

## Commentary on Hebrews Chapters 7 and 8, by Chuck Smith 10.6.24

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### October Memory Verse, 1 Thessalonians 4:15-16 (NKJV)

<sup>15</sup> For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep.

<sup>16</sup> For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

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### Chapter 7

In the book of Genesis, after Abraham and Lot had parted company, there was a confederation of five kings that conquered in the area where Lot lived, and took him captive and spoiled several cities. Abraham, hearing of it, armed his servants and he went out to meet these five kings in battle, and defeated them. He took from them the spoils that they had taken from the many cities that they had conquered.

As Abraham was returning victoriously with the spoils from these five kings, there came out to meet him a man by the name of Melchisedec. The name means "the King of Righteousness." He was also known as "the King of Salem," which being interpreted is "the King of Peace." Nothing is told us concerning the origin of Melchisedec. We know nothing of his genealogy, nothing of his parents. We know nothing of what happened to him after his meeting with Abraham. This was 400 years before Moses and the law.

Melchisedec, a mysterious priest of which we know so little, is only mentioned twice in the Old Testament. The first time being there in [Genesis 19](#), when he met Abraham. But then in [Psalm 110](#), out of the blue the psalmist writes concerning God, that He had sworn with an oath that, "Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec." This one hundred tenth Psalm is a psalm concerning the Messiah. It begins, "The Lord said unto my Lord, 'Sit Thou at my right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool.' The Lord shall send the rod of Thy strength out of Zion: rule Thou in the midst of Thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: Thou hast the dew of Thy youth. The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, 'Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.'"

Now there was the Aaronic order of priesthood from the tribe of Levi. One of the requirements of being a high priest in the nation of Israel under the law was, first you had to be from the tribe of Levi, and then of the Aaronic order. Here is an order of priesthood that antedates the Levitical priesthood by 400 years. A priesthood to which Abraham, the father of the nation, gave tribute, paid tithes, and received a blessing.

So the writer of the book of Hebrews, in the seventh chapter, is going to point out that this priest, Melchisedec, was of a higher order of priesthood than was the Aaronic order

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of priesthood established under the law. And that even after the Aaronic order had been established, a thousand years later...in fact, there is a thousand years' time difference between the two mentions of Melchisedec in the Old Testament. Abraham lived about 2000 B.C. when he met Melchisedec, a thousand years later. You see, we read of it in the same Bible and it's only a few books back, but it is a thousand years back. Suddenly this comes forth, "God has sworn and will not repent, 'Thou art a priest forever, (talking of the Messiah), after the Order of Melchisedec,'" not after the order of Aaron, after the order of Melchisedec. So that gives you a little background.

One further note before we get into the text itself. One day as Jesus was disputing with the Pharisees, they were challenging Him concerning His claims as Messiah and the Son of God. They said, "We are the sons of Abraham." Jesus said, "If you were the sons of Abraham, you would have acknowledged me, because Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it." And they looked at him and they said, "What are You trying to tell us? Abraham saw You. You are not even fifty years old." And Jesus responded, "Before Abraham was, I am." And they took up stones to kill Him" ([John 8:56-59](#)).

Now this statement, "Abraham rejoiced to see my day and saw it." When did Abraham see Jesus? Many Bible scholars, and myself included, many Bible scholars believe that Melchisedec was, in reality, one of what they call the Christophanies of the Old Testament, the appearance of Jesus in the Old Testament to Abraham. And that He was actually Melchisedec who came out to meet Abraham who received tithes from him and who blessed him. It is interesting that Melchisedec gave to Abraham bread and wine, the symbols of communion, the body and blood of our Lord.

Now, let's get into the text.

### Chapter 7

For this Melchisedec, the king of Salem, priest of the most high God ([Hbr 7:1](#)),

He said that he was the priest of El Elyown, the Most High God, when he introduced himself to Abraham.

who met Abraham as he was returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also the King of Salem, which is, the King of peace ([Hbr 7:1-2](#));

Fascinating name, King of Righteousness, King of Peace.

