

Hebrews 7

Hebrews 7
Tape #8212
Pastor Chuck Smith

Hebrews, chapter seven.

As we have noted there is a tie between each chapter. The one leads into the next. And in verse twenty of chapter six, he is speaking about the hope that we have in Jesus as an anchor for our soul, who has entered within the veil, the heavenly, whether the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made a high priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.

Back in Genesis fourteen, we read that as Abraham was returning from the victory over the five kings, that had taken his nephew, Lot as a hostage, he had conquered over the five kings, chasing them all of the way to the gates of Damascus. He had defeated them and taken much spoil. And as he came back the king of Sodom met him to show his appreciation. But then in Genesis 4:18, and Melchisedec, the king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine and he was the priest of the most High God. And he blessed him and said, blessed be the God of Abraham, or blessed be Abraham of the most high God, possessor of the heaven and the earth. And blessed be the most high God, which has delivered your enemies into your hands. And Abraham gave him tithes of all that he gained.

Then in Psalm 110:4, the Lord has sworn and will not repent. Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.

In the twentieth verse of the sixth chapter, he quotes this Psalm declaring that Jesus was made a high priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.

Now that is all that we have in the Old Testament concerning this interesting priest, Melchisedec.

The Jewish rabbis believe that there four ways of interpreting a Scripture. The first was called the *Peshach*. And that is the plain meaning of the Scripture. The second was called the *Remas*, which was the implied meaning within the Scripture. The third was called the *Dereus*, which was the understanding that you came after much study and consideration. And the fourth was to interpret the passage was as an allegory, as a metaphor to find the hidden meaning in the passage.

As we get into chapter seven and as the writer begins to expound on the, oh, that's called *Sod*, as he begins to expound on the subject of Melchisedec, he uses the *Sod* or the metaphorical way of interpreting the passage.

Now he points out here in chapter seven, *For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him;* So we read that he was the king of Salem. The word, Salem, means peace, so the king of peace. He was the priest of the Most High God. And his name, Melchisedec, means King of Righteousness. *Melech* is the Hebrew for king. Melchisedec, the king of righteousness.

And it is interesting that Jeremiah tells us that in the day of the Lord, that He will be known in that day as Jehovah-tsidkenu, which means Jehovah our Righteousness.

He blessed Abraham, that we are told.

And then we read in the next verse, ²*To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace;* So these are the basic facts that are told us in the Book of Genesis concerning Abraham's encounter with Melchisedec. He was the king of peace. He was the priest of the Most High God. His name means King of Righteousness. He blessed Abraham. He gave him bread and wine and Abraham paid tithes to him.

Now these are the things that then he speaks of Melchisedec, things that are not actually declared but deduced from the passage, drawn out of the passage.

So he is ³*Without father, without mother, without descent, (He is without genealogy.) having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth (who abides) a priest continually.* Now you know that the Book of Genesis is a book of genealogies. It's all of the "begats" that you have in Genesis. It is very important to follow the genealogy. We follow the genealogy from Adam to

Abraham. We follow the genealogy from Abraham on through to Joseph and to the twelve sons of Jacob, in the Book of Genesis. And over and over again we have the genealogies. It was very important in the Book of Genesis to list the genealogies, to list their births and of course we read, and he begat sons and daughters and he died.

And he begat sons and daughters and he died. So it records the birth as well as the death of those important characters in the Book of Genesis.

But suddenly, here we have a man that comes on the scene. He is called the king of peace. His name means the king of righteousness. And Abraham received a blessing from him. And Abraham pays tithes to him. And yet no genealogy. We are not told who his parents were. We're not told when he was born. We're not told when he died.

So from this, the writer of Hebrews draws out the fact that he is without the genealogy, without any background, he suddenly comes on the scene. He is without generation. He is without descent. That is, we hear nothing of the descendants of Melchisedec. Nothing is told of his birth or of his death.

Now consider how great this man was, Consider the greatness of this man, we read in verse four. Consider how great this man, Melchisedec was.

unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. So consider the greatness. First of all, Abraham paid tithes to him. Now we are told a little later on, the sons of Levi, who took the office of the priesthood are commanded to receive the tithes from the people. And the sons of Levi came out of the loins of Abraham. But this man who was not a descendant of Abraham, received tithes from Abraham.

