

# THE GLORIES OF CHRIST IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

by

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## CHAPTER SIX

### **“A PRIEST FOREVER”**

Hebrews 7:1-28

#### **The Official Glories of Christ**

The Epistle to the Hebrews, more than any other part of the New Testament, unfolds in wonderful detail the glories which flow from the Christhood of our Lord. The term “Christ” is an official title and speaks of Him as the Anointed Man.

In the Old Testament we meet with a threefold personal type of the “Messiah,” a word of which the name “Christ” is the equivalent.

There was the term meaning “**the anointed prophet**,” another meaning “**the anointed king**,” and yet another meaning “**the anointed priest**.” No king could be a priest also under the old economy, but the prophetic Scriptures pointed to One who would “**a priest upon his throne**” (Zechariah 6:13). In Psalm 110 the oath of God establishes the Messiah as “**a priest forever after the order of Melchizedec**” who united kingship and priesthood in one.

As Christ, our Lord undertakes to establish the will of God in a revolted world. He has become invested with all authority in heaven and on earth to bring a disordered universe into the divine harmony.

He will not rest till He can hand back to God the Father all that of which the enemy has deprived Him, that God may be all in all throughout eternity. Thus the program of the Christ is cosmic in its scope.

But in accomplishing this task many intermediate stages have to be gone through before the goal is reached. When He asks for it (Psalm 2:8), the nations will become His inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth His possession. He has not asked yet. He is waiting for His fellow heirs, for His “**brethren**,” as the second chapter of Hebrews call them.

They enjoy the blessing of His being the Christ in the meantime.

- He has purged their sins (Hebrews 1:3);
- He has become the Apostle of God's salvation to them (1:2; 3:1);
- He is the High Priest of their confession (3:1);
- He succors them when tempted (2:18);
- He is touched with the feeling of their infirmities (4:15);
- He ever lives to make intercession for them (7:25);
- He is the Captain of their salvation, and is leading them unto glory (2:10);
- He is their Forerunner within the veil (6:20);
- He is their great Shepherd through the blood of the everlasting covenant (13:20);

He is the One who, as Author and Finisher of the course of faith, at God's right hand now inspires them, as they look to Him, to run the race set before them (12:1, 2).

These are some of His official glories which are the realities that faith appropriates while we wait for the further stage of His great plan to reconcile both heaven and earth unto Himself and bring into subjection the things under the earth (Colossians 1; Philippians 2) till the last enemy, death, has also been destroyed.

### **“A Priest Forever After the Order of Melchizedec”**

Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 7:1-28

We might regard the seventh chapter of Hebrews as a sermon on Psalm 110:4, where we read of the divine oath which constituted the earth-rejected Jesus, now at God's right hand, **“a priest forever after the order of Melchizedec.”**

This sermon falls into three logical divisions; and the theme is again divided into three topics:

1. *Introduction—Melchizedec, a type of Christ* (vv. 1-3)
2. *Theme—Christ's priesthood is superior to Aaron's* (vv. 4-21):

a. In the order of His priesthood (vv. 4-14)

The Melchizedec order is greater than the Aaronic order.

b. In the eternity of His priesthood (vv. 15-19)

Christ's priesthood is unchangeable, eternal; whereas the Aaronic priesthood was continually changing because of the death of the priests.

c. In the divine oath (vv. 20, 21)

Christ's priesthood was inaugurated by the divine oath to One whom God had made the Partner of His throne; Aaron was made a priest without an oath (vv. 20, 21).

3. *Conclusion—The character of our Great High Priest and His intercession at the throne of grace* (vv. 22-28)

## Melchizedec—A Type of Christ

7:1-3

Melchizedec is mentioned in only three places in Scripture: Genesis 14:17-20 is the historical record; Psalm 110:4 states the prophetic type; Hebrews explains the meaning of the prophecy. Turn now to Genesis 14, and read the story of the man, Melchizedec.

Abram was returning from the battle, in which he had delivered among others, Lot and the king of Sodom, when Melchizedec, king of Salem and priest of God Most High, met the patriarch. Three acts of this king-priest are mentioned:

1. *He “brought forth bread and wine.”*

It is evident that Melchizedec’s priesthood was based on sacrifice that foreshadowed the Saviour to come. What blessed truths he must have discussed with Abram concerning the suffering of the promised Redeemer! Surely they looked down the centuries, by faith, to see the broken body and shed blood of the Lamb of Calvary!

2. *He blessed Abram, giving God the glory for the patriarch’s victory.*

3. *He received tithes of the spoils of the battle from Abram.*

Before you leave the Genesis record, read on to the end of this chapter. The king of Sodom was so grateful to Abram for deliverance that he offered to let the patriarch keep the spoils of the battle; but Abram refused, trusting God for his reward. Evidently the Lord was pleased with this choice (See Genesis 15:1).

