speaking for, or the representing of, someone other than one’s self. Jesus, as our Great High Priest, would now represent the Hebrews and all of us, whether Jew or Gentile—before God the Father. *“And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world”* (1 John 2:2), and *“since He always lives to make intercession for [us]”* (vs. 25b), He is not just an intercessor but is the great and final intercessor.

As the Great High Priest, Jesus stands before God on behalf of man. The High Priest (as pictured in the Old Covenant) represented God to man and represented man before God. However, Jesus as our Great High Priest, in fulfillment of the typology and practice found in the Old Covenant, will forever make intercession for those who come to God through Him. For this reason, the author documents the fact that the Old Covenant has given way to the New, and therefore, the Father is to be approached only in and through Jesus. The Old Covenant is obsolete! Therefore, the Hebrews must move forward in faith and trust Jesus for the access promised them.

### **A Brief but Needed Digression**

It should be understood by all that we as sinners are fully incapable of saving ourselves or offering anything to the Lord in exchange for our souls. This is what Paul communicated when he said *“we were still without strength”* in Romans 5:6. Moreover, those whom he suggested were *“without strength”* are referred to as the *“ungodly,”* thus *“Christ died for the ungodly.”* *“Ungodly”* is a reference to the impiety with which men are identified.

Apart from the work of grace, there is no care or concern for God, no desire to see, know, or reverence Him. Therefore, we must understand that when Christ died for us, it was apart from man's request or desire. In fact, we were said to be the "enemies" of God. When we were "without strength," there was not care or concern for Him—or for what He could offer. Nonetheless, "Christ died for the ungodly," His "enemies,"—you and me—and has provided us all we need to desire and access Him.

Jesus' death was "for" the "ungodly." The word used for "for" in Greek means "on behalf of." This shows, without a doubt, that Jesus did not die as the result of any fault within Himself. Jesus had and has no shortcoming or insufficiency. This would include loneliness or the need for fellowship with those He created. (This is an oft erroneous reasoning for why God created man.)

Jesus died "for" man, for the same reason He created him—To show us who He is, and to share His love with us: "for" mankind, "God demonstrate[d] His own love toward us while we were still sinners" (Romans 5:8). The vicarious propitiatory sufferings and death of Jesus was for us, apart from us, and in our place: a fully appeasing and satisfactory payment "for" our "impiety" and the "wrath" we deserve. Thus, in Jesus, we who trust God for salvation are "saved from [that] wrath through Him." Our sinful debt has been paid; we are accounted as debt free, thus "reconciled" (see Romans 5:6–11).

All this being said, if Jesus had died "for" our sins, apart from any good in us and/or any desire for God in us, but had remained in the grave, we would all be without hope. For Christ's death in our place may have satisfactorily met the need for justice against our sin, but His resurrection documented the satisfactory mediatorial work of Jesus. His resurrection guarantees that we who are "in Him" will, like Him, be raised up to live with Him—forever.

Paul addressed this to the Corinthians when he wrote, "And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise. For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Corinthians 15:14–20).

Herein we see the "power" of His resurrection: a resurrection that would have never occurred if Jesus had not *died* in our place for our sins. We are "saved by His life." "And... we... rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation."

This is the power of the "endless life" the author points out in the better priesthood of Jesus the Messiah.

### **A Priest from the Tribe of Judah?**

As mentioned above, there was a needed change of the Law. The Old Covenant Law had to be annulled and set aside to make way for the better and perfect way.

The better and perfect way was not a makeover of the Old but was in so many ways completely different.

To begin with, the priesthood under the Law of Moses was only through the tribe of Levi. Moreover, only Aaron and his sons were allowed to serve as High Priests (see Exodus 28:1–3; Numbers

18:7). Furthermore, because the Law was given only to Israel (see Jeremiah 31:31–34), the priesthood served only those who were Jews. No Gentile had access to God under the Levitical system—unless they became Jews and joined the House of Israel. However, Jesus, as the Great High Priest, after the order of Melchizedek, has provided access to all—Jew and Gentile alike. *“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus”* (Galatians 3:26–28).

Continuing, the author explained, *“For He [Jesus] of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar”* (vs. 13), and, *“For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood”* (vs. 14).

