

How Does Melchizedek Point Us to the Need for Jesus?

[Hebrews 7:11-17](#)

Hebrews, Day 23

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? For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well. For the one of whom these things are spoken belonged to another tribe, from which no one has ever served at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests.

This becomes even more evident when another priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek, who has become a priest, not on the basis of a legal requirement concerning bodily descent, but by the power of an indestructible life. For it is witnessed of him,

*“You are a priest forever,
after the order of Melchizedek.”*

- Hebrews 7:11-17, ESV

"If it ain't broke, don't fix it." But what if it is broken?

Why would God bring up Melchizedek in Psalm 110, hundreds of years after the establishment of the Levitical priesthood and the Law of Moses? Why promise a coming Messiah who would be "*priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek,*" when God Himself had established the priesthood of Aaron and his descendants in the Tribe of Levi?

Hebrews 7:11 tells us why: Perfection could never be attained under the Levitical priesthood. Much of the rest of Hebrews will unfold exactly why this is true. The point in this part of Hebrews is this: If the Law of Moses and the Levitical priesthood established under that law, were capable of providing salvation, Psalm 110 would be unnecessary. In other words, if it wasn't broke, God wouldn't have had to fix it.

But would the new promised priest truly be better than the old Levitical priests? Yes, in many ways! This is where the superiority of Melchizedek and the exact nature of the promise given in Psalm 110 become very important. Melchizedek was superior to Levi, to Aaron. He was a king, as well as a priest, and Abraham paid tithes to him.

Yet the promise in Psalm 110 goes beyond the picture of Melchizedek we have in Genesis 14. God promises a Messiah who will be "priest forever." How could anyone be priest forever? Only if He could live forever! So, the promise of the Messiah-Priest in the order of Melchizedek is a promise of One who has an indestructible life, One who will never die.

This promise in Psalm 110 lines up with another famous Messianic promise, in 2 Samuel 7:13-17. Here, God promised David that he would have an offspring whose kingdom would be established forever: "*I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.*"

These promises of an eternal priest and an eternal king come together in Jesus, who is from the Tribe of Judah, a descendant of David. Jesus is made king and priest forever in the glory of His resurrection, by the power of an indestructible life. He is the priest we need, the One who brings the salvation the Levitical priesthood could never achieve.

