Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Jesus: The Superior Priest
Scripture: Hebrews 7:11-19
Code: 1617

You have your Bibles, turn to Hebrews 7. For our study tonight, we are continuing in our series in the Book of Hebrews. Come to chapter 7, and verses 11 through 19 will be consideration tonight.

Now, it's been a while since we've been in Hebrews, and so we wanna kinda bring you up-to-date. It seems like today's been the day when we've been getting up-to-date in both of our studies, but we wanna look at this particular portion in Hebrews, but we don't wanna do it in isolation, so let me give you a brief review.

The Book of Hebrews was written to a group of Jews outside the area of Jerusalem, Jews who had apparently been evangelized by the apostles and early prophets. There were some of them who were saved, had committed their lives to Jesus Christ; but were still hanging onto some of the features of Judaism, not really making a clean break. Some of them still worshipping through the ritual of the priesthood of Israel. In addition to them, there were unsaved Jews who had been intellectually convinced that Jesus Christ was their Messiah. They apparently believed all of the data regarding the Gospel, but for fear of being unsynagogued and separated from the life of their people, they had never really made a commitment to Jesus Christ; and then, perhaps in the Jewish community, there were also some unsaved and unconvinced. But to this community of Jews, primarily the saved ones still hanging onto the Judaistic rituals and the intellectually convinced ones who hadn't yet made that final step of faith in Christ, the Holy Spirit pens this letter; and it is designed to present to those Jews the absolute superiority of Jesus Christ; and that, because He is superior, the new covenant is thus superior to the old covenant, and they can let go entirely of the old ritual and the old covenant and embrace Christ, who is totally sufficient; and they need nothing else.

So throughout the Book of Hebrews, we find repeatedly words concerning the preeminence of Christ. In chapter 1:1 to 3, Jesus Christ is superior to everything and everybody. In chapter 1:4 through chapter 2:18, He is superior to angels who mediated the old covenant. In chapter 3, He is superior to Moses who really was the...the one given the old covenant. In chapter 4, He is superior to Joshua, the one who led the children of Israel into the Promised Land; and so all along the Holy Spirit is unfolding the fact that for every man, for everyone connected to the old covenant, as great as they may have been, Jesus Christ is superior. That's His point, so that the Jewish reader understands that the new covenant is total, and that it needs nothing of Judaism to make it complete.

Now, the final superiority or kind of the apex of the whole thing has to do with the priesthood. The most important feature in Judaism, the most important feature in the ritual of Judaism and in the ceremony of Judaism, and in the law of the Old Testament was the function of the priesthood. Therefore, if Jesus is to be superior in all ways to the old covenant, He must be superior then to the old priesthood. He must be a greater priest than was Aaron and all the other priests who followed in Aaron's line through the tribe of Levi; and that then becomes the heartbeat of the Book of Hebrews; and when we arrived at chapter 4, really at the end of chapter 4 in verse 14, this thought was introduced. "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest that has passed into the Heavens, Jesus the Son of God," and then He goes on to describe what kind of a priest He is.

That introduces right there at the end of chapter 4 the whole sweep of the Book of Hebrews, clear on through what we're studying now, and even beyond that as we shall see in later studies. The great crux of the book then hinges on the priesthood of Christ, that he is a superior priest to any of the old covenant, and this is important, for this establishes Christ's new covenant as superior to the old; and throughout the Book of Hebrews, we read about Christ being a mediator of a better covenant, a better hope, with better promises, a better sacrifice, with better substance, a better country, a better resurrection, a country not earthly, but heavenly. It talks about a heavenly Christ, a heavenly calling, a heavenly gift, a heavenly country, a heavenly Jerusalem in contrast, to all the earthly things of the first covenant.

Now chapter 8 verse 1 and 2 summarize the whole feeling, because it says, "Now of the things which we have spoken, this is the sum...or the summary...We have such an High Priest who is seated on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man."

Now, here we have the summary of the whole shot in Hebrews: Christ is the better priest. Christ is the supreme priest, and, therefore, His provision, His sacrifice, His priesthood, and His covenant are the superior ones to the old. Now, it is on the basis of all of that that the Holy Spirit is saying to the Jews, "Put your total confidence in the new covenant. Drop the old completely." The converted Jew who has claimed Christ as his Messiah can let go of all of the temple routine, all of the temple ritual. He can drop all of the sacrifices. He can drop all of the priesthood, because Christ has supplanted it all.

The unsaved Jew, who is hanging on the verge of the decision, can let go of Judaism and come to Christ in full confidence that this is sufficient; and so then the key to the superiority of the new covenant over the old, of Christ over all the Old Testament figures, is the priesthood. This is the issue of Judaism, and this is the heartbeat of Hebrews. Jesus must be a great High Priest, for a man cannot go to God unless he be taken there by one who stands between that man and God.

