

JESUS OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST

HEBREWS 7-8

REMINDER: The author of Hebrews has relied heavily on the tool of *comparison* in order to prove his point—**Jesus is superior to all that has gone before.**

In fact, all that has gone before in God's revelation was anticipating the fulfillment that would come in Jesus.

- Jesus is superior to the angels (ch.1)
- Jesus is superior to Moses (ch.3)
- Jesus' rest is superior to the rest Joshua led his people into. (ch. 4)
- Jesus' priestly work is superior to Aaron's. (ch.5)



Hebrews 7 begins another comparison that had been alluded to but not explained in previous chapters.— the superiority of the High Priestly office of Jesus will be compared to the mysterious biblical character who appears in Genesis 14 – **Melchizedek** (MEL-KHIZ'-EH-DEK)

Q: Who was Melchizedek?

- Melchizedek is a figure who appears immediately following Abraham's defeat of four invading kings in Genesis 14. **He is introduced as a king and priest.**

Q: So What?

- The author is making the point that there was a priesthood in place **before** Aaron was appointed as priest of the sacrificial system introduced in Exodus.

Q: Again, so what?

- Using **Psalms 110**, David's inspired messianic prophecy; the author establishes that Jesus was not to be disregarded because he was not born a Levite (the tribe of Aaron and all priests). David reveals that God intended His messiah to follow the order of Melchizedek:

“The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.” (vs. 4)

- **After establishing how Jesus can be considered our High Priest, the author moves on to establish by comparison how:**
 1. **Melchizedek’s priesthood was superior** to the Levitical (Hebrews 7:4-10)
 2. **Jesus is in the order of Melchizedek’s priesthood— therefore, He is superior to the Levitical priests.**

Q: How does the author seek to prove Jesus is a superior High Priest?

- **Through comparisons with Melchizedek – a foreshadow or type of which Jesus is the reality.**

MELCHIZEDEK – A TYPE OF CHRIST

- **He was a God honoring man in a godless society.** (so was Jesus)
- **King and Priest** – (Jesus is also presented in Hebrews as the fulfillment of all 3 Old Testament offices: Prophet-Priest-King)
- **Blessed Abraham** – strengthened and refreshed him when faced with temptation. (Jesus also strengthens and refreshes those who draw near to the throne of grace. 4:16)
 - Martin Luther saw it this way: *“Melchizedek presents Abraham to the entire world and declares that only with him, in his house and family, are the church, the kingdom of heaven, salvation, forgiveness of sins and divine blessing.”* (Phillips, p.223)
 - **Note:** It is the superior who blesses the inferior (7:7) Melchizedek blessed Abraham in whose loins was Levi.
 - **Bread and wine** – impossible to miss items used to speak of the blessing that comes through the new covenant of grace.
 - Anticipates and represents the **messianic priesthood** that is based on the power of His sacrificial death and resurrection.

- **King of Righteousness** – his kingly rule was concerned with extending righteousness. (Jesus is perfect righteousness and purposing to extend the kingdom of righteousness.)
- **King of Salem** – means “*Shalom*” or peace. (Jesus is the Prince of Peace)

*For to us a child is born,
 to us a son is given,
 and the government will be on his shoulders.
 And he will be called
 Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
 Everlasting Father, **Prince of Peace**.
 Of the increase of his government and peace
 there will be no end.
 He will reign on David's throne
 and over his kingdom,
 establishing and upholding it
 with justice and righteousness
 from that time on and forever.
 The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.
 (Isaiah 9:6-7)*

- **No Genealogy** – mysteriously a priest yet he has no known beginning in a culture that valued genealogy highly. Priests later had to be able to prove their lineage to Levi. (Jesus did not trace his lineage to Levi—He was of the tribe of Judah – His credentials are not on the basis of ancestry but on the basis of His indestructible life (7:16))
- **Without Beginning or End** – suggests a timeless priesthood since there is no known beginning or end. It is forever - eternal. (Jesus is a risen, living Lord without beginning or end – begotten not made—being of one substance with the Father—living to intercede forever—our High Priest)

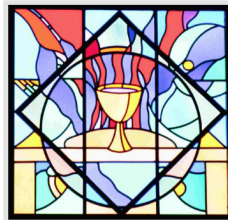
Key Point: The Melchizedek priesthood of Jesus was in God's plan centuries before He gave the gracious provision of the Levitical priesthood and the law.



Q: Why is this such an important point to make?