We then are told that he blessed Abraham. The writer points out that the lesser is always blessed by the greater. So the inference is that this Melchisedec was even greater than their father Abraham because he blessed Abraham and the lesser is blessed by the greater.

And then it is pointed out that the priests who come from the tribe of Levi, die. They receive the tithes of the people, but yet death is the destiny for each of them. But Melchisedec who received the tithes from Abraham, it is recorded of him, that he lived for God said, in Psalm 110, thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.

He points out that Levi, the tribe of Levi, the Levitical priesthood, actually paid tithes to Melchisedec, in that the Levi genes were in Abraham in the time that he paid the tithes.

You remember that when the children of Israel returned from the Babylonian captivity and they sought to re-institute the priesthood, that they required the men who take the office of the priesthood, show their genealogy. They had to come up with something. Some were claiming to be of the tribe of Levi, but they did not have their records. They didn't have the genealogy chart. Thus, they were rejected because they would only allow those with genuine Levi genes to serve in the priesthood.

But potentially, you see, Levi was in the loins of Abraham when Abraham paid tithes, so in that potential manner, the Levitical priesthood paid the tithes to the Melchisedec order of priesthood.

So he draws the conclusion then, that if the Levitical priesthood had been complete, there would not have been a necessity for another priesthood to arise, which was after the order of Melchisedec. Why not a priest after the order of Aaron? So as we go through this, we see these are the points that are being made as he is making inferences from things that are not said.

Consider how great this man was to whom even the patriarch, Abraham, paid a tenth of the spoil, ⁵*And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham:* ⁶*But he whose descent is not counted from them* (That is, the descendants are not counted from them, from Levi) *received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises.* ⁷*And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better.* ⁸*And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth.* ⁹*And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham.* ¹⁰*For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him.* So, these are the conclusions that he is drawing as he is showing the superiority of Melchisedec over Aaron or over the Aaronic or Levitical priesthood.

¹¹*If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) So it is evident that the priesthood of the Levites was not perfect. For under them they received the law.*

what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? So there needed to be another priesthood.

¹²*For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.* This means that the old commandment was disannulled because it was weak and unprofitable.

For the priesthood being changed, there is a necessity to change the law, ³*For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar.* So Melchisedec, no ministry at the altar, but a priest forever before the Lord. Not after carnal commandments, it was necessary that the new priest come after the likeness of Melchisedec.

Now he points out that the tribe from which Jesus came, there was nothing in the law that spoke of priesthood from the tribe of Judah. The law spoke only of the priesthood from the tribe of Levi.

So he said, ¹⁴*For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.* ¹⁵*And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest,* ¹⁶*Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.* ¹⁷*For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.* ¹⁸*For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof.* The old commandment disannulled. Now a new order of priesthood established after the order of Melchisedec.

¹⁹*For the law (he declares) made nothing perfect,* There was the disannulling of the commandment going before because of the weakness and the unprofitableness thereof, for the law made nothing perfect, *but the bringing in of a better hope did;* The law could not make a person righteous. Keeping the law would not make a person righteous. The law could only reveal to you your sin and condemn you because of your sin. There was no provision within the law for you to be righteous or for you to even keep the law. It was just there to show you were guilty before God.

And that it was necessary that you then offer a sacrifice for your sins to bring to God a sin offering. The law itself could make nothing perfect. The sacrifices could not take away your sin. The sacrifices could only cover your sin. The word, atonement, in the Old Testament comes from the Hebrew word, *kophar*, which means a covering. But they could not put away your sins as we will read a little further in Hebrews, it was impossible that the blood of bulls and goats could put away sin.

Under the law the person was still distant from God. The priest would approach God for you. The law could not bring you near to God. So the weaknesses of the law, in that it could not make you righteous. It could not give you the power to keep the law. Nor could it put away your sins nor could it draw you near to God. So the law was weak and disannulled because it was unprofitable.

But the Lord has made a better covenant with us through Jesus Christ. And so it's not after the old commandment but after the power of the eternal life in Jesus. For He testified Thou are a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.

