

Hebrews Study

Eternal Companion Hebrews 7:1-28

“Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; ²⁴ but because Jesus lives for ever, he has a permanent priesthood” – Hebrews 7:23-24

Most things in the Bible are easily understood, but there are a few things that remain a mystery for us today. In the Old Testament the role of the priest is a standard office we read about, but the unique priest that is named Melchizedek is one of these mysteries. We actually have more information about Melchizedek from the New Testament than we do from Genesis 14 and Psalm 110. The author of Hebrews discusses Melchizedek and compares him to Jesus in Hebrews 7.

Melchizedek the Priest vv. 1-10

What do you learn about Melchizedek from this passage?

King of Salem, priest of God most High—He blessed Abraham.

King of righteousness, Salem, King of peace.

Without father/mother, without genealogy, beginning of days/end of life
Given a 10th of the plunder by Abraham.

How does seeing Jesus in the order of Melchizedek make Jesus greater than the priests from Aaron’s descendants?

The priests from Aaron all died, but Jesus did not.

Jesus is both Priest and King

Jesus Like Melchizedek vv. 11-28

Verse 11 and 19 speak about “perfection.” What sense is it used in these verses?

It’s not used in a way to mean moral perfection, rather completeness.

What is the change in law that comes with a change in priests?

The OT Law states that the priests come from the tribe of Levi. The change will occur when the new priest comes from Judah—Jesus. Verses 13-14 explain this in detail.

What difference does verse 15-16 make about Jesus as the high priest like that of Melchizedek?

He’s not made a priest because of his ancestry, but based on his power and his life.

King ... and priest v. 1

It was common among the Canaanites for one man to hold both offices. However, this was expressly forbidden in Israel under the Law of Moses. Priests came from the tribe of Levi, while kings came from Judah and other tribes.
—Navigators Bible Commentary

“Genesis makes a point of recounting the ancestry, birth, and death of almost all of its main characters, but it omits this information in Melchizedek’s case.” — Karen Lee-Thorp

“Just as a bride and bridegroom plan their wedding day and work to make it perfect, God is working at bringing his world to perfection and doing what is necessary to make it complete.” - N.T. Wright

“Another priest” v. 15.

“The Greek language has two words for ‘another.’ **Allos** means another of the same kind. The word used in verse 15, however, is **heteros**, which means another of a different kind. The first indicates a quantitative difference, the second a qualitative difference.”
Christ is a high priest of a completely different order than the Levitical one.”

- Navigators Bible Commentary

How is Jesus one with an “indestructible life?”

He’s God, but specifically He has power to rise from the dead.

ἀθέτησις athētesis Set aside v. 18. Cancel, annul, completely do away with. The Greeks used this word for annulling a treaty, a promise, a law, or a regulation, or for removing a person’s name from a legal document.

What is the “former regulation” in verse 18 referring to?

The OT Law, specifically the priests who served as priests.

“Many Catholic churches have a board somewhere that lists the priests and rectors that served that church dating back for many centuries. Imagine looking at such list and discovering that the last appointed rector was still there and serving. Imagine he was still serving, still alive. A faithful man serving as called. This is the role that Jesus plays as a permanent high priest.”
- N. T. Wright

According to verses 20-22, how is Jesus different than the other priests with respect to their calling?

Jesus was made a priest by an oath by God, quotes Psalm 110:4
Jesus “has become the guarantee of a better covenant” v. 22

“His redemptive work is finished, so this intercession means not the work of salvation but the distribution of its daily benefits in our lives. Christ is ever-present to strengthen us in time of need, guide us in our daily walk, and enable us to overcome our daily struggles and difficulties.”
- Grant Osborn, George Guthrie

According to verses 23-25, how is Jesus unique among the priests who represented Israel before God?

He wasn’t prevented by death from continuing his office as high priest. His was a “permanent priesthood” v. 24

How does verses 26-27 describe Jesus?

“holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners” v. 26
Jesus didn’t need to offer a sacrifice for himself, He sacrificed Himself.

“This priest in the order of Melchizedek is holy, blameless, pure, and set apart from sinners. He offered himself once for all as the definitive sacrifice for his people’s sins and is now exalted above the heavens. He has a permanent priesthood and is able to save them completely and eternally because he always lives to intercede for them. Let [us] be assured, then, that the objectives of his perpetual priesthood will be fully realized.”
- Peter O’Brien, PNTC Hebrews

Verse 28 says of Jesus, “the Son, who has been made perfect for ever.” In what sense is Jesus’ priesthood “made perfect?”

It is complete, lacking nothing. There is no other priesthood greater.

What words or phrases offer you security/assurance as you read it today?

“guarantor of a better covenant” (7:22),
“permanent priesthood” (7:24), “able to save completely” (7:25),
“always lives to intercede” (7:25), “once for all” (7:27)
“made perfect forever” (7:28).

Hebrews Study

For the Road

Preparation for Next Week:

Read: *Hebrews 8:1-13*

Be Ready to Discuss:

The differences in the Old and New Covenants, "Copy and Shadow." Why an accurate Tabernacle is needed. How is the Old Covenant Obsolete?

Further Study...

A man of mystery or something more? Who do you think Melchizedek was?

Use the space below to examine the Scripture and language to form your opinion.

Compare Melchizedek's titles in Hebrews 7 to the messianic titles in Isaiah 9:6-7 and Jeremiah 23:5-6; 33:15-16.

Hebrews 7:16 alludes to Christ's eternal existence. Read Micah 5:2; John 8:58; 17:5, and Revelation 22:13 to see what they say about this.

How does 7:1-28 help you have confidence to "draw near to God" (7:19)?

What do you learn about Christ's intercession from Luke 22:31-32; John 17:6-26; Romans 8:33-34; 1 John 2:1?