

The Epistle to the Hebrews

July 18, 2021

Hebrews 6:19-7:10

Reading: Hebrews 6:19-7:10

Christ's Eternal Priesthood

Opening Prayer

The monks in carefully copying the historical writings of the Bible gave chapter and verse addresses to the books of scripture. They did not always make sense where they put the breaks in chapters and verses; just as the break between chapters 6 and 7, in which the writer is carrying his thought forward. The relationship between Melchizedek, Abraham and Jesus the Christ. In writing the Book of Hebrews, the author primary purpose was to show the greatness of Christ above anything else that makes a claim of greatness. Jewish believers were being tempted to return to their Jewish traditional beliefs. A system of works that did not save. The writer offers proof after proof that to go back to Judaism would be to forfeit all hope for eternal life with the Lord. Hebrews was written to show that to return to Old Testament practices would be an empty endeavor because everything the Old Testament pointed to and finds its reality in - is found in Jesus Christ.

We should think of the Old Testament as a map with road signs that directs us to Jesus. When Joyce and were driving the back roads of Great Britain we would have been hopelessly lost without a GPS. It is like a whole rural country system with roads like the back streets of Santa Fe; beginning and ending and changing without warning. When the road sign says the village is 3 kilometers beyond; you have not arrived. The sign points to a reality, but the sign is not the reality. The reality is still down the road. The Old Testament is like the sign that

says, Jesus ahead with a directional arrow, but it is not Jesus. Jesus is up the road from the Old Testament and He is the reality.

Today, for us, it is not the temptation to return to Judaism but a temptation to look to other things for our hope. Messianic Jews try to combine the Old and the New working hard to keep the festivals and laws that do not save. The Jewish system of sacrifices temporarily covered sin but did not remove sin. Only Jesus removes sin, so one must seek and love and glorify Jesus before and above all things of the world. For us, the biggest danger is to slip into taking the Lord and His Word for granted or that we might get so used to hearing and reading biblical truths that they no longer affect us like they once did and allow the world and the influences of the evil one creep slowly into our lives and rob us of our relationship with Christ. In the Christian world of today, you do not have to look very far to discover those who this has happened to. They make claims of biblical truths but in reality, live otherwise. They live godly on Sunday and the rest of the week they are in the world. They are willing to compromise the truth of the Bible for gain. We see this in both churches and people. Claims are meaningless unless there is a life that models the claims and lives them out.

For example, one might make the claim to believe the Bible and yet practice unbiblical behaviors. One might claim that the Bible has authority and yet not submit to that authority. As believers we must bow and give allegiance to Christ and Him alone. A big part of true belief is acting out belief as one lives their life. We are in a war with the world and we must stay sharp. One cannot allow their senses to become dull. One must keep a clear conscience and serve Christ with every fiber of their being because He alone is Lord. Jesus alone is the High Priest of an eternal priesthood. The writer inspired by the Holy Spirit has made this clear; for those who love God they are to spend their lives striving to know Him deeper,

grow closer to Him and serve Him with gladness as He is their first love. Jesus is the High Priest and we are to be a community of priests in service to Him and His people.

The Attributes of Christ's Priesthood (7:1-3)

We do not have much background concerning Melchizedek in the Bible. But the writer has a purpose for relating Melchizedek with Christ. Reading at verse 1 of chapter 7, “For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him,² and to him Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything. He is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then he is also king of Salem, that is, king of peace.³ He is without father or mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God he continues a priest forever.” To better understand these verses, travel back with me to Genesis chapter 14,¹⁷ “After his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer (*Kâdorla'omer / ked-or-law-omer*) and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom (*sed-ome*) went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (*shaw-vay*) (that is, the King's Valley).¹⁸ And Melchizedek king of Salem (*shaw-lame*) brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.)¹⁹ And he blessed him and said, ‘Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth;²⁰ and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!’” These verses speak of Melchizedek's position, as both *king of Salem* and *priest of the Most High God*. This combination between kingship and priesthood turns out to be significant for the writer's purpose as the next verses show. The writer uses the title found in Genesis, Deuteronomy, Psalms and other places in the Old Testament; *Most High God*. Any priesthood is evaluated according to the status of the deity who is served, which means that

Melchizedek's must have been of a highly exalted for he serves the one and only *Most High God*.