This is the argument of this entire section of Hebrews. Now, in chapter 4, as I read, He introduced the concept of Christ as a priest. In chapter 4, pardon me, in chapter 5 verses 1 to 10, the Holy Spirit shows how that Christ is a greater priest than Aaron; and Aaron, in the mind of the Jew, was the greatest priest; but, clearly, in 5:1 to 10, as we studied, the Holy Spirit shows that Jesus is greater than Aaron.

Now, then, after 5:10, notice how it ends in verse 10, "Called of God and high priest after the order of Melchizedek." He says here that Christ is of a different priesthood than Aaron, the order of Melchizedek. Now, He wants to say more about that, but He's got a problem. He knows that many of these people aren't even saved yet, and they won't understand this heavy truth; so He stops, and in 5:11, He begins a parenthesis, and He says, "I wanna say more about Melchizedek, but I can't. You can't handle it. You're dull of hearing." And then He enjoins them to get saved so they'll have spiritual ears and understand; and He does that all the way through the end of chapter 6.

As He closes chapter 6, He goes right back and says, "Jesus, made an high priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek." Now, what He's done is a whole parenthesis from 5:11 to 6:20 to say, "Look, people, I'm gonna tell you about Melchizedek, but you'll never understand it until you come to Christ, and then you have spiritual understanding." And so He gives them this parenthetical invitation. Having concluded His invitation in 6:20, in 7:1, He goes right into Melchizedek. "For this Melchizedek," etc., and takes off explaining the priesthood of Melchizedek and how Jesus Christ is a priest after the order of Melchizedek.

Now we studied this passage, chapter 7 verses 1 to 10, and it's been a couple of months ago that we did it; but in it, we saw that He presented to us five ways that the priesthood of Melchizedek is better than Aaron's. First, it was a universal priesthood, and you'll remember that Aaron's was national. Secondly, it was a royal priesthood. He was a priest king. Aaron's was subject to kings. Thirdly, it was a righteousness and peace priesthood. Aaron's could not provide either righteousness or peace. Fourth, it was a personal priesthood. It was based on Melchizedek's own character. Aaron's was based on descent and heredity and had nothing to do with character. Fifth, it was an eternal priesthood, and Aarons was definitely limited by time.

So in those five ways, we saw that the priesthood of Melchizedek is a superior priesthood to that of Aaron. Now that's just a basic point. Now, I want you to get this. You're gonna have to really leave your brain in gear tonight or you're gonna get lost; but if you stick with it, blessing untold will be yours.

Now, in...this is the point, the Jew always felt that there was nothing superior to the Aaronic priesthood, to the Levitical ritual, to whole ceremonial law as given to Moses; but the very fact that there existed another priesthood that had superiority to Aaron's proves that Aaron's priesthood was limited; and the promise that David gave in Psalm 110 was that, when Messiah came, He would not be a priest like Aaron. He would be a priest like Melchizedek, which means that whatever kind of

priest Melchizedek is, it must be better than Aaron. Now that's a very important point, and that shows that all along God had designed to set aside Aaron's priesthood. From the very time it was initiated, it was inferior, for even before Aaron's priesthood, Melchizedek's existed, and David said, "When Messiah comes, He will be like Melchizedek," showing that Aaron's was inadequate and would fall by the wayside and be replaced.

Now, this is important, because this is proof positive from the Old Testament that God never intended the covenant with Israel to go on forever, but that it would be replaced by a different priesthood. Now, that's what he trying to prove - that God has set aside Judaism, brought in a new priesthood, not something just out of the blue, but patterned after Melchizedek's; and you'll remember that Melchizedek was very important, because Abraham actually paid tithes to Melchizedek; and Abraham, in a sense, was acting for the whole nation of Israel. So Melchizedek is greater than Aaron, and since Jesus Christ is a high priest after the order of Melchizedek, He is greater than Aaron. There is a better priest then and a better covenant, and Judaism has thus been set aside.

Now, the Holy Spirit is not finished proving that Jesus is superior to Aaron. He goes on in verses 11 to 19 to continue His proof; and what He's doing, and this is what we're gonna look at. It's really exciting. What He does here is He shows that Christ is better, because David prophesied that Messiah would be of another order, which meant Aaron's order couldn't make it. Do you understand that? Messiah would have to come in another order of priesthood, at Psalm 110, I think it's verse 4, that shows that Aaron's wouldn't make it.

Now that brings us to our passage, verses 11 to 19, in which He discusses this situation. As we look at it, the key phrase I want you to draw attention is in verse 19, and we'll build our message around this phrase. "For the law made nothing perfect...but the bringing in of a better hope did, by which we draw near unto God." Now, there's the phrase I want you to get. "We draw near unto God." That's the key to the whole thing. The goal of God in all that He does in behalf of man is that man might come into His presence. Drawing near to God is the goal of Christianity. That's the whole point. This is the essence of Christianity. This is its highest experience. This is the design of God for Christianity. Access to His presence, coming into His presence with nothing between.

