

Welcome to Women's Bible Study!

JANUARY 27, 2019

Hebrews 7

Review

- ▶ Genre: Epistle. A “word of exhortation”
- ▶ Author: Unknown
- ▶ Recipients: 2nd generation Jewish Christians
- ▶ Date: Mid 60s





Key Words/Themes in Hebrews

“Better than”

“Let us”

Because Jesus is “better than _____, let us _____”

→ Hebrews powerfully shows that Jesus is the fulfilment/substance of the promise/shadow that went before. He is “better than” all that pointed to Him. Therefore we can have confidence and hope.



Hebrews 1-2

▶ How has God spoken in the past?

In many times and many ways to the fathers through the prophets

▶ How has He spoken in these last days?

By His Son



Hebrews 1-2: God has spoken through His Son

7 truths that affirm that He is God's final Word:

▶ 1. Appointed heir of all things



▶ 2. Created the world



▶ 3. Radiance of the glory of God



▶ 4. Exact imprint of His nature *imprint*

▶ 5. Upholds the universe by the word of His power

▶ 6. Made purification of sins

▶ 7. Sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high

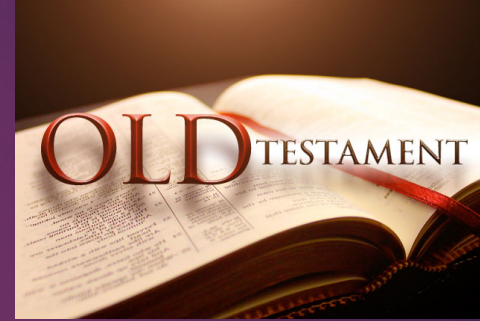




Christ is the Prophet through whom God has spoken His final word. He is the Priest who has cleansed His people's sins and He is King who sits enthroned on high. (Bruce)

Jesus is “better than” Angels/He is the Son

- ▶ Author uses 7 Old Testament passages to show how the Son is superior to angels

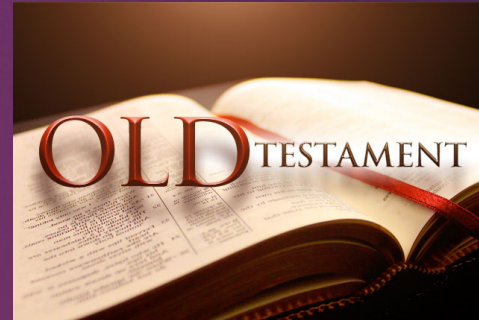


→ Therefore “*Let us*” pay much closer attention lest we drift away

- ▶ If the message delivered by angels carried retribution, how much more if we neglect the message of the Son?

Jesus is made “Lower than Angels”/Jesus is Man

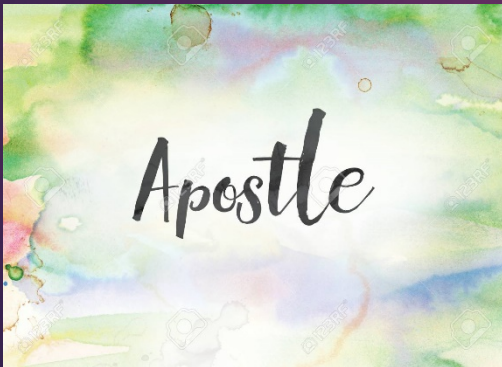
- ▶ He was made lower than the angels and became man so He could be our representative.
- ▶ Author uses 3 Old Testament passages to show this unity with humanity.



→ Because of Jesus's solidarity with humanity, He has become our merciful and faithful high priest.

Hebrews 3: Jesus is “Better than” Moses

- ▶ The author calls us to consider Jesus, the Apostle and High priest of our confession.
- ▶ Apostle=God’s representative to man. High priest=Man’s representative before God.



Hebrews 3: Jesus is “Better than” Moses

► The author compares Moses and Jesus:


--Moses=servant in the house, part of the house, role was to testify to things to come

--Jesus=Son over the house, founder, owner, maker, and inheritor of the house.



Hebrews 3: Jesus is “Better than” Moses

- ▶ We are His house (all believers) if we hold fast our confidence till the end.



persevere

Hebrews 3: Jesus is “Better than” Moses

→ The author has deep concern that they will fall away and therefore he constantly emphasizes the need for confidence and hope. He uses to use a familiar Old Testament passage to appeal to them: Psalm 95



Hebrews 3:7-19

⁷ *Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says,*

“Today, if you hear His voice,

⁸ *do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion,
on the day of testing in the wilderness,*

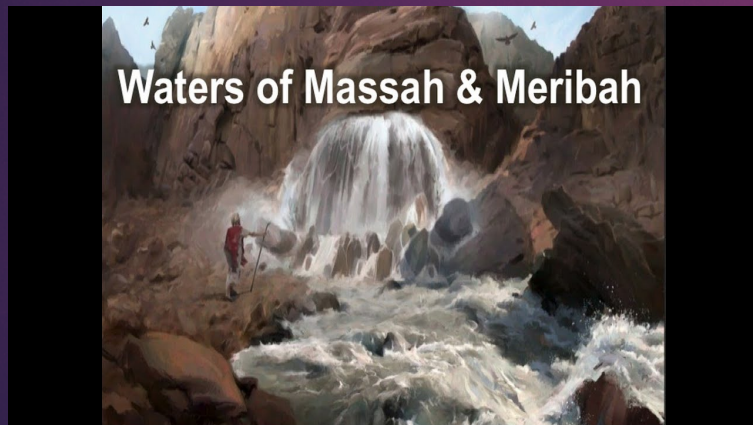
⁹ *where your fathers put Me to the test
and saw My works for forty years.*

