

What's My 'Most-High' ...and What's My Priesthood?

Hebrews 7:1-11

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The context & continuation of thought in Heb. 7 ... This thought began back in Heb 4...

Hebrews 4:14-15 *"Since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 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.*

Hebrews 5:8-10 *"Although he was a son, the learned obedience through what he suffered. ⁹ And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him. ¹⁰ being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek."*

THEN... an Excursus— An identifying, a concern, and a warning about their spiritual condition!

Hebrews 5:11 *"About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing."*

Hebrews 5:12 *"For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food."*

THEN... Back to Melchizedek and the Unique Priesthood of Jesus—That is VITALLY Important for them to be able to Survive These Days of Struggle & Suffering!

Hebrews 6:15-20 *And thus Abraham, having patiently waited, obtained the promise. ...¹⁷ So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath, ¹⁸ so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us. ¹⁹ We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, ²⁰ where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.*

THEN... We get an explanation of who Melchizedek is!

Heb 7:1-11

"The way that the author of Hebrews plans to bless you as he teaches you in this chapter is by calling to your remembrance a story that he expects all of his readers already to know. " **Ligon Duncan**, "The Great Melchizedek"

Interacting with BIG & WEIGHTY WORDS!

"The MOST HIGH God"

- **There's was a day of Pluralism and Pantheism!**

- Abraham's day was filled with false gods!
- The 1st Century land was filled with "forces" that were granted "DEITY" status!

"When Paul went to Athens he saw that it was literally filled with images of these divinities (Acts 17:16). The Parthenon of Athena overshadowed everything, but other deities were represented in every public space. There was Aphrodite, the goddess of beauty; Ares, the god of war; Artemis, the goddess of fertility and wealth; Hephaestus, the god of craftsmanship." **Timothy Keller**, "Counterfeit Gods", p. xi

- **Ours is a day of Pluralism and Pantheons!!**

"...Our contemporary society is not fundamentally different from these ancient ones. Each culture is dominated by its own set of idols. Each has its "priesthoods," its totems and rituals. Each one has its shrines--whether office towers, spas and gyms, studios, or stadiums--where sacrifices must be made in order to procure the blessings of the good life and ward off disaster. What are the gods of beauty, power, money, and achievement but these same things that have assumed mythic proportions in our individual lives and in our society? We may not physically kneel before the statue of Aphrodite, but many young women today are driven into depression and eating disorders by an obsessive concern over their body image. We may not actually burn incense to Artemis, but when money and career are raised to cosmic proportions, we perform a kind of child sacrifice, neglecting family and community to achieve a higher place in business and gain more wealth and prestige." **Timothy Keller**, "Counterfeit Gods", p. xii

Abraham (and the Hebrews ...and us)—NEED a Reference Point for "MOST-High God!!!"

Genesis 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.

...The Human Heart NEEDS an Awareness that Life has an ULTIMATE SOURCE! ...Here - God is:

- **the "Possessor of heaven and earth"**
- **HE... determines the events of life on earth!**
- **"EVERYTHING" is His!**

PRIESTS

...This is a Critical Concept (that if unknown by us will make us ignorantly invent a false religion!!)

- **"Priesthood" SCREAMS that there is some type of "Difference & Disconnect" between these two parties—Humanity & Deity!!** ...AND that there is some kind of "Deficiency" that Man Brings in Approaching These Higher Powers!
- **Priesthood gets informed by an understanding of "Righteousness" & "Peace"!** ...Melchizedek is a Revealer of BOTH!

Heb 7:1-2 *For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him,² and to him Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything. He is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then he is also king of Salem, that is, king of peace.*

2 Questions about Our Understanding of "Righteousness & Peace" ...

(1) Are you mindful that there is such a thing as "Righteousness"? ...a concept of "Ultimate-Rightness"!!

(2) Are you mindful that "peace" has to do with things NOT being in a Hostile or Antagonistic Posture? (Ie, something has created "Harmony" where there was once "discord"!!) ...The Bible "Clarifies" this, while modern man tends to "Assume" this.

Consider this "Fundamental Gospel Understanding" —

- Rom 3:10-12 ...21-25
- Rom 5:1, 6-9

- **Priests have to do with ACCESSIBILITY! ...**

“Chapter 7 is the focal point of Hebrews. It concerns the central, the most important, part of Judaism—the priesthood. No sacrifices could be made except by the priest and no forgiveness of sins could be had apart from the sacrifices. Obedience to the law was exceedingly important, but the offering of sacrifices was even more important. And the priesthood was essential for offering them. Consequently, the priesthood was exalted in Judaism.” **John MacArthur**, “Who Was Melchizedek?”

“... to the Jew, the priesthood was very exalted, and the priesthood was very intrinsic to Judaism. The priests really were the ones who connected men with God. And the Latin word for priest is *pontifex*, taken apart and it means bridge builder. The priest was the one who built the bridge from man to God. And to the Jew, the priesthood was really very, very important.” **John MacArthur**, “Melchizedek, a Type of Christ”

What Do You Look to—to “Connect” You to God?

- **Hebrews’ “Hostility” to Priesthoods**

Hebrews 7:11, 18-19 *Now if perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need would there have been for another priest to arise after the order of Melchizedek, rather than one named after the order of Aaron? ¹² For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well. ... ¹⁸ For on the one hand, a former commandment is set aside because of its weakness and uselessness ¹⁹ (for the law made nothing perfect); but on the other hand, a better hope is introduced, through which we draw near to God.*

THIS is a RADICAL—and Uncomfortable Thing to Hear!! ...Can you imagine how this sounds to the “Sincere Jew”??

Beware ...when your approach to God doesn’t Strictly Depend on a Priest of the Order of Melchizedek!!

- Beware when your approaching God is through the “Levitical Priesthood”!
- Beware when your approaching God is through the “Roman Catholic Priesthood”!!

NOTE the Contrast of Christ-Centeredness in Hebrews — **Hebrews 4:14,16** *Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ... ¹⁶ Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

Hebrews 10:19-23 *Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, ²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²² let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. ²³ Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.*

Hebrews 7:19 *(for the law made nothing perfect); but on the other hand, a better hope is introduced, through which we draw near to God.*

... “PERFECT”?? Who said anyone needed to be considered “Perfect”??—GOD DID! ...THIS is related to those 2 concepts—“Righteousness” & “Peace” ...How Does One Gain “Right-Standing” & “Harmony” with the Perfect/Holy God? ...ONLY through the Priesthood of Jesus Christ!