Now, I think sometimes we forget this. Christians look at their Christian life usually three or at least three ways. Some look at their Christian life, and they see Jesus Christ only as a means to salvation and personal happiness; and that's about how they look at their Christian life. They're looking for happiness. They're on a quest for security. They've found Jesus. There's their happiness. There's their security, and that's about as far as it ever goes. Other people look at their Christian life like this. They see it as a relationship to Jesus Christ, and they seek to know Christ better. Now, that's fine, just as No. 1 was fine; but, still, they haven't grasped really what Christianity is. It's not just security and happiness. It's not just knowing Jesus Christ deeper and deeper.

Thirdly, and this is the key. This is what Christianity really is. Some Christians understand that Christianity is drawing nigh unto God. That is the essence of Christianity. That's what it is. The fullest expression of our faith is to enter into the presence of God, into the Holy of Holies, and to sit on the throne with Him. That's the fullest expression of our faith. Jesus is the door to God; and, in a sense, many Christians fellowship with the door and never get into the Holy of Holies. We need to understand that the design of God in our faith is to bring us into a full kind of access to the God of the universe.

Now, friends, that is something that Judaism could never do. Could never do...In Ephesians chapter 3, Paul makes that thrilling statement in verse 17, when he says this. Well, starting in 17, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God." This is Christianity. Fullness with God.

Then you go to 1 John chapter 1, and he says, "These things write unto you that you might have fellowship with us, and our fellowship is with...whom?...the Father and with His Son." As we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another." The Father, the another means the Father. That is Christianity. It is access to God. It is the knowledge of the holy. That is the real goal of our faith.

Now, Judaism never brought a man into the presence of God. Never in the purest and fullest sense. It's only in the new covenant that it's possible. Only by the blood of Jesus Christ. Only by His priesthood interceding at the right hand of God. Only by His perfect sacrifice on Calvary was access to God opened...and the great recurring themes in Hebrews are the new covenant, the priesthood, and the sacrifice; and it is the new covenant, the priesthood of Christ, and the sacrifice of Calvary that gave us access to God. Aaron's priests couldn't do it. Aaron's sacrifices couldn't do it. No matter what they did, what always hung between them and God? What hung? The veil, and it never was removed; and only the high priest once a year go in; and he had to go in and get out fast, because never could Judaism open the way for a man to go in and sit down with access to God.

The fact that the Messiah was priest after the order of Melchizedek opened up an entirely new thing, because Aaron's priesthood had necessarily been set aside, because it was inadequate. It could not bring man into access with God...The fact that perfection was not brought till Christ offered Himself shows that imperfection was attached to the Aaronic Levitical priesthood.

Now, the design of these verses is to clearly show that truth; and if you haven't gotten it already, you'll get it as we go. And the point is to encourage these Jews to break with the old system and come to Jesus Christ. Now, this was not an easy thing for the Jews to understand. For them to understand

that the Mosaic economy was temporary and inadequate and defective and unable to bring perfection was an unbelievable thing for a pious Jew to handle. All their lives, they had been taught that the Levitical system was perfect, that it was instituted by God, that it was sufficient, and that it was permanent; and how you gonna convince them differently?

Well, the Holy Spirit uses invincible logic here and shows that the Levitical system was imperfect; and because it was imperfect, it had to be superseded; and the reason we know it was imperfect was it couldn't do what all God's religion is designed to do - bring a man into the presence of God. It couldn't do it...and, thus, when Jesus came, the whole old system had to be destroyed. It had to be dropped, and Judaism is now defunct.

Now, let's divide the text into two parts, one dealing with the imperfection of the inferior priesthood, and the other with the perfection of the superior priesthood. In verses 11 to 14, we'll see the imperfection of the inferior priesthood. Now this is thrilling, because it so clearly shows the transition and what the new covenant means.

Look at verses 11 to 14, and we'll consider them verse by verse after just an introductory remark. It was never - now mark this - it was never the intention of God that the Levitical priesthood would remain forever. Never was. For the Old Testament, God prophesied another priesthood was coming. Psalm 110:4. Now, if God predicted that another priesthood would come, that assumes that the old one would be done away, does it not? And so it is never indicated in the Old Testament that the Aaronic priesthood is permanent...

In Genesis 14, Melchizedek was first met; and in Psalm 110...the prophecy given to David. You remember that the greeting comes to the Messiah there, "Sit Thou at My right hand, for Thou art a Priest forever after the order of...not Aaron, but whom?...Melchizedek. There's coming a greater priesthood." Now, if Messiah then was to be a different priest in a different order, then the Aaronic priesthood must be imperfect, or there would be no need for a change. Do you see that? That's the point, verse 11. Let's look at it.