¹⁰ *Therefore I was provoked with that generation,
and said, ‘They always go astray in their heart;
they have not known My ways.’*

¹¹ *As I swore in My wrath,
‘They shall not enter My rest.’”*

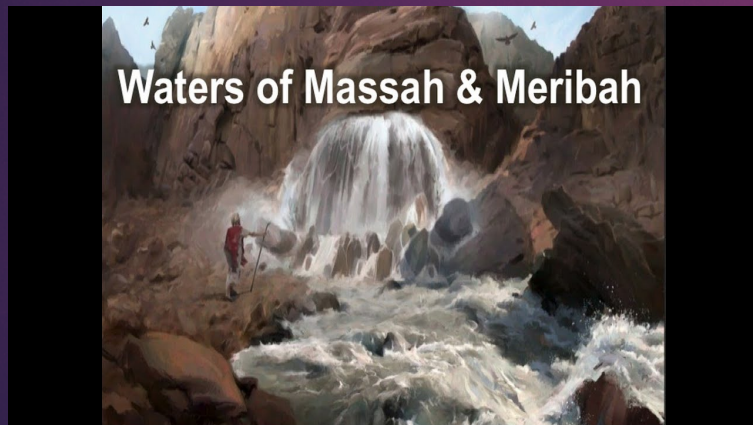
Hebrews 3

- The author draws on this widely known “example” to warn them against going the way of the Israelites in the Exodus by giving up their faith and hope. The two examples are:
1. The Israelites testing of God at Meribah
 2. The revolt after the return of the spies



Hebrews 3

- ▶ In Psalm 95, the Psalmist warns a later generation not to follow their example and face disaster and now, the author of Hebrews is issuing the same warning. (In urgency, the author warns that just as judgment came on those who rebelled against Moses, rebelling against Jesus leads to greater judgment as He Himself is greater than Moses.



Hebrews 3

- ▶ Therefore “*Let us*” take care lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God.
- ▶ Why was that earlier generation unable to enter His rest?
Unbelief



Hebrews 3

- ▶ That earlier generation revolted against God's appointed leader, Moses. To reject Jesus, God's appointed Apostle and High Priest, would be an even more outrageous revolt. To return to the Law or Judaism would be similar to that earlier generation wanting to return to Egypt and equals outright rejection.
- ▶ Each day is a new "today" in which we can heed the warning to hear and obey God.



Hebrews 4: The True Rest of God

- ▶ Therefore “*Let us*” fear lest we fail to reach His rest
- ▶ What is His rest? The rest God promises His people is the rest He Himself enjoys:

Hebrews 4: The True Rest of God

“Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. ² And on the seventh day God finished His work that He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work that He had done.³ So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all His work that He had done in creation.” (Genesis 2:2-3)



Hebrews 4: The True Rest of God

- ▶ The “rest” of God began at the close of creation and continues to this day.



Hebrews 4: The True Rest of God

- ▶ The rest reserved is a Sabbath rest, an entering into the rest that began on the 7th day of Creation. It's a heritage, a homeland to come. In Hebrews 11, we see those who have gone before us who longed for that “better country”. We enter God's rest at salvation, resting from our works, but we also look to that eternal rest to come.



Hebrews 4: The True Rest of God

- ▶ Therefore “*Let us*” strive to enter that rest so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience.
- ▶ What sort of disobedience? Unbelief, specifically unbelief in the message spoken now by the Son.
- ▶ Remember, God’s Word has the ability to diagnose the heart. It’s sharper than the sharpest sword and sees through to our innermost self.



→Something to consider: The Son of God is also the Son of Man, our representative. He too faced a temptation in the wilderness. Yet unlike that ancient generation, He was victorious.

So what ancient Israel (and in reality, all of us) failed to do, Jesus did as the Perfect Man. Which makes Him qualified to be our Perfect High Priest and our representative.

Justified=Just as if I'd never sinned. Just as if I'd always obeyed. (Pastor Norm)



So our author concludes:

Hebrews 4:14-16

Since then 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 is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

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Hold Fast

- ▶ Since we have a great high priest “*let us*” hold fast our confession. Why? Our high priest is able to sympathize with our weaknesses because He was tempted in every way too.



Draw Near

- ▶ “Let us” draw near to that throne where Jesus sits exalted at the Father’s right hand. There we will find mercy and grace to help us hold fast our confession of faith.

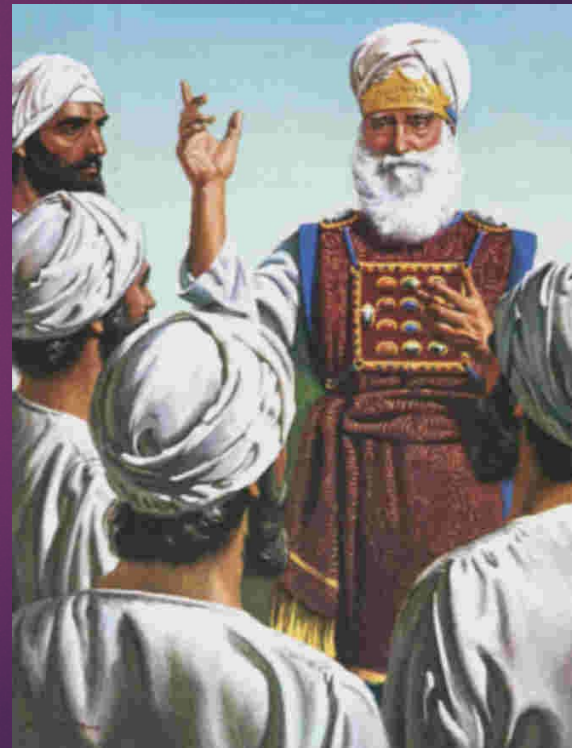


Hebrews 5:1-5 Qualifications for a high priest

The author lists qualifications for a high priest:

