

Let Us Go on - Part 3

by Roy Hession

The sermon explores the transition from understanding Jesus as a sympathetic friend to recognizing Him as the ultimate high priest in the order of Melchizedek.

Duration: 47:42

Scripture: Hebrews 1:1-5

Topics: "Perfection"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins by emphasizing the exalted stature of God and how He has spoken to humanity throughout history. He highlights the importance of Jesus as the Son of God and the one who upholds all things by the word of His power. The preacher then discusses the first appearance of Jesus in the story of Abraham and his nephew Lot. He explains how compromising with the world can lead to involvement in its troubles and calamities. The sermon also delves into the sacrificial setup in Israel and how Jesus fulfills and surpasses the role of the priests in bringing salvation. The preacher uses the analogy of a stage and a shadow to illustrate the significance of Jesus as the substance and fulfillment of the foreshadowing in the Old Testament.

Transcript

The people of Israel were forbidden to enter into what God calls, my rest. And in chapter 4, the apostle is at pains to tell us that that rest which they did not enter into is still available for believers today. We haven't time to go further into it than that, to follow his very interesting and somewhat intricate argument, but he comes to the conclusion in verse 9, there remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

The rest that Israel wouldn't enter into because of unbelief is a type and picture of a rest which God has got for the believer. And all we can say that is in verse 10, it is indicated, he that has entered into his rest, he also has ceased from his own works as God did from his. God has done two great works.

The work of creation, and when it was completed and seemed to be very good, he rested, he was satisfied. But then that rest was disturbed by sin, and God who had rested began to stand up again and begin to work. The Lord Jesus said, my father worketh, hitherto and I work, no work for God, while sin is not fully dealt with.

And so he did another work, the work of redemption in his son. And when he saw that one offering for sin, he said, it's good, very good. And he said, I could rest.

I've done something that perfectly, completely deals with this matter. I don't need to do anything more than what I've done in my son. And he rested with regard to his work of redemption in the same way as he rested with regard to his work of creation.

And the rest that he's won for himself through the blood of Christ is a rest which is open for us. And he that has entered into his rest has ceased from his own works, his own struggles, his own self-reproaches, even as God has rested from his works. Now, we cannot say any more than that on that subject, because we must push on.

But I don't think we shall lack, because we haven't been able to deal with that wonderful picture of Canaan, of rest, because it's going to come out in all the other things that the Apostle will be saying to us as we go on. Now, this morning, we want to think of a second going on. Let us go on from knowing the Lord Jesus as our Aaron to knowing him as our Melchizedek.

Now, at this point, for many of you, that won't mean a thing. But I hope at the end of this morning it will mean something. And I suppose this is the main message of this great epistle.

May God help me to make it simple and helpful. May the Holy Spirit light it all up to us. We must understand what the sacrificial set-up was in Israel.

I call it a set-up, but don't misunderstand me. It was all by divine appointment. God had said that the firstborn of every home were his in a special way, because they all would have been slain on that night in Egypt, but for his intervention through the blood of that lamb.

And therefore he purchased to himself the firstborn of every family. But he couldn't very easily have the firstborn form a body for special service. It wouldn't be very convenient.

So he said, I'm going to take the Levites in lieu of your firstborn. They're going to be your representatives in special service for God. And so the Levites, the tribe of Levi, were set aside for special sacred service on behalf of Israel in a way that nobody else was.

And their special business was to take care of that tabernacle in the wilderness. And later when they got into the Promised Land and built the temple, they were the caretakers and the maintenance men and the doers of what was done in and around the temple. In the wilderness they were the ones who carried the various parts of the temple and the like.

That was the tribe of Levi, the Levites. They also were responsible for teaching people the law of God. Out from within the Levites there was another group, the sons and family of Aaron.

And they were to be priests. One stage further in, they were priests. And theirs was the privilege and responsibility of offering the sacrifices for the people on behalf of God.

When an Israelite sinned, he came and laid his hand upon the goat and confessed his sin and he killed the lamb or the goat, and the priest would sprinkle the blood upon the altar. He would offer it and so on, and burn its flesh. And he would have access into the holy place.

He'd offer the showbread and much else, the seat and the candlesticks and all the various pieces of furniture in that first partition, the holy place. They had certain privileges. They were able to eat the sacrifices that were given by Israel and so on.