"If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood...skip the parenthesis for a minute...what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchizedek, and not be called after the order of Aaron?" Do you see? If perfection was brought by the Levitical priesthood, what need would there be for a priest after the order of Melchizedek? If Aaron's priesthood brought it all, and it was sufficient, who needs the one of Melchizedek? That's simple enough, isn't it? That's just what He's saying. If God had intended the Aaronic priesthood to introduce the age of perfection, the time of perfect access to God, why would He then have prophesied Messiah to be a priest of a different order?...

You see, when God set aside Israel, that was no accident. God had planned that way back in the Old Testament, even before the world began. God knew Messiah would be a different priest, because He knew the Aaronic priesthood was imperfect. Now, I wanna take a moment to look at some details. Look at the word perfection. Now, this has caused a lot of confusion in people's understanding of the Book of Hebrews. We dealt with it in chapter 6 verse 1. Lemme deal with it again.

The word perfection used by the Apostle Paul has to do with spiritual maturity. We read it in Ephesians 4 when he talks about perfecting the saints. We read about it in Colossians when he desires to present every man perfect. When Paul uses the term perfection, he uses it to mean mature, complete, full-grown. That's Paul's use of it; but in Hebrews, it is a word used to refer to the goal and the aim of Christianity - access to God. In Hebrews, it does not mean spiritual maturity. It essentially has to do with salvation in Christ.

Compare for a moment verse 11 with 19. Look at verse 11. "If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchizedek?" Now what is the goal then that God has in mind? It is what? Perfection. It couldn't come by Aaron, right? So God had to bring Melchizedek's priesthood. The goal in verse 11 is perfection.

Now let's see the goal in verse 19. "For the law made nothing perfect." The law couldn't bring the perfection that was the goal, right? "But the bringing in of a better hope did, by which we get perfection." Is that what it says? No. "By which we draw near to God." That's the synonym for perfection, do you see? In the Book of Hebrews, perfection is access to God...It is the full goal of our faith. It is not spiritual maturity of those who are already Christians.

I illustrate it another way. Chapter 10 verse 14, "For by one offering," now that is Christ by the one sacrifice of Himself, "For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." In other words, He has given them positionally full access to God. You see? That's perfection in Hebrews.

Now, go back to chapter 6 verse 1, some of you were confused in that chapter when we began to teach it. Listen to it now. Now, He's saying to the Jews who are still stirring around in Judaism, "Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrines of Messiah, let us go on unto...what?...perfection," which means what? Access to God. You can't gain access to God through the repentance from dead works. You can't gain it through the washings, and the laying on of hands, and all of that. You must go on. If you're going to come into access to God, it's only through Jesus Christ. You've gotta get off the ABCs of the Old Testament and get to the new covenant. Perfection means access to God.

Now, the Levitical priesthood could not provide this full access. Jesus said, "No man cometh unto the Father," and He said it to Jews, and what was the rest of His statement? "But by Me." There could

be a covering of sins. The old covenant covered them over. Never got rid of 'em, it just covered them over. Look at chapter 10 verse 1...Now watch this. "For the law, having a shadow of good things to come...you see?...and not the very image of those things, can...what's the next word?...never, with those sacrifices which they offered year by year, continually make those who come to it...what?...perfect." It can't give access to God, verse 2, "For then would they not have ceased to be offered?"

You see, if the sacrifice got anybody into God's presence, they coulda stopped offering the sacrifices. Then He goes on, "Because the worshipers had purged, or once purged, should have had no more consciousness of sins." So now the point of verse 11 is clear. If the Levitical priesthood could've brought this perfection, which is access to God in Hebrews and salvation, in the fullest sense, if the Levitical priesthood could've brought that, why would God have predicted another priesthood? Oh, this is so important for Jews to hear this. It shows that the Levitical priesthood couldn't bring men to perfection.

There are so many verses jumping into my mind. Hope you don't mind. Chapter 10 verse 4, here, this is as simple as it can be. Here's the...here's the whole Levitical priesthood. "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away...what?...sins." That...that economy couldn't do it. Verse 5, "Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith, 'Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me." In other words, "God, You don't want anymore sacrifices and offering. You want Me to be the final sacrifice." You see the new economy, the new covenant, the new priesthood, the new sacrifice; and it is by that one offering that He perfects forever them that are sanctified. What the old economy couldn't do, Christ did. That's why you have to have a new priesthood. The old one was inferior. That's why we believe that Judaism today has been supplanted by the new covenant. It's the whole point.

Now, you'll notice a phrase in verse 11 that I skipped over, but I don't wanna do that. Parenthetically it says, "If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law)." That's interesting, because that law demanded access to God. It demanded perfection, but it couldn't provide it; and, thus, the fulfillment had to come from something other than the old system. The old system demanded access to God, but couldn't provide it. It had to come through a different priesthood.

