

THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS

JESUS IS THE ULTIMATE REVELATION OF GOD

30 January 2022

Chapter 7:11-28

Verse of the Day:

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 7:25)

Review: Who, What, When, Where, & Why?

What's Going On Here

Who in the world is Melchizedek? ... That's not exactly a household name. In fact, outside of Hebrews, the name is mentioned only twice in the whole Bible. Why does he receive such prominence in this letter to the Hebrew Christians? Is this a mystery cloaked in secrecy that only a Hebrew could understand? Is this a fictitious character invented in order to add some drama? Can it be that he is a figment of the writer's imagination? Or did the writer have a divine purpose for including a man whose name we have difficulty pronouncing (Mel-KIZ-eh-deck)?

David, Abraham, Aaron, Levi, and even Melchizedek were household names to the first readers of this letter. Melchizedek was known and revered from the beginning of Israelite history. Abraham was the first to encounter him. Whether the early believers thought of Abraham (who offered a tithe to him) or David (who wrote a psalm that mentions him) or the writer of Hebrews, it was clear that this great Melchizedek had a whole lot to do with their life with God. For the story of Melchizedek pointed the way to the Son of God, Jesus—who is superior to all and who deserves all honor and glory.

The words of this chapter gave hope to first-century readers who were familiar with Hebrew history. Many of them were suffering, and some had become disillusioned with the way of Jesus. Some had even begun to return to a trust in the Law and the priesthood of former days. They were no longer looking to the Gospel to save them, but to the Law (which could not save them). They needed a strong but loving rebuke followed by an assurance that Jesus is the solution to their needs. He is the High Priest who is greater than the great Melchizedek.¹

Jesus Compared to Melchizedek

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.

v11: perfection not in the sense of physical excellence or sinlessness, but in the Latin sense of “bringing someone to completion, so that he reached the goal that had been set for him.”²

received – (perfect passive) have been and continue to be taught the law.

arise – intentionally used as a double entendre

order – *taxis* – fixed arrangement, proper procedure...

v13: The one, “Jesus” was from the tribe of Judah.

¹ Kramin, Howard (1997). *God's Word for Today: Hebrews* (p. 48-49). St. Louis: Concordia Pub. House. Reproducible by purchaser only.

² Kleinig, J. W. (2017). *Hebrews*. (C. P. Giese, Ed.) (p. 145). Saint Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House.

¹⁵This becomes even more evident when another priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek, ¹⁶who has become a priest, not on the basis of a legal requirement concerning bodily descent, but by the power of an indestructible life. ¹⁷For it is witnessed of him,

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

¹⁸For 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.

²⁰And it was not without an oath. For those who formerly became priests were made such without an oath, ²¹but 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.’ ”

²²This makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant.

²³The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, ²⁴but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. ²⁵Consequently, 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.

²⁶For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. ²⁷He 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. ²⁸For 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.

v16: indestructible – endless, perpetual, unimpaired

v17: c.f. Psalm 110

v18: set aside – annulled

v19: If the law brings nothing to completion then what is the purpose of the law?

v20: Oath – c.f. Heb 6:13-20 & Psalm 110:4

v22: guarantor → security deposit

v22: If Jesus is the guarantor of a better covenant, than what was the previous covenant (and what was it’s guarantor) (c.f. Exodus 20:1–2)?

v23-24: How is death both a punishment for sin and a gift of God (c.f. Gen 3:22–24)?

v25 & 28: LW 26:11-12 (Law versus Gospel in salvation)