



A NEW AND BETTER WAY



A STUDY IN HEBREWS

WEEK THREE: THE MINISTRY OF JESUS

Read Hebrews 4:14-5:10

“This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same temptations as we do, yet he did not sin”. (NLT)

When we look at these verses, we can see how much better the ministry of Jesus compared with the Old Testament high priests.

“Every high priest is a man chosen to represent other people in their dealings with God. He presents their gifts to God and offers sacrifices for their sins. And he is able to deal gently with ignorant and wayward people **because he himself is subject to the same weaknesses. That is why he must offer sacrifices for his own sins as well as theirs.**” (5:1-2)

The old covenant made clear that you didn't become a high priest because you rather liked the idea, you had to be called of God as was Aaron. You had to be of the line of Aaron. Chapter 5 explains that Jesus didn't exalt himself to become High Priest but he was chosen by God.

- Do we understand that God has called us?

The following verses tell us something of our calling: *1 Corinthians 7:17, Ephesians 4:1-6, 1 Peter 2:9, 1 Peter 4:10-11*

- Notice what it says in 1 Peter 2:9. Peter was writing to Christians in Asia Minor who felt rejection because of their obedience to Christ. Are there times when you feel rejected by friends or family because of your Christian faith?
- Do you appreciate how special you are to God?
- 1 Peter 4:10 tells us to use our gifts to serve others. Why is that important?

Read *Philippians 2:5-8*

- Do we appreciate all Jesus has done for us?

Read *Hebrews Chapter 7*

In verse 20 of chapter 6 we read “*Jesus...He has become our eternal High Priest in the line of Melchizedek.*”

I found the online website ***Insight for Living Ministries*** which sets out such a clear explanation, I decided to use it in its entirety:

Few persons in the Bible are shrouded in more mystery than Melchizedek, king of Salem. After the battle against the five kings in [Genesis 14:17](#), Melchizedek stepped into the narrative as if out of nowhere . . . then vanished again. We know nothing of his ancestry, his family, or his exploits. All we know is that he was the ruler of nearby Salem—the city that would one day be called “Jerusalem”—and that he was called “priest of God Most High ([Genesis 14:18](#)). When Melchizedek met Abram after his victory, the king came with bread and wine in his hands and a blessing on his lips.

Centuries later, after the coming of Christ, the author of Hebrews looked at the account of Melchizedek and drew a number of analogies between him and the ultimate High Priest and King of Jerusalem, Jesus. The book of Hebrews doesn’t say that Melchizedek was literally the Son of God making a cameo appearance. Rather, the author drew parallels between the two figures, suggesting that what Melchizedek was literarily, Jesus Christ is literally. The cue for this parallelism came from [Psalm 110:4](#), in which the Davidic Messiah was called “a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek.” Consider these analogies from [Hebrews 7:1-3](#) that teach us about our Great High Priest, Jesus Christ.

Literally Melchizedek was ...	Literally Jesus was ...
A priest outside the Levitical priesthood, therefore not a minister of the Law of Moses, which came much later	The ultimate priest outside the Levitical priesthood, therefore not a minister of the Law of Moses, which He fulfilled
A “king of righteousness” according to a translation of his name	The “king of righteousness” because He purchased righteousness for us on the cross
A “king of peace,” as <i>Salem</i> means “peace”	The Prince of Peace, who will one day bring a kingdom of universal peace
Without a record of parents, having neither his beginning nor end recorded in Scripture	The eternal Son of God, having neither beginning nor end, eternally one with the Father and the Holy Spirit as God the Son

Though not obvious to Abram at the time, the mysterious priesthood of Melchizedek pointed forward to the eternal priesthood of Jesus Christ, who ministers grace and mercy to us based on His own sacrifice for our sins ([Hebrews 7:11-28](#)).

It is an interesting comparison to that of Aaron, whose priestly ministry was based on keeping all aspects of the law, with serious punishment for those who failed to do so. We read about Melchizedek first in Genesis 14:17-19.

“After Abram returned from his victory over Kedorlaomer and all his allies, the king of Sodom went out to meet him in the valley of Shaveh (that is, the King’s Valley). And Melchizedek, the king of Salem and a priest of God Most High, brought Abram some bread and wine. Melchizedek blessed Abram with this blessing: “Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth.”

We often refer to things or events in the Old Testament as shadows, or types, of Jesus. In Leviticus 16 we read that on the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur, Aaron, as high priest, was to choose two goats. One would be for a sacrifice and on the other, Aaron would lay both his hands on the head of the goat and confess over it all the sins and rebellion of the Israelites. The goat would then be taken out into the wilderness and set free, figuratively taking away the sins of the people.

- Would you be able to explain the significance of the scapegoat?

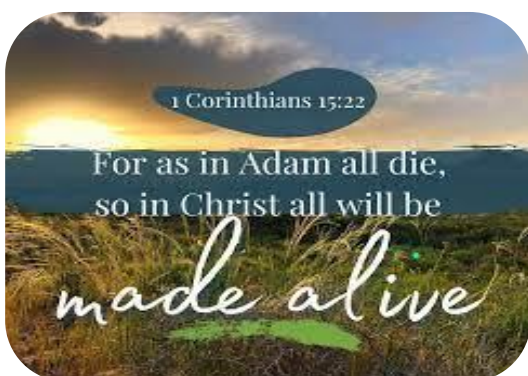
Another shadow or type is that of Adam. *1 Corinthians 15:22* tells us that: *For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. ... Just as everyone dies because we all belong to Adam, everyone who belongs to Christ will be made alive.*

- What are the similarities and differences between Adam and Jesus Christ.
- John Henry Newman wrote the hymn *Praise to the Holiest in the heights*. The second verse reads:

O loving wisdom of our God! When all was sin and shame,
A second Adam to the fight and to the rescue came.

- How does this demonstrate God’s love for us?

So, let us remind ourselves of our opening scripture, that Jesus is our great High Priest as this is essential in his sacrifice on our behalf. *Hebrews 5:7-9* *“During the days of Jesus’ life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered and once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.”* (NIV)



Prayer

Father, help us in our daily walk to remember that we are made alive in Christ, through his great sacrifice.