In explaining the two Old Testament passages where Melchizedec is mentioned, the Holy Spirit, in Hebrews 7:1-3, reviews the story, adding also the following significant facts:

4. *The name “Melchizedec” means “King of righteousness.”*

5. *“Salem” means “peace”; therefore, Melchizedec was “King of peace.”*

“Salem” was the ancient name for “Jerusalem,” meaning “city of peace,” or “habitation of peace.”

6. *Melchizedec has no recorded genealogy.*

From Genesis to Revelation the Bible exalts the Lord Jesus Christ as the King of righteousness and King of peace. In Him **‘Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other’** (Psalm 85:10).

- Only His loved ones know Him now as the Just One (Acts 7:52) and **“justifier of him which believeth”** in Him (Romans 3:26).

- Only the redeemed know Him now as the **“God of peace”** (Romans 15:33).

But in that coming day of His glorious reign on earth He will be universally acknowledged as **“THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS”** and **“Prince of Peace”** (Jeremiah 23:6; Isaiah 9:6).

Genesis, a book which emphasizes the importance of family records, omits Melchizedec’s genealogical credentials; whereas later, in the Aaronic priesthood, the records of the Levitical priests were of vital importance (See Ezra 2:61-63). The Holy Spirit’s omission of this genealogy is explained in Hebrews 7:3, in that Melchizedec was **“made like unto the Son of God,”** our Great High Priest, **“who abideth a priest forever.”** In other words, the very omission of Melchizedec’s genealogy makes him a type of the eternal Lord Jesus, who has **“neither beginning of days nor end of life.”**

### **Christ’s Priesthood Is Superior to Aaron’s**

The conclusion is logical, convincing and unmistakable: the priesthood of Christ is better than that of Aaron; and the Levitical, or Aaronic, priesthood was the very heart of Judaism, the best the old economy had to offer.

#### *1. In the order of His priesthood Christ is superior to Aaron (vv. 4-14)*

Melchizedec was greater than Abram:

- a. Because he received tithes from Abram.
- b. Because he blessed Abram.

**“And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better”** (v. 7).

Therefore, Melchizedec was greater than Abram’s great-grandson, Levi; and better than Levi’s great-grandson, Aaron—and all their descendants, Levitical priests.

Since Christ is **“a priest forever after the order of Melchizedec”**—not after the order of Aaron—He is superior to all the Levitical priests, Aaron’s lineal descendants. It is a forceful argument, used here to exhort the Hebrew Christians to forsake the then empty ritual of Judaism, and to press on with Christ, who had fulfilled all the Law of Moses and set aside its ceremonies.

Furthermore, Christ came, not from the tribe of Levi, as did Aaron; but **“our Lord sprang out of Juda”** (v. 14); therefore, He is both King and Priest—King of righteousness, King of peace, and our: Great High Priest forever!

#### *2. In the eternity of His priesthood Christ is superior to Aaron (vv. 15-19).*

Aaron died; his sons died; therefore, the Levitical priests were ever learning, ever being replaced by their sons (cf. v. 23); but Christ is a Priest with **“the power of an endless [Greek, ‘indissoluble’] life”** (v. 16; cf. v. 24). **“For ever”** He is our undying Priest with **“an unchangeable priesthood.”**

Again, in verses 18 and 19, the Holy Spirit reiterates the fact that the Law of Moses, including the Levitical priesthood, had been disannulled, that is, set aside, with the **“bringing in . . . of a better hope”** in Christ, through whom **“we draw nigh unto God . . . The law made nothing perfect.”** It was but **“a shadow of good things to come”** (10:1).

*3. Because of the divine oath, with which He was constituted a Priest forever, Christ is superior to Aaron (vv. 20, 21).*

Aaron and his sons were made priests **“without an oath”**; not so the Lord Jesus. All of the immutability of the sworn statement of the unchanging God gives unquestioned authority and boundless power to our Heavenly Priest!

### **The Matchless Person of Our Great High Priest**

7:22-28

The closing section of this explanation of Psalm 110:4 describes the character of our High Priest:

**“For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins [Christ had no sin in Him], and then for the people’s: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. For the law maketh men high priests, which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since [after] the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore”** (vv. 26-28).

The substance of the Antitype far exceeds the shadow of the type here, in this word-picture of our blessed Lord.

### **His Intercession at the Throne of Grace**

This ever living Priest is our constant Intercessor; we draw near unto God by Him (cf. Acts 4:12). Hence He saves us to the uttermost, that is, to the full and final rest of God.

