

COMMENTARY

Hebrews Chapter 7:

vs. 1-10 There would be a question in the back of the Hebrew Christians mind that Paul answers and puts to rest in these verses. The question is, "All the priests were from the tribe of Levi, weren't they?". By reminding them of Melchizedek, Paul shows that they were not. Melchizedek means "King of Righteousness" and King of Salem means "King of Peace". The city of Salem later became known as Jerusalem. The account that Paul relates can be found in Genesis 14:17-20. Paul shows that we have no details on Melchizedeks background thus proving that there is no way that he could have come from the line of Levi.

Paul then shows how Melchizedek was a great man of God. If the Hebrew Christians forefather, Abraham, gave and recognized Melchizedeks priesthood then so should they. Paul also reminds them that you give an offering or tithe to those who are greater. He reasons that, if Abraham the forefather of Levi recognized this man (even though he was not from the tribe of Levi) then the Christians should recognize the priesthood of Christ even though He is not from Levi.

vs. 11-28 Paul shows that perfection was not available through the priesthood of the tribe of Levi. For perfection to be made possible, the priesthood had to be changed..
vs. 17 (Psalm 110:4) If you are changing the priesthood, then the laws that they followed would also need to be changed. Otherwise, you would be no better, off. Paul shows that Jesus was
vs. 21 (Psalm 110:4) from the tribe of Judah and became a priest not because of His ancestors, but because He would live forever. God Himself testified concerning it. The old law is set aside and is replaced by a new hope. The new hope being, eternal life through Christ. God confirmed this change of priesthood by an oath; the Levite priests did not always have that type of a sign, but Jesus did. Because of that oath, Jesus is our guarantee of a better covenant than that of the Israelites.

Paul shows Jesus' superiority in that He will live forever to plead our case and has sacrificed 1 sacrifice for all time and did not even have to offer a sacrifice for Himself. There had never been another priest who could come close to making these claims.

COMMENTARY

Hebrews Chapter 8:

Paul begins the chapter by stating the conclusion of the matter concerning Jesus as our high priest. Quite simply, our priest serves in Heaven in the true sanctuary, has offered a better sacrifice, has a superior ministry, covenant and promises then the Levite priests who serve here on earth at an imitation of the true sanctuary, offer imperfect sacrifices and have an inferior ministry, covenant and promise as theirs was found wanting and was replaced by God. The fault with the old covenant was that it could not make the people perfect and holy.

vs. 7-12
(Jeremiah
31:31-34)

God promised that He would give a NEW COVENANT or a new agreement to man. God said it would be different from the one given in the wilderness in the time of Moses. A new one would be given because Israel was not faithful to the old one and therefore God turned His back on them. The New Covenant would have His laws impressed upon the hearts and minds of His people and all nations would learn of Him. Under this new covenant, forgiveness of sins would be offered. Paul then shows that since this one is new then the old covenant is no longer needed and would disappear.

Pauls emphasis is that JESUS is a much better high priest; has a far greater covenant to offer; and this has all been approved by the God that the Hebrews have served for centuries. The point Paul is making is, why revert to the old covenant when you have something far better in Jesus Christ!!

COMMENTARY

Hebrews Chapter 9:

vs. 1-10

Paul has been dealing with the priesthood that was set up under the first covenant. He now moves on to the area where they serve. The tabernacle was a large tent-like structure that was surrounded by a large curtain fence that outlined the courtyard. The Tabernacle was set up into two parts. The section to the east was called the "Holy Place". The other section was called the "Most Holy Place" or the "Holy of Holies". More about the tabernacle can be learned from Exodus 36-38,40. The NIV incorrectly translates in verse 4. They and some other translations state that the golden altar of incense was in the Holy of Holies. Exodus 40:26,27 shows us that the altar of incense was in front of the veil and not behind it. What is this which Paul is referring to? It is a golden bowl that is referred to in Leviticus 16:12,13.