Now look at verse 12. So if there's gonna be a different priesthood, "For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law." Now, the idea of changed here, matapiffamy, means to put one thing in the place of another. You don't add Christianity to Judaism. You take away Judaism, and you put Christianity in. You replace it. The priesthood of Melchizedek was not added to Aaron's. It replaced it. You see it there. "For the priesthood being changed." Matapiffamy, replacing another one. Aaron's is defunct. It says then, "There is made of necessity a change also of the law." Now some people have kind of gagged here, and said, "Does this mean that

the law of God is done away?" No. Whenever you see the word law in...in any kind of a context related to the Old Testament, be sure that you understand that it can mean several things. It can mean the whole Old Testament. The whole Old Testament, the entire thing, is...is referred to as the law. It can also mean the Decalogue, or the Ten Commandments of Moses. It can also have to do with the ceremonial rituals of Israel, and we believe that is clearly what he is saying here.

He is saying, "If the priesthood is to be defunct, and a new one there, then there must be a changing of all of the ceremonial laws." Certainly, there's not a doing away of God's moral law. It's not all of a sudden right for us to say, "Well, we're under the new covenant. We may now commit adultery, steal, lie, covet, etc., etc., take the Lord...Lord's name in vain." No, God does not set aside His moral law. Paul says in Romans 7, "The law is holy, just, and good." But the ceremonial law, the Mosaic system of sacrifices has been set aside. That's what He's saying.

So not only is He saying to these Jews that there is a new priest, but He's saying, "When the new priest comes, the whole old system goes, as well." There must be a change in the ceremonies; and this is His way of saying to them, "You don't need to be making this trek to the temple all the time. That's done. That's over. It's been supplanted."...For some who had come to Christ were still worshipping at the temple, still hanging onto the ritual of the old system; and the setting aside was extremely difficult for the Jews to grasp. In fact, so difficult that it was the reason they stoned Stephen, and they vented their wrath on Paul on that very basis - the issue of setting aside the old. And even some believers, even some who had been redeemed obstinately contended that the Mosaic system still remained in force; and you had to go through all the rigmarole of the Levitical priesthood still.

I think that's the issue in Acts, yes, 21:20, "And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord and said unto Him, 'Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews are there who believe, and they are all zealous of the law.'" There were Jews being saved, but not breaking with the old system. It was the same contention that caused so much trouble in the early church, you remember. The early church was always being harassed by the Judaizers. That's the word that means certain Jews who came in and tried to impose the whole Old Testament system on the Christian. They were telling the Christians you had to be circumcised, and you had to go through the Aaronic priesthood, and you had to go through all the sacrifices, and so forth; and the Book of Galatians is really written as kind of a reaction to that; and in Galatians chapter 4 verse 9, writing to this very problem, he says, "But now after you have known God, why are you turning to the weak and beggarly elements unto which you desire again to be bondage? You already have access to God. Why do you wanna back out of the Holy of Holies and go through the ritual in front of the veil again?'" You see?

He says, "You observed days and months and times and years. You're back into the old ceremonies." Chapter 5, he says, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty with which Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Don't go back to the old rituals, the old

system. You've been turned loose.'"

"For in Jesus Christ...verse 6...neither circumcision avails anything, or uncircumcision." That isn't the issue any longer. That's over with. And he says in chapter 3, "O foolish Galatians!" I like that. "Who hath bewitched you? Who's...who is woofing you? You, that you should no obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been openly set forth, crucified among you?" Listen to this. "Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect by the flesh? You had access to God through the Spirit. Now you're gonna go back and go through the fleshly rituals?"

You see, this was the problem; and so he wants to be sure that they understand. There's kind of an interesting illustration of this. I think it may fit, Mark 9. Listen to it. "And Peter answered and said to Jesus, 'Master, it's good for us to be here...He's up on the mountain...Let us make three booths: one for Thee, one for Moses, and one for Elijah--'...watch...for he knew not what to say...which was often his problem, never seemed to stop him from saying anything...For they were very much afraid." Peter just kind of blurted it out. Now watch, "There was a cloud that overshadowed them; and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, 'This is my beloved Son: Hear Him!'" Now watch. "And suddenly when they had looked around about, they saw no man anymore, except Jesus only."

God said, "Don't listen to Moses and Elijah. This is My Son...do what?...hear Him." You see, in a sense, God was illustrating that the old covenant had passed, and after the thunderstorm, after the cloud, or whatever it was had vanished, they saw Jesus only. That's the point. The old system is defunct, and Ephesians 2:18 says, "For through Him we have access by one Spirit to the Father." You see? At Sinai, people were fenced off at the foot of the mountain. There wasn't any access to God. In the tabernacle, in the temple, they were veiled off. They couldn't go near there...

How blessed it is that Jesus Christ tore down the veil. Something a Levitical priest couldn't do, because they were an inferior priesthood; and when it had to be changed, the system had to go with it. The old system was only temporary anyway. That's clear from what Paul says in Galatians 3. "Wherefore the law, the old system was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ." Then he says, "But after faith has come, we're no longer under a schoolmaster. When we grow up, we don't need the old thing anymore." So the whole system with its priesthood included has changed. Not just changed, but exchanged for a new order with a new priest, a new sacrifice, and a new covenant.

