

VERSES 26-28 Such a high priest truly meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. ²⁷ Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself. ²⁸ For the law appoints as high priests men in all their weakness; but the oath, which came after the law, appointed the Son, who has been made perfect forever.

1. According to this passage, how does Jesus meet our needs as a high priest?
2. What are some of the other ways Jesus meets our needs as a high priest?
3. How should we respond to the high priest God has given us in his Son?



By now we are all too familiar with Melchizedek. While he escapes the notice of every other New Testament writer, he is a big deal for the writer of Hebrews.

We are left with very little in the way of biography. We know that he was the “king of Salem” and “a priest of God Most High.” He greets Abraham in the King’s Valley as he is returning from a decisive victory over four kings from the north. The two men share a covenant meal of bread and wine. Melchizedek blesses Abraham, and Abraham, in turn gives Melchizedek a tenth of the spoils of war.

Nearly five hundred years later David envisions a king that will both be his son (or descendant) and his Lord. Psalm 110 begins, with the familiar line, “The Lord says to my lord: ‘Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet (v. 1).’” The line, however, that captures the writer of Hebrews’ imagination comes in the third stanza: “The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: ‘You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek (v.4).’”

In Hebrews 7, the writer of Hebrews tells us that Jesus is the king David envisioned. He is both David’s son and David’s Lord. He is seated at God’s right hand, and he is a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

In the first half of chapter 7 (vv. 1-10), the writer of Hebrews takes us back to Abraham’s encounter with Melchizedek to explore how Melchizedek symbolizes the ideal which is fully realized in Jesus. In the last half of the chapter (vv. 11-28) we return to Psalm 110 to explore how Jesus, as our high priest, is a guarantor of a far better covenant. We learn why we need a new high priest, and why we will never need another one.

WHY WE NEED A NEW HIGH PRIEST (vv. 11-19)

VERSE 11 If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood—and indeed the law given to the people established that priesthood—why was there still need for another priest to come, one in the order of Melchizedek, not in the order of Aaron?

1. The word for perfection means “to be complete.” In other words the law starts a process that it cannot bring to completion. How would you describe that process?
2. Why can’t the law bring the process to completion?
3. While the New Covenant is described in several Old Testament passages, one of its most vivid expressions comes in Ezekiel 36:25-27:

I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. ²⁶ I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

How does the New Covenant compensate for the inherent weakness of the law?

4. What role does the law play in New Covenant?

VERSES 12-14 For when the priesthood is changed, the law must be changed also. ¹³ He of whom these things are said belonged to a different tribe, and no one from that tribe has ever served at the altar. ¹⁴ For it is clear that our Lord descended from Judah, and in regard to that tribe Moses said nothing about priests.

1. What are some of the changes that must be made to the law in order for Jesus to be our high priest?
2. What are some of the other changes ushered in by the New Covenant?

VERSES 15-17 And what we have said is even more clear if another priest like Melchizedek appears, ¹⁶ one who has become a priest not on the basis of a regulation as to his ancestry but on the basis of the power of an indestructible life. ¹⁷ For it is declared: “You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.”

1. According to the writer of Hebrews, what makes it clear that we no longer need a priesthood after the older order?
2. What is the basis for the Old Testament priesthood?
3. What is the basis for the New Testament priesthood?

4. What do you think the writer of Hebrews means by “an indestructible life?”
5. How does an “indestructible life” qualify Jesus to be our high priest?

VERSES 18-19 The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless ¹⁹ (for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God.

1. How often and under what conditions could the high priest enter the presence of God (the holiest place) under the Old Covenant?
2. How often and under what conditions can our high priest (Jesus) enter the presence of God?
3. How often and under what conditions can we enter the presence of God?
4. Why don’t we take greater advantage of the access God has given us into his presence?

WHY WE WILL NEVER NEED ANOTHER (vv. 20-28)

VERSES 20-22. And it was not without an oath! Others became priests without any oath, ²¹ but he became a priest with an oath when God said to him: “The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: ‘You are a priest forever.’” ²² Because of this oath, Jesus has become the guarantor of a better covenant.

1. What is it that makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant?
2. How does the Psalmist describe that oath?
3. How does this oath reassure us that we will never need another high priest?

VERSES 23-25 Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; ²⁴ but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. ²⁵ Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.

1. What prevented the Levitical high priest from continuing in office?
2. What prevents our Lord from continuing in office?
3. What does it mean to come to God through Jesus?
4. What is he able to do that no other high priest could do?
5. What does he “always lives” do? Why is this significant?