

THE GREATEST PRIEST

BIBLE TEXT : Hebrews 7:1-28

LESSON 438 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Hebrews 7:1-28

- ¹ For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him;
- ² 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;
- ³ 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.
- ⁴ Now consider how great this man *was*, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils.
- ⁵ And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham:
- ⁶ But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises.
- ⁷ And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better.
- ⁸ And here men that die receive tithes; but there he *receiveth them*, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth.
- ⁹ And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham.
- ¹⁰ For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met

Bible References:

Notes:

There is no way to be saved and made ready for Heaven other than through Jesus Christ. God made the promise to Abraham that through his seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed. That was the promise that Jesus would come to earth to be our Redeemer.

Promise Confirmed

This was a very important promise -- the most important promise that was ever given to man. It was so important that God confirmed it with an oath. And because He could swear by no greater, He swore by Himself (who always was and always will be) that He would do what He promised. Some people make the statement that some certain thing is as sure as the earth itself. But the earth is going to pass away. So if God had sworn by the earth, His promise might have passed away, too.

Abraham did not even have a son or daughter when God promised that Jesus would come through his descendants -- and Abraham was then an old man. But God said, "Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee." That meant that there would be many descendants in his family. And one of those descendants, far down the line of time, would be Jesus. Abraham waited patiently for 25 years before that son was born, but finally the Word of God came to pass!

Promises for Us

We may become rather impatient when our prayers are not answered at once; but if we know what we ask is the will of God, He wants us to keep holding on to the promise, and have faith. There are many promises in the Bible which we can apply to ourselves, such as: "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37); "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11: 28); He will grant unto us, "that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life", (Luke 1:74, 75); "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you" (Acts 1:8); "I am the LORD that healeth thee" (Exodus 15:26). God has promised wonderful rewards to those who overcome: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (Revelation 2:7). "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death" (Revelation 2:11); "To him will I give power over the nations" (Revelation 2:26); ". . . I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name" (Revelation 3:12); and, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Revelation 3:21). We surely can say with the Apostle Paul that we have "obtained promises."

The End of Time

In the day in which we live there is little hope in the world. It

him.

¹¹ If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need *was there* that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?

¹² For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.

¹³ For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar.

¹⁴ For *it is* evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.

¹⁵ And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest,

¹⁶ Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.

¹⁷ For he testifieth, Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

¹⁸ For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof.

¹⁹ For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope *did*; by the which we draw nigh unto God.

²⁰ And inasmuch as not without an oath *he was made priest*:

²¹ (For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:)

²² By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.

²³ And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death:

has been said that we used to speak of time marching on, but now we say that time is running out. Plans for atomic weapons of destruction are so wide-spread that no doubt, today, man is capable of destroying all of mankind. It is only the mercy of God that we have the peace and safety we have. The true Christian, the one who is prepared to meet the Lord, has the glorious hope of being taken out of this world alive when Jesus comes. We do not worry about the wars and rumours of wars, about atomic bombs and missiles. When it is the Lord's time to take His people Home, we will escape the horrors of judgment. That is the hope that is an anchor to our soul.

The Tabernacle Type

When Jesus was crucified, then arose again, He entered into Heaven, the "true Tabernacle." That was entering "through the veil." The expression refers to the Tabernacle worship, which the Israelites observed. The Tabernacle was divided into two compartments; one was the Holy Place in which stood the golden altar of incense, the golden candlestick and the table of shewbread. Dividing the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies (or the Holiest of All) was a curtain woven in one piece. No one was allowed to pass under it into the Holy of Holies except the high priest -- and he only once a year. That place was too sacred for ordinary people to enter. Even if the high priest himself had disobeyed God in any way, he would have died if he had gone in there. That was the place where the Ark of the Covenant, which contained the Ten Commandments, stood. When Jesus died on the Cross, that heavy curtain (or veil) was ripped from the top to the bottom, a picture or illustration that the way into the Holiest of All was now open to all.

In the Old Testament Law were instructions concerning the priests: from what family they were to come; what clothes they must wear; what duties they must perform, and when. All the priests must be descendants of Aaron. In this chapter Jesus is introduced as our High Priest, but He is not a descendant of Aaron. Jesus was made "an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."