Jeremiah tells us that when the Lord comes to reign upon the earth that He will be known in that day as Jehovah-Tsidkenu, which means, "the Lord our Righteousness," or, "the King of Righteousness." We know that He is coming as the Prince of Peace. Both of these names incorporated in the name Melchisedec.

Now, Melchisedec, he said was,

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Without father, without mother, and without genealogy, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life ([Hbr 7:3](#));

It doesn't tell us where he was born, when he was born. It doesn't tell us when or how he died, or that he did die. It doesn't tell us anything of his genealogy. It doesn't tell us anything of his father and mother. He appears isolated on the scene, no background, nothing of his future. Just there appearing to Abraham, blessing him, receiving tithes from him, giving him bread and wine in communion. And so without father, without mother, without a genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life.

but made like unto the Son of God; he abides a priest continually ([Hbr 7:3](#)).

God has sworn and will not repent, "Thou art a priest forever." So he abides, continually abides; the priesthood is continual, forever. "Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec." It is an order that is established which is an eternal order of priesthood. "Thou art a priest forever," so he abides a priest continually.

Now consider ([Hbr 7:4](#))

You remember, twice before in Hebrews we had been told to consider Jesus. "Now consider him..." Now he tells us to consider Melchisedec. And as I say, I believe that he was an appearance of Jesus in the Old Testament.

Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils ([Hbr 7:4](#)).

Consider how great he must have been.

You see, Abraham was, in the mind of the Jew, the epitome. He was it. He was the father of those that believed. He was the prime patriarch of the people. Now consider how great this man Melchisedec was that Abraham would have given to him a tenth part of everything he had. That Abraham would have paid tithes to him, a 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 brothers, though they come out of the loins of Abraham ([Hbr 7:5](#)):

God had, under the law, established that the people should give a tenth part of all of their increase, that they should bring it into the temple. This was to be given to the priest. They were to pay their tithes, a tenth part of the increase. When they harvested their crops a tenth was to be brought in and given unto the Lord. The Levitical priests received tithes from their brothers; all of them were descendants of Abraham.

But he whose descent is not counted from them ([Hbr 7:6](#))

Not a descendant of Abraham. He lived at the same time, so his descent is not counted from them.

received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises ([Hbr 7:6](#)).

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Abraham had the promises of God. "Unto thee shall all of the nations of the earth be blessed. From thy seed shall the nations of the earth be blessed." This promise was to Abraham, and yet, here is Abraham receiving a blessing from this man. "Consider this man," who is that man? That even Abraham paid tithes to him and he received the blessing from Abraham.

For without any argument the less is blessed of the better ([Hbr 7:7](#)).

The blessing is always bestowed from the greater to the lesser. We are blessed of God. The fact that Abraham then received the blessings of Melchisedec puts Melchisedec even above their great patriarch Abraham.

And here men that die receive tithes ([Hbr 7:8](#));

The Levitical priests, they died and the order was passed on and on and on in a succession of generations. And here men that die receive tithes,

but there he received them, of whom it is witnessed that he lives ([Hbr 7:8](#)).

"Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec." That is, Melchisedec still lives.

And as I may so say, Levi also, who receives tithes, paid tithes in Abraham. For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him ([Hbr 7:9-10](#)).

So in reality, the priesthood of Melchisedec is so superior to that of Levi that Levi actually, who was, of course, in the loins of Abraham or potentially there in that gene structure that was to be passed on, Levi paid tithes unto Melchisedec.

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? ([Hbr 7:11](#)).

So coming to this [Psalm 110](#), "God hath sworn and shall not repent, 'Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.'" If the Levitical priesthood were perfect, if it could bring man into a perfect state, then why wouldn't God have said concerning the Messiah that, "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Aaron"? It was because the Aaronic priesthood could not bring anything into perfection. Therefore, God reverts to an earlier priesthood and greater priesthood, "Thou are a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec."

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 ([Hbr 7:12-13](#)).

So the fact that the priesthood is after the order of Melchisedec, there has to be a change of the law, because under the law you had to be of the tribe of Levi in order to be the priest. When they had returned from Babylonian captivity, there were some men who claimed priesthood, but they could not prove their genealogies, and so they were

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not allowed in the priesthood. Only those that could bring their genealogies and prove that they were of Levi.

