Hebrews 7

Verses 1-3: ***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.***

--**(1)** ***For. . .*** what we have here in these three verses is one long sentence that is a summary of what the Scriptures tell us about Melchizedek **(Gen. 14 + Ps. 110)**. The writer is now going to get into things he wanted to say from **5:11**, but first paused to exhort them to press on into maturity and warn them not to fall away from the truth in Christ.

--Melchizedek was a king of Salem (possibly a geographic area but most likely Jerusalem: **Ps. 76:2**). He was also a priest of ***The Most High God***. . . which means the God above all. It was the first usage of that particular name of God in Genesis. Melchizedek was a royal priest from a post-flood form of worship that extended to all peoples.

--In the Genesis account, he meets Abraham and blesses him.

--**(2)** The writer notes that Abraham paid tithes to God through Melchizedek. Also, his name means "king of righteousness" or "king of peace." Two great features of the coming kingdom age **(Isa. 9:6-7; 48:18)** when Christ will rule over all nations**.**

--**(3)** ***without father, without mother, without genealogy. . .*** Having a genealogy was essential for the Levites. Without genealogical proof of their tribal heritage, Levites were not allowed to serve after the return from Babylon **(Ezra 2:26; Neh. 7:64).**

--***having neither beginning of days nor end of life. . .*** Scripture records no start or end to his life—and in the book of Genesis no less! Birth did not give him his priesthood and death did not take it. In this way, the appearance of endlessness in the Scriptural record of Melchizedek typifies the reality of the endlessness in Jesus' life and priesthood.

--***but made like the Son of God. . .*** Melchizedek was not the Son of God. He was ***made like*** the Son of God. Melchizedek is symbolically or typically what Jesus is actually and truly. Melchizedek is made like Jesus—not the other way around. He is the shadow and Christ is the substance.

--The inspired writer assumes that what the Bible says *and doesn't say* is inspired! If we speculate that Melchizedek is Jesus or Shem, we contradict the Holy Spirit's purpose in how he stands *in the inspiration of Scripture.*

--It is utter foolishness for us to try to supply what the Holy Spirit specifically and purposefully leaves out. In these types of places, as one writer put it: *Our ignorance is knowledge.*

Verses 4-10: ***Now consider how great this man was, to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils. 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; but he whose genealogy is not derived from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. Now beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better. Here mortal men receive tithes, but there he receives them, of whom it is witnessed that he lives. Even 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.***

--**(4)** ***Now consider. . .*** the consideration is a serious one. The phrase is used three other times **(3:1; 10:24; 12:3).** The Scriptural account of Melchizedek was very important! The Hebrews needed to know they still had a legitimate high priest and priesthood. They needed a good biblical reason to turn from Moses. They needed comfort from the Word.

--The first thing they needed to seriously consider was the fact that Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek.

--**(5)** It was an honor for the Levites to receive tithes from their brothers. Doing so was in accordance with the commandment of God **(Num. 3:9; 8; Neh. 10:38)**.

--**(6-7)** The second thing they needed to seriously consider was the fact that Melchizedek blessed Abraham! Since the lesser is always blessed by the greater **(Gen. 47:7-10; 48:9; 49; Lk. 2:34)**, then how great was Melchizedek if he blessed the patriarch of Israel?! Melchizedek blessed, with real benefit, the very man God had given the promises of the Messiah to!

--**(8)** Tithes are offered to God through the priests **(Num. 10:34-39; 18:2+26).**

--**(9-10)** Yet the Levites, who receive from men on earth, paid tithes to Melchizedek through Abraham.

Verses 11-18: ***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? For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law. For He of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar.***

For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood. 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. For He testifies:

"You are a priest forever
According to the order of Melchizedek."

For on the one hand there is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness, 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.

--**(11)** The writer asks a sobering question that every Hebrew had to answer! The writer asks the question, and then answers it in summation in **19.** Clearly, if the priesthood and the law could bring us to maturity in Christ, another biblical priesthood would have never been acknowledged or promised.

