

CHRIST GREATER THAN ABRAHAM

Hebrews 7:4–10 — *"Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. 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: But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises. And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better. And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth. And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham. For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him."*

Here we are talking about how great Melchisedec is to speak of the fact that Jesus Christ — the High Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec — is also greater than Abraham. For the Israelite mindset, this is as great it gets. *Greater than Abraham. Greater than the patriarch Abraham!*

John 8:56 — *"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad."*

What Abraham saw is not clearly stated in Scripture, but he saw a day coming. This same Abraham who gave a tithe of the spoils to the "Priest of the Most High God", is the same one who the Lord spoke of saying *"Before Abraham was, I AM"*, John 8:58.

Abraham surely saw that he was in the presence of greatness. How much more the greatness of the Son of God, revealed to mankind, now ascended to the right hand of "the majesty on high", and a true unveiled message from the Father.

It is also quite important to see the other declaration in these verses: the present (at that time) passing away priesthood was subservient to the Melchisedec priesthood. Blessings flow down from the greater to the lesser, and tithes go up. This is intrinsic greatness, not greatness that can be reached. All of the priests who were still in Abraham were also subservient to this High Priest of the Most High. The argument is plain: no matter how great the Aaronic/Levitical priesthood (also established by God), it is lesser than that of Melchisedec.

And the declaration in the Psalms, David speaking the words of God by God's Spirit, "Thou art a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek" speaks of the greatness of the Christ of God — His Anointed — who is Jesus Christ our Lord. This everlasting priesthood is from now until eternity superseding¹⁸ the Old Testament priesthood.

This does need to be reconciled with another covenant that is in Numbers with Aaron's grandson, Phineas:

Numbers 25:10–13 — *"And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy. Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace: And he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of*

¹⁸ This should not be understood as a transferring of promises made explicitly to the nation Israel to the present day Church of God in the dispensation of grace we are now in. But the priesthood is changed, for ever.

an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel."

Is that promise made null?

That cannot be, *"For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance"*, Romans 11:29.

Malachi chapter 3:1-6 may shed some light on this. Can the old priesthood be transferred to a higher order and remain as priests? Was not the entire Israelite nation to be a *"kingdom of priests, and a holy nation"*, Exodus 19:5?

Those priests after Aaron's order need a mediator between them and God as well, and this priesthood after the order of Melchisedec is the answer. It is the Man Christ Jesus who is their mediator as well.

Acts 4:12 — *"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."*

The "we" in that verse is Israel, including the priesthood. The priesthood needs to be purged, and it will be. The work is done.

Ezekiel chapters 40–48 speak of a temple that has not yet been. It has priests and Levites serving in it. This is a full study in itself beyond the scope of our study, but God's promises — His covenants — are true and can be counted on. How this will all happen even with a changing of the priesthood is confusing, but God will make it happen and it will make sense in time.

CHRIST GREATER THAN THE AARONIC PRIESTHOOD

Hebrews 7:11–17 — *"If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people 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? For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar.*

"For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."

Here we start this section, stating right from the start proof that the Old Testament priesthood was not enough. From the Messianic Psalm 110, where we have the statement of Christ called of God, a high priest forever — after a different order, the need for a different priesthood is shown.

The argument is this: If the Levitical priesthood was sufficient — *"if therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood"* — why would it ever have needed to be said *"Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek"*?

This is going to the Old Testament scriptures for proof that the changing of the priesthood was indeed necessary. It was also stated that it would be changed. This also becomes a segway to the truth that

there would need to be a change of the law. The old order of things was changing. This will be the same reasoning that will be used later in the epistle to address the new covenant. In chapter 8, we have in verses 8–12 an extended quotation from Jeremiah 31:31–34. Verse 13 adds the argument, that in promising a new covenant, the current one was made old.

Within the scriptures of the Old Testament, or covenant, we already had a statement concerning its coming end. This same thing is being said about the priesthood. There would have been no need for a different order of priesthood to arise if the current — now old, or former — was sufficient. And since the law established the Aaronic priesthood, the law needed to be changed. A whole new order would need to arise.

We are now going to discuss the priestly tribe. Which one was it?

The sons of Aaron were early designated the priests. In Numbers chapter 3 the whole tribe of Levi was given as a substitute for the firstborn of Israel. The Levites were those dedicated to the LORD for tabernacle service.

Judah was not that tribe. Judah was the tribe that would have kingship. This though, was not fully understood at first, but we would see it from the reign of David onward. Jacob, when blessing his sons, got to Judah and said this:

Genesis 49:10 — *“The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.”*

This came to pass with David’s kingship, and we will see that included in the Gospel is the important aspect of *“Jesus Christ of the seed of David”*, 2 Timothy 2:8; Romans 1:3. The New Testament as we have it opens with *“The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham”* (Matthew 1:1). Judah is in that genealogy, and it is quite important, because it is consistent with all of the promises of the Scriptures. But the priesthood under that testament was clearly limited to the tribe of Levi, and that even limited further to Aaron’s sons. That there would be another priesthood superseding that priesthood would necessitate a new law. That is what is happening here.

The priesthood after the order of Melchisedec would be a priest that is also a King. Jesus Christ is that priest forever after the order of Melchisedec. He is that merciful and faithful high priest, and He is also King of kings and Lord of lords. He is the rightful King of Israel, as recognized by Nathael — *“thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel”*, John 1:49. He was also recognized as such by the wise men from the east as *“He that is born King of the Jews”*, Matthew 2:2.

Jesus Christ is King and Priest, holding those offices just as Melchizedek did, so He is a priest after the order of Melchizedek, not after Aaron. The Aaronic priests had that office by way of birth and inheritance. It was not a merit-based office. In fact, many of the priests were not good at all, thinking of Eli’s sons who desecrated the priesthood. That in Malachi chapter 3 there is a need to purify the sons of Levi says much about the state of the priesthood.

Verse 16 speaks of the power of an endless life. The sons of Aaron after the flesh had a command to occupy the priesthood after the flesh. The Priesthood of the Son of God has inheritance by virtue of who He is, and that is who He is eternally, to occupy this everlasting Priesthood. As the Psalm says, and this

epistle says so many times, "Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek", so we go back to the very opening of this epistle:

Hebrews 1:3–4 — *"Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they."*

He has also by inheritance a more excellent name than the sons of Aaron and the sons of Levi. And the New Testament in His blood will be shown to be so much better than the old covenant, *"which decayeth and waxeth old [which] is ready to vanish away."* Hebrews 8:13.