

Lessons From Hebrews

Greater Than The Levitical Priesthood

(He 7:4-11)

INTRODUCTION

1. Good Afternoon
 - a. Greeting...
2. Series of "Lessons From Hebrews."
 - a. We have thus far found Jesus to be greater...
 - i. Than the angels.
 1. **He 1-2**
 - ii. Than Moses.
 1. **He 3:1-6**
 - b. Today we will notice that Jesus is greater...
 - i. Than the Levitical Priesthood.
3. The Jewish priest were placed high in the minds of any faithful Jew.
 - a. After all they were the ones that...
 - i. That could carry the ark of the covenant.
 - ii. Were set a part to whole worship God.
 - iii. That helped with the daily sacrifices.
4. Thus the Jews had a hefty respect for the Levites and the priesthood but more so for the high priest.
 - a. Why? The high priest was the one that...
 - i. Helped them "roll their sins" forward each year during the Day of Atonement.
5. It is this great respect for the high priest that the Hebrew writer uses to prove "Jesus is greater than the Levitical priesthood and even the Levitical high priest."
 - a. With that in mind let us examine what the writer had to say.

I. The Qualifications Of A High Priest

- A. He was able to give gifts and sacrifices for the people (**5:1**)
 1. There is no greater example of this than on the Day of Atonement where he gave a sacrifice for the sins of the people.
 - i. **Ex 30:10** "Aaron shall make atonement on its horns once a year. With the blood of the sin offering of atonement he shall make atonement for it once in the year throughout your generations. It is most holy to the LORD."¹
- B. He was to be able to deal gently with the people (**5:2-3**)
 1. The High Priest was able to sympathize with the people.
 - i. The Greek word of gentle or compassion is "metriopatheo."
 - ii. "The word pinpoints that area between "I don't care at all" and "I care so much that I can't function." The high priest, in dealing with so many people and so many sins was to guard against becoming calloused on the one hand, and on the other, becoming so distraught with pity and grief that he lost his ability to fulfill his task." (Notes on Hebrews 'Chapter Five' by Parish, Eddie pg. 49)

¹ All Scriptures are taken from the ESV unless otherwise noted. If other translations are used this is not necessarily an endorsement of the translation.

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2. This sympathy comes from personal understanding of having sinned himself.
 - i. Thus the atonement sacrifice was for him as well.
- C. He was appointed by God (5:4)
 1. We see that God was the one that appointed the proper high priests.
 - i. **Ex 28:1** "Then bring near to you Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the people of Israel, to serve me as priests—Aaron and Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar."
 2. By the time of the Hebrew letter the high priest position had been extremely corrupted due to the Greeks, Romans, and Herods appointing high priests.
 - i. God however had not change His requirements for one to be a high priest.
 - a. **Ps 105:26** "He sent Moses, his servant, and Aaron, whom he had chosen."
- D. Thus we see the qualifications to be a proper high priest of God

II. The Qualifications Of Jesus As High Priest

- A. The Hebrew writer now sets forth that Jesus meets the requirements of High Priest
 1. They should not worry about being without an advocate.
- B. Jesus was given the position of High Priest (5:5)
 1. **Ps 110:4** "The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, "You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.""
- C. Jesus could deal gently with the people (5:7)
 1. This is not to say in the same way as the other high priests.
 - i. **He 4:15** "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin."
- D. Jesus gave the ultimate gift and sacrifice (5:8-9)
 1. Whereas the high priest gave a sacrifice Jesus gave the ultimate sacrifice.
 - i. **He 7:27** "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."
- E. Thus we find Jesus is a high priest and greater than all others

III. Melchizedek's Priesthood Vs The Levitical Priesthood

- A. The Hebrew writer assumes his readers know the account of Melchizedek
 1. This account is found in the book of Genesis.
 - i. **Gn 14:18-20** "And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.) 19 And he blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; 20 and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!" And Abram gave him a tenth of everything."
- B. The Hebrew writer begins by pointing out the obvious (7:1-2)
 1. Melchizedek...
 - i. Was king of Salem.
 - ii. Was priest of the Most High God.
 - iii. Was the one that met Abraham after the slaughter of the kings.

