

Hebrews 7-11

Chap 7: Jesus is Superior to the Priesthood

The priesthood of Aaron was established by God at the time he gave the Law to Moses. God established that the high priest of Israel would be Aaron and his descendants.

Jesus, in contrast, is a priest “in the order of Melchizedek” (mel-KIZ-a-deck). The little we know about him is found in Gen. 14:18–20. The Hebrew name means “king of righteousness.” Melchizedek was the king of the city of Salem, a name from the same root as the Hebrew for “peace” (shalom). Instead of being a priest because he descended from a priestly line, carefully recorded in scripture, he suddenly appeared in Genesis 14 and then disappeared. As far as the OT narrative is concerned, it shows no end to his priesthood, so in that sense he continues a priest forever (Psalm 110:4). Hebrews treats him as a metaphor, or “type,” a foreshadowing of Christ, of his eternal priesthood which brings true peace.

Chap 8 – 10:18: Atonement of Jesus Superior to the Sacrifices Under the Law

The tabernacle was essentially a tent, with an outer court and inner sacred rooms. A veil separated the two sacred rooms in the Tabernacle – the Holy Place and the *Most* Holy Place. The junior priests entered the Holy Place each day to tend to the altar and make sacrifices on behalf of the people. The *Most* Holy Place is where the Ark of the Covenant was located, over which God’s presence rested. Only the high priest could enter through the veil into the Most Holy Place, and he could do so only on the yearly Day of Atonement, to make atonement for the sins of the nation as a whole.

Daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly offerings were made to atone for sin, including animal sacrifices in which the blood was *sprinkled*. *Hyssop* is a plant with cleansing properties used throughout the OT in connection with cleansing from sin; the first instance was in Exodus, when the Israelites used hyssop to spread the blood on the doorposts so the angel of death would pass over their house. Another cleansing ritual was found in the burnt sacrifice of a *red heifer* without defect, slaughtered outside the camp, and burned with *cedarwood*, *scarlet yarn*, and *hyssop*. The ashes of this offering were mixed with water and *sprinkled* on people and things defiled by contact with death. The entire ritual was a foreshadowing of Christ, killed outside the gate, whose sprinkled blood cleanses from death.

Read: Hebrews 9:13-14. What does this say about our state now that we are saved?

Read Hebrews 9:24-28. What does this say about the once-for-all quality of what Christ has done?

Hebrews says that Jesus’ sacrifice was better than all of these, because it is once-for-all. He is the high priest of the greater and more perfect tent (9:11), true sacrifice (10:10), and the true veil through which we must pass (10:20).

Chap 10:19-39 – Exhortations and Warnings

The second half of Chapter 10 begins another “therefore” in the book of Hebrews. Read vs 19-25.

Notice the poetry: “since __,” “since __,” “let us...”

Read 10:26-31. What attitude is addressed here? Consider Numbers 15:27, 30-31

Read 10:32-39, esp vs 39 – Why is faith important? That verse leads us into Chapter 11.

Chap 11 – The “Hall of Fame of Faith”

vs 1-7 speak of faith and how the people of old received commendation from God. In what ways? Consider how we can show the kind of faith exemplified here? How does our culture call on us to demonstrate a similar faith in God (hint: vs 3, 4, 7) ?

Finally, vs 8-10. Abraham was “the father of all who believe”. How was Abraham’s faith shown?