Melchisedec

In the 7th chapter of Hebrews we have a little explanation of who Melchisedec was. He lived way back in the time of Abraham, and was king of Salem (or Jerusalem). We know he was a great man, because Abraham paid tithes to him. He was greater than any of the priests of Aaron's family, and Abraham honoured him by giving him a tenth of what he had obtained as spoils in battle. Melchisedec blessed Abraham.

As Abraham was the father of all the Israelites, including the tribe of Levi, Aaron's tribe, it was the same as if the sons of Aaron had paid tithes to Melchisedec. So if Jesus was a priest after the order of Melchisedec, and not one of the descendants of Aaron, He was much better than all the priests under the Law. It made a tremendous change in the priesthood to have Jesus instead of one of Aaron's sons. They had to be replaced from time to time because they grew old and died, and a younger man must take his place. But the Priesthood of Jesus continues forever, because Jesus is alive eternally.

Change in the Law

The Apostle goes on to explain that if we have a new priesthood, we must necessarily have a new law. God gave the Law through Moses to the Children of Israel for a temporary period, until Jesus would come. When Jesus became our better High Priest, we needed a better law for Him to execute.

Throughout the Old Testament history people were looking for

²⁴ But this *man*, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.

²⁵ Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

²⁶ For such an high priest became us, *who is* holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;

²⁷ Who needeth 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, when he offered up himself.

²⁸ For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, *maketh* the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.

QUESTIONS

1. How sure did God make His promise to Abraham?
 2. How long did Abraham wait for the promise to be fulfilled?
 3. Name some promises God has made to us.
 4. What was in the Holy Place in the Tabernacle on earth?
 5. Who alone could enter the Holy of Holies? How often?
 6. From what tribe did the Old Testament priests come?
 7. After what order did Jesus become a Priest?
 8. Give some prophecies concerning the first coming of Jesus.
 9. How are we saved?
- How often did Jesus have to die?

the coming of their Messiah. All the prophets had something to say about His coming, and those prophecies concerning His first coming were all fulfilled when Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Micah predicted about 700 years before Jesus came: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2). When Herod asked the scribes where Jesus was to be born, they found that text in Micah and told Herod that He was to be born in Bethlehem. Yet most of the Jews did not believe in Him.

The prophecy of Jacob, almost 1700 years before, is given in words a little harder to understand, but he said: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be" (Genesis 49:10). Shiloh meant Jesus, and He would come through the tribe of Judah. But, as Paul said, nothing was said in the Law about priests coming from that tribe. So Jesus became a Priest of a different order, that of Melchisedec.

Why did we need another priesthood and another law? If the people could get all they needed to make them ready for Heaven through the Mosaic Law and the priesthood of the sons of Aaron, why was it done away? The Law was given to show people the sinfulness of sin, but no one was saved by any works he could do. It said: "Thou shalt not. . ." But the people could not help but commit sin when they were sinners. They could not obey all the Law without being justified by faith.

Saved by Faith

But people could be saved by faith, as Abraham had been, and as many other Old Testament characters had been. "The just shall live by faith." Those who were saved by faith could keep the Law. Anybody who is born of God, and who with all his heart wants to do the will of God, knows what is right and wrong. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine" (John 7:17).

If you have been saved, and then have a hankering to go back to sinful pleasures and do the things other sinners do, you had better look into your heart to see if you are still saved. If you prefer sinners for your companions to those who are living godly lives, you have lost the love of God out of your heart. "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" (II Corinthians 6:14). If you are serving the Lord you are not interested in the same things as is the one who is serving the devil.

All the animals that were slain as sacrifices at the Tabernacle and Temple pictured what would happen to Jesus when He came. Every day certain sacrifices had to be made; other sacrifices were made only on special occasions -- perhaps only once a year. They had to be offered again and again. When Jesus came, He died once, shedding His Blood, to pay the price of redemption for all sin, and that ended all the sacrifices. Jesus said: "It is finished" (John 19:30). The Plan of Redemption was complete. Once was enough for Him to shed His Blood. He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens" (Hebrews 7:26). The priests who had officiated under the Law were only men who had once committed sins themselves, and had to have their own sins washed away before they could be a help to others. But Jesus never had committed any sins, and did not have to shed Blood for His own sins. He did it all for us. Because Jesus shed His Blood, we can all be made free from sin if we come to Him and accept His way of being saved.