Look at verse 13 and 14. "For He of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe." Jesus didn't come from Levi. He wasn't in the line. "Of which no man gave attendance at the altar." If you weren't from Levi, you didn't fool around the altar; and what tribe was Jesus from? Verse 14, "For it is evident that our Lord sprang...where?...out of Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood." What's he saying? He's saying, "Jesus must be of a different order, because He's a priest not out of Levi, but out of Judah; and Moses never said anything about priests coming out of Judah." The cardinal old testament rule for priesthood, the singular No. 1 qualification

was you be a descendant of Levi and Aaron. That was it. You had to be from the right tribe; but our Lord, by being from Judah, fulfills the prophecy and shows that the old system was done away. This is invincible logic.

The Holy Spirit clearly had set aside the old system, because Jesus Christ had been born of a virgin in the tribe of Judah. The statement there, "He of whom these things are spoken," verse 13, refers to Messiah; and what things are spoken? The prophecy of Psalm 110. He of whom it said, "Messiah shall come after the order of Melchizedek," was not from Levi, but Judah, showing the old system was set aside.

If Christ were not the true fulfillment of that prophecy, He could never usurp the right of priesthood. You know, in the Old Testament, you read sometimes, for example, it's in 2 Chronicles 26 where it tells about Uzziah, the king, who decided that he'd function as a priest. He entered the temple and purposed to burn incense. Azariah, the priest, stopped him. Lemme read you just one verse, 2 Chronicles, as long as we'll take a minute to do that, 26, I think it's 18. "And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, 'It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the Lord, but to the priests the sons of Aaron who are consecrated to burn incense. Go out of the sanctuary, for thou hast trespassed; neither shall it be for thine honor from the Lord God.'" And he was mad. He was mad; but before he got a chance to do anything about his anger, verse 19 in the middle says, "The leprosy even rose up in his forehead." God struck him right there with leprosy. You didn't violate God's command that the priest came out of Levi until...until the change when the new order came with the priest after Melchizedek.

Messiah would be a priest, but not of Levi, of Judah; and so what do we say in verses 11 to 14 then? We say this. It was an inferior priesthood that could not provide access. The imperfection of the inferior priesthood. Then in verses 15 to 19, He brings in the perfection of the superior priesthood. The perfection of the superior priesthood.

Now it's...it's two ways superior, and this is simple and beautiful. First a superior priest, verses 15 to 17. Verse 15, "And it is yet far more evident, for after the similitude of Melchizedek, there ariseth another priest." Far more evident. In other words, the evidence, the logic is overwhelming that the Levitical priesthood is now obsolete. It's evident. It's as evident as is the fact that Jesus came from Judah, which is also evident. Genesis 49:10 tells us Messiah would be from Judah. Even the genealogy of Jesus, if anybody wanted to check into it, they all had to find out, is that He went to...His parents went to Bethlehem to pay their taxes, which meant they were from the tribe of Judah. "Bethlehem, though thou be little among the sons of Judah," said Micah, "out of thee shall He come forth who is to be ruler over my people Israel."

So it was evident that He came from Judah. It was more evident, because of that, that the whole Levitical system had been set aside and, after the similitude of Melchizedek, there arises another

priest, a greater priest. Priesthood of Christ was no temporary thing. It was sufficient. It was permanent. It was abiding. It was the fulfillment of prophecy. Jesus, evidently, obviously fulfilling that promise.

So He says, "Don't cling to Judaism. In effect, it's defunct. We have a superior priest." Now watch this word another. Hum, that's interesting. "It is far more evident for, after the similitude of Melchizedek, there arises another priest." Now, in the Greek, there are two words for another. We may have talked about 'em before. This word here is heteras, the...there's one word for another, allas , and it means another of the same kind. This one, heteras, means another of a different kind. Let's assume that I wanted to get rid of my Volvo. I don't wanna get rid of it, necessarily, but let's assume for illustration that I did. So I drive my Volvo down to the...the car dealer, and I drive it in, and I say to the car dealer, "I would like to trade my Volvo for another Volvo." That would be allasVolvo. But let's say I say to the man, "No, this time I...I don't...I'm not happy. I want to trade my car for another car, my Volvo for, say, a Rolls Royce." I mean why not? It's only an illustration. Live it up...

In the first case, I'm trading a Volvo for a Volvo. That's the same thing. In the second case, I'm saying, "I don't like my Volvo. I want another kind of car that's different than mine." That is the word used here. We do not have another priest just like the other ones. We have another one who can do what the other ones couldn't do. That's the point of another. A rich, rich word showing the distinction between Christ and Aaronic priests. So another priest had to come, and it was evident that He did, not like Aaron, but a different priest of a different order who could do what Aaron couldn't do.