--**(12)** A change in the priesthood, which administers the law, would demand a change in the law itself. The two are inextricably bound.

--**(13-14)** The writer anticipates a perceived problem any Jew would have. The promise of **Ps. 110** was to the Lord of David but also the Son of David, who was of the line of Judah. Jesus' tribal genealogy was clear **(Mt. 1; Lk. 3; Acts 2:29-32; 13:23; Rev. 22:16).**

--Jesus ***arose*** from Judah—which reminds us of prophetic language speaking of the Messiah in terms of a rising: Star, Scepter, Rod, Branch, etc. **(Num. 24:17; Isa. 11:1; 53:2; Jer. 23:5; Zech. 3:8; 6:12).**

--These would be serious questions for any Jew! Who is this Son of David as a predicted priest? How can He be a priest if He is from the tribe of Judah? Being both king and priest was against the law. Being a priest from any tribe other than Levi was against the law. How could these things be?

--**(15)** The writer explains by declaring that the Scriptures made it clear there would arise ***another priest. . .*** the Greek word for ***another*** being *heteros*—meaning another of a different sort.

--**(16-17)** How is Jesus different as a priest? The Levites were fleshly priests, of a fleshly heritage, made so by the commandment of God. Jesus' priesthood is established by the oath of God, and maintained because of who He is as One full of power and eternal life!

--**(18)** These prophecies made it apparent ***there is an annulling of the former commandment***. The law had been *disannulled!* What a powerful declaration! These Hebrews needed to hear this so badly.

--The Greek word for ***annulling*** (*athetesis*) is only used in **9:26,** where the writer speaks of how Christ has once and for all ***put away*** (*athetesis*) our sin! The shadow had been removed by the substance. The law and priesthood were no longer needed because Christ had come, and the Spirit was given.

Colossians 2:14:** ***having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.*

--The writer is making things as clear as possible. The law and priesthood were *annulled, **former,** weak* and *unprofitable.* *We can forget what a shock it was for the early Jews to learn that neither they nor the Gentiles were to follow Moses' law as the defining rulebook and form of spiritual life and worship.*

--**(19)** Why? For two reasons:
--First, the law was never God's means to bring us to perfection. It was a temporary schoolmaster **(Gal. 4:1-7)**. The law demanded perfect maturity but could never produce it.
--Second, we have a better hope, covenant, and priesthood in Jesus Christ ***through which we draw near to God.***
--Drawing near to God under the Levitical priesthood was dangerous **(Ex. 19:22; Lev. 10:3)** and typically only for the priests themselves.
--Now, in Christ, we draw near to God in a much better way **(4:16; 10:22 + Eph. 2:18-22)**! We have better hope in knowing our sins are forgiven; the grace we stand in gives bold access to God; and in the life of God we experience through the Holy Spirit.

Verses 20-22: ***And inasmuch as He was not made priest without an oath (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'"),
by so much more Jesus has become a surety of a better covenant.
--The writer wants them to seriously consider another difference, bringing back the importance of an oath from God as he described in **6:13-18**. The Levites were made priests by God's commandment, but Jesus' priesthood was established by God's oath—solidifying God's eternal and unchanging purpose in His priesthood.
--As the ***surety*** of the New Covenant, the fulfillment of the promises of God rests solely on Him. The Lord Jesus Christ will never fail.

Verses 23-25: ***Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing. But He, 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.***
--**(23-24)** The Levites continued on because they ***were many***. Jesus remains because ***He continues forever.*** They passed. He remains. He always will.
Revelation 1:18:** ***I am He who lives, and was dead, behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.*
--The remaining aspect of the Messiah was something the Jews were familiar with.
John 12:34:** ***The people answered Him, "We have heard from the law that the Christ remains forever; and how can You say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up'? Who is this Son of Man?"*
--(Side note: It is His eternal kingly and priestly standing that secures our place as kings and priests throughout the eternal ages—**Rev. 1:4-6.**)