For the law made nothing perfect, bringing in of a better hope did. Now this idea of Jesus, being better. The New Covenant in Jesus, being better. A better covenant, a better hope.

As you go through the Book of Hebrews, you find this brought throughout the whole Book. There is pointing to Jesus as the better way.

Hebrews 1:4, speaking of Jesus, He was made so much better than the angels, as He has by an inheritance, obtained a more excellent name than they. That's good for Jehovah Witnesses who would say that Jesus was an angel, Michael, the archangel. But He was made so much better than the angels.

Hebrews 7:7, and without contradiction, without all contradiction, the less is blessed by the better.

Hebrews 7:19, for the law made nothing perfect, but bringing in a better hope did; *by the which we draw nigh unto God.*

Then in Hebrews 7:22, By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.

Hebrews 8:6, and now has He obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also is He the Mediator

of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.

Hebrews 9:23, It was therefore necessary that the patterns of the things in heaven, should be purified with Thee, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

Hebrews 10:34, For you had compassion on me in my bonds. You took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.

Then in Hebrews 11:16, But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He hath prepared from them a city.

Hebrews 11:35, Women received their dead raised to life again: and other were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:

Hebrews 11:49, God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

Hebrews 12:24, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaks of better things than that of Abel.

So all the way through, through Jesus Christ, we have a better promise, a better hope, a better covenant. And so he points this out as we go through. Now he points out again, Jesus being a better priest than the Levitical order, the order of Melchisedec being a superior order. And for the reasons that we discussed earlier.

²⁰*And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest:* The priests of the Old Testament were made priests just because of their being of the tribe of Levi. There was no oath taken by God, that they should be priests. They were just priests because they came in the genealogical order. Some of the priests were very bad. Some of the high priests were wicked men.

At the time that Jesus came into the world, the high priesthood was really corrupt. They were of the sects of the Sadducees. They were humanists. They were materialists. They were corrupt. And yet it was only because they were descendents of Levi and of Aaron, that they had the position of the High Priest, but not really declared by God to their office, but they received it just as the result of birth from the tribe of Levi.

²¹*(For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath (That is, Jesus.) by him that said unto him, The Lord swears and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:)*

²²*By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.* So it made a surety of a better testament. The covenant, it was declared by God with an oath. God had sworn and will not repent. Thou art a Priest, forever, after the order of Melchisedec.

Now, he points out in verse twenty-three, ²³*And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death:* There were many priest because of death. A man would serve as the office of the High Priest until death and then a new one would be appointed to take his place. They did not have a continuing ministry.

²⁴*But this man (Jesus), because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.* But Jesus, because He lives forever, has an unchanging priesthood.

²⁵*Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.* This is why He is able to save to the uttermost, all who come unto God by Him, because He ever lives to make intercession for them. The uttermost, meaning people of nations. No longer is salvation something exclusively for the Jew. But through Jesus Christ, God has thrown the door open wide and invited all men to come in. Whosoever will, let him come and drink of the water of life freely!

Save to the uttermost means save from the most dire circumstances.

Save to the uttermost means save from the deepest depths of sin and defilement.

Save to the uttermost means to be saved for all eternity. It's ultimate.

The requirement—all who will come unto God by Him. Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life. And no man comes to the Father, but by Me!

Now there is something that you often hear people say—all roads lead to god. It all depends on which god. All roads lead to some god. But which god? There is only one road that leads to the Father, the

Creator, the Eternal God, Creator of heaven and earth. And that's Jesus Christ! I am the way, the truth and the light and no man comes to the Father, but by Me!

So religions will lead you to some god. All roads will lead to some god, but there is only one road that leads to the Eternal God, the Creator of heaven and earth, the God that is revealed to us in the Bible. And so we've got to come through Jesus Christ! There is no other way!

Jesus said, that He was the door to the sheepfold. And he that would seek to enter by any other way, was a thief and a robber. I'm the door, He said, into the sheepfold.

And Jesus ever lives to make intercession for us. Now this was a part of the ministry of the priest, to make intercession before God for the people.