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- iv. Was the one that blessed Abraham.
 - v. Was the one that received a tenth of Abraham's spoils.
 - vi. Was king of peace.
 - a. This is because his name means "king of righteousness" and he was king over Salem which means "peace" thus he was the "king of peace."
- C. The Hebrew writer then points out the "lack of information" (7:3)
- 1. The Hebrew writer finds significance in the "lack of details" concerning Melchizedek.
 - 2. Melchizedek...
 - i. Is without father.
 - ii. Is without mother.
 - iii. Is without genealogy.
 - iv. Is without beginning or end.
 - v. Is a continuous priest.
 - vi. Is a resemblance of the Son of God.
- D. How all this information concerning Melchizedek finds significance (7:4-10)
- 1. Melchizedek was worthy of Abraham giving him a tenth of the spoils.
 - i. This can only mean one thing Melchizedek was greater than Abraham.
 - a. **He 7:4, 7** "See how great this man was to whom Abraham the patriarch gave a tenth of the spoils...7 It is beyond dispute that the inferior is blessed by the superior."
 - 2. The Levitical priesthood was inferior to Melchizedek as well.
 - i. This is seen in that Abraham was inferior to Melchizedek and Levi came from Abraham's loins.
 - a. **He 7:9** "One might even say that Levi himself, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham"
- E. Thus Melchizedek's priesthood was greater than that over Levi's

IV. Jesus' Priesthood Vs The Levitical Priesthood

- A. Jesus as high priest is...(7:12-25)
- 1. Over a better law
 - i. **He 7:19, 22** "(for the law made nothing perfect); but on the other hand, a better hope is introduced, through which we draw near to God...22 This makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant."
 - ii. If the Levites were priests to an inferior law they are inferior to Jesus.
 - 2. Permanent in his priesthood.
 - i. **He 7:24** "but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever."
 - ii. The Levites, according to Josephus, had 83 high priests between Aaron and the fall of Jerusalem. Thus we see clearly their mortality makes them inferior to Jesus. (Antiquities, 20.10.1)

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3. Save other to the uttermost.
 - i. **He 7:25** "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."
 - ii. The Levitical priesthood though many no doubt wanted to, could not "save" anyone. This once again makes them inferior to Jesus.
- B. Jesus as high priest is...(7:26-28)
 1. Holy, innocent, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens.
 - i. There is none like Him in heaven or on earth.
 - ii. He is the perfect High Priest.
 - a. **He 7:28** "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."
- C. Thus. Jesus the Christ is greater than the Levitical priesthood.
 1. He is worthy of all the glory, honor, and praise due Him.

CONCLUSION

1. Mark Correll once said, "If you can think of anything that's more important than Jesus to you, then Jesus is nothing to you." (<http://goo.gl/5pd66>)
 - a. Brethren Jesus is greater than anything this life has ever offered.
2. Question: Is Jesus greater than everything in your life?
 - a. If so continue therein and grow thereby.
 - b. If not why not.
3. Invitation
 - a. For those that are Christians but are not living for Christ repent by confessing your sins to God that He may forgive you and dedicate your life/time back to Him.
 - i. **I Jn 1:7, 9** "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin...9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
 - b. For those that are not Christians or for those that think they are Christians and want to know for sure notice what is required to become a child of God or Christian according to God and God only.
 - i. Hear/Study **Rom 10:17; II Tim 2:15**
 - ii. Believe Jesus Is The Christ **Jn 3:16; 8:24**
 - iii. Repent/Turn To God **Ac 17:30; Lk 24:47**
 - iv. Confess Jesus As Lord **Mt 10:32; Rom 10:9**
 - v. Immersed For The Forgiveness of Sins **Ac 2:38; 22:16; I Pt 3:21**
 - vi. Live A Faithful Life **I Jn 1:7; Eph 5:8**