Now you may ask, Is the Melchizedec priesthood of our Lord a present ministry? Or is it millennial in its character? Is it for all believers, or for Israel only? It appears that according to the Epistle to the Hebrews, faith lives in the light of **“the world [or ‘age’] to come,”** and anticipates its spiritual blessings. Thus we have already, spiritually, come to Mount Zion, the metropolis of the millennial earth (12:22-24). This era is one of faith in the unseen. The coming day will be one of display of what faith lays hold of now. So in the summing up found in 8:1 we read, **“We have such an high priest,”** the kind of priest of whom Melchizedec was a type.

We who have been spiritually **“translated . . . into the kingdom of his dear son”** (Colossians 1:13) need not wait till the millennial consummation and display of this kingdom, in which our Lord will function in His royal and Great High Priestly character as King of righteousness and King of peace. We are in the enjoyment of both ministrations now.

His rule is a Priestly rule. And it was to “**Abram the Hebrew**”—a name first mentioned in Genesis 14:13—the pilgrim from another country, and a stranger in the land, that Melchizedec brought forth bread and wine out of Salem, a beautiful figure of those who receive the benefit of our Lord’s present ministry. Abram was thus helped to refuse the offer of the King of Sodom to enrich himself with the Babylonish spoil taken in battle. Those who feast on heavenly bread and wine are superior to the lure of this world.

But is the Melchizedec priesthood for all believers, or for Israel only. In writing to Hebrew Christians, the Holy Spirit referred to the Lord Jesus as their Great High Priest; whereas in addressing Gentile believers, many of whom did not know the ceremonies and teachings of Judaism, He spoke of Him as the “**one mediator between God and men**” (I Timothy 2:5), “**an advocate with the Father**” (I John 2:1). The terms carry the same meaning, in that Christ is the Representative in the court of heaven for the redeemed sinner, whether Jew or Gentile. And He will never lose a case!

As Intercessor, He pleads the cause of His own, even as He answered the heart-cry of Job for a “**daysman**,” a Mediator between God and men (Job 9:33). Like Jacob’s ladder, He touches the very throne room of heaven, as well as the humble experiences of His redeemed. (Cf. John 1:51.) In the place of all power, at the right hand of God (Mark 16:19; Romans 8:34; Colossians 3:1), the crucified and risen Lord takes our part when Satan, “**the accuser of our brethren**,” accuses us “**before our God day and night**” (Revelation 12:10).

Again, as Aaron ministered on behalf of his people, he wore the two onyx stones, engraved with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, upon his shoulders, the place of strength. At the same time he wore over his heart the breastplate with its twelve precious stones, also engraved with the names of the twelve tribes. Thus, symbolically, he bore his people on his shoulders and in the place of affection before the God who answers prayer. Likewise, our Great High Priest, even our Intercessor, knows His own sheep by name as He represents them at the throne of grace (John 10:3, 14, 27). And what is the nature of His prayer? John 17 gives the answer.

### **Another Chapter of Contrasts**

To recapitulate, look again at this seventh chapter of Hebrews, which proves beyond all controversy that the person of our Great High Priest is more excellent by far than that of Aaron and all his sons. As you get the overall picture, you see a continued contrast between Judaism and Christianity:

Under the Levitical priesthood there was imperfection (vv. 11, 19); in Christ we find perfection (vv. 19, 25, 28).

After fifteen hundred years of Judaism, there was “**further need**” of a heavenly Priest—a need fully met in Christ (v. 11).

“**The priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law**” (v. 12); “**Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth**” (Romans 10:4).

**“For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before” and “a bringing in of a better hope” (vv. 18, 19).**

- Aaron was a priest only, from the tribe of Levi; Christ is King-Priest, from the tribe of Judah, King of righteousness, King of peace, and a Priest forever.
- Aaron was made priest without an oath; Christ, with the divine oath.
- Aaron ministered under the old covenant of the Law of Moses; Christ is **“the surety of a better covenant”** the new covenant in His blood (v. 22).
- The Levitical priests were many, ever learning, continually dying; Christ is alive for evermore, all-wise, unchangeable. .
- Aaron and his sons were sinners, needing to offer sacrifices for themselves (v. 27); Christ **“knew no sin”** (II Corinthians 5:21); He is absolutely holy (vv. 26-28), **“altogether lovely”** (Song of Solomon 5:16).
- Aaron and his sons had to offer the **“daily”** sacrifice (v. 27), year after year for fifteen centuries; Christ offered one sufficient sacrifice once for all (v. 27).

Could the Hebrew Christian ask for more? Can you? What though the nation persecuted the Jewish believer for loving the Lord Jesus? What though you may suffer affliction for His sake? He is at the throne of grace, able and waiting to meet your every need, even as He has always met the needs of His own—**“according to his riches in glory”** (Philippians 4:19).