That was the next circle. But then there was an inner circle composed of just one man, and he was the high priest. The Levites, the priests, the family of Aaron, and the high priest himself, who was Aaron himself in his lifetime, and his elders normally right the way through.

And with regard to his privileges and responsibilities, there were many, but chief of which was, he was the one who was allowed to go into the Holy of Holies just once in the year. They could all go, the priests could, not the Levites, not the Levites, into the holy place. They had to every day, attending to things.

But beyond that veil that obscured that Holy of Holies, which pictured the immediate presence of God, only the high priest could go. And then only once in the year, on that great day of atonement related to us in Leviticus 16. You may know the incidents, how on that great day they got two goats, they cast lots between them.

One was to be the scapegoat, and the other the bear to die. And they would confess the national sins upon the head of the scapegoat, take it away and lose it in the wilderness, typifying their sins being forgiven, and they were to kill the other goat. And with the blood of that goat, once in the year, he was able to part the veil that hid that sacred place, in which was the base of that pillar of cloud and fire, filling it with an unearthly light.

He'd go in with incense that he might cover himself, with a cloud of incense before the face of God, and with his finger he would sprinkle the blood upon the mercy seat. Well, there's much meaning in that, and we shall look at that another morning. Now that was the high priest.

And his business was to represent man to God. That was his business. Chapter 5, verse 1, it says, Every high priest, taken from among men, is ordained for men in things pertaining to God that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices.

And of course, he was at the very apex of this sacrificial hierarchy. Now, the purpose why God gave him this elaborate ritual and hierarchy was, of course, to typify and foreshadow the Lord Jesus Christ and his work of redemption for men. He was preparing his people for things that they wouldn't otherwise understand.

Indeed, he was giving them a vocabulary beforehand. You can see that that was so, because John used the vocabulary which was made ready for the moment. He said, Behold the Lamb of God that beareth away the sins of the world.

Well, for Gentile Christians, and even for the man of the street, that doesn't mean a thing. But it did for Jews. They'd been offering lambs all down their century, but never feeling quite that their sins were really taken away.

Now, says John, this is the Lamb, not man's Lamb, God's, who really does the work. And so it is, with all this Old Testament ritual, it was to give them a vocabulary, or rather to give himself a vocabulary in which to express things which otherwise would be difficult to express. And that's the reason why we need to soak ourselves in our Old Testaments, because otherwise we shall not understand our New Testaments.

You cannot divide one from the other. The old provides a vocabulary for the new, and there's nothing for it, my dear young Christian, you've got to be a Bible student. That housewife has nothing for it.

You've got to know your Bible. Well, everybody else knows, studies books. This is our Bible, from now to the rest of our days.

And what a delightful, thrilling book it is when the Holy Ghost lights it up. Oh, we ought to love, love our Bibles, and thank God that between these covers we've got this amazing revelation from heaven. Now, this is written to Jews who believe on the Lord Jesus, but there were tricks in between, as we saw.

Some of them were even priests going on with these sacrifices. And they did not clearly see, I'm quite sure, what we are beginning to see now, that this high priest and his work was typifying and foreshadowing the greater work of the greater high priest, the Lord Jesus Christ. They didn't see clearly that he had, so to speak, swept aside all those Old Testament sacrifices and Old Testament priesthood, fulfilling them all and eclipsing them all in himself, and leaving believers today not with a complicated ritual, but just with himself in whom everything is fulfilled.

They did not see it. And they weren't really seeing his work to be what it really was, and they were not in the fullness of his blessing as a result. They weren't even responding to the moral demands that that would make upon them.

And so, his great purpose in this epistle is to show just that, that these priests typified Jesus, and that in Jesus they're all done away and finished with because now that we've got the substance, we don't need the shadow. I always think this question of foreshadowings is helpfully illustrated by a stage. In the wings, they're standing the principal actor.

In a moment or two, he's coming onto the centre of the stage. There's a light behind him, we're going to suppose, and this light casts a shadow, his outline on the stage beforehand. Maybe it's a very critical moment in the story, and here he is about to come, and the audience are all watching this shadow, very interested in this shadow.

This is the moment for which the whole story has been heading up, and they watch the shadow. And you can gather quite a bit about the shadow. You can see the sort of hat he's got on.

You can see he's got a sword or something. And they get quite a picture. But once he himself comes on the scene, you don't need the shadow.

And these are foreshadowings of Jesus, what wonderful foreshadowings. In fact, I confess I find some things in the old about Jesus that aren't so clearly revealed in the new. We need both.