But here is a priest after another order. Therefore, the law has to be changed, because we know he said that Jesus came from the tribe of Judah. And nothing in the law is said concerning the priesthood of the tribe of Judah, but it is an exclusive right for the tribe of Levi. For he of whom these things are spoken, Jesus is the one of whom this was spoken, "Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec," pertains to another tribe of which no man gave attendance at the altar. They did not serve before the altar of God, those from the tribe of Judah.

For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood ([Hbr 7:14](#)).

In the book of Hebrews, he has brought out that we have a great high priest, even Jesus Christ, the righteous. The Jew would immediately challenge, "How could Jesus be a great high priest when He comes from the tribe of Judah?" Nothing is said in the law concerning the priesthood from the tribe of Judah. So here he pulls out this 110<sup>th</sup> Psalm, "For God has sworn and will not repent, 'Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.'" And so he answers the argument of the Jew, who would declare there is no way Jesus could be a high priest coming from the tribe of Judah. He answers that argument quite thoroughly with his prophetic [Psalm 110](#).

And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there arises another priest ([Hbr 7:15](#)),

It is far more evident because the prophecy in [Psalm 110](#), that there has to arise another priest after the order of Melchisedec.

Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life ([Hbr 7:16](#)).

"Thou art a priest forever." So the law could make nothing perfect. It could only bear witness of a better covenant, established on better promises.

For he testified, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. For there is then of necessity a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitable thereof ([Hbr 7:17-18](#)).

The law has been disannulled, commandments disannulled, because of the priesthood being changed.

For the law made nothing perfect, but it brought in a better hope; by which we draw nigh unto God ([Hbr 7:19](#)).

The Bible says, "By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified in the sight of God" ([Romans 3:20](#)). The Bible teaches us that the law was never intended to make a man righteous. The purpose of the law was to reveal man's sin and his utter sinfulness. It is

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by the law that I have a knowledge of sin, for God has declared His righteous standard and I realize that I have fallen short of God's righteous standard.

When you look at the law that way, then we are all guilty. Though we may not have physically clubbed our neighbor to death, we've hated him because he never keeps his dog quiet at night. "I could kill him in the middle of the night when I'm awakened by that pesky dog." Guilty! The law made nothing perfect, but it did bring a better hope by which we draw nigh unto God.

And inasmuch as when a man was made a priest he had to take the oath of the priesthood ([Hbr 7:20](#)):

Even as the president has to take the oath of office, the governor has to take the oath of office, so the priest has to take the oath of office.

(For those priests were made without an oath of God; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent [God took an oath], Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:) By so much was Jesus made the surety of a better testament ([Hbr 7:21-22](#)).

And they truly were many priests ([Hbr 7:23](#)),

They would die, and that was their problem. They'd live out their life span and die, and the priesthood would pass on to the next and the next. It was something that was continually changing. There truly were many high priests of the Aaronic order,

because they were not allowed to continue by reason of death [they were mortals]: But this man, because he continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. 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 ([Hbr 7:23-25](#)).

Now, the purpose of the priesthood was that of intercession. The people could not come directly to God.

The purpose of the priest was to take this sinning man and intercede for him before God. But the priest himself had sins, so before the priest could offer a sacrifice for you, he had to first of all offer the sacrifice for himself. And then having offered the sacrifices for himself, he then, in turn, could offer for you. He would go before God and intercede for you. He was your representative before God, and then as he would come back to you. He would represent God before you. He was the go-between. He was the daysman. He was there mediating between you and God, because the approach to God was impossible for you to come directly to God. Our sins blocked the door, kept us from coming. You go to God with all your sin, you'd be a fried man. You can't stand in the holiness and purity of God. You'd just be wiped out. So that daysman, that mediator. So that was the purpose of the priesthood in the Old Testament.