Qualifications for a high priest

1. He is selected from among the people



Qualifications for a high priest

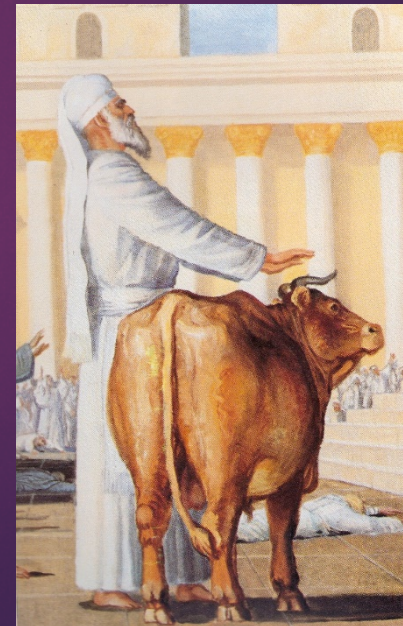
2. He represents the people before God-offering gifts and sacrifices for sins.

-Specifically at the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16)



Qualifications for a high priest

3. He is able to sympathize since he himself is subject to weakness.



Qualifications for a high priest

4. He is called by God to serve as high priest.



Hebrews 5:5-10: Jesus's Qualifications

1. He too was selected from among His brethren
2. He represents the people before God, offering sacrifice for sin. (More on that in Chapter 9)
3. He is able to sympathize with those He represents. He was tempted, grieved, and was “made like His brothers in every respect”.
4. He didn't exalt Himself to the role of High Priest but He was appointed to it by God the Father. And His priesthood is eternal, appointed as a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

Hebrews 5:11-6-8: Warning against abandoning the faith

The author has much he wants to say about this order of Melchizedek but he pauses to issue a strong warning first.

- ▶ They have become dull of hearing and need to be taught the basic principles again
- ▶ He calls them to leave the elementary doctrines and press on to maturity
- ▶ He warns them that if they turn back from Christ, it is impossible to be restored to repentance.

Hebrews 5:11-6-8: Warning against abandoning the faith

→ Nothing is impossible with God! The Lord can break into the hardest of hearts! But the warning is that, in reality, those who have walked among us and left, are often the hardest to see return. They have seen and heard the reality of the gospel and have outright rejected it. This is a strong warning to press on in faith. Remember the parable of the sower-the seed sown on good soil and the seed sown on rocky soil may appear to have similar growth for a time. But once a time of testing comes, the difference become evident. True believers persevere to the end.



Hebrews 6:9-20: Call to Persevere because of the Faithfulness of God's Promise

- ▶ After the severe warning, he encourages them that he doesn't believe they are apostates and is sure of better things for them. Why? Because of the fruit of righteousness that is evident in their serving of the saints.

Hebrews 6:9-20: Faithfulness of God's Promise

- ▶ The author mentions Abraham as the supreme example of someone who was given promises by God and who believed them to the end.



Hebrews 6:13-20: The Faithfulness of God's Promise

- ▶ The author of Hebrews focuses on the fact that when God made the promise, He confirmed it with an oath. Since God has no one greater than Himself to swear by, He swears by Himself.
- ▶ He is driving to the point that God's promise regarding the priesthood of Jesus is confirmed with a similar oath.

The LORD has sworn

and will not change his mind,

“You are a priest forever

after the order of Melchizedek.” (Psalm 110:4)

Hebrews 6:13-20: The Faithfulness of God's Promise

► And these 2 unchangeable things:

1. The Promise of God

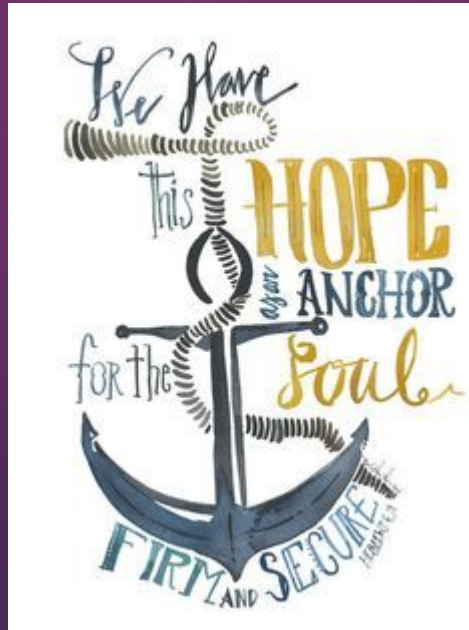
2. The confirmation of the promise with an oath, are our hope.

Hebrews 6:17-20: The Faithfulness of God's Promise

¹⁷ So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of His purpose, He guaranteed it with an oath, ¹⁸ so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us. ¹⁹ We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, ²⁰ where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

Our Hope

- And this hope in the promise of God that Jesus is our appointed High Priest is our **anchor**. We are moored to an immovable object, the throne of God Himself. Our hope is fixed there because Jesus is there, seated at the right hand. He, as our High Priest, has entered behind the curtain as a forerunner on our behalf.