But when we've got the substance, the Lord himself, then we don't need to hang on to and go on with the rituals and sacrifices of the Old Testament. Well, of course, we aren't in danger of that, because we live in an age so much later, but they were. And he wanted to show them that, and that is the great purpose of this epistle.

And so he begins by bringing in this thought that the Lord Jesus is their high priest. He begins by speaking of himself in all his exalted stature. Chapter 1, verse 1. God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the ages, by whom also he made the reaches of space and the ages of time.

What a Lord this is, who being the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person and upholding all things by the word of his power, he is at pains to show us how mighty is our Lord Jesus, when he had by himself purged our sins. What a terrible thing sin must be if it occasioned its debt to be paid only by the actual person of such a Lord, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high, being so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. And then he's at pains to show us and to prove that this Lord Jesus is so much better than the angels.

Then he goes on to tell us in chapter 2 that this one who is so much higher than the angels for our sakes became a little lower than the angels. But we see Jesus, verse 9, who was made a little lower than the angels voluntarily for the suffering of death, now crowned with glory and honour, that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. He who passed the angels in his great descent has passed them again in his glorious ascent.

But then he's at pains to develop this thought about him becoming a little lower than the angels. And he shows us it wasn't quite so little, though. He came right down to man's level.

Verse 11, For both he that sanctify, that's Jesus, and they who are sanctified, that's us, are all of one, all of the same Father, and he has come down to the same position as ourselves, for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren. And then there's some Old Testament references to show this. I will declare thy name unto my brethren.

In the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. Again I will put my trust in thee, and again behold I and the children which God hath given me. He became a brother among brethren.

He became a worshipper among worshippers. He became a believer among believers. He became a child among children.

That summarizes the meaning of those Old Testament references. Verse 14, For as much then as the children are partakers of failing flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same humanity with its weaknesses and sorrows, and even made himself liable to death, and went through death, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil. And he destroyed him because that which gives the devil his authority over the human race is sin.

The devil was, so to speak, the jailer. But Jesus cancelled our sins, and the jailer has no further hold over us, and so on. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham.

And this great coming down, this taking upon himself of our flesh and blood, with all our limitations and weaknesses, was in order to qualify him to be our, and those Hebrews, high priest. Now this is the first introduction to the epistle of this thought. Wherefore, verse 17, In all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

For in that he himself suffered being tempted, and he did so grievously, he is able also to suffer them that are tempted. And so he tells those people that just as they've had an earthly high priest, here is the true high priest. And he isn't someone way up that doesn't know our conditions, he's identified himself with the deepest, in the deepest way possible, with our poor humanity.

And therefore his is not the saviour with the big stick, he's sympathetic to all the troubles and trials and failures of men. For he knew what temptation was. Although he never knew it, he knew the strain and stress and distress.

And he's our sympathetic high priest. And in that he compares with Aaron, because that's how God arranged it in Old Testament times. A high priest was to be a mere man.

Chapter 5, verse 1, For every priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sin. Listen, who can have compassion on the ignorant, the erring? You can make an awful lot of mistakes in this mosaic law, you have to really know something to keep it all. And oh, they stumbled and failed so awful.

Well, he said, I do too, as a matter of fact, I can't keep track of it all either. You see, he had compassion on the erring, and of course also on the erring morally too. He said, yes, I have my moments.

I have my moments when I fail. And so it was to be a man from among men who can have compassion on the ignorant and on them that are out of the way, for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity. His business, I say again, was to represent man to God.

But he was to be a man who could be sympathetic and adequately bring the needs of the people to God. And by reason hereof he ought, as for himself, to offer to himself to offer the sins. And so the Lord Jesus was made man, identified with us, that he might truly be a high priest in the same way that Aaron was.

Verse 7 tells us of this identification with us in our troubles. Verse 7, who in the days of his flesh, when he offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears, and to him that was able to save him from death and was heard within that he feared, though he were a son, and such a son, yet learned he obedience. Learned he what obedience was like.

By the things that he suffered, he had to bow his will to things that God ordained, far more severe than that you've ever had to bow to. Oh, he learned obedience. And being made perfect, he became the author of salvation to all them that obey him.

Do you know he had fellowship with you in your tears and mine? He knew the fellowship of unanswered prayer. Or perhaps I'm not right in saying it. He offered prayers and strong crying to him that was able to save him from death.