1. If you have not already formed the habit of setting aside an appointed time each day, preferably in the morning hours, for Bible reading and prayer, by all means do it at once.

In addition to your study of this lesson take time for prayer and praise for the truth it holds. **“Consider . . . Christ Jesus”**—the wonders of His person and the power of His work on your behalf. Seek first the Giver—not His gifts—if you would experience the unfailing joy of unbroken fellowship with **“such an high priest.”**

2. How is Melchizedec a type of Christ?
3. Why is Christ’s priesthood superior to Aaron’s?

## **CHAPTER SIX**

**NOTE: PLEASE DO NOT CONTACT THE MOODY CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL FOR GRADING OF YOUR EXAMS – IF YOU WISH TO COMPLETE THEM, CONSIDER THEM AS AN OPEN BOOK EXAM**

**1. In the blank space write the letter of the correct answer. (32 points)**

**(1) Melchizedec's genealogy is not recorded in the Bible because he**

- (a) Was not an actual person**
- (b) Was a type of the Son of God**
- (c) Was not important enough**
- (d) Did not worship the true God**

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**(2) Hebrews 7:17 teaches that**

- (a) The priesthood of Aaron was superior to Melchizedec's**
- (b) Christ's priesthood is after the order of Aaron's**
- (c) Aaron's priesthood is after the order of Melchizedec's**
- (d) Christ's priesthood is after the order of Melchizedec s**
- (e) Melchizedec's priesthood is better than Christ's**

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**(3) The intercessory work of Christ in heaven is**

- (a) For Israel only**
- (b) For all believers in the Lord Jesus**
- (c) For the millennial age only**
- (d) For the unsaved**

**(4) The forceful comparison of Christ's priesthood with the Aaronic priesthood was for the purpose of**

- (a) Exhorting the Hebrew Christians to take Christ along with the Judaistic rituals**
- (b) Declaring that the ceremonies of the Temple worship had always been meaningless**
- (c) Exhorting the Hebrew Christians to forsake the empty ritual of Judaism and press on with Christ**
- (d) Proving that the Temple offerings were not of divine institution**

\_\_\_\_\_

2. In the right-hand margin write “True” or “False” after each of the following statements. (10 points)

- a. Christ is superior to all Levitical priests. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Christ’s priesthood ended with His ascension. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. The Levitical priesthood was to continue forever. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Christ came from the tribe of Judah. \_\_\_\_\_
- e. Aaron and his sons were confirmed as priests by an oath. \_\_\_\_\_
- f. There were Old Testament priests who came from the tribe of Judah. \_\_\_\_\_
- g. Christ’s priesthood is unchangeable. \_\_\_\_\_
- h. The kings of Israel were sometimes eligible for priestly office. \_\_\_\_\_
- i. Christ fulfilled the law of Moses and brought in a better hope. \_\_\_\_\_

Read Psalm 110, Hebrews 7 and Genesis 14 and then state which of the following facts are true. (10 points)

- a. The name “Melchizedec” means “king of righteousness.” \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Melchizedec was king of Sodom. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Abraham gave Melchizedec bread and wine. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. The king of Sodom helped make Abraham rich. \_\_\_\_\_
- e. Melchizedec received tithes from Abraham. \_\_\_\_\_

4. From your study of this lesson give briefly the three main proofs that Christ’s priesthood is superior to Aaron’s. (3 points)

- a. \_\_\_\_\_ 7:4-14
- b. \_\_\_\_\_ 7:15-19
- c. \_\_\_\_\_ 7:20-21

5. a. State briefly what the onyx stones which the high priest wore on his shoulders typified. (10 points)

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b. State also what the high priest’s breastplate illustrated. (10 points)

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6. In column 1 name five aspects of the Levitical priesthood, and in column 2 the corresponding contrast to be seen in Christ. (20 points)

| Column 1 | Column 2 |
|----------|----------|
| a. _____ | _____    |
| b. _____ | _____    |
| c. _____ | _____    |
| d. _____ | _____    |
| e. _____ | _____    |

7. Match each reference in column 1 with the statement in column 2 by placing the correct letter from column 1 in the proper blank in column 2.(5 points')

| Column 1        | Column 2                                                 |
|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| a. Hebrews 2:10 | (1) Ever lives to make intercession _____                |
| b. Hebrews 3:1  | (2) Captain of our salvation _____                       |
| c. Hebrews 1:3  | (3) Has purged our sins _____                            |
| d. Hebrews 4:15 | (4) Touched with the feeling of our infirmities _____    |
| e. Hebrews 7:25 | (5) The High Priest of our profession [confession] _____ |
| f. Hebrews 6:20 |                                                          |

~ end of chapter 6 ~

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