Jesus was a physical descendent of Judah and not from the tribe of Levi (see Matthew 1:1–16). The argument for Jesus over the Levitical priests would have completely derailed all Jewish persons had God not already told them that there would arise another Priest who would serve in the order of Melchizedek—who was King of Salem (Jerusalem) and Priest of the Most High God. This was communicated long before Levi was born.

David pointed this out in Psalm 110:

*“The LORD said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.’ The LORD shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of Your enemies! Your people shall be volunteers in the day of Your power; in the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning, You have the dew of Your youth. The LORD [God] has sworn and will not relent, ‘You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.’ The Lord is at Your right hand; He shall execute kings in the day of His wrath. He shall judge among the nations, He shall fill the places with dead bodies, He shall execute the heads of many countries. He shall drink of the brook by the wayside; therefore He shall lift up the head”* (Psalm 110).

For clarity may I suggest the following edits:

*“The LORD [God] said to my Lord [Jesus], ‘Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.’ The LORD [God] shall send the rod of Your strength [Jesus’] out of Zion. Rule in the midst of Your enemies [Jesus]! Your people shall be volunteers in the day of Your power; in the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning, You have the dew of Your youth. The LORD [God] has sworn and will not relent, ‘You [Jesus] are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.’ The Lord [Jesus] is at Your right hand; He shall execute kings in the day of His wrath. He shall judge among the nations, He shall fill the places with dead bodies, He shall execute the heads of many countries. He shall drink of the brook by the wayside; therefore He shall lift up the head”* (Psalm 110).

Moreover, Jesus identified Himself with the Psalm as recorded in the Gospels. *“While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, ‘What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?’ They said to Him, ‘The Son of David.’ He said to them, ‘How then does David in the Spirit call Him ‘Lord,’ saying: ‘The LORD said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool” ’? If David then calls Him ‘Lord,’ how is He his Son?’”* And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore” (Matthew 22:41–46). No one would deny that Jesus is citing Psalm 110 as a reference to Himself. It couldn’t be clearer!



Furthermore, when Jesus was questioned by Caiaphas (a High Priest at the time of Jesus' trial prior to His crucifixion), He put Himself directly into the context. *"And the high priest arose and said to Him, 'Do You answer nothing? What is it these men testify against You?' But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, 'I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!' Jesus said to him, 'It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven' "* (Matthew 26:62–64). The inference is obvious!

### **A King from the Tribe of Levi?**

We have noted that Melchizedek was both a Priest and King. Therefore, if Jesus is the *"priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek,"* then it is also fitting that He be *"King of Salem"* as well. However, the Old Covenant made no provision for a Levite to serve as King. Moreover, there was condemnation leveled against the kings who crossed the line and engaged in Levitical duties. (On Saul, see 1 Samuel 13:1–14; on Uzziah, see 2 Chronicles 26:16–23.) Therefore, as pointed out earlier, there was *"of necessity...a change of the law"* (vs. 12b). If Jesus is to serve as King, it cannot be according to the Law of the Old Covenant but must be according to the order of Melchizedek—in the New. This required the annulling of the Old and the establishing of the *"new and living way"* previously predicted.

The Jews of our day are looking for the Messiah and anticipate His coming as ruler in Jerusalem. That King is Jesus, and indeed, He will come *again*—and reign!

### **I Swear—The Oath!**

In the Old Covenant, priests were appointed, but not by any form of oath, *"for they ha[d] become priests without an oath"* (vs. 21a). Their appointment was based upon a carefully followed genealogical record, moral fabric, physical health and ceremonial requirements (see Leviticus 21:16–24). However, Jesus *"was not made priest without an oath"* (vs. 20), He was made Priest by *"an oath"* and that oath *"by Him who said to Him: 'The LORD has sworn and will not relent, 'You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek" ' "* (vs. 21b). *"For when God made a promise... because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself"* (Hebrews 6:13). Therefore, it was written, *"by so much more Jesus has become a surety [guarantee] of a better covenant"* (vs. 22).

It should be noted that Jesus' moral, physical, and ceremonial work at Calvary qualifies Him to be the Great High Priest. Moreover, His genealogical record proved His earlier described genetic qualifications as the son of Adam, the son of Abraham, the son of David, the Son of God. Jesus perfectly fulfilled all the prophesied requirements attributed to the One who was to come.

### **Saved to the Uttermost**

As Great High Priest, Jesus, *"because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood"* (vs. 24), and, *"Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them* (vs. 25).