He did. He did shrink from the cross in the natural. It cost him as much, and much more than it would have cost you.

He said, if it be possible, let it not be, Lord, but if it's your will, I'm willing. Oh, it cost him something. And he was heard.

And the answer was no. Do you know the pain and sorrow of God's answer, no? When you pray for a loved one, when you pray for the raising up of one that you love so much, and the answer is no? He had fellowship with you in that. There's nothing in which he's not been identified with his people.

And so, just as Aaron was compassed about with infirmity, so has been our Lord Jesus. And so, in a sense, he fulfills the picture given by Aaron. And maybe the people to whom Paul was writing, sort of saw that.

They knew him as their Aaron, in that way. They knew him as their friend, their sympathetic one, who could help them in their troubles, succor them in their temptation. But apparently they only knew him as their Aaron.

And we can know him in the same way, so to speak, only as our Aaron, only as our friend, only as our sympathetic friend. There's not a friend like the lowly Jesus. No, not one.

Was there a friend so meek and lowly? No, not one. And you know that him, who can heal all our soul's disease. And we do, perhaps, have some conception of him as that, right down by our side, sympathetic with our infirmity, to whom we can take our tears.

It helps to think that he passed this way as we have, that he had fellowship even in that know that comes to us from heaven sometimes. Wonderful. But we may only know him as such.

Knowing him only as a friend, who's partaken of our humanity, and who helps us. We may know somewhat that he died for us, but it's a bit shadowy. The full meaning of that, in its full power, is only intermittent in our lives.

A bit vague. We aren't really right there, but we know him only as our Aaron. Now, says the apostle, I want you to go on.

I want you to go on from knowing him as your Aaron. This blessed one has come down right alongside of us to help and succour us in our temptations, to knowing him as something else. And so he says, 5 verse 9, and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him, called of God and high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

Now, here we come to it. I want you to know Jesus as our high priest, not after the order of Aaron, that's not enough, but after the order of Melchizedek. Once again, that may not mean a thing to you, but we're going to look into it.

Now, when the apostle started writing to these people about Jesus being their high priest, they would find a difficulty. I don't understand that, they would say, but we've got a high priest, we venerate our high priest, he does a lot for us. Do we need another high priest? And the apostle anticipates that difficulty in chapter 7, verses 13 and 14.

He of whom these things are spoken, that's Jesus, prostrateth to another tribe of which... Please turn the cassette over now, do not fast-wind it in either direction. He of whom these things are spoken, that's Jesus, prostrateth to another tribe of which no man gave attendance at the altar, for it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah, of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. The priest came from the tribe of Levi, and of the family of Aaron.

But this one, they say, of whom you speak, he isn't of that tribe at all. He's of Judah. How can he be a priest? He can't trace his genealogy back to Aaron.

And then in chapter 8, verse 4, he anticipates the same difficulty. If he were on earth, he would not be a priest, seeing there are priests that offer gifts according to the law. They've got priests.

And merely to say that Jesus is their high priest, wouldn't carry them. It's all right for us because we're not wedded to a priesthood, but they were. And so he has to tell them, he is a high priest, but of a different

order altogether.

An order infinitely superior to that of Aaron. And so he says he's a high priest, called of God, after the order of Melchizedek. And he shows us that this order of priests, the order of Melchizedek, utterly eclipsed, and they would have to admit it, the order of Aaron.

Well now, who was Melchizedek? Maybe some of us never even heard of him. Well, he appears only three times, very briefly, in Scripture. His first appearance is in Genesis 14.

Genesis chapter 14. And this is in the story of Abraham. You remember that Abraham's nephew Lot separated himself from Abraham, and he compromised, and he went and lived in the sinful city of Sodom.

And when Sodom was attacked by her enemies, and many of them taken captive, Lot was taken captive too. If you compromise with the world, you get involved in the troubles of the world, and the calamities of the world, in a way you wouldn't have been if you were standing right outside. Remember there was some great financier threw himself out of an airplane over the Atlantic, and the shares in which he was involved went down like that.

They were the booming shares. Everybody was buying them, selling out again, buying, selling, making money. It didn't bother me.

I hadn't got any money, and I don't think I'd been very interested to go into that, but a friend of mine who was a believer, he was doing it. And my, he suffered. He was involved in the overthrow of Sodom.

So was Lot. But Abraham, the separated man, he realized this was the situation, and he gathered his men together, and with the help of the Lord, he rescued those captives, rescued even those of Sodom, and above all, Lot. Genesis 14, verse 17.

