

## HEBREWS Fear to Faith

### STUDY 8

# The Superior Sacrifice of the Son

## A. The Superiority of Melchizedek's Priesthood

[7:1-14]

### 7:1-4 Who is Melchizedek, and in what ways is he a wonderful type of Christ? (Gen. 14; Psalm 110)

[1] [7:1-3] Melchizedek is mentioned three times in Scripture: in history (Gen. 14); in prophecy (Ps. 110); and in doctrine (as here), this last being based on the other two. **W.H. Griffith Thomas** *Let Us Go On* p.82

[2] [7:1] Melchizedek appears at a crisis in the religious history of the world as the representative of primitive revelation, or of the primitive relation of God and man still preserved pure in some isolated tribe. If, as on the whole seems to be most likely, he was an Amorite, the fact that he had preserved a true faith becomes more impressive. On this point however Scripture is wholly silent. The lessons of his appearance lie in the appearance itself. Abraham marks a new departure, the beginning of a new discipline, in the divine history of mankind starting from a personal call. The normal development of the divine life has been interrupted. But before the fresh order is established we have a vision of the old in its superior majesty; and this, on the eve of disappearance, gives its blessing to the new. So the past and the future meet: the one bearing witness to an original communion of God and men which had been practically lost, the other pointing forward to a future fellowship to be established permanently. At the same time the names of the God of the former revelation and of the God of the later revelation are set side by side and identified (Gen.14:22; comp. Deut. 32:8f). **B.F. Westcott** *The Epistle to the Hebrews* p.201



[3] [7:3] ... it is not surprising that our authors should regard the omission of any mention of parentage or posterity as remarkable. For one thing, in the early chapters of Genesis, in which genealogy is so prominent a feature (cf. 5:1ff., the book of the generations of Adam; 10:1ff., the generations of the sons of Noah; 11:10ff., the generations of Shem; 11:27ff., the generations of Terah, Abraham's father), Melchizedek is the only personage among the worshippers of the one true God whose ancestry and descendants receive no mention. **P. E. Hughes** *Hebrews* p. 248

[4] [7:1-3] And it is not the type that determines the antitype, but the antitype that determines the type; Jesus is not portrayed after the pattern of Melchizedek, but Melchizedek is "made like unto the Son of God". **F.F. Bruce** *Hebrews* p.138

[5] [7:3] It is strange to find patristic and medieval authors appealing to the verse before us as though it supported their notion of a celibate New Testament priesthood. Thus, for example, we find Jerome affirming that the qualification "without genealogy" means that Melchizedek was unmarried, and so childless and without posterity, in a place where he is advocating celibacy of the clergy, even though he does not conclude from this same verse that Melchizedek was without parents and experienced neither birth nor death. Such is the inconsistency of special pleading! **P. E. Hughes** *Hebrews* p. 249

### 7:5-10 How is the priesthood of Melchizedek demonstrated to be superior to the Levitical?

[6] [7:1] The treatment of the history of Melchizedek is typical and not allegorical. The Epistle in fact contains no allegorical interpretation. The difference between the two modes is clear and decisive. Between the type and the antitype there is a historical, a real, correspondence in the main idea of each event or institution. Between the allegory and the application the correspondence lies in special points arbitrarily taken to represent facts or thoughts of a different kind. A history, for example, is taken to illustrate the relation of abstract ideas (comp. Gal. 4). **B.F. Westcott** *The Epistle to the Hebrews* p.202

### 7:11-14 Connect the genealogy of Christ with the inferiority of the Levitical priesthood

[7] [7:13,14] What is remarkable is that, notwithstanding the plain doctrine of the Epistle to the Hebrews, by the middle of the third century the Christian ministry has come to be widely understood in terms of the levitical priesthood of the old covenant. This is strikingly evident in the writings of Cyprian, who, to quote Bishop Lightfoot again, "treats all the passages of the Old Testament which refer to the privileges, the sanctions, the duties, and the responsibilities of the Aaronic priesthood, as applying to the officers of the Christian Church." **P. E. Hughes** *Hebrews* p. 263

Where did the idea of a Christian priesthood come from?

## B. The Superior Priesthood of Jesus [7:15-25]

### 7:15-17 How is the type of Melchizedek the perfect picture of a superior priesthood? What is its power, compared to the Levitical priesthood?

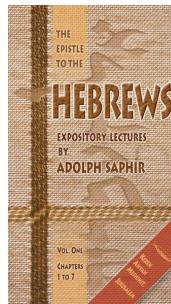
[8] [7:2] Thus three distinct features are noted in which Melchizedek points to Christ. (1) His name and title: King of Righteousness and King of Peace. (2) His isolation from all priestly descent, as holding his priesthood himself alone. (3) The

absence of all record of his birth and death. In other words the record of Melchizedek points to Christ in character, in office, in person (nature). **B.F. Westcott** *The Epistle to the Hebrews* p.173

#### 7:18-19 If the Law is imperfect, how can we assert it's divine? (Rom.7:6-14; 10:4)

[9] [7:18] A command, a law, is essentially powerless to help. It cannot inspire with strength: it cannot bring aid to the wounded conscience. And the ritual priesthood was affected by both these faults. It was external, and it was formal. It did not deal with the soul or with things eternal. **B.F. Westcott** *The Epistle to the Hebrews* p.188