The other text, which the writer of Hebrews refers to comes from Psalm 110 where God speaks to Christ, as indicated by Matthew 22:42-45, Acts 2:34, 1 Corinthians 15:25 and here in Hebrews 1:13. Psalm 110, “**The LORD says to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.’ ...** ⁴ **The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, ‘You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.’** ⁵ **The Lord is at your right hand; he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath. ⁶ He will execute judgment among the nations, filling them with corpses; he will shatter chiefs over the wide earth.”** Psalm 110 speaks of the eternal priesthood of Jesus and of the wrath poured out at His second coming. The second coming is not what we are focused on today. The mystery surrounding Melchizedek is not what we are to be focused on either. So, let us focus on the author's intended meaning. What is his purpose for bringing up Melchizedek?

In answering this question, we come to our key thought of the text today. **There is a New Covenant and a new priesthood; Jesus brought in the New Covenant and He is the High Priest of an eternal priesthood.** The traits of the new priesthood found in the New Testament are prefigured or foreshadowed in the original priest Melchizedek especially as seen in Psalm 110.

Melchizedek is unique among priests in that he held two offices of king and priest. He practiced a priestly role prior to God setting up the line of priests which were descended from Aaron. I believe this is another reason the priesthood of Aaron was the road sign pointing to Christ to come and was to end with the coming of Christ. Melchizedek was a king and he was a priest another road sign pointing to Christ. He prefigured our Lord coming to earth as God incarnate and as

the High Priest and King. Melchizedek is an example or foreshadow of our Lord's multiple offices; God, Messiah, King and Savior.

Melchizedek's name prefigures the character of our Lord. If we break his name into two pieces, we have *Melchi* – meaning King and *Zedek* – meaning Righteousness. His name literally means “*King of Righteousness*”. This new priesthood reflects Christ's perfect righteousness. As God, Jesus Christ is perfect righteousness and therefore does not have to make a sacrifice for His own sin but as the Messiah, makes His sacrifice totally with His people in mind. As the King, He judges us in light of His righteousness. As He performs His priestly function for His people, He is Savior because our sins are forgiven and the King grants us a spotless pardon. Jesus Christ is the true King of Righteousness. The Apostle Paul wrote concerning Christ and the world and our position in Christ, ²⁷ “**But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong;** ²⁸ **God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are,** ²⁹ **so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.** ³⁰ **And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption,** ³¹ **so that, as it is written, ‘Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.’ ”** (1 Corinthians 1:27-31)

One principle taught in this Hebrew text is that a tithe is given to the one who is greatest. The point the author makes is that Melchizedek did not give Abraham a tithe of all he had; no, Abraham honored Melchizedek with a tithe or portion of what he was blessed with. For Jewish Christians who basically saw Abraham as the key to everything Jewish, this would be an extremely good point for the author to make. The writer's thinking goes like this; *You, Jews think so highly of Abraham, even as great a man as Abraham was, even he gave*

Melchizedek a tithe showing that he was the lesser of the two and who he honored. If Abraham honored Melchizedek by tithing, then you are to honor Christ who greater than Melchizedek and tithe as Abraham tithed. Dear Christian, tithe is commanded by God, partly, because it shows we honor Him and are willing to sacrifice, and it shows the world where our allegiance lies and who we honor. Simply put, to not tithe robs God of honor and that is sin.

My last 2 points is, Melchizedek, priest of the **Most High God**, is a foreshadow of Christ and has no ties with Aaron or the Aaronic priesthood. Reading verse 3, **“He is without father or mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God he continues a priest forever.”** The author is not saying that Melchizedek is divine in some way because he does not have mother or father. In fact, John Calvin wrote, **“It is indeed certain that he (*Melchizedek*) descended from parents; but the Apostle does not speak of him here in his private capacity; on the contrary, he sets him forth as a type of Christ. He therefore allows himself to see nothing in him but what Scripture contains. For in treating of things respecting Christ, such reverence ought to be observed as not to know anything but what is written in the Word of the Lord. Now, as the Holy Spirit in mentioning this king, the most illustrious of his age, is wholly silent as to his birth, and makes afterwards no record of his death, is not this the same thing as though eternity was to be ascribed to him? And what was shadowed forth in Melchisedec is really exhibited in Christ. ... It shows to us as in a mirror, that Christ has neither a beginning nor an end.”** So, the point the author is making and Calvin explains is that there is no recorded lineage tying him to the Aaronic priesthood, there is no lineage for he is a foreshadow or type of the future Christ. In other words, Melchizedek is a different type of

priest. This prefigures our Lord in that Jesus Christ is not in the line of Aaron either. His priesthood is different. It is an eternal priesthood.