Jesus, our great High Priest, is able to save them to the uttermost. Now this salvation that we have...now, again, don't mix your prepositions. It is not saved *from* the



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uttermost. It isn't here declaring that God can reach down to the lowest level of human existence and take a man from that state of a derelict and raise him to a high level of a redeemed preacher. Now, God can do that, and other text confirms that, but that is not what this text is affirming. It is not saving from the uttermost. It is saving *to* the uttermost. This salvation that you have, it's the most. Nothing greater, nothing finer, nothing more glorious than this salvation that we have through Jesus Christ. It is going to take us to the highest limits of glory. It's salvation to the uttermost. The absolute, ultimate experience. This glorious salvation that lifts us into the very presence of God and makes us one with Him.

Christ is there today, at the right hand of God, interceding on my behalf. Presenting me to the Father, interceding, and that is His ministry and His mission. He is not condemning me.

Where did we ever get that idea that Jesus was always condemning us? When Jesus was talking to Nicodemus about being born again, Jesus said, "For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He that believes is not condemned" ([John 3:17-18](#)). Notice He didn't say, "He who works hard, he who is faithful in devotions, he who prays an hour every day, he who reads ten chapters of the Bible every day is not condemned," but, "he who believes is not condemned, and he who believes not is already condemned." The law did that. This is the condemnation, that light came into the world and they wouldn't come to the light.

Now Jesus, not only a high priest, He's my intercessor. And He is able to save me to the uttermost because He ever lives, a priest forever. He ever lives to make intercession. So He acts there in the priestly capacity of interceding or of mediating between God and man, but He is there as my mediator representing me before God.

For such an high priest becomes us, who is holy, he is harmless, he is undefiled, and he is separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens [what a glorious High Priest I have]; who needs not daily, as those high priests [from Levi], to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. For the law maketh men high priests which have weaknesses; but the word of the oath, [God has sworn and shall not repent] which was since the law [it came some six hundred years after the law; the time of David], makes the Son, who is consecrated forevermore [a priest forever] ([Hbr 7:26-28](#)).

### Chapter 8

Now of the things which we have spoken this is the essence: We have such a high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heavens; he is a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer [that is the ministry of the priest to offer the gifts and the sacrifices]. For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest,

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seeing that there are priests that offer the gifts according to the law: Who serve unto the example and the shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: See, said the Lord, that you make all things according to the pattern that was shown you on the mount ([Hbr 8:1-5](#)).

The reason why there had to be such complete carefulness in the making of the tabernacle, that he makes it exactly according to the plan that God gave to Moses on the mount, is that the tabernacle is a model of heaven. You want to know what heaven is like? Do you want to know what it looks like and all? then study the tabernacle. The Holy of Holies is a model of the throne of God in heaven. The cherubim there in the tabernacle overshadowing the mercy seat. And so it is a model of the heaven.

Jesus didn't enter into the earthly temple that had been built by Herod the Great. He didn't enter into the Holy of Holies of the earthly temple, but He entered into the heaven, of which the earthly temple was a model. The earthly temple is not the real McCoy. It is just a model of what is real. So Jesus didn't enter into the model, He entered into the real thing. The earthly temple is only a shadow or a model of that which is in heaven. Our great High Priest entered directly into the heavens, of which the earthly tabernacle was only a model, and there He is representing me before God in heaven, not before a model of that whole thing in the Holy of Holies in the temple here on the earth. These things were to serve as an example and a shadow of the heavenly things.

That is why, though oftentimes we get bogged down in Leviticus, if we understand as we are reading in Exodus and Leviticus, we are reading about the temple and the dimensions and the things that were in it. And you go into Leviticus and read about the offerings, then you'll understand more about heaven and the heavenly things.

But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises ([Hbr 8:6](#)).

