



As we go through these chapters of Hebrews, one thing we can't help notice is the author's authority, confidence, and knowledge of the subject matter, which best fits that of the apostle Paul. No other New Testament writer covers these topics as he does here, and in his other Epistles.

So after he lays out the six fundamental doctrines taught by Christ, he then reveals a more profound teaching – the one about Jesus Christ becoming our new High Priest of a new order and a mediator of a better covenant than that given at Mt. Sinai, which was based on a mortal priesthood, animal sacrifices, rituals and a physical tabernacle.

Paul now skillfully weaves Old Testament scriptures that were prophecies of this coming new High Priest with his new sacrifice established once and for all time; and a heavenly tabernacle – not on the physical earth. The Jewish Christians in particular are repeatedly warned here not remain in the O.T. covenant, where Jesus Christ is not its central figure, and yet they are encouraged to remain firm and with good works.

He says, "But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner. For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises" (6:9-12).

Again, there is the warning to remain faithful to the end and now uses the example of Abraham: "For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying, 'Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you.' And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all dispute. Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong

consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, where the *forerunner* has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek" (Heb. 6:13-20).

Abraham, of course, was the "father of the faith" "who through faith and patience inherit[ed] the promises." Which did he inherit? Two are mentioned: (1) The son he would have, although they were past the age of bearing children, and (2) this son would multiply as the stars in the heavens. How could Abraham be so sure of them? Because of the two things God did to assure them: (1) He made an oath to keep it, and (2) it is impossible for God to lie. God's promises are called the "anchor" of our soul -- what keeps us secure, namely, that God's promises can't be broken nor can God lie by not fulfilling them.

Now, God made other promises to Abraham which are not yet fulfilled, but the point is He also made promises respecting Jesus becoming our High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

He explains, "For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated 'king of righteousness,' and then also king of Salem, meaning 'king of peace,' without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually. Now consider how great this man was, to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils. And indeed those who are of the sons of Levi, who receive the priesthood, have a commandment to receive tithes from the people according to the law, that is, from their brethren, though they have come from the loins of Abraham; but he whose genealogy is not derived from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. Now beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better. Here mortal men receive tithes, but there he receives them, of whom it is witnessed that he lives. Even Levi, who receives

tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, so to speak, for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him" (Heb. 7:1-10).

In order to make the connection with Melchizedek and Jesus Christ, Paul goes back to the biblical account of Melchizedek. He mentions this unusual king and priest was dedicated to the true God – when only Abraham was following Him at that time. He then mentions this person did not have a human ancestry nor birth. As the account says, "...without father, without mother, without genealogy, having *neither beginning of days nor end of life* [He was immortal], but made *like* the Son of God." This then had to be a Spirit Being who appeared before Abraham, similar to the Spirit Being who was accompanied by two angels on the way to Sodom, whom Abraham served Him food, when it says, "Then *the Lord* appeared to him...as he was sitting in the tent door" (Gen. 18:1). This is called a theophany, or an appearance by God (the Word, who later became flesh).

He would be a superior priest to that of Aaron, since Abraham paid his tithes and was blessed by Him. In this sense, Levi, who became the head of the Levites also paid Him tithes.

Paul further says, "Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law. For He of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to *the power of an endless life*. For He testifies: 'You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.' For on the one hand there is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness, for the law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, there is the bringing in of *a better hope*, through which we draw near to

God. And inasmuch as He was not made priest without an oath (for they have become priests without an oath, but He with an oath by Him who said to Him: 'The Lord has sworn and will not relent, 'You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek' by so much more Jesus has become a surety of a better covenant" (7:11-22).

The scripture quoted here is from Psalms 110:4 and emphasizes that God made an oath with this new priesthood based on a Spirit Being who has "an endless life." The only one who could qualify is the Word coming in the flesh and becoming such a High Priest, starting a new order that would supersede and replace the previous priestly order.

As F. F. Bruce brings out, "A further token of the imperfection of the old priesthood and the superiority of the new lies on the face of our author's O.T. text, 'Thou art a priest *for ever*.' These words are quite inapplicable to the old order; no priest of Aaron's line could have been described as 'a priest forever,' for the simple reason that each one of them died in due course. But the Christian's High Priest is immortal; having died once for all and risen from the dead, He discharges His ministry on His people's behalf in the power of a life that can never be destroyed. The law which established the Aaronic priesthood is called a 'carnal commandment' because it is 'a system of earth-bound rules' (NEB); it is concerned with the externalities of religion—the physical descent of the priests, a material shrine, animal sacrifices and so forth. Like everything else in the Levitical regime, the Aaronic order of priesthood was marked by *transience*; it stands thus *in contrast* to the permanence and effectiveness of the priestly office of Christ" (*Commentary on Hebrews*, p. 148).

Paul continues, "Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing. But He, because He continues forever, has *an unchangeable priesthood*. Therefore He is also able to *save to the uttermost* those who come to God through Him, since He *always lives* to make intercession for them. For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; who does *not* need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for

His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did *once for all* when He offered up Himself. For the law appoints as high priests men who have *weakness*, but the *word of the oath*, which came after the law [given to Aaron], appoints *the Son who has been perfected forever*" (Heb. 7:23-28).

Again, the point is the superiority of Christ in every way to what the Levitical system attempted to physically do. God took *an oath* in the Psalm already quoted about Melchizedek being a priest forever, something He never did with Aaron.

Paul goes on, "Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: *We have such a High Priest*, who is seated at 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 erected, and not man. For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Therefore it is necessary that this One also have something to offer. For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law; who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, 'See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain' (Heb. 8:1-5).

Again, to show the superiority of the heavenly position Jesus has as our High Priest, he says the Tabernacle was patterned after a heavenly one. So the physical tabernacle was only *an inferior* copy of the spiritual tabernacle in heaven, just as the Aaronic priesthood was only *an inferior system* of the spiritual priesthood held by Jesus Christ.

Paul continues, "But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. Because finding fault with them, He says: 'Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in my covenant, and I disregarded them, says the Lord.

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those day, says the Lord. I will put *my laws* in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for all shall know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.' In that He says, 'A new covenant,' He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away" (Heb. 8:6-13).

So Jesus inaugurated a new covenant, yet as seen here it is still based *on the spiritual law* (Rom. 7:14)--the principles of the Ten Commandments, which need to be *internalized* in our hearts. It will be established for all peoples, and forgiveness will be granted upon true repentance. Now, only *the first stage* of the New Covenant is being applied today--the "betrothal" stage. Now, we only receive a "down payment" of God's spirit to *begin* internalizing God's laws in our hearts, but only in the second and final stage of the New Covenant, when we become spirit beings with a perfect heart and mind, we will not want to sin and will then keep God's laws perfectly. This will only be accomplished when Jesus marries "the Bride" at His coming—in the First Resurrection, and then, it will also be offered in the Second Resurrection.

This is where Catholics, Protestants and Evangelicals get it wrong. The New Covenant does change the laws--but about the priesthood, rituals, and sacrifices -- to those of Christ's new priestly order of Melchizedek, and from a physical tabernacle to a spiritual one, where we can now go directly to God the Father and Christ in our prayers, and where He, and not a physical priest, intercedes for us. The laws of God in the New Covenant do change--from just keeping them physically to now also keeping them *spiritually*. Christ mentioned this in the Beatitudes of Mt. 5 and the rest of the Sermon on the Mount. As He showed, the Sabbath is *still* binding as God's *spiritual law* (Mr. 2:23-28), enshrined in the Fourth Commandment, but keeping it *not only* physically, but spiritually, just as the rest of God's commandments! Thank God for this great truth!