I think the writer makes his point clear when he says of Melchizedek, **“resembling the Son of God he continues a priest forever.”** The author is bringing out ways in which Melchizedek is a type or a prefiguring of Christ but Melchizedek is **NOT** Christ. Melchizedek’s priesthood was not only different from that of the Mosaic order, it was altogether superior. Now if this is the case, how much more superior is Christ’s eternal priesthood than that which the Jews had in the mosaic order? This reinforces that **Jesus Christ is superior and there is a New Covenant and a new priesthood; Jesus brought in the New Covenant and He is the High Priest of an eternal priesthood.** The question is, do you believe and if you believe will you live your life and serve God in this belief?

The Blessings of Christ’s Priesthood (v. 4-10)

As we look to this second part of this morning’s passage, we are forced to consider how these blessings came about. Abraham honored the King by giving a tenth of all he had. These verses tell us that even the Levites who received tithes from the people gave a tenth of all they had. How much more should we honor King Jesus with a tithe of all we have?

Reading from Hebrews chapter 7, at verse 4, **“See how great this man was to whom Abraham the patriarch gave a tenth of the spoils! ⁵ And those descendants of Levi who receive the priestly office have a commandment in the law to take tithes from the people, that is, from their brothers, though these also are descended from Abraham. ⁶ But this man who does not have his descent from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. ⁷ It is beyond dispute that the inferior is blessed by the superior. ⁸ In the one case tithes are received by mortal**

men, but in the other case, by one of whom it is testified that he lives.⁹ One might even say that Levi himself, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham,¹⁰ for he was still in the loins of his ancestor when Melchizedek met him.”

This brings us to an important principle for today. Do you give a tithe to the Lord? Do you worship and honor Him with a tithe? Some might ask, “What is a tithe?” The term tithe means a tenth. A tithe is honoring the Lord, showing that He is the Greater and that we are the lesser. It is figuring all that your household makes and taking ten percent off the top and giving it to your church whose head is Christ. I know some people who say well after all my bills are paid and all my expenses are taken care of then I will give the Lord 10 % of what is left. That is not a tithe. A tithe is 10 % off the top, the first-fruits and then the other 90% is used with a stewardship that shows how we provide for our family and community and the poor. It is the first tenth, not what is left over. God wants our best, our first not a diseased lamb or what we scrape up from the floorboard of our car. If you tithe, I am sure you can testify that the 90 % left goes much further because it has the Lord’s blessing – it goes further than keeping the 100% without the Lord’s blessing. The truth is though we do not tithe to get - but we do it because the Lord is the greater and we are the lesser and He is worthy to have our obedience. Honor Christ our King by tithing to your church – for Christ is the head of this church.

In the New Testament counterpart to the Levitical passages on tithing we read from the Apostle Paul, “If we have sown spiritual things among you, is it too much if we reap material things from you?¹² If others share this rightful claim on you, do not we even more? Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ.¹³ Do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in the sacrificial

offerings? ¹⁴ In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel.” (1 Corinthians 9:11-14)

The Lord did not tell the Jewish nation to pass some sort of tax to make the people pay for all the expenses of the temple and pay the priests. It was a gift of joy to the Lord and for His glory. So, it should be for us today that our people here at Canyon Bible Church who love the Lord and His Word should be joyful givers of a tithe. Ten percent of all you earn should be dedicated to the Lord and given.

Would you honor the Lord by faithfully giving a tithe? I know for some, they might be thinking that there is no way I can give 10%. They might say, Pastor, if you knew my finances you would agree. For someone in this situation, I would say two things. First, begin giving a lesser amount at first and increase your tithe as debt is paid off – get out of debt – it cripples. It is a heart issue and God will honor the heart that works to be obedient. The second, is when Joyce and I became Christians, writing that tithe check at first was not easy, but we did, even though looking at our bills, the math did not work. Amazingly, the Lord honored our effort and desire and somehow it worked even though the math did not – God can do amazing things. It took time for my heart to change where I looked forward to giving the tithe and giving God from my first-fruits. When one gives a tithe from their first-fruits God blesses what remains and it works beyond the math. Obedience will bring about a change in one’s heart – with God it is a heart issue.