We have already examined Jesus' eternal nature (*"He continues forever"*) and His *"unchangeable priesthood"* as the result. Furthermore, we know that He has saved us from the *"wrath"* we deserve as the result of His mediatorial work as our *"intercessor."* However, we should also be fully aware of His saving to *"the uttermost"* for *"those who come to God through Him."*

Jesus' work as Great High Priest does not and cannot require the help or assistance of man. We simply trust God for the salvation provided in Jesus and therefore enter into *"the rest"* earlier examined. (See the lesson on Hebrews 4)

Saving to the *"uttermost"* means being saved completely and forever. It is final and certain! The salvation God provides in Jesus requires no further sacrifice for sins (Hebrews 10:26), no human maintenance (Ephesians 2:8–9), no repeated recollection of sins (vs. 27), etc. We are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. Our only required response to all Jesus had accomplished is that we come to God through Him (vs. 25). (See Ephesians 1:2–14)

### **Once, for All**

The Hebrews have been delivered from the Law. It has been fulfilled, and made *"obsolete"* (Hebrews 8:13), by the One and Only who has provided all it could *never* accomplish—*"for it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins"* (Hebrews 10:4). The Law's *"weakness and unprofitableness"* (vs. 18b) *"made nothing perfect"* (vs. 19a). It has been *"nailed to the cross"* (Colossians 2:14). It is finished!

Jesus *"does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself"* (vs. 27). The Law that was designed to point the Hebrews to their Messiah has, once and for all, been fulfilled in Jesus—the only one righteous! *"For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens"* (vs. 26). *"Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them"* (vs. 25).

Jesus' one sacrifice, of Himself, guarantees salvation to all who come to God through Him.

Jesus died once, and for all. He died for every Jew and every Gentile. He will never die again! He has risen from the dead and is seated in His throne, in the heavenly places, at the right hand of God the Father (see Hebrews 1:3). By the perfect sacrifice of Himself, Jesus provided the only way man could have final and lasting redemption. No man or beast could satisfy the righteous and required standard. Therefore, Jesus accomplished this for us—by Himself. *"The law appoint[ed] as high priests men who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, appoints the Son who has been perfected forever"* (vs. 28) to do it. Jesus, the *"holy, harmless, undefiled, [and] separate from sinners"* (vs. 26), did it all. Therefore, He alone could and has accomplished what the Law could not do, what man could not attain, what every man needs!

### **Perfected Forever**

Jesus has been perfected forever. This means that He, in His eternal self-existence, had always been, and will always be, perfect. As the Great High Priest, Jesus, the Redeemer of our souls, has entered *"the Presence behind the veil"* (Hebrews 6:19), mediating for us by His own blood, and has, by His perfect work, *"perfected forever"* (Hebrews 10:14) those who trust Him for salvation.

May the Lord grant us grace to see, know, and experience all He has provided us.

## Questions:

- 1) **True or False:** Theologians have long argued the identity of Melchizedek.
- 2) **True or False:** Jesus' ministry is greater than and distinguished from the Levitical Priesthood.
- 3) **True or False:** It seems that there is no reason to reject the proposition that Melchizedek was a Christophany.
- 4) **True or False:** Melchizedek was simply an early human king who reigned in Salem (Jerusalem) at the time of Abraham.
- 5) **True or False:** Melchizedek is an angelic being who serves as a created being before the Lord in heaven, but came to serve as the King of Salem and Priest of the Most High God prior to the establishing of the Levitical priesthood.
- 6) **True or False:** Melchizedek was a Christophany. However, because we do not have an absolute declaration in Scripture, we should gently hold this view.
- 7) **True or False:** The Law could not make man righteous.
- 8) **True or False:** The Old Covenant has given way to the New.
- 9) **True or False:** Jesus' genealogical record proves His right to the titles son of Adam, son of Abraham, and son of David.
- 10) **True or False:** Jesus' work as Great High Priest does not and cannot require the help or assistance of man.
- 11) **True or False:** Jesus died once, and for all. He died for every Jew and every Gentile. He will never die again!
- 12) **True or False:** Jesus, the Redeemer of our souls, has entered "*the Presence behind the veil,*" mediating for us by His own blood, and has, by His perfect work, "*perfected forever*" those who trust Him for salvation.

## Notes: