

INTRODUCTION

The writer of Hebrews has just finished describing the great priesthood of Melchizedek in Chapter 7 of Hebrews.

1. It is a priesthood forever, without beginning or end.
2. It is a priesthood that God confirmed with an oath.
3. It is a priesthood founded on personal greatness and not on appointments or genealogies.
4. It is a priesthood which offers a sacrifice that never needs to be repeated.
5. It is a priesthood so pure that that there is no necessity to offer sacrifice for sin of its own.
6. It is a priesthood of peace and righteousness.
7. It is a priesthood which is at the same time a royal kingship.

This priesthood was introduced in Genesis, Chapter 14 – long before the priesthood of Levi was ordained by the Mosaic Law. And this priesthood was confirmed by King David in Psalm 110 when he prophesied that the coming Messiah would be forever in its order. And now the Hebrews author makes the connection that Jesus, our promised Messiah, is the forever High Priest of the Melchizedekian order.

Chapter 7 has taught us of **A Better Priesthood**. Now Chapter 8, where we continue our study today, will teach us of **A Better Covenant**. This follows the logic introduced in 7:12:

Hebrews 7:12 For when the priesthood is changed, of necessity there takes place a change of law also.

OUR BIBLICAL TEXT

Hebrews 8:1-6 *Now the main point in what has been said is this: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister in the sanctuary and [n the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man. For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices; so it is necessary that this high priest also have something to offer. Now if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer the gifts according to the Law; who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned by God when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for, “See,” He says, “that you make all things according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain.” But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises.*

VERSE 1

From the outset, the author makes clear what is the sum of what he has said thus far.

8:1a *Now the main point in what has been said is this: we have such a high priest.*

It should come as no surprise that this forever priest after the order of Melchizedek is none other than Jesus the Christ. And we have Him readily available to us: “we have such a high priest.” It is as though the author is saying, “don’t miss my main point in all the verbiage, argument and deep teaching I’ve given you – JESUS IS OUR HIGH PRIEST FOREVER.”

And then he goes on in verse 1 to point out three unusual aspects of this priest:

1. He has **TAKEN HIS SEAT** = His work is finished. (Note that there were no places to sit down in the furniture of the tabernacle and temple)
2. He has **SAT ON THE THRONE** of the Majesty = He is both priest and God-King
3. He has sat **IN THE HEAVENS** = in the heavenly temple/throne room

Do you see how the author is methodically and masterfully taking us deeper and deeper into the

wonders of this High Priest of ours?!

VERSE 2

And in verse 2 he goes on to say three more wonderful and unusual things about this priest:

1. He is a **MINISTER** = still active in the lives of his people
2. He is in the **TRUE** sanctuary of the **TRUE** tabernacle = the former was not the ultimate reality
3. He resides in a **GOD-MADE** place, not in a man-made place

It is here that we have come to the source of our message title: “The Path To Reality.”

The Bible teaches us that so much of what we see and experience, though real, is not the ultimate reality. For instance, here are some every-day **TYPES**: (greek: tupos)

1. Marriage is the type of the ultimate marriage of Jesus and His Church
2. Communion is the type of the ultimate spiritual communion of each believer with Jesus
3. Church is the type of the ultimate worship of God in heaven
4. Water baptism is the type of the ultimate baptism of the Spirit when we become a follower of Jesus
5. Prayer is the type of the ultimate intimate communion with God we will enjoy in heaven
6. Even the wonders of our earth are only a type of the greater wonders of God for us in heaven
7. And our homes are a type of our ultimate residences being prepared for us in heaven

Here in verse 2, we have a hint of what will be developed in greater detail in the chapters ahead – that true reality is to be found only in seeking after Jesus, as he guides us as our High Priest into the reality of God and His heavenly kingdom. Our friends who are not yet followers of Christ may not yet be seeking what they call “God,” but they are surely seeking for reality.

VERSE 3

Since the high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifice, so must our High Priest, Jesus, offer the same. This is speaking of the priest’s role to satisfy and appease God. It is the priest’s duty to bridge the gap between God and man, bringing them together by means of sacrifice that satisfies the demand of the Almighty. The theological word for this is PROPITIATION. This has already been stated previously in Hebrews:

Hebrews 2:17 *He [Jesus] had to ... make propitiation for the sins of the people.*

And the apostle John in his first epistle makes this very clear:

1 John 2:2a And He Himself [Jesus] is the propitiation for our sins .

Thus, the gift and sacrifice that our High Priest Jesus brings to the Almighty on our behalf is HIMSELF – the spotless “lamb” of Himself as propitiation (or satisfaction) to meet the demand for perfection.

VERSE 4

Here we simply have indication that this sacrifice of Jesus could not have been made as an earthly priest, since he was not in the Levitical line and it was not according to the Law.

VERSE 5

Now here is the verse that specifically speaks of a “type” (“copy” in the NASB and “tupo” in Greek).

It also speaks of “shadow” as opposed to the reality that caused that shadow. In this case the “type” or “shadow” is the earthly priest, and the reality is the Heavenly High Priest of Jesus. “Shadow” is an appropriate term since it takes a bright light against something real to cause a shadow. Here, God is the bright light, the something real is Jesus our High Priest, and the shadow cast is the earthly priest.

The Hebrews author says that the earthly priest as a type or shadow should be evident by God’s words to Moses when he was instructed to build the tabernacle, manned by earthly priests. Here the author quotes from Exodus:

Exodus 25:40 [God to Moses:] See that you make [all the details of the tabernacle] after the pattern for them, which was shown to you on the mountain.

You see, every detail of God’s instructions given on Mount Sinai was to be followed exactly, for they were the “blueprints” as it were of the reality of the heavenly tabernacle. In the same way the earthly priest was the “blueprint” for the heavenly High Priest to come in Jesus. And all the animal sacrifices were the “blueprint” for the once-for-all sacrifice of the Lamb of God for the sins of the world. And now that the reality has come, the type or shadow created by the Law is not necessary. And therefore, neither is the Law necessary as well: thus, the “new covenant.”

VERSE 6

And we conclude with the key verse of this section. It speaks of three “betters”:

1. A better (or “more excellent”) MINISTRY
2. A better COVENANT
3. Better PROMISES

Jesus’ more excellent ministry is his making all his followers perfectly righteous in God’s eyes, perfectly satisfying God’s demand and allowing all to enjoy intimate access with the Almighty.

Jesus’ better covenant is the “new covenant in His blood” He spoke of while initiation the first communion:

Luke 22:20 *And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.”*

What is the “new covenant” , or what we know of in our Bible as the “New Testament”? Well in one word, Jesus’ word, it is His BLOOD. That is what makes the new “new.” And next week’s lesson will take us more deeply into what the “new covenant” is all about.

Jesus’ better promises are the promises of love and grace, rather than blessing following obedience.

Mathew 11:28-30 Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.

MAY WE TAKE ADVANTAGE OF HIS BETTER MINISTRY MOMENT-BY-MOMENT

MAY WE LIVE UNDER THE BLOOD OF HIS BETTER COVENANT ALWAYS

MAY WE RELISH HIS BETTER PROMISES OF LOVE AND GRACE AND EVER PASS THEM ON
TO ALL WE ENCOUNTER

Amen!