Hebrews 7

Hebrews 7:1-3: Melchizedek-King and Priest

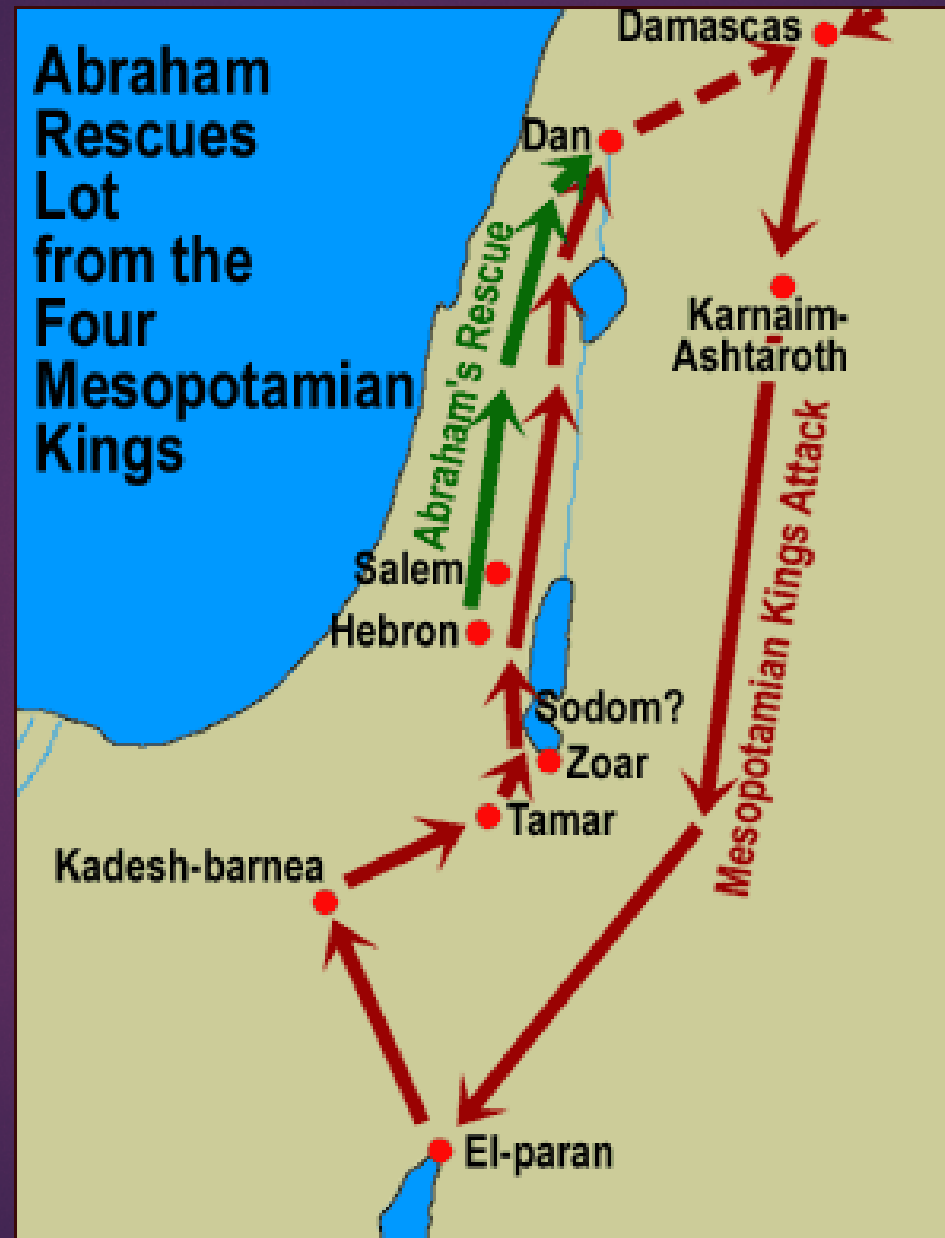
For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him,² and to him Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything. He is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then he is also king of Salem, that 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.

Hebrews 7:1-3: Melchizedek-King and Priest

- ▶ The author goes back to Genesis and the introduction of this Melchizedek into the Biblical story to show how he foreshadows the priesthood of Christ.