--**(25)** ***Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost. . .*** Moses' law and the Levitical priesthood could not bring anyone to perfection, but Jesus Christ can save to the uttermost in quality and quantity. He alone can bring us to God's ultimate end.
*Morgan (God's Last Word To Man, pg. 88): *"The Priesthood of the Son of God does more than shadow forth a possibility; it creates an experience."**
--We now ***come to God through Him. . .*** Not Moses' law, the priesthood, or the temple in Jerusalem. Anyone seeking to come to God, to worship God, must now do so through Jesus Christ, and His eternal priesthood. *Not the Catholic or any version of an Orthodox church. There is only one truly exclusive mediating Minister and ministry (Think of Christ amidst the golden candlesticks tending His Church worldwide)!*
--***Since He always lives to make intercession for them. . .*** The intercession mentioned here is that of a high priest, not just prayer, though prayer is clearly involved. It is His standing as our representative, like the high priest of old. *The intercession of the Jewish high priest would mainly be thought of in relation to sin and drawing near to God in worship—prayer of course being a part of that.*
--Jesus' royal kingly position is not yet made manifest in the world, but His sympathetic priesthood is daily and constant. He lived for thirty years humbly in the home circle. Served for three years in public ministry. But now, He has faithfully served as our High Priest for the last two thousand years!
--All our access to God, worship of God, and communion with God happen because of Him and through Him.
--That said, He does pray for us. His prayers for us in His heavenly life right now are just as real as His prayers were for others in His earthly life—as He prayed for Peter **(Lk. 22:31-32)**; for all disciples **(Jn. 17:20-26)**; and even for those who crucified Him **(Lk. 23:34)**.
--Truly, only heaven knows what His prayers have accomplished on our behalf! If no one else intercedes for you—He does. If you cannot pray for yourself—He does. If you cannot find another to pray with you—He will **(Rom. 8:27+34)**.

Verses 26-28: ***For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; 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. 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.***
--**(26)** ***For such a High Priest was fitting for us. . .*** He is the One who perfectly and fittingly meets our needs!
-***Holy:*** The Greek word here (*hosios*) is not the typical one translated *holy*. It carries more of the idea of *piety* or *practical and visible holiness*.

-***Harmless:*** Means innocent, or without guile, lacking evil thought or intention. The Greek word (*akakos*) appears only once more in **Rom. 16:18** and is translated *simple.* This is so important for us to know—as it was for the Hebrews! Jesus will never harm us.
-***Undefiled:*** Pure. Untainted. The Jews were always so worried about being ceremonially clean or unclean. Jesus is always undefiled. *Even touching a leper! The unclean become clean at His touch or word.*
-***Separate from sinners:*** In the world but not of the world. His separateness is not isolation. It gives hope to sinners who seek the same!
-***and has become higher than the heavens:*** He is exalted in the heavenly place. He alone has the name that is above every name.
--**(27)** The sinning priest had to offer sacrifices for himself **(Lev. 4:3-12)**. The high priest did not have a daily sacrifice for himself, but he did have a ***need daily*** as a sinner.
--In contrast, Jesus Christ ***offered up Himself. . . once.*** One sacrifice. One payment of eternal worth to pay the debt of all sin. *The Catholic Mass, as a daily sacrifice to purify sin, is a dishonor to the cross of Christ. It demands that His work is *not* finished, but like the ceremonial actions of the old high priests, needs to be done daily.*
--Scripture clearly teaches Jesus dealt with sin ***once for all when He offered up Himself.***
--**(28)** The law can only provide a faulty priesthood. The oath of God has provided the Son who alone has been perfected. Only the Perfect One can lead us into the perfection God has for us! The One who came low enough to take on our flesh and blood and carry our sin has risen high enough to lead us into the very presence of God.
--Why would anyone, whether the Hebrew of the writer's day or the modern worshiper in our day, turn from God's eternal High Priest to revert back to a weak and unprofitable human priest who stands between them and God?!