And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedor Laoma, and of the kings that were with him at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale. And Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine, and he was a priest of the Most High God. And he blessed him and said, Blessed be Abraham of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth, and blessed be the Most High God, which hath delivered thy enemies into thine hand.

And he gave him, as Abraham gave him, tithes of all, of all the spoils. Now where he was, who he was, we don't know. Never heard of him before.

Extraordinary thing was that in this heathen darkness, here was a priest, not of idols or heathen religions, but a priest of the Most High God. And Abraham was a worshipper of such. And when Abraham came back, this priest blessed him.

And Abraham, in token of his superiority to himself, gave him a tithe of all the spoils that he possessed. That's the incident. That's the first reference.

The second reference is in Psalm 110. And this psalm is very obviously a Messianic psalm. Do you know what that means? A psalm that prophesies Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The first verse settles that quite conclusively for us. The Lord said unto my Lord, sit at my right hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool. Have you seen in your Bible, Lord, the first L-O-R-D, all capitals? Always know this, where you see Lord, all in capitals, in the Hebrew it means Jehovah.

The second Lord isn't all in capitals. It just means master. And so it really means Jehovah said unto my Lord, my boss, my master, sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

And you remember the use the Lord made of the scripture? He said to the Pharisees, what think ye of Messiah? Whose son is he? They said he's the son of David. How does David, if he's his son, call him his Lord? Referring to this. They couldn't answer.

Well, of course, Jesus is David's son, but he's more. He's David's Lord. So this is Messianic.

And then verse four you have this second reference to Melchizedek. The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, thou, referring to Messiah, art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek, referring to this isolated incident in Genesis 14. You're that sort of priest.

And then the third reference, or references, is in Hebrews. And Paul takes up that passage in Psalm 110, and he loathes it. It becomes the great tool of his exposition.

He repeats it from different angles again and again. And so Paul says to those people, you ask me how Jesus can be a priest when he doesn't belong to the priestly tribe? He can't be traced to Aaron. He's a priest of another order altogether.

Even your own scriptures say so, that Messiah is to be a priest after the order of Melchizedek. And then he's at pains to show that this order of priests is infinitely superior and eclipses the order of Aaron. Now, the Apostle Paul in Hebrews uses this quotation from Psalm 110 four times, and on each occasion from a different angle, emphasizing a different word in the quotation.

And I want us to look at these four references in the time that remains. The first is in chapter 5, verse 6, the reference which we have already pointed to. Jesus is called of God and high priest after the order.

I'm sorry, the first is in chapter 5, verse 6. And we must get the context. Verse 4. No man taketh this honor unto himself of being a priest, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified him, not himself to be made a high priest.

But he that said unto him, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee. And then he quotes for the first time this scripture to show that Jesus is a priest not by exalting himself and saying, I'm going to be a priest. He's a priest by God's appointment.

And he quotes for the first time this scripture, Thou art a priest. Who's saying it? Jehovah to Messiah, Thou art a priest. Forever after the order of Melchizedek.

That's the first reference. I think that's helpful, especially when we come to see what he does as priest, that God's appointed him as such. We sometimes get the impression that Jesus, through the cross, had to persuade an unwilling God to be gracious to us.

Far from it. It was a gracious God who said, I'm going to have a priest for men. A priest who adequately deals not only with their troubles but with their sins.

And Jesus is my priest by God's appointment. He hasn't got to persuade an unwilling God. He's not unwilling.

Who gave him? Who appointed him? Who sent him down to become so identified with us? Who asked him to offer himself on that cross? It was God. What an encouragement. He's called of God a priest.

God has given me a priest to stand to its man and God for my relief and blessing and reconciliation. Well, that's the first one. The second is in the same chapter, the one I made a mistake about.

Verse 10. Called of God, a high priest after the order of Melchizedek. Now, in the first reference, what are the words which are emphasized? Thou art a priest.

I'm calling you to be such. But now he's emphasizing after the order of Melchizedek. And for quite a time afterwards, he develops what he means.

In other words, you're after an infinitely superior order of priests. And this is the thing he's really getting to in this epistle. Of whom we have many things to say and hard to be understood, seeing you're dull of hearing.

And then he goes on to that passage. You're children still. Can he take milk? Can't take meat.

So apparently, this is the heart of it. And I hope we shall find it to be the heart. That Jesus is a priest, yes, but a priest after the order of Melchizedek.