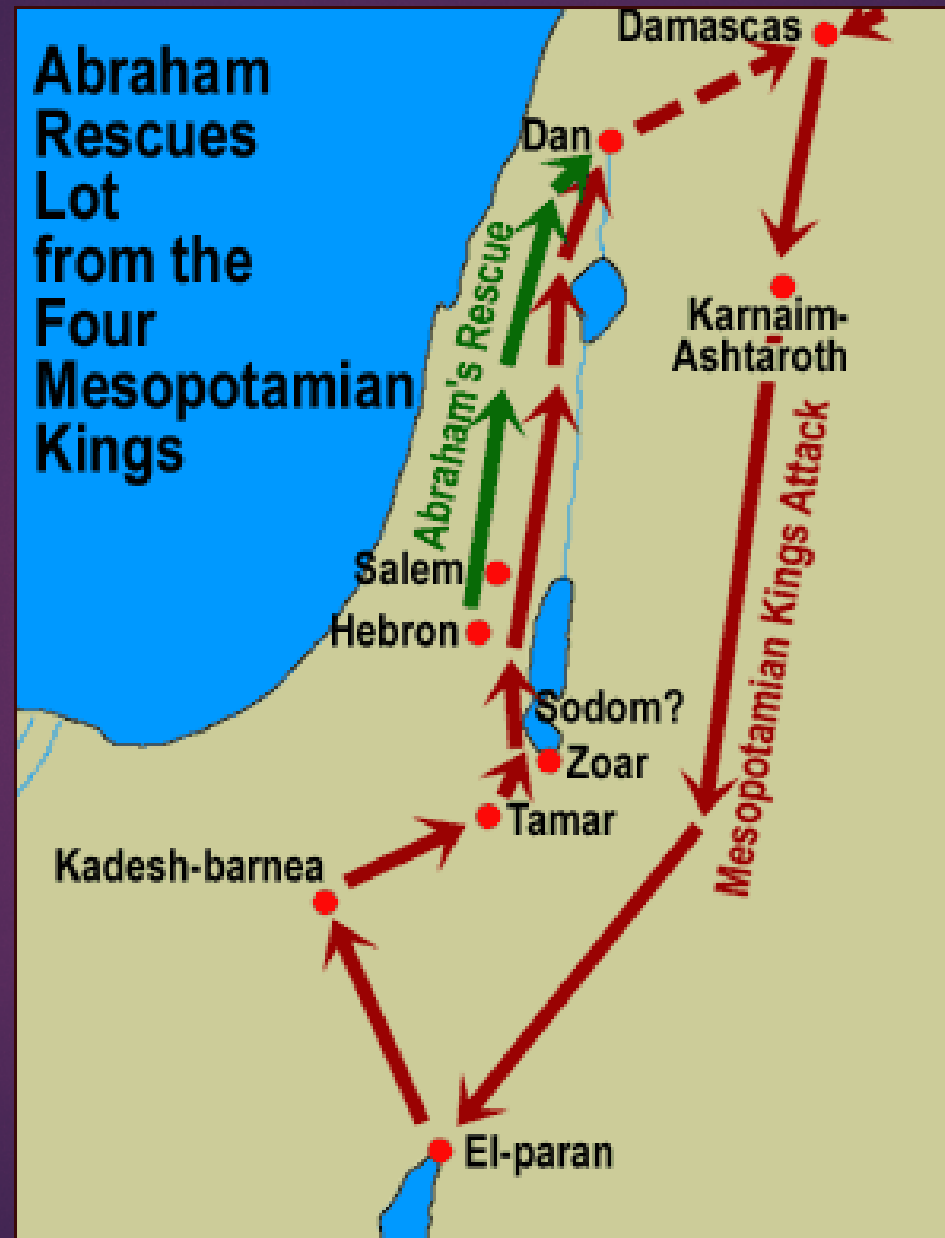






Sink hole beside the Dead Sea. In the Bible they are referred to as "tar pits" or "slime pits."





Genesis 14:17-20

After his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). 18 And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.) 19 And he blessed him and said,

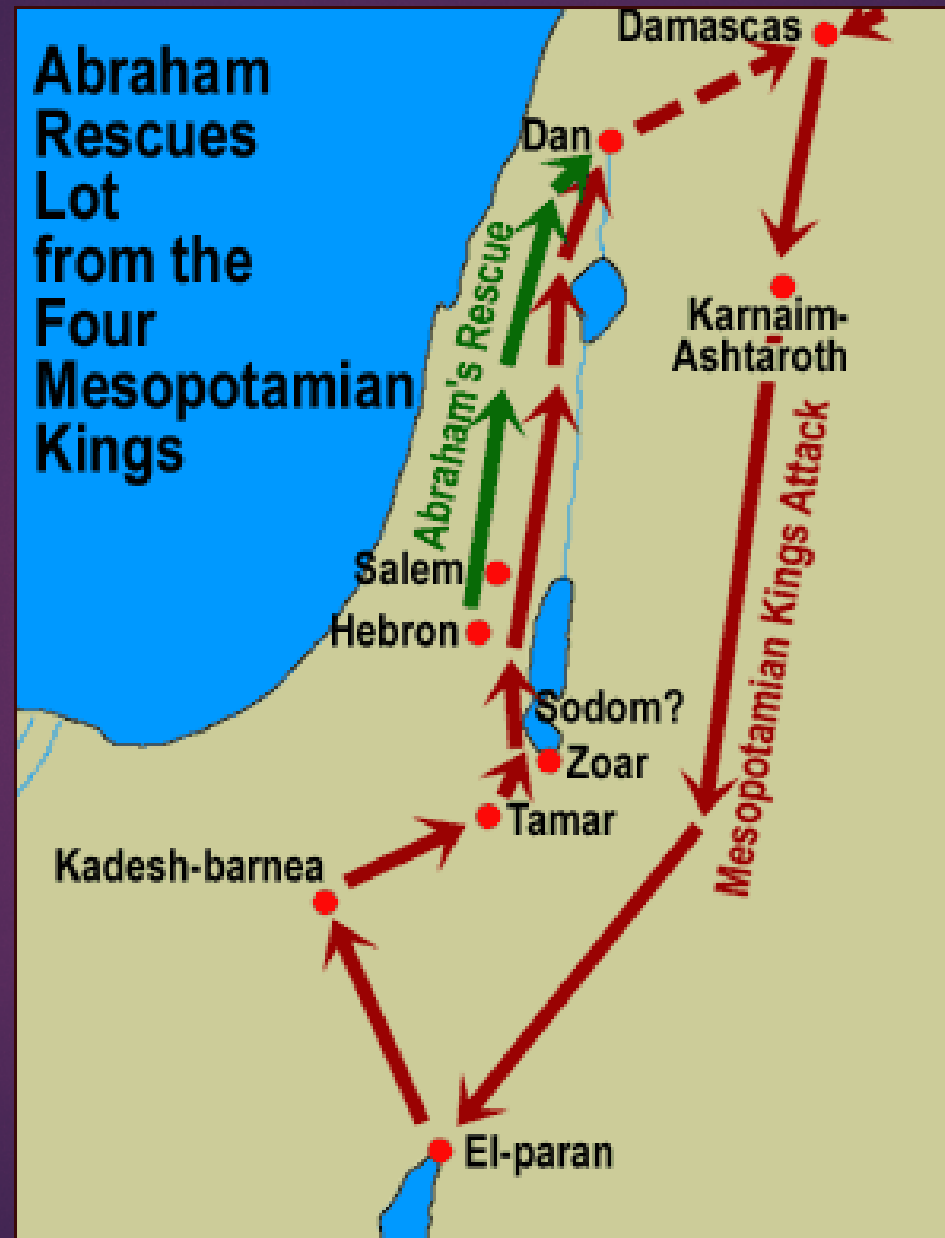
“Blessed be Abram by God Most High,

Possessor of heaven and earth;

