



EXPLORE THE BIBLE®

Psalms Sermon Series

Supports Session 6: God's Messiah

Sermon Title: "Priest Forever" (Hebrews 7:11-28)

Connection to Session 6

Psalm 110 is the most quoted Psalm in the New Testament. The New Testament writers consistently applied Psalm 110 to Jesus's kingship and priesthood as the fulfillment of the Old Testament messianic hope. Hebrews 7:11-28 unpacks how Jesus is the true and better priest.

Introduction/Opening

Melchizedek. Say that ten times fast! Melchizedek was an enigmatic figure in the Old Testament. He appeared almost out of nowhere, Abraham gave a tithe to him, and he blessed Abraham. Then, he vanished off the scene. Melchizedek was the king of Salem and priest of God. We do not learn much about him until the seventh chapter of Hebrews, when the writer compares his priesthood to that of Jesus. The author of Hebrews says that his name means "king of righteousness" and "king of peace" (Heb. 7:2). Melchizedek points us forward to the better priesthood of Jesus. In this sermon, we'll explore what Hebrews 7 says about Jesus's priesthood and why this is good news.

Outline

1. Jesus's Priesthood Was Necessary (Heb. 7:11-14)

- a. The author of Hebrews implies that perfection was obviously not attainable through the Levitical priesthood (v. 11). One only has to look at the history of Israel to note not only the repetitive nature of the sacrifices, but also the fallibility of the priests like Hophni and Phineas (1 Sam. 4).
- b. All of humanity is affected by the curse of sin, and therefore, cannot attain perfection (Rom. 3:23). God maintained His relationship with His people through the Levitical sacrificial system and the Law, but neither produced change in the people.
- c. There was a difference between the nature of Melchizedek's priesthood and that of the Levites (Heb. 7:11-12).
- d. Our culture is familiar with the idea of "upgrading." Fairly frequently, phone companies issue updates for their devices that provide fixes for certain problems. But at some point, devices become obsolete because the software is too outdated and not worth keeping up. The Levitical priesthood had served its purpose, but it was ineffective and obsolete. With the arrival of Jesus, the priesthood received a major upgrade.

2. Jesus's Priesthood is Secured Through His Indestructible Life (Heb. 7:15-17)

- a. Jesus Christ and His priesthood is *likened* to that of Melchizedek. The priesthood of the Levites was based on “physical descent,” by being a part of the family (v. 16). While the Levitical office of the priesthood was good, the men who occupied it often were not. In contrast, Jesus's priesthood is grounded in the power of His “indestructible life” (v. 16).
- b. As an illustration, we often hear how family businesses often fail when they are passed on to the next generation. The children of the owners often do not possess the same passion as their parents for the business and feel obligated to carry it on without an inward compulsion to do so. This is akin to the Levitical priesthood; but Jesus's priesthood is guaranteed by His life, which was unable to be destroyed by death (Acts 2:24). Jesus is truly a “priest forever” (Heb. 7:3).

3. Jesus's Priesthood Provides a Better Hope and Covenant (Heb. 7:18-22)

- a. The Levitical priesthood was “unprofitable” in that it did not achieve the perfection desired (v. 18). People continued to sin, and their hearts were left untransformed. However, through Christ we have a better hope that allows us to draw near to God.
- b. This better hope comes through a better covenant in Christ, the new covenant prophesied in Jeremiah 31:31-34, which is contrasted with the old. God's teaching would be “on their hearts” and they would all know the Lord (Jer. 31:33). Belonging to the people of God does not come through family lineage, but through personally knowing God through Jesus Christ.

4. Jesus's Priesthood Alone Offers Salvation (Heb. 7:23-28)

- a. The Levitical priests faced constant turnover because of death, but Christ lives forever and will hold office permanently (v. 24). He is the priest “we need” (v. 26). He is unlike every human mediator in His holiness and position. He will not fail.
- b. Every four years, the United States faces a presidential election and a transfer of power. Despite campaign promises, no one knows what the next president will accomplish. We do not have that fear with Jesus. He is permanently the priest, no one will supersede Him. Because He lives forever, “he is able to save completely those who come to God through him” (v. 25).
- c. Unlike the Levitical priests, Jesus does not continually make sacrifices for us; His one, perfect sacrificial act on the cross was enough to save all who trust in Him.

Conclusion

As we reflect on the priesthood of Jesus, there is but one thing left for us to do, and it is hinted at twice throughout the text: Draw near to God through Jesus (vv. 19,25). There is no other mediator or institution that can save; there is no good deed or obedience we can offer to God to be saved. Jesus offers us a better hope and covenant, one that is as indestructible as His life. Draw near to God through Him.

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