Look at the principal that is brought forth when Abraham honored Melchizedek, reading at verse 6, “**But this man who does not have his descent from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises.**” ⁷ It is beyond dispute that the inferior is blessed by the superior.” I want to state for the record that Abraham did not give a tenth of his possessions in order to manipulate

the King into blessing him. He did it because it was the right thing to do. He did it because the inferior should honor the superior. The subject should honor the King. Again, He was not paying some tax the King had instituted but he gave it as a gift because the King was so much greater than he was.

This brings us to the second part of this exchange. Abraham gave a gift to the King, the inferior to the superior, because it was the right thing to do. The King after being honored gave Abraham the gift of His blessing because it was the King's character to do so and the superior blesses the inferior. In other words, it was the right thing for the King to do.

Following the tithe and blessing we read something that seems odd to us today or not easily understood. Continuing in verse 9, [“One might even say that Levi himself, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham,¹⁰ for he was still in the loins of his ancestor when Melchizedek met him.”](#) When Abraham offered these gifts to the King, it says in the text that all the Levitical Priests offered gifts because Abraham was the Head of the Old Covenant where yet to come. He was their federal or national head, the founding father of the Jewish nation. This principle of a federal head comes down to us on a very real level and hits home to us. In another case of the federal headship principle, we have Adam as our federal head as the first man created by God. He sinned and the entire human race was made sinners because we were all in him when he sinned or we could say he sinned for all of us. The Bible goes on to say that there is One who came later, namely Jesus Christ, and all who are in Him will find blessings. Jesus is the federal head of God's elect and the New Covenant.

What type of blessings do we receive from being in Christ? What type of blessing do we receive from the superior to the inferior? We honor Christ with our tithe and our lives because He is the superior and He blesses us - the inferior.

The Old Testament priest would declare a blessing on the people every year. Jesus' priesthood is far different. It is an eternal priesthood. So, to begin with our blessings are eternal in nature. To say that they are eternal is to also imply that they are not of this world. For example, if God blessed us with a new car, it would not be an eternal blessing from an eternal priesthood. Eternal blessings are different. To begin with, if we are in Christ we are forever blessed. He is our federal head of righteousness. Because we are counted righteous, we enjoy the eternal blessed state of God. This eternal blessedness shows itself in many ways. We are not acting out certain behaviors to receive blessings, we are living in a blessed state of being in Christ and our blessed state manifests itself in certain noticeable behaviors.

Our blessed state shows up as we live to honor our Lord. As the Psalmist wrote, "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; ²but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night." (Psalm 1:1-2) The Psalms continues to show how we are blessed, "Praise the LORD! Blessed is the man who fears the LORD, who greatly delights in his commandments! ²His offspring will be mighty in the land; the generation of the upright will be blessed." (Psalm 112:1-2) Jesus mentions several blessings in the Beatitudes, one of which is, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied." (Matthew 5:6) The Apostle James, brother of Jesus, who came to salvation after Christ's resurrection wrote, "Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those

who love him.” (James 1:12) James persevered great persecution and he was blessed to do so for the honor of Christ. When one receives Jesus as their Lord and Savior, Christ gives them the gift of the indwelling of the God the Holy Spirit, as Matthew recorded the words of Jesus the result is, “Jesus answered him (*Peter*), ‘Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.’ ” (Matthew 16:17) Faithful obedience to Christ endows believers with eternal safety, “Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him! ⁹ Oh, fear the LORD, you his saints, for those who fear him have no lack!” (Psalm 34:8-9) Ultimately, we are blessed in a number of ways by an eternal Priest when our sins are taken away. As Paul affirmed, ⁷ “Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; ⁸ blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.” (Romans 4:7-8) So, the choice is before each of us. If we believe, **Jesus Christ is superior everything and there is a New Covenant and a new priesthood; Jesus brought in the New Covenant and He is the High Priest of an eternal priesthood.** We will live the New Covenant. Are you living out your blessed life? Are you honoring the eternal King and High Priest with your tithe? Are you running to Christ for security in a broken and evil world? Are you living in a state of grace, peace and mercy through Christ? Are you sharing the good news of salvation through Christ with the ‘lost’ of this world? It is my prayer that the answer to all these questions is “Yes!” May we, my beloved of Christ, live in honor of the greatest of all that exists, Jesus Christ, eternal God and Savior, Amen!