20 and blessed be God Most High,

who has delivered your enemies into your hand!”

And Abram gave him a tenth of everything.



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who has delivered your enemies into your hand!”

And Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

Melchizedek

- ▶ This is all the Biblical narrative has to say about Melchizedek! But the author of Hebrews finds as much significance in what is not known about him as what is. So what do we know?

Melchizedek

1. He is King of Salem (Future Jerusalem)



Melchizedek

2. He is a priest of God Most High.

→ In him we see the foreshadowing of a King/Priest.
(Remember according to the Law, the line of King came from Judah and the line of priests came from Levi) Here Melchizedek prefigures a different “law”, a king who is also a priest.



Melchizedek

3. Overlooked by the author of Hebrews but a noteworthy point, Melchizedek greets Abraham with bread and wine. Many commentaries think different things about what that represents but it's hard to read it and not see a foreshadowing of the Last Supper.



Melchizedek

4. He blesses Abraham.

5. Abraham pays him tithes.



Melchizedek

6. His name is translated “King of righteousness and King of peace. (Hebrews 7)



Melchizedek

7. Melchizedek is described as having no mother or father, without genealogy.



Melchizedek

- ▶ This is not necessarily suggesting that he was an angel or the preincarnate Christ-the author is using an argument from silence and the fact that his genealogy is not listed to show that he is a fitting “type” of Christ. Because of this lack info, he is portrayed as a type of “eternal being” like the Son of God. Melchizedek is a priest “forever” (according to his time in the Biblical story) and in comparison, Christ remains a priest forever. Melchizedek is the shadow, Christ is the fulfilment.

Hebrews 7:4-10: The Superiority of Melchizedek

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.

Hebrews 7:4-10: The Superiority of Melchizedek

- ▶ Abraham had already been chosen and blessed by God at this point in the story. (Genesis 12) but here Melchizedek is portrayed as the greater of the two.
- ▶ And if he is greater than Abraham, then the priesthood from him must also be greater than a priesthood that came through Abraham.
- ▶ Abraham acknowledged that superiority by paying tithes to him. According to Levitical law many years later, the Israelites paid tithes to the Levites. By paying tithes to Melchizedek, Abraham, Levi's ancestor, showing that the priesthood of Melchizedek is superior to the priesthood of Levi.

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Hebrews 7:4-10: The Superiority of Melchizedek

- ▶ Abraham also acknowledged Melchizedek's superiority by accepting a blessing from him.
- ▶ Another "proof" of his superiority is that as far as the record goes, Melchizedek doesn't lose his office as priest by death. What was true of him as a type in the Biblical narrative, is absolutely true of Christ to whom Melchizedek foreshadows.
- ▶ The author brings the point up again by saying that it's as if even Levi paid tithes through Abraham, again showing his priesthood as inferior to Melchizedek's order.

Hebrews 7:4-10: The Superiority of Melchizedek

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Hebrews 7:11-14: Imperfection of the Aaronic Priesthood

11 Now if perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need would there have been for another priest to arise after the order of Melchizedek, rather than one named after the order of Aaron? 12 For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well. 13 For the one of whom these things are spoken belonged to another tribe, from which no one has ever served at the altar. 14 For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests.

Hebrews 7:11-14: Imperfection of the Aaronic Priesthood

- ▶ The author goes on to talk about that Levitical priesthood and how it was never able to bring about perfection. It was never designed to inaugurate the age of fulfilment, rather that age must come from a different priesthood of a different order.



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Hebrews 7:11-14: Imperfection of the Aaronic Priesthood

- ▶ The priesthood under the Law was such an integral part of the law that to bring about a new priesthood, meant a new law was inaugurated as well. The Law was a temporary provision only until Christ came.

Galatians 3:24

... the law was our tutor to bring us
to Christ ...

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Hebrews 7:11-14: Imperfection of the Aaronic Priesthood

- ▶ The fullness of that change can be seen in the fact that the One these things are spoken of doesn't even come from the tribe of Levi, but a whole different tribe. Judah, while the tribe through whom the kingly line was to come, never was referred to as a priestly tribe.



Hebrews 7:15-18: Superiority of the New Priesthood

This becomes even more evident when another priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek, 16 who has become a priest, not on the basis of a legal requirement concerning bodily descent, but by the power of an indestructible life. 17 For it is witnessed of him,

*“You are a priest forever,
after the order of Melchizedek.”*

18 For on the one hand, a former commandment is set aside because of its weakness and uselessness 19 (for the law made nothing perfect); but on the other hand, a better hope is introduced, through which we draw near to God.