You remember how Moses interceded for the nation of Israel. He was an intercessor. Abraham interceded for the city of Sodom. And so it was the duty of the priest to intercede for the people, to go to God on behalf of the people. We find Moses in that great prayer of intercession, when the people had so totally failed.

But Jesus is interceding for us!

So Paul says, who is he who condemns? It is Christ who has died, yea, rather has risen again and is at the right hand of the Father making intercession for us.

²⁶*For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;* In verse twenty six, for such an high priest became us. He is holy. He is harmless. He is undefiled. He is separate from sinners and he is made higher than the heavens.

Now this could not be said concerning the high priest of the Levitical order. Many of them were not holy. Many of them abused their office. They took advantage of the people. Many of them were very defiled. Many of them were sinners, terrible sinners, but not Jesus. And so our High Priest, who represents us. He is holy. He is harmless. He is undefiled. He is separate from sinners and He is made higher than the heavens.

²⁷*Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins,* Who needs not to daily offer sacrifices for His own sin, as did the high priests. Now the high priest had to first of all, offer sacrifices for himself before he could offer sacrifices for the people, because he also sinned.

In Leviticus 4:3, concerning the high priests and the offerings, we read. If the priest, that is anointed, sins, according to the sin of the people, then let him bring for his sin, which he hath sinned, a young bullock without blemish unto the Lord for a sin offering. And he shall bring the bullock unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord; and shall lay his hand upon the bullock's head, and kill the bullock before the Lord. And the priest that is anointed shall take of the bullock's blood, and bring it to the tabernacle of the congregation: And the priest shall dip his finger in the blood, and sprinkle of the blood seven times before the LORD, before the veil of the sanctuary.

Now he had to make this offering for his own sin before he could offer for the people.

And then a little later on in Leviticus 16, after Aaron's two sons were killed when they offered strange fire, the Lord commanded Aaron not to come just at any time into the holy of holies. It wasn't an open door kind of policy. The high priest could only enter into the holy of holies on one day of the year, the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur. He wasn't to enter just at any time into the holy of holies. But the first time he came in on the Day of Atonement, he had to come with an offering for his own sin.

Leviticus 16:5, And he shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering. And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin offering, which *is* for himself, and make an atonement for himself, and for his house. And Aaron shall take the two goats, and present them before the LORD *at* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for the scapegoat. And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the LORD'S lot fell, and offer him *for* a sin offering. But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat, shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make an atonement with him, *and* to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness. And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin offering, which *is* for himself, and shall make an atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin offering which *is* for himself: And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the

LORD, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring *it* within the veil: And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that *is* upon the testimony, that he die not: And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle *it* with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times.

Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that *is* for the people, and bring his blood within the veil, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat:

So you see that the high priest under the Levitical order, sinned, just like everybody else. And it was necessary that he offer an offering for his own sin.

Not so, our great High Priest, Jesus Christ, because He was separate from sinners! He was holy! He was harmless! He need not daily, as those high priests, who offer up the sacrifice for his own sins *and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself*. Jesus did not have to daily or annually offer sacrifices. His sacrifice of Himself was once and for all. It was not necessary that He offer a sacrifice for Himself, but once, a sacrifice for all.

²⁸*For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity (weaknesses); but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.* Melchisedec the priest of the Most High God, is thought by some scholars to be what is called a theophany. That is one of the manifestations of God in the Old Testament. They believe that Melchisedec was possibly Jesus Christ.

In the eighth of chapter of John, when Jesus is disputing with the Jews, Jesus said to them, your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day and he saw it and he was glad.

Then the Jews said to Him, You are not fifty years old. And have You seen Abraham.

And Jesus said unto them, verily, verily I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am!

So the reference to Abraham seeing His day, is a reference to Melchisedec, meeting Abraham when he was returning from the battle of the five kings with the spoils. The interesting thing is he is called the king of peace. He is called the king of righteousness. There is no genealogy. There is no descent. There is no record of his parentage or of the descendants. And the interesting thing when He appears to Abraham, what did He offer him? Bread and wine, the elements of communion. And so there are many who hold to the idea that Melchisedec was actually one of the Old Testament appearances of Jesus Christ. I think that there is a lot of merit and validity to that.

