

A Priest Like Melchizedek

This Advent season we will be looking at the three roles, or offices, of the Messiah. Messiah means "anointed one," and Christ has been anointed as our prophet, priest, and king. This week we looked at Christ as our priest. But He is not a priest from the Levitical order established under Moses. He is a priest in the Order of Melchizedek. In addition to our text below, it would be useful to refer to Genesis 14:17-24; Psalm 110; and Hebrews 7:1-10.

Hebrews 7:11-28

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.

Discussion Questions

1. What are several ways in which Melchizedek was a foreshadowing of Christ? What makes this important to our understanding of Christ?

2. What are some of the ways in which the writer of Hebrews shows that the priestly Order of Melchizedek is superior to the Levitical Priesthood?

3. A priest is someone who represents you before God, and makes a way for you to be right before Him. In what ways are the statements regarding the priesthood of Christ comforting to you?

4. Although we have direct access to the Father through Christ, who is our perfect priest, we are sometimes tempted to rely on other people in ways in which we should only rely on Christ. How does that play out in your life?

5. How does knowing that Christ offered himself "once for all" (v. 27) affect how you deal with shame or guilt?

6. How does knowing that Christ is living to intercede for us (v. 25) affect your sense of security in Christ?