- He is speaking to people who are tempted to return to the old covenant of sacrifices and offerings of the Levitical priesthood.
- That system could not attain the standard of perfection that God required of His people—why return to something that God has set aside? (vs. 11, 18)
- The old system cannot save – Jesus can! (vs. 25)

HEBREWS 8 – High Priest of a New Covenant



Q: The Old Covenant came from God—why was a New Covenant needed?

- *“As an administration of salvation, the law could not bring about what it sought. The goal of every priesthood is to draw people to God, but the old covenant could not do this. This was its weakness, and why it demanded another covenant to come. The same is true today. An outward code, a system of rules, may point us in the right direction (and the moral law of God certainly does that). However, it offers no power, no change of heart, to motivate us along that change of course, and no impetus to move along the new azimuth. For this we need power, a new disposition or attitude, which the law cannot convey, but which comes only by the Holy Spirit as he is poured out on us by our heavenly high priest.” (Phillips, p. 237)*

Q: How are Christians supposed to think about the two covenants?

COVENANTS OF GOD

HEBREWS 8

DEFINED: An agreement that establishes the terms of a relationship. God's covenants were patterned after the Suzerain/Vassal treaties of the ancient world.

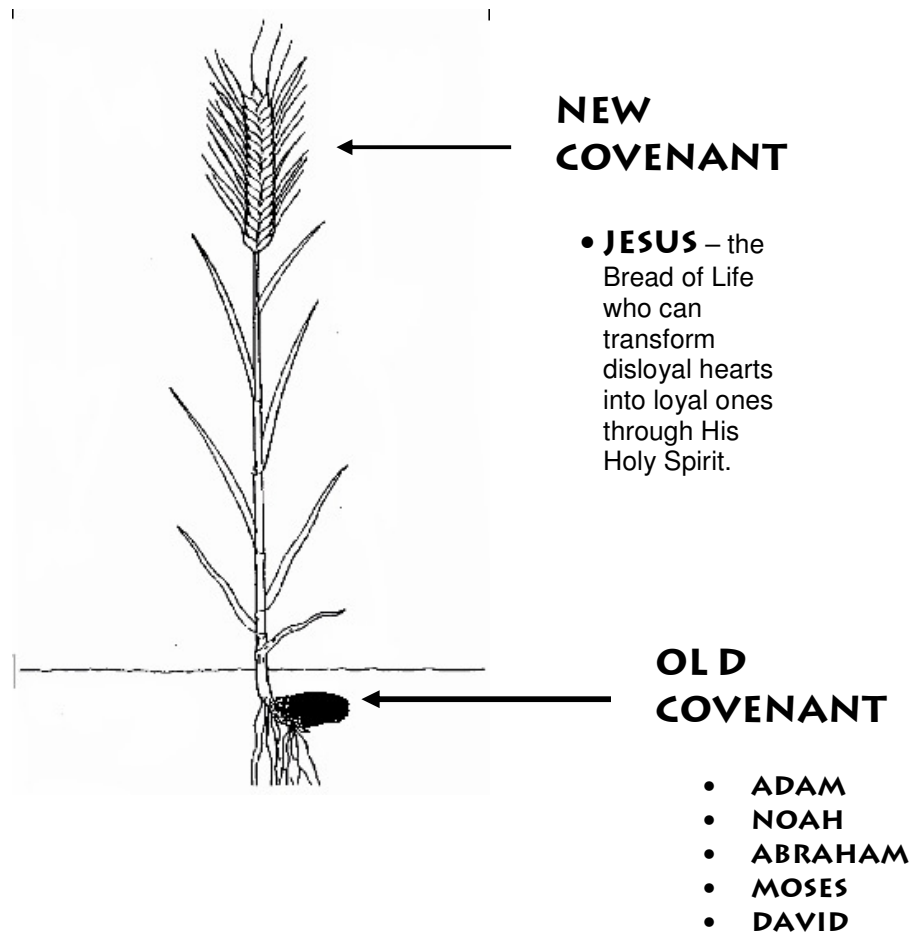
These always included:

- Opening statements describing the benevolence of the Ruler
(**DIVINE GRACE**)
- Statements of expected human response of loyalty
(**HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY**)

PURPOSE: "I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God." (Exodus 6:7)

OUTCOME: "God found fault with the people (not the covenant) and said: "The time is coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant..." Hebrews 8:8

TRUTH: GOD WILL KEEP HIS COVENANT VOWS! WHAT HE REQUIRES FROM US HE BESTOWS ON US!



"In speaking of a new covenant, He makes the first one obsolete. And what is being growing old is ready to vanish away." (Hebrews 8:13 ESV)