Paul has set the scene. He now goes onto show how the high priest would enter the Holy of Holies on a yearly basis to offer sacrifices for his sins and the sins of the people. The fact that they could only enter with blood showed that the entrance into God's presence was of what it should be and would be under Jesus Christ.

vs. 11-28

Paul begins in again on how Jesus' priesthood is superior to that of the old covenant. Paul starts off by mentioning that Jesus entered not an earthly tabernacle but the heavenly one. He entered not with the blood of bulls and goats but with His own blood. In so doing He paid the price for the salvation of all mankind. Paul says that the blood and ashes of the animals would sanctify or set apart these people as the people of God (see also Numbers 19:9,10). If these inferior sacrifices could set the people apart unto God then Jesus' superior sacrifice will not only set us apart as the people of God but will remove guilt from our lives and serve God in holiness. Because of Christ's superior sacrifice He is the mediator (one who talks to God on our behalf) of the new agreement between God and men.

Paul shows the necessity of Jesus' death. First He died as a ransom, He paid the price. Not only that, but the new will or testament could only be made effective if one has died. The old covenant was instituted after the shedding of blood (Ex. 24:8) and so was the new. Jesus sanctified the heavenly tabernacle with the blood of His superior sacrifice.

Jesus had to offer His sacrifice only one time, just as man is destined to die once and face the judgement. In the same way He will re-appear and those who have a part in the new covenant will receive salvation from Him.

STUDY GUIDE

Hebrews 7:

1. To whom did Abraham give a tithe (a tenth) of everything?
2. How was Melchizedek, like the Son of God?
3. How do we know that Melchizedek was great?
4. Who does the law require to collect a tenth from the people?
5. How do we know that perfection could not be earned or obtained through the Levitical priesthood?
6. What must also change when a priesthood is changed?
7. What tribe was Jesus from, and what did Moses say about that tribe regarding the priesthood?
8. Why were the former laws and regulations set aside?
9. Since Jesus lives forever, how does Paul describe His ability to save and why is Jesus able to save in this manner?
10. How is our high priest described in verse 26?
11. How is Jesus different from the other high priests according to verses 27 & 28?

BONUS:

1. Tell all that you can about Melchizedek. Explain how his existence affects you.
2. Support the proposition: "Jesus and His priesthood is superior to the Levitical priesthood". Explain also, why that should be important to you.
3. Why was it vital that Jesus was given the office of high priest by an oath from God?

STUDY GUIDE

Hebrews 8:

1. What is the point of all that Paul said in chapter 7 according to verse 1 of chapter 8?
2. What is every high priest supposed to do?
3. Why was Moses warned about the building of the tabernacle?
4. What of Jesus' is superior to the Levitical high priests? (see vs. 6)
5. Why did God turn away from His people?
6. Where would God put His laws and write His laws under the new covenant?
7. Under the new covenant, who will know God/
8. Under the new covenant, what would God forgive and what would He no longer remember?
9. What did God do by calling this covenant, "NEW"?

BONUS:

1. Why should verses 1 & 2 of this chapter, be exciting to Christians?
2. Why should we as Christians be interested in the construction of the tabernacle in the Old Testament?
3. Describe the New Covenant.
4. Write what you feel are items of value in the new covenant to you & why.

STUDY GUIDE

Hebrews 9:

1. What two things did the first covenant have?
2. What did the ark of the covenant contain?
3. How did the high priest enter the inner room (Holy of Holies)?
4. What were the gifts and sacrifices offered by the priests, not able to do?
5. how did Jesus enter the Most Holy Place?
6. Christ died to set us free from what?
7. What needs to take place for there to be forgiveness?
8. Why has Jesus appeared once for all?
9. What is man destined to do?
10. According to verse 28, why was Christ sacrificed?
11. What will Christ bring at His second appearance for those who are waiting for Him?

BONUS:

1. Explain or diagram the tabernacle and where the various pieces of furniture were.
2. What did the sacrifices under the first covenant accomplish? How is that different from forgiveness of sins?
3. Why does Paul keep referring back to the first covenant if the second one is superior?
4. How does this chapter help you appreciate the new covenant compared to the first covenant?
5. Describe, up to this point in the book of Hebrews, the differences between the old and the new covenant.