First of all, he shows us how Melchizedek is indeed a type and foreshadowing of the Lord Jesus. Chapter 7. For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham, returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him, to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being by interpretation king of righteousness, and after that also king of Salem, which is king of peace, without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God, abideth a priest continually. He says two things about this priest that typify the Lord Jesus.

His name. Melchizedek apparently means king of righteousness. It's Hebrew for king of righteousness.

He was also king of Salem, which means king of peace. King of righteousness, king of peace. Can righteousness and peace go together? If he's a king of righteousness, he must condemn the sinner.

No peace for the sinner. But the amazing thing is that in Jesus you've got a blessed reconciliation of righteousness and peace. In him, righteousness and peace have kissed each other, as it says in the Psalms.

How is that possible? Do you know that old hymn about the cross of Jesus? And it says about the cross of Jesus, O Christing place, where heaven's love and heaven's justice meet. Have you seen the cross in that night yet? It was the gift of heaven's love, but heaven's justice was utterly satisfied in him who died the just for the unjust, so that now God can be just, not wink at sin. And yet the justifier, the him that believeth in Jesus.

Sin has received its due reward in the most dreadful manner possible in him. Righteousness has been satisfied that peace might come to the sinner. And then it also says that he had no genealogy.

It didn't really mean that he hadn't got a mother or father, but there's no reference to it. And genealogies are very important in the Old Testament, as you know. You get masses of them, especially when it comes to priests.

There's no genealogy given of this man. Where he comes from, we don't know. And in that way, he's like the Son of God, who's from heaven.

He had an earthly genealogy, but that's only earthly. He's endless, having neither beginning nor end. Eternal.

And so Melchizedek is like the Lord Jesus in those matters, he says. But then the real thing he's concerned to say is that this priest, Melchizedek, and Jesus, who's after that order, is better than Aaron. And he says two things here.

He says, don't you remember that Melchizedek blessed Abraham, verse 7, and without contradiction, the less is blessed of the better. Therefore, it's obvious that Melchizedek was better, higher, than the patriarch Abraham because he blessed him. And don't you know another thing he said? That Abraham acknowledged that superiority by giving him tithes.

He acknowledged the superiority of this wonderful priest. And don't you understand this? That the Levites received tithes of the people, but in Abraham, they who received tithes of the people, paid them to Melchizedek. And then he has a lovely bit, don't you see, in effect, Levi was still in the loins of his father Abraham.

And when his father Abraham bowed and acknowledged the superiority of Melchizedek by making those tithes, Levi, in effect, was doing the same. That's the argument here in these verses. You can see them there.

And if Jesus is after the order of Melchizedek, it's obviously a superior order to that of Aaron. Then he goes on to say another thing. Verse 11.

If there for perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, for under it the people received the law, what further need was there that another priest should arise after the order of Melchizedek and not after the order of Aaron? See, God said, who's going to be another priest? Messiah's going to be of another order. Well, doesn't that infer that Aaron's order wasn't enough? And the point would have been very much realized by those Hebrew believers. And not only was the priesthood changed, but the law was changed too.

And in the mere fact that God said, thou art a priest after the order of Melchizedek, he meant that the old one was going to pass away and this was going to be established, a better priesthood on better promises. 722. By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better covenant.

What is a surety? A surety is one who sees that covenant obligations are fulfilled and if they are not, he has to bear the responsibility. Right? That's what a surety is. That's what a sponsor is.

You'd be very careful before you become a surety for somebody else. You're smart for it. Proverbs says that.

If the other fellow fails, you've got it. And that's what's happened. We've failed.

But we've got a surety who bears the responsibility of our failure to keep the obligations of the covenant. And he bore that obligation in his blood upon the tree. And this priest, not only is he a better priest, not only is there a better covenant, we shall think about that tomorrow, I hope, but it's based on better

sacrifices.

Chapter 7, verse 7. This priest, after the order of Melchizedek, he needed not daily as those high priests to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins and then for the people's. For this he did once for all when he offered up himself. And look again to what the Scripture says about this great sacrifice that this high priest, after the order of Melchizedek, has done.

Chapter 10, verse 11 and 12. Talking about Aaron's priests, every priest standeth, emphasis on standeth, daily, ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifice that can never take away sins. But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God.

They were always standing. Their work never finished. Always had to repeat the old sins of the nation as they came to the Day of Atonement.