Hebrews 7:11-14: Imperfection of the Aaronic Priesthood

- ▶ This priest comes from an order that is not temporal but is eternal. The Levitical priests each died and passed their priesthood on to another, but this High Priest is immortal. He is a priest forever by the power of His indestructible life.
- ▶ The author quotes again Psalm 110:

Psalm 110

4 The LORD has sworn
and will not change his mind,
“You are a priest forever
after the order of Melchizedek.”

Psalm 110

- ▶ This is the same Psalm quoted in Hebrews 1:13 when the author is making the point that the Son is called Lord by God the Father and is at His exalted right hand. This was a highly understood Messianic Psalm with Jesus quoting it about Himself as well. (Mark 12:35-37)

Hebrews 7:15-18: Superiority of the New Priesthood

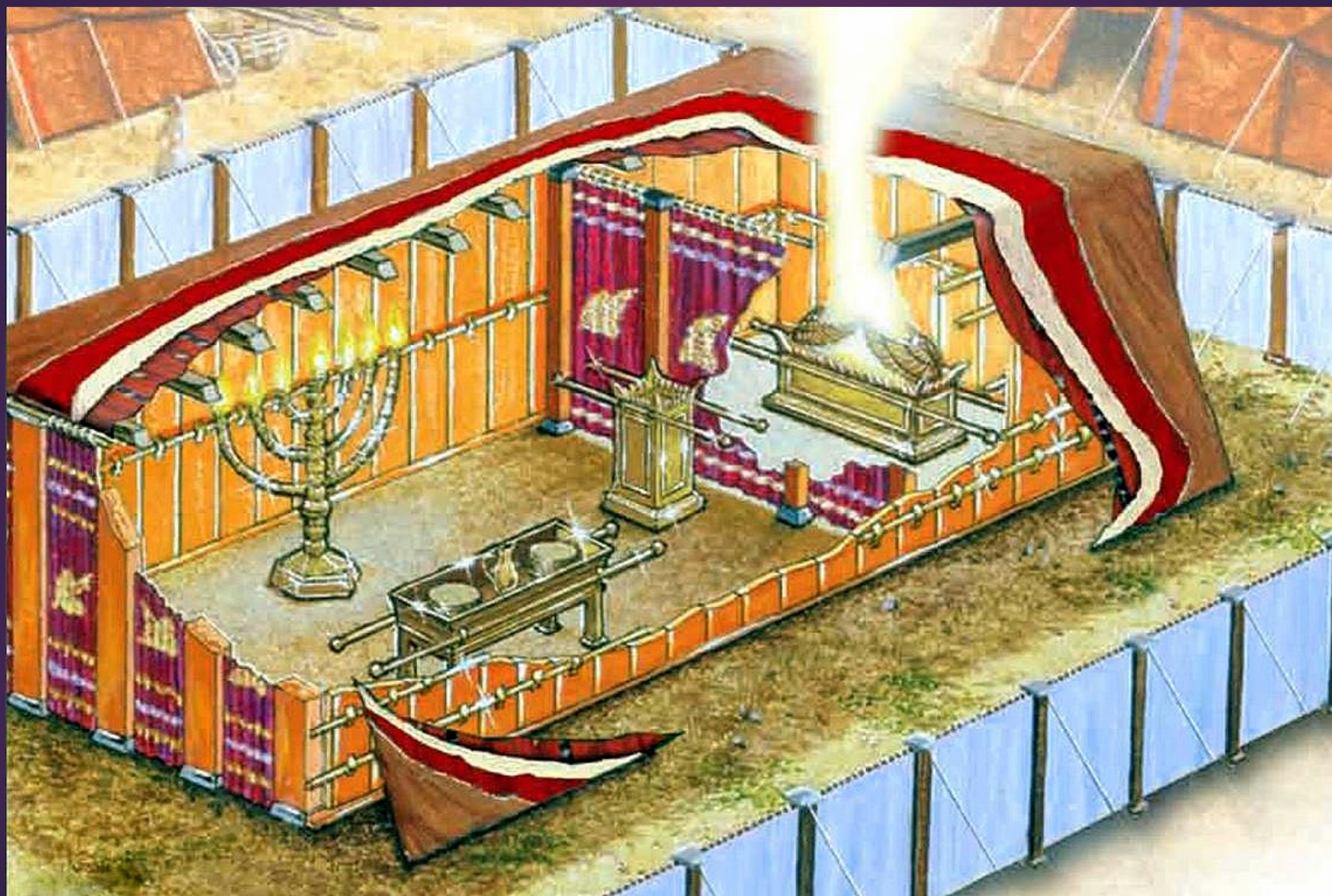
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Hebrews 7:11-14: Imperfection of the Aaronic Priesthood

- ▶ The former command was weak and useless in that it could never make the worshipper perfect. It always kept them at a distance from God. Even the tabernacle was designed to show distance and separation from God.



Hebrews 7:11-14: Imperfection of the Aaronic Priesthood

- ▶ The former command was weak and useless in that it could never make the worshipper perfect. It always kept them at a distance from God. Even the tabernacle was designed to show distance and separation from God.
- ▶ But now, a better hope has been introduced, one that calls us to draw near to God.



Hebrews 7:20-22: Superior because of an Oath

20 And it was not without an oath. For those who formerly became priests were made such without an oath, 21 but this One was made a priest with an oath by the one who said to Him:

“The Lord has sworn

and will not change His mind,

‘You are a priest forever.’”