There are three things that Scripture teaches. God is holy; man is sinful; Jesus is the perfect Mediator. In the old dispensation great stress was laid upon the first two points – God is holy; man is sinful: Therefore the godly Israelites prayed: Oh that God would send forth His salvation! Mediation was foreshadowed. Perfection was promised, the true Sacrifice, the gift of the Spirit. Israel was taught of God the nature, depth, and condemnation of sin. The law was the full, comprehensive, and profound commentary on the consequences of the Fall. It revealed to the Jews man's deep-seated estrangement from God, his depravity and corruption, the sinfulness of the very root and fountain of our life. The holiness of God and man's sin and sinfulness were thus vividly impressed on God's ancient people. **Adolph Saphir** *Hebrews* Vol.1, p. 410



#### 7:20-22 Notice that, as in the previous chapter, the author finds great significance in an oath (6:13-18)

#### 7:23-25 Relate the superiority of Christ's priesthood to one of Hebrews's pet subjects -- the Ascension (2:17; 4:14)

[10] [7:25] It remains to be seen how this continuous and complete salvation may be made real to us in personal experience. There is one and only one class of people to whom this applies – He is able to save completely “them that come unto God by Him.” The phrase “them that come,” is literally “them that draw near” or “them that come right up.” It is found seven times in Hebrews (4:16; 7:25; 10:1,22; 11:6; 12:18,22). It is the word for worshipers, meaning those who enter into the presence of God and realize their union and communion with Him. It includes acceptance and access, and implies assurance within and the right to the fullest possible appeal. **W.H. Griffith Thomas** *Let Us Go On* p.95

[11] [7:25] In view of these blessed truths, the call is clear, “Lift up your hearts.” The more we are occupied with the living Christ, and the fuller we confide in Him, the truer our consecration to Him, and the more complete our control by Him, the more thorough will be our experience, and the more effectual our witness. This verse, beyond any other, shows the essential and fundamental difference between the elementary experience of Christ as our Savior, and the deeper, richer experience

of Christ as our Priest. The one attitude looks back on the Cross with praise and thankfulness; the other looks up to the Throne with joy and confidence. **W.H. Griffith Thomas** *Let Us Go On* p.96

### c. The Superior Sacrifice of the Son [7:26-28]

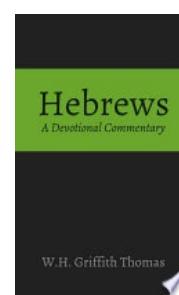
#### 7:26 Is there a contrast with the designation of v.22? (cf. 2:9; 4:14; 6:20)

[12] [7:26] Anselm provides a good example of the medieval notion of fittingness as he attempts to prove how fitting the virgin birth of Christ was. “God,” he explains, “can make a human being in four ways: either from a man and a woman, as he created Adam; or from man without woman, as he made Eve, or from woman without man, which was something he had not yet done. Accordingly, to demonstrate that this last method also lay in his power, and was held over for this very purpose, nothing is more fitting than that he should take that man about whose origin we are inquiring from a woman without a man” (*Cur Deus Homo?* 2:8). This notion of fittingness as a test of divine competence and ingenuity is foreign to the mind of the scriptural authors. **P. E. Hughes** *Ibid* p. 271

[13] [7:26] Christians have gained a view of the possibilities of life, of its divine meaning and issues, which gives an infinite solemnity to all its trials. **B.F. Westcott** *The Epistle to the Hebrews* p.195

#### 7:27-28 In what consists the superiority of the Son's sacrifice?

[14] [7:27] ... it is perhaps best to suppose that our author is speaking both generally and particularly in this verse, in such a way that when he says “daily” he has in mind the complex daily sacrificial routine performed by high priest as well as priests, whereas when he says “first for his own sins and then for those of the people” his thought is moving from the general to the particular, and is in fact beginning to focus on that great festival which was the annual consummation of the whole sacrificial system. **P. E. Hughes** *Hebrews* p. 277



### Our assurance – and His ability

[15] When it is said, “He is able to save,” it should be noted that this is the third thing associated with His ability in the Epistle: He is able to sympathize (4:15); able to succor (2:18); and able to save (7:25). This ability of Christ is a truth of great importance, and one that is at the base of everything in our Christian life and experience. It is probably on this account that we find it so prominently set forth in the New Testament. “God is able to make him stand” (Rom. 14:4); “able to establish you” (Rom. 16:25); “able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless” (Jude 24); “able to make all grace abound toward you” (2 Cor. 9:8); “able to keep” (2 Tim. 1:12); “able to build you up” (Acts 20:32); “able even to subdue” (Phil. 3:21); “able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think” (Eph. 3:20). The more we are occupied with the power of the living

Christ, the fuller, deeper, and richer will our spiritual life become. When it is said "able to save," it means literally "able to keep on saving." Salvation is threefold – past, present, and future. It includes deliverance from the penalty of sin (past); from the power of sin (present); and from the presence of sin (future). **W.H. Griffith Thomas** *Let Us Go On* p.93