So the seventh chapter. Read it again and these things, I think, will sort of clarify in your mind, you know. Without the background, sometimes we just read it and it leaves sort of a fuzz in our brain. But getting just a little background on it and seeing the direction he's going. He is showing to us that Jesus is our great High Priest.

You see, the Jews were bound in their religious system. And the worship and all of the Jewish religion was very moving, was very touching, was very graphic. When you had sinned and you realized the guilt of your sin, and that the Bible declares that the wages of sin is death. The soul that sinneth, it shall surely die! And you know that you have been sentenced to death for your sins, for you to go out to your flock and take a lamb without spot or blemish, or a goat or a bullock. And you bring it into the priest. You lay your hands on the head of that bullock and you confess the sins that you have committed. And the idea is by laying your hands on the bullock and the confession of your sins, you are transferring the sin over to the bullock. And when that was done, the priest would slit its throat and catch the blood in a cup and take it in and offer it before the Lord, the bullock dying in your place! And you realize the consequences of your sin was death! And the death of that innocent bullock, who has taken your sins as you laid your hands on its head and confessed your sin. Transferring the guilt, it dying for you, the blood being offered to the Lord, so that your sin was covered—*kophar*. It was not taken away, but covered! But it was a very graphic illustration and it was deep rooted in the people.

You know, it is important, so important, that we have a sense of forgiveness, the relief from the guilt. A guilty complex can make you neurotic. A guilt complex can destroy you. It can drive you crazy.

It is so important that we have that sense of forgiveness. And thus God provided it under the law. Their

sins would be covered, but the problem was, the man who was making the offering for you, was also a sinner. And before he could do anything for you he had to do something for himself. He had to offer his own sacrifice for his sin. And that was a daily process because we sin daily.

Now I don't think that every day they brought a lamb. You wouldn't have that many lambs, you know. But you know, they would sort of let them accumulate, then they would bring in an offering you know and cover a period of time. But it was moving! It was deeply rooted tradition.

And so in embracing Jesus Christ, and not taking now a bullock any longer for your sin offering or a lamb or whatever, there was that, but, what do I do about my guilt? So he is pointing out, look, Jesus, is the sacrifice for your sins! He's not like the high priest that you've been going to, the descendant of Aaron! But He is a priest after a different order, an eternal order, the order of Melchisedec.

Now if the priesthood of the tribe of Levi were perfect, it wouldn't be necessary that God create His Son a priest from a different order, because He was from the Judah.

Now the tribe of Judah, was the kingly tribe. When Jacob was blessing his sons on his deathbed, he said, concerning Judah, the scepter shall not depart from Judah. The scepter being the rod of reigning. It will not depart from Judah until the Messiah comes. And so Jesus the King, from the tribe of Judah, but also now, our High Priest.

But the Jew would say, how can that be? He's from the tribe of Judah. The Bible says nothing about priesthood in the tribe of Judah.

So, he goes back to this passage in Psalms, which says Thou art a priest forever, (God has sworn and will not repent.) Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec. And so He is different order. He is not from the Levite tribe, but He is a different order. He is a priest after the order of Melchisedec.

So you have a high priest, who has gone into heaven, of which the earthly tabernacle and temple was only the model of the heavenly things, as we will be finding out in the subsequent chapters. And Jesus has entered in with the blood of His own sacrifice, once and for all! It's complete, not like the Aaronic priesthood, which was a continuing, year after year, but once and for all, He has put away our sins! Oh, how much better is this new covenant, better promises. And it brings us a better hope! How much better, we have it, in Jesus Christ!

Father, we thank You, for the Word. And we thank You for Jesus, our Great High Priest, who has entered into heaven for us. Who is able to save to the uttermost, all who will come to God by Him, seeing that He ever lives to make intercession for us. Oh, we thank You, Jesus. We come to You tonight. And we thank You that the door is open because You are the door to the sheepfold, by which we have entered into fellowship in the family of God. Oh Lord, how blessed we are, how rich, how glorious, are Your ways. Thank You, Father. In Jesus' name. Amen.