



Lesson 35

Theme: A Better Hope

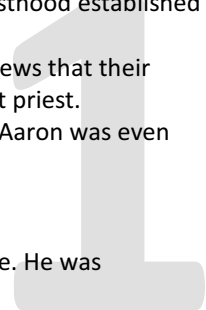
Scripture: Hebrews 7:11-19

Understanding the Levitical Priesthood

- All priests were Levites, but not all Levites were priests.
- All priests had to be from the tribe of Levi and from the family of Aaron.
- Levites were subject to the King.
- A Levite could not be King.
- The sacrifices of the Levites, including those on the Day of Atonement, were not permanent, but had to be repeated over and over again.
- The sacrifices of the Levites provide no permanent forgiveness, no permanent righteousness, and no permanent peace.
- The right to be a priest was hereditary.
- The priests themselves were also temporary. They began to serve at the age of 25 and had to stop serving at the age of 50. They also died. (Numbers 8:24-25)
- The Levitical priest served the nation of Israel alone.

Melchizedek's Superior Priesthood

- His was a universal priesthood - not just to the nation of Israel.
 - The Levitical priests were priests of the LORD or Yahweh.
 - Melchizedek was a priest of the Most High God (El Elyon) - possessor of the heavens and the earth.
 - Jews understood that there was no other priesthood established by God other than the Levitical priesthood.
 - Here, the writer of Hebrews reminds the Hebrews that their father, Abraham, offered tithes to a different priest.
 - Melchizedek's priesthood existed long before Aaron was even born!!
- His was a royal priesthood.
 - Four times he is referred to as king in 7:1-2!
 - He was king of righteousness and king of peace. He was sovereign over both!



- His priesthood was personal, not hereditary.
- "without father, without mother . . ." means that there is NO RECORD of Melchizedek's genealogy in the Old Testament.
- Melchizedek's genealogy meant nothing to his priesthood. Whereas the Levites' genealogy was important
- His priesthood was eternal, not temporary.
 - ① There was not age limitation on Melchizedek's priesthood, as there was on the Levitical priesthood.
 - ② The Levitical priesthood ended collectively at the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D. It was for the old covenant only.
 - ③ Melchizedek "remains a priest continually". (v. 3)

V. 11 - AN IMPORTANT QUESTION!

- The argument of the writer is that if the Levitical priesthood was perfect, there would be no need for another priesthood after the order of Melchizedek. This means that the Levitical priesthood did not make the people attain perfection therefore there is a need for a change (Hebrews 8:7; Hebrews 10:1-4; Galatians 2:21; Galatians 3:24-25)
 - Greek has TWO words for "another":
 - ① ἄλλος allos {al'-los} "another" – an additional one - of the same kind.
 - ② ἕτερος heteros {het'-er-os} – "another" of a different kind.
- The Old Testament promised another (ἕτερος) priesthood of a different kind and order.

PERFECTION: τελείωσις teleiosis {tel-i'-o-sis} – the bring of a thing to completeness for what it was designed for.

- DOCTRINALLY it means bringing a sinner into the presence of the thrice Holy God.
- Removing all obstacles between God and man so that man could fellowship (draw near to) with God.
- The Levitical priesthood could not do this. Only Jesus, the Christ, could.
- In order for there to be fellowship with God there must be:
 - ① RIGHTEOUSNESS: Christ lived a RIGHTEOUS life for those whom He came to save. See 2 Corinthians 5:21.
 - ② PEACE: Before being saved (reconciled to God) we were **ENEMIES** of God and God was our **ENEMY** (Romans 5:10; Colossians 1:21; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; James 4:4) Christ is OUR PEACE and His Gospel is called the "Gospel of Peace." (Romans 5:1;

Colossians 1:19-20; Ephesians 6:15; Romans 10:15)

- THESE THE LEVITICAL PRIESTHOOD (AND LAW) COULD NOT GIVE.