It wasn't really taken away. But this man, one sacrifice, and that himself on Calvary's cross was utterly enough. And as a token of the fact that it was enough, he could sit down.

They were standing, he could sit down. Which means that you can sit down too. Some of us are standing, trying to do this, trying to do the other, to become a better Christian, to become a Christian at all.

And then having become one, to become a better Christian. If you can make promises, if you can do something more, if you can attain more, that'll make you a better Christian, you'll get more peace, you'll do nothing of the sort because you won't be able to become a better Christian. Most of us think that the full blessing of God depends on us becoming that little bit better.

But it's becoming that little bit better that always defeats you. You're always standing, always struggling, always hoping. But this man has dealt with the only thing that matters between you and God, your sins, dealt with it so sufficiently to say, now, I can sit down, I can rest.

And he said, dear one, you can rest. If my sacrifice for the sins of the whole world is enough for God, and he showed it was enough and that he raised me from the dead, isn't it enough for you? If he's satisfied, can't you be? If he's prepared to accept my blood as your righteousness, can't you be? If all he wants you to do is to admit the whole truth of what you are and come to the Son, and then he counts you righteous, isn't that enough? He's sat down, but we aren't. Never sure, never at rest, never say, I really found the answer.

Oh, this wonderful high priest after the order of Melchizedek. The third reference, we must hurry, the third reference is in chapter 7, 23. 7, verse 17.

The first was, thou art a priest, by divine appointment. God's given him for us. Secondly, thou art a priest after the order of Melchizedek.

Oh, so much better than Aaron's, this wonderful sacrifice he's offered. The third is in verse 17, thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. The emphasis on forever, forever.

And then he goes on to say what he means, verse 23, and they truly were many priests because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death, but this man, because he continues ever, has an unchangeable priesthood. He's always there. His operations are not on earth.

In heaven, in the presence of God for me, always there. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth, always there on our behalf, making intercession for us. Will you turn to 9, 24.

Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us. When it says that Jesus is making intercession for us in heaven, does it mean he's praying? Please, Lord, please, Lord, spare that man, spare that man. I don't think so.

I can only give you my opinion. The mere fact he's in heaven at all is his intercession. It's a miracle he ever is in heaven.

Don't forget that. He took our sins and our sorrows. He bore our judgments.

God left him on the cross. It was the justest thing God ever did to forsake his son upon that cross. He wasn't forsaking his son so much as the one whose likeness the sun was wearing, mine.

That's what I deserved. Sin separates. It separates him from God.

How is it that he's back in glory then? Heaven should be shut against him because he took more sins than I've got. He took everybody's sins. He was the epitome of sin.

And yet he's back in glory. He was brought again from the dead and went back into glory, we're told, by the blood of the everlasting covenant. So great was the value of that blood that he cancelled out all the sins for which he stood short.

And the presence of the Lord Jesus in glory is evidence of the fact there's power, wonder-working power in the blood of the Lord Jesus. If Jesus can get there by his blood, I can. For he had more on him than I had.

But the blood that he shed availed first of all for him. He should have been in the grave to this day if that sacrifice wasn't enough. But it was, there was power in the blood.

And Hebrews 13, we'll look at it later, raised him from the dead. And in Hebrews 9 we see it was by the blood that he entered into heaven. And the fact he's there is my guarantee.

The fainter though I be, God looks on him and pardons me. My name is written on his hands, my name is written on his heart. I know that while in heaven he stands, no tongue can bid me thence depart.

He's a high priest forever. That sacrifice once made avails forever. I can go to him at any time and know the worst about me was anticipated and settled in him before I ever committed it.

A high priest forever. Mine. I've got a friend at court.

A friend at court. The failure of a feverish sinner, a friend at court. Isn't this an encouragement? Not to go back.

Oh, I fail, I better quit it all. But to go on. You have a high priest.

You've only got to go to him, I don't care what it is. It's enough what he did for you. And down from glory comes not only cleansing, but life more abundant.

Let us pray. Lord Jesus, we've spoken many words this morning. We've had to speak them in perhaps haste but how we thank thee that thou does know how to interpret thy beloved son to us.

Oh, help us to see the heart rest that comes from seeing before the throne of God above. I have a strong, a perfect plea. A great high priest whose name is love who ever lives and pleads above.

Oh Lord, may we know what it is to hand over everything that disturbs us and robs us of peace to this one who's anticipated it all who's our friend at court.

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