Now, I want you to catch another word that I got to studying this word, and it just thrilled me. The word ariseth. There's a wonderful note on that word, anistatie. This won't mean anything to some of you. Paul will understand this. It's a present middle indicative; and what it comes from is anistamie, which means to arise; but anything in the middle voice is reflexive. That means to arise by myself. No Aaronic priest could ever use that middle voice. There ariseth by himself another priest. No, no. He would arise by virtue of his mother and father, not of himself. In other words, the Aaronic priest would have to say, "I am a priest, not by myself, but because I've inherited the right." Jesus said, "I just arose a priest by Myself."

Lemme give you another thought. Anistamieis used in Acts 2:32 to refer to His resurrection. He Himself raised Himself from the dead; and so when that little word says that there ariseth another priest, He arose and declared Himself a priest uniquely on His own character; and He arose from the dead to establish that He indeed was a priest...What an exciting thing to get into the words and see what God is really saying.

So a different priest. I might just throw in a little note that's important here. Melchizedek is then a type of Christ, right? You say, "Yeah, but so is Aaron a type of Christ." That's all right. Listen to this. A Biblical type doesn't have to be a type in every respect. Do you understand that? We say, for

example, that a lamb in the Old Testament is a type of Christ. Not in every respect, in one respect. It's a sacrifice. Right? Aaron is a type of Christ in his function. Melchizedek is a type of Christ in his person. Not all types have to be types in every respect. You understand? So Christ really fulfills the type of Aaron and Melchizedek. Aaron in function, Melchizedek in person.

So Christ then is presented as the superior priest. Now the Holy Spirit goes further in describing Him in verse 16. This is really rich. "Who is made not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an indestructible, indissoluble life." Oh, that is something. Do you know how Aaron's priests got to be what they were? By a carnal what? Commandment. Fleshly regulations. That's what it means. The norm or the standard prescribed for high priest in the old economy had to do only with the body, only with the physical. Didn't matter what they were spiritually. Had nothing to do with it. To be a priest, you had to be a pure descendent of Aaron, and there were at least 142 physical blemishes that could disqualify you. Those were the only disqualifications. If you made it through as a physical specimen, it didn't matter what you were spiritually. You were in.

You could read Leviticus 21, and you'll find some of those qualifications. The ordination ceremony is outlined in Leviticus 8; and it goes like this. First of all, the man who was being inducted into the priesthood was bathed in water to be ceremonially clean, all external, all physical. He was clothed in four priestly garments: the linen knee breeches, long linen garment, the girdle, and the bonnet or the turban. He was anointed with oil. He was dabbed with sacrificial blood on the tip of his right ear, his right thumb, and his right big toe. Every single item in the whole deal had to do with his physical body. It was all a fleshly rule. It was a all a physical issue; and once he had been ordained, he had to go through certain washings and anointings with oil and had his hair cut a certain way, and so forth and so on. It was all physical.

It had nothing to do with character, ability, personality, or holiness at all. Their whole ministry was physical. Even in chapter 9 verse 13 it indicates this. "For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of an heifer...heifer sprinkling the unclean sanctifieth to the purifying of the...what?...flesh." You see? The whole thing was physical. It was only physical. All these things make up the law of a fleshly commandment. They were priests because of bodily rules. Had to do with their physical body.

Watch this..."Who is made...verse 16...not after the law of a fleshly commandment, but after the power of an indestructible life." That's a different kind of priest, isn't it? Nothing to do with the physical body, but to do with eternal power. That's the kind of priest Jesus was. In the case of the Levitical priesthood, no matter how ill-suited he was and reluctant to take the office, the law made a man a priest by his pedigree. It was outside compulsion. In the case of Jesus Christ, it was the inside compulsion of a life that couldn't dissolve, of an eternal kind of power. He was a priest by eternal power...He had an inward priesthood. Not a physical claim, but an eternal claim; and, thus, by His eternal power, He can do what no priest could ever do. He can give us access to God...

Verse 17, "For He testifieth: 'Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.'" You see, Melchizedek wasn't a priest by any physical standard. He was a priest because of his character; and in that sense, he pictures Jesus Christ; and Jesus Christ can do what Aaron couldn't do. He takes us into the presence of God, and He anchors us there.

Now go back to 6:19, and see if it doesn't mean something. "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil, where the Forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus." Jesus has taken us into the veil and anchored us there. Do you see? That's what the old priesthood could never, never, never do...What Christ has provided for us has taken us into the presence of God by the power of an indestructible life and anchored us there eternally.

My friends, that's ultimate power, and that's what it means in 7:25, when it says, "Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for us." He takes us to God and anchors us there...and that no Aaronic priest could ever do. He is the One who brings us to perfection. His priesthood based upon eternal power accomplishes access to God, and that is the theme of verses 18 and 19. This is the climax of the text. Aaron is replaced by Christ. Let me read you 18 and 19, correcting the punctuation so it becomes clear.