V. 12 - IT IS NECESSARY (obligatory, required, compulsory, mandatory, imperative) that with the change of the priesthood is a change of the law which came with that priesthood.

- Every priesthood comes with its own laws. The Levitical priesthood came with the ceremonial laws and animal sacrifices for the atonement of sins of the people of Israel. Therefore, the new priesthood after the order of Melchizedek comes with a completely new framework.
- The new priesthood after the order of Melchizedek was NOT added to the priesthood of Aaron - it replaced it!
- Christianity is not something that is ADDED to Judaism - it replaces it!
- A PICTURE: The Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-5) - Moses and Elijah are set aside and the apostles are told to LISTEN to Christ.
- The Levitical priesthood was TEMPORARY.

V. 13-14 - The first evidence of the change of the old priesthood is a change in the requirement for becoming a priest.

- The new priest which the writer speaks about is not from the tribe of Levi and not a direct descendant of Aaron as the old one.
- No man from this tribe (the tribe of Judah) has ever officiated at the altar or performed the roles of the priesthood. This is so important that when King Uzziah from the tribe of Judah attempted to burn incense at the altar he was struck by God with leprosy. (2 Chronicles 26:18-20). The writer wants his audience to know that this is a complete overhaul of the old ways of doing things under the old priesthood.
- Our Lord (Owner, Master, Ruler and King) came from Judah, of which nothing was said by Moses concerning the priesthood. The tribe of Judah was the royal line, from which David emerged and out of David's line the Messiah would come (Genesis 49:8-10; 2 Sam 7:12; Isaiah 11:1-5; Micah 5:2).

V. 15 -17 - IT IS FAR MORE EVIDENT THAT ANOTHER PRIESTHOOD WILL ARISE (Psalm 110)

- If this new priesthood is after the order or likeness of Melchizedek (Consider all that has been said about Melchizedek from vv1-10).

- Then, He has come not according to the law of a fleshly commandment. Note that the priesthood of Melchizedek was instituted before the law. Which means that this new priesthood is superior to the law and is not limited by it!
- BUT, this new priesthood is according to the POWER OF AN ENDLESS/ INDESTRUCTIBLE LIFE. (Hebrews 7:3; Rev. 22:13; John 11:25; 1 John 5:12; John 6:35; 1 Cor. 15:45; John 14:6; John 1:4; John 10:10; John 17:2)
- God testifies concerning His Son that He is a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek (Psalms 110). Observe that this is not the testimony of man or of angels but of God Himself. The writer repeats this testimony of God about His Son twice in this chapter for emphasis. God's testimony is far greater and it is TRUTH because God cannot lie (Numbers 23:19; Titus 1:1-2; 1 John 5:9)

V. 18: ON THE ONE HAND THERE IS AN ANNULMENT:

- The introduction of a new priesthood has led to an annulment (a legal term which means to declare an official agreement, decision or result invalid) of the former commandment concerning the priesthood and its ceremonial laws.
- **Why?** Because of its weakness and unprofitableness (Romans 8:2-4)

V. 19a: Why? Because the law made nothing perfect (consider v.11). God's goal for His people is PERFECTION. The priesthood under the old covenant and the laws which came with it did not make the people perfect (Hebrews 10:4; Romans 3:19-20; Deut. 27:26; Galatians 3:10,13)

V. 19b: ON THE OTHER HAND...Rejoice!

- The new and better priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ which is according to the order of Melchizedek has brought in a BETTER HOPE (Hebrews 6:17-20; Hebrews 8:6; John 14:6; Romans 3:21-26)
- Why is it a better hope? Because it is through this new priesthood that we draw near to God! The better priesthood overcomes all the weaknesses and limitations of the Levitical priesthood (see Hebrews 7:11,18,19).
- It is only through Jesus Christ that any human being can draw near to God. He is the only way (1 Peter 3:18; Ephesians 2:11-18). This is the glorious Gospel!

