



UPSTATE GROUP MEMBER GUIDE

WEEK 8 - HEBREWS 7:1-28 - SEPTEMBER 30-OCTOBER 6

MEMBER NOTES

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SCRIPTURE

TAKE THIS TIME TO STUDY THE BIBLE TOGETHER. REMEMBER, THE GOAL IS NOT JUST TO CONVEY INFORMATION, BUT TO HELP PEOPLE IN YOUR GROUP LEARN TO READ THE BIBLE FOR THEMSELVES.

THE POINT

A BETTER PRIEST

Hebrews 7:1-28

For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, 2 and to him Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything. He is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then he is also king of Salem, that is, king of peace. 3 He is without father or mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God he continues a priest forever.

4 See how great this man was to whom Abraham the patriarch gave a tenth of the spoils! 5 And those descendants of Levi who receive the priestly office have a commandment in the law to take tithes from the people, that is, from their brothers, though these also are descended from Abraham. 6 But this man who does not have his descent from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. 7 It is beyond dispute that the inferior is blessed by the superior. 8 In the one case tithes are received by mortal men, but in the other case, by one of whom it is testified that he lives. 9 One might even say that Levi himself, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, 10 for he was still in the loins of his ancestor when Melchizedek met him.

11 Now if perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need would there have been for another priest to arise after the order of Melchizedek, rather than one named after the order of Aaron? 12 For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well. 13 For the one of whom these things are spoken belonged to another tribe, from which no one has ever served at the altar. 14 For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests.

15 This becomes even more evident when another priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek, 16 who has become a priest, not on the basis of a legal requirement concerning bodily descent, but by the power of an indestructible life.

17 For it is witnessed of him,

“You are a priest forever,
after the order of Melchizedek.”

18 For on the one hand, a former commandment is set aside because of its weakness and uselessness 19 (for the law made nothing perfect); but on the other hand, a better hope is introduced, through which we draw near to God.

20 And it was not without an oath. For those who formerly became priests were made such without an oath, 21 but this one was made a priest with an oath by the one who said to him:

“The Lord has sworn
and will not change his mind,
‘You are a priest forever.’”

22 This makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant.

23 The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, 24 but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. 25 Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them. 26 For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. 27 He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once *for all when he offered up himself*. 28 For the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.

The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Heb 7:1-28.

STUDY NOTES

WEEK 8 NOTES : Hebrews 7:1-28.

The author of Hebrews is desperately trying to show Christians just how great Jesus truly is. The author seems to believe that if Christians see just how beautiful Christ is then they'll do absolutely everything they can to stay close to Him and avoid drifting away from Him.

In Hebrews 7, the author puts forward a "type" or an Old Testament foreshadowing of Christ in order to help people understand who Jesus is.

Let's break this down just a bit. The Old Testament uses something called "typology" to foreshadow the coming of Christ. This literary tool makes use of "types" to preview the coming "anti-type." In other words, the Old Testament uses certain characters and circumstances to foreshadow the coming Christ.

This is why Jesus was so critical of the Pharisees who studied the Old Testament but did not recognize Him as the Savior when He came to earth. These religious scholars had been studying the Old Testament scriptures looking at the various "types" of Christ to come. Yet, when Christ actually showed up they did not recognize Him. Thus Jesus said to them in John 5:39. "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me,"

In Hebrews 7, the author references Melchizedek, from Genesis 14, who was the King of Salem and the High Priest of God, as a type of Christ. The question is, "What is God trying to teach us about Jesus by pointing us to Melchizedek?"

The answer will become obvious as we study Hebrews 7, but let's make it clear here at the beginning. Jesus being the true and better Melchizedek means Christians have a better High Priest, a better Savior, than anything the sacrificial system could ever offer.

A High Priest From God

The first reason the author compares Christ to Melchizedek is to show Jesus came as a Priest sent from God. In the Old Testament sacrificial system the High Priest had to be from the tribe of Levi, a direct descendent of Aaron. If that is the case, Jesus isn't qualified to be our High Priest. He came from the tribe of Judah. However, Melchizedek was a priest based on God calling him, even before Aaron was born. In tying Melchizedek to Jesus, the author is showing us Jesus is from an order of priests that finds its heritage

not in Aaron, but in the commission of Heaven. We have a High Priest sent from Heaven.

A High Priest Greater Than Aaron

The second reason the author compares Christ to Melchizedek is to show Christ came as a priest who was greater than Aaron. In Genesis 14, Abraham pays tithes to Melchizedek and in return Melchizedek blesses Abraham. The author of Hebrews points out that the greater person is able to give blessing to the lesser. The point is that Melchizedek was greater than Abraham was. This means the priesthood of Melchizedek is greater than the priesthood of Aaron which descended from Moses. In other words, if Jesus is from the Priesthood of Melchizedek then Jesus is a greater priest than Aaron ever was. He has the ability to bless and forgive and love to a degree Aaron was never capable of. He has the ability to save Aaron never had.

A High Priest Who Will Never Die

The third reason the author compares Christ to Melchizedek is to show that Christ came as a priest who will never die. Melchizedek is presented in scripture as a man who came out of nowhere, almost an eternal figure. We aren't told of his beginning and we aren't told of his end. That points us to Jesus, the Son of God, who had no beginning and no end. For this reason, Jesus has a priesthood that never ends. This stands in stark contrast to the Aaronic Priesthood that was constantly changing due to the death of a priest. Jesus is a better priest because He is an eternal priest.

Melchizedek is a shadowy figure in scripture. The author of Hebrews brings him up to pull us out of the shadows of the Old Testament and into the substance of the New Testament. Melchizedek is mentioned in order that we might know we have a priest who is sent from God, who has the ability to save us, and He will never die. This priest has a name. His name is not Melchizedek, it is Jesus Christ.

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QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- *Why was it important for the early Christians, and for us, to know that in Christ we have a more superior priest than anything offered in the old covenant?*
- *What qualities make Christ a more superior priest than anyone in the old covenant?*
- *Think back on the Old Testament and give a few reasons why the Old Covenant priests were incapable of bringing salvation?*
- *Why is it important we deal with even hard texts like this one to see a full picture of Jesus?*

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