22 This makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant.

Hebrews 7:20-22: Superior because of an Oath

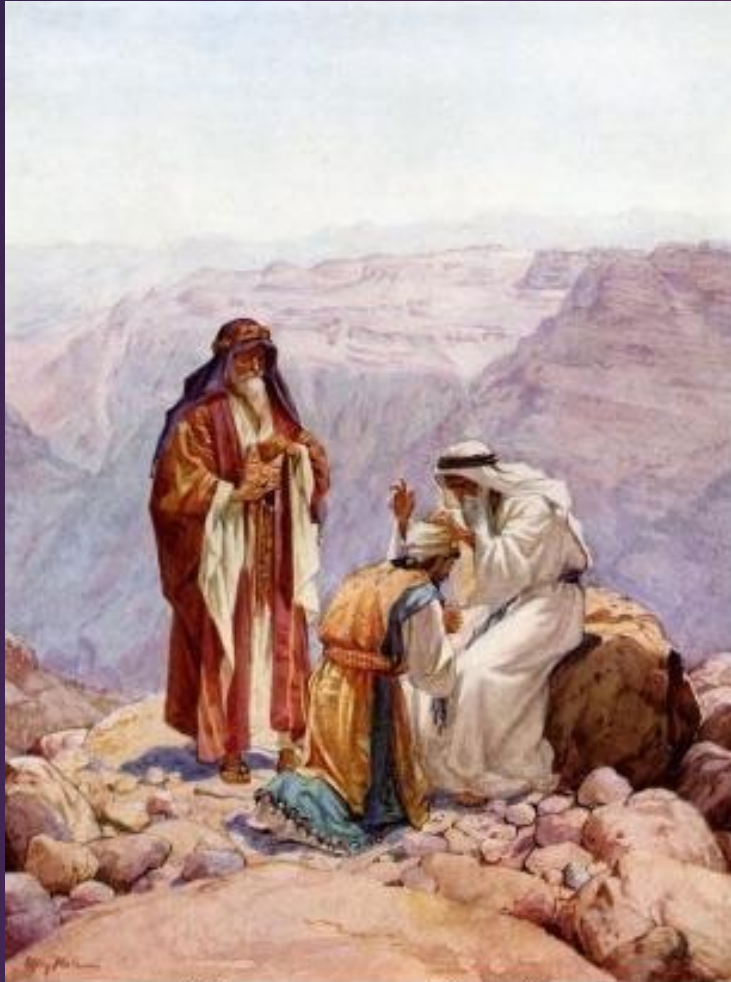
- ▶ One of the reasons it's a superior priesthood is because it was inaugurated with an oath.
- ▶ The author already made the point that God's promises to Abraham were irrevocable because they were made with an oath. In the same way, the promise of the new priesthood is guaranteed with an oath.
- ▶ The author now names this eternal priest-Jesus. This is a pivotal point-Since His priesthood is superior to Aaron, He is the mediator/guarantor of a better covenant.

Hebrews 7:23-25: Superior because of its Permanence

23 The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, 24 but He holds His priesthood permanently, because He continues forever. 25 Consequently, He is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

Hebrews 7:23-25: Superior because of its Permanence

- ▶ Another reason it's a superior priesthood, is because it is permanent.
- ▶ Unlike the former priests who died, Jesus holds His priesthood permanently. The former priesthood ended for each high priest when he died:



"The Consecration of Eleazar"
By William Brassey Hole (1846-1917)

28 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, (Numbers 20:28)

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Hebrews 7:23-25: Superior because of its Permanence

- ▶ But not so with our High Priest! Because He continues forever, He is able to save to the uttermost.

“Those who have Christ as their High Priest have in Him a Savior whose saving power is available without end.” (Moo)

Hebrews 7:23-25: Superior because of its Permanence

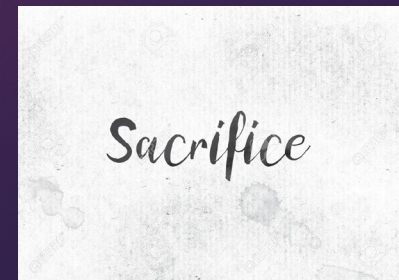
- Our author has talked about our high priest as providing atonement and strengthening them in temptation (2:17) and that He sympathizes in our weaknesses (4:15). Here His work is summed up by “intercession”. He sits “as an enthroned Priest-King, asking what He will from a Father who always hears and grants His request.” (Moo)

Hebrews 7:26-28: Superior because who Jesus is-The Son

26 For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. 27 He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself. 28 For the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.

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- ▶ Before a Levitical priest could offer a sacrifice for the people, he had to offer his own sacrifices first. Our High Priest has no need as He is holy, unstained, and perfect. And He has presented a permanent sin offering on our behalf.
- ▶ The author has mentioned our High Priest making atonement, purification for sins. Now the nature of His sacrifice is given. He offered up Himself.



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- ▶ The author closes with a summary-the law appointed men in weakness but our high priest is appointed by an oath, a Son who has been made perfect forever.
- ▶ “His once-completed self-offering is utterly acceptable and efficacious, His contact with the Father is immediate and unbroken, His priestly ministry on His people’s behalf is never ending and therefore the salvation which He secures to them is absolute.” (Moo)

Conclusion:

Jesus is our great High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek. Our permanent priest, able to save to the uttermost those who draw near through Him since He always lives to make intercession for us. What great hope and assurance! In Him our salvation is forever secured.





Thoughts and Discussion



1. We have talked about several “better thans” in Hebrews. Jesus is better than angels, better than Moses, leads us to better rest, is a better high priest according to a better priestly order, gives us better hope, and is the guarantee of a better covenant. Is there one of these that stand out to you and encourage you tonight?
2. What does it mean to you that Jesus always lives to make intercession for you?
3. Our salvation is absolutely secure, not because of anything we have done, but only because of Who has secured it. How does that bring you peace as you face temptation and sin?