"For there is verily an annulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness of it." God set aside the old standard. Now watch. Now put a parenthesis at the beginning of verse 19. "(For the law made nothing perfect), but the bringing in of a better hope by which we draw near unto God." Or you'd use and. Lemme read it this way. "For there is verily an annulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness of it. (For the law made nothing perfect), and the bringing in of a better hope...cross out did...by which we draw near unto God." You see? God says, "I am setting aside the old one, and I'm bringing in a new one; and in the new covenant, you have what? Access to God.

Now, the word disannulling, afaytises, has to do with the doing away of something that is established. It is used, for example of annulling a treaty, of annulling a promise, a law, a regulation, of erasing a man's name from something. It has to do with removing what is established. The whole paraphernalia of the sacrificial system, the whole ceremonial system is wiped out. It is annulled. It is done away with. God wipes it out; and He wiped it out for good in 70 AD when He destroyed the temple. The old system could reveal sin. It could cover sin. It could give a relative measure of drawing near to God, but not full perfection. It brought nothing to conclusion. The priesthood of Jesus Christ made all that Israel looked forward to a reality. Access to God.

You know, Peter says in 1 Peter chapter 1, he says, "That these people who wrote the Old Testament, they looked and they search diligently about that one that should come, searching what person or what manner of time. The Spirit of Christ who was in them did testify or signify when he testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ. In other words, they look to see when all this would happen, this great act of salvation. Verse 12, "Unto to it was revealed that, not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the Gospel. In other words, they only saw it from a distance; but now it is finished, and we can go into God's presence, and we can sit down; and with the Apostle Paul, we can say, "Abba, Father."...We are a holy priesthood. We have access to God.

In chapter 10 in verse 19 in verse 19, listen to this. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the Holiest." Could they ever do that in the Old Testament? How do we do it? By the what? By the blood of Jesus. "By a new and living way, which is he has consecrated for us through the veil...that is to say his flesh...and having an high priest over the house of God, let us...what are the next two words...draw near...with a true heart, in full assurance of faith having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscious. No longer plagued with that conscience."

So the Word of God gives us the wonderful promise of what Jesus accomplished. Lemme give you a simple allegory that I picked up from somebody else, but it sure fits. Let's say that there's a young woman who has got a lotta bills. Not outta the ordinary; and she's really in over her head. She really is kinda wondering, "How am I gonna meet my debts? I...I just don't have any...any money, and I'm way in, and it's just...just really hopeless." Well, let's say she's a lovely young lady, and a young man comes along and falls very deeply in love with her; and he says to her one night, "I want you to marry me." She says, "Oh, I'll have to tell ya, then you might not want to. I am in hock up to my ears." And he says to her, "That's all right. I will pay all your debts. I love you that much."

That's wonderful, and maybe he gives her a ring, and, oh, they are engaged for six months or so, and all along, he keeps saying, "I'll pay your debts," and she keeps saying, "Oh, that's wonderful." And then she goes home and says, "Oh, my debts, my debts. He says he'll pay them, but, oh." You know, it's nice to have a promise. Better to have your debts paid...

She doesn't really have any peace, and she doesn't really have freedom of conscience. She has only hope, right? Then she marries the guy. He pays all her debts. Not only that, he...he reveals to her that he is infinitely wealthy beyond her wildest imagination and gives her a joint checking account...And not only have her debts been paid, but she dwells in the riches of the one she loves. That's how much better to be in the new covenant than to be in the old where all you ever had was the promise that it was gonna come, but you never had the freedom of conscience that it would; and now, when Jesus hanging on the cross said, "Tay tellus thy. It is finished." On this side of the cross, we dwell in the riches of the One who loves us. All of our debts are completely paid...Let's pray.

Father, we thank You that, unlike Israel who could only look to the future and trust, never having their conscience really free, we, because of Jesus' finished work on the cross, not only have the promise, but the fulfillment. Father, we know that the Old Testament couldn't do it. The old covenant couldn't provide it...Father, we know that God, as the writer of Hebrews says, "Having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." There was no real access to God for them apart from the new covenant...Oh, Father, thank You for what You accomplished in Jesus Christ, the perfecter who gave us access to you. Lord, we realize that perhaps tonight there are some in our midst who've never known that access. Who have never known what it is to forsake everything and step into the glories of the new covenant, to open their hearts to Jesus Christ. Maybe there are some Jewish people here who are still clinging to some of the old things, that have not yet seen their Messiah and entered into the new covenant, the full and final sacrifice where there's freedom from sin and guilt because of the perfect work of Christ.

God, may this be the night of the great and glorious transition. Thank You, Father, for what is ours in Christ, and for the unspeakable riches that he bestows on us by grace. We pray in His name. Amen.

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