Now as you go back in Exodus chapter 19, and you read the covenant that God made with the nation of Israel, in the giving of the law, the establishing of the priesthood. This covenant that God made with Israel was predicated upon the people's faithfulness and the people's obedience. Verse 5 of chapter 19, "Now therefore," God said, "if you will obey my voice indeed..." "If," conditional, the covenant just isn't a straight out, flat covenant, unilateral. It is a conditional covenant. "If you will obey my voice indeed and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all the people. For all the earth is mine, and ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak," God said to Moses, "to the children of Israel." "And so Moses came down and called for the elders and all and told them of the people, and the people said, 'All that the Lord hath spoken we will do.' And so Moses returned the words of the people of the Lord" ([Exodus 19:5-8](#)). Moses went back to the Lord and said, "Hey, they said they will do everything You say." They said that, but they didn't. But you see, the covenant was "if" you will obey my commands, "if," but they did not. And therefore, the first covenant was broken, not by God but by man,



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because it was predicated upon man's obedience, man's faithfulness. But man was not obedient or faithful.

Now Christ has been the mediator of a new covenant, which is a better covenant, because it is established on better promises. Why? Because the new covenant is not predicated upon my faithfulness. The new covenant is predicated upon God's faithfulness. The new covenant is not predicated upon my work. The new covenant is predicated upon God's work. And because the new covenant is predicated upon the faithfulness and the work of God, it shall stand. It's good. I can enjoy it and be blessed by it, because it isn't conditioned upon me. It is conditioned upon God and His faithfulness. So, the new covenant is a better covenant. The New Testament superior to the Old Testament, or the new covenant superior to the Old Testament, because it is based upon better promises of the work that God has wrought through Jesus Christ, that finished work. Once and for all, offering the sacrifice, and now my just believing in Him. And that is the condition, my believing in Him.

If the first covenant had been faultless [had it been perfect], then there would be no reason sought to have a second covenant ([Hbr 8:7](#)).

If the first covenant could bring man into a righteous state before God, then you wouldn't need another covenant. But it could not, and that's why you needed a New Testament.

For finding fault with them, he said, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not [if you keep my commandments] in my covenant ([Hbr 8:8-9](#)),

It's not going to be like that one predicated upon my obedience.

and I regarded them not, saith the Lord ([Hbr 8:9](#)).

They broke the covenant, so I did not keep the covenant, because they broke it.

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people ([Hbr 8:10](#)):

You see, it's God's work now. He's going to put His law in my mind and He's going to write it in my heart. What does that mean? It means that God is going to express His will in my life, as I seek Him and as I submit my life to Him, God expresses His will for my life by putting the desire in my heart to do that which He wants done. He puts it into my mind to do something.

And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more ([Hbr 8:11-12](#)).

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Now see, this is God, this isn't me. It's not on my faithfulness now. It's on God's work in my heart, God's work in my mind, God's work in my life. I will know Him. He will reveal Himself. He will be merciful to my failures and He will not remember my iniquities anymore.

In that he saith, A new covenant, he made the first old. Now that which decays and waxes old is ready to vanish away ([Hbr 8:13](#)).

And the old covenant soon vanished. Right after this, the priesthood was over, 70 A.D., the end of the old covenant. And even those Jews today who are orthodox, or claim to be orthodox, are not obedient to the old covenant, because there is no priest. There is no high priest. There is no offering for their sins. They are not keeping covenant with God, no matter how religiously they may watch their diets or keep the Sabbath or offer their prayers at the Western Wall or at the tomb of David or at the tomb of Rachel or at the tomb of Abraham. The old decayed, passed away with the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 A.D. This was written just six years before the destruction of Jerusalem. So his declaration, "Now that which decays and waxes old is ready to vanish away," was fulfilled within six years. It vanished away.

But ours is an everlasting covenant, this new covenant that God has. A covenant established upon better promises, upon a high priest who does not die, does not change, who does not have to offer sacrifices for His own sins before He offers for me. But once and for all offered the sacrifice before God, by which I am saved to the uttermost as I come to God by Him.

Shall we pray.

Father, we thank you for our great High Priest, Jesus Christ. Who has passed into heaven for us, not into the earthly tabernacle, but, Lord, right there before Your throne, right there on your right hand. And how grateful we are, Father, that You have given to us such a great High Priest who loves us and who has washed us and cleansed us from our unrighteousness and who has changed our hearts and who has changed our minds and who has changed our nature. Through whom we have been born again by the Spirit of God into a spiritual life. Thank You, Father, for the walk and the life in the Spirit that we experience through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.