

## Toward a Better Understanding of Hebrews 7

Jesus was, and is for ever, High Priest. This was an entirely new doctrine for the Hebrews. Our Lord Himself had made no specific reference to it during the days of His earthly ministry, nor is there any record of it in the preaching of the apostles. Yet the teaching of both One and the others was based upon and assumed this fundamental fact. But now the Holy Spirit was pleased to give a clear unfolding of this precious truth. A.W. Pink

“This,” (the teaching about the old law and priesthood being obsolete) “as we said in an earlier article, “was the hardest thing of all for a Hebrew, even a converted one, to bow to, for it meant repudiating everything that was seen, and cleaving to that which was altogether invisible. It meant forsaking that which their fathers had honored for fifteen hundred years, and espousing that which the great majority of their brethren according to the flesh denounced as Satanic.” From A.W. Pink’s commentary on Hebrews. A. W. Pink

### Verses 1-3<sup>1</sup>

**For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham as he was returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, <sup>2</sup> to whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth part of all the spoils, was first of all, by the translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then also king of Salem, which is king of peace. <sup>3</sup>Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, he remains a priest perpetually.**

AARON	CONTRASTS	MELCHIZEDEK
Had a birth		No record of his birth
Had a father and mother		No record of his parents
Had a genealogy		No record of his genealogy
Record of his death		No record of his death
His priesthood ended and another took his place.		He remains a priest perpetually as his death is not recorded

More remotely the opening “For” of the verse, looks back to Hebrews 5: 10, 11 : he now brings forth the “many things” he had to say to him. A.W. Pink

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## Studies in Grace and Faith Hebrews 7

Only a few commentators believe that Melchizedek was a theophany (a manifestation of God). Most believe that he was a real king and priest during this time-Wuest

Almost endless conjectures have been made as to the identity of Melchizedek. Questions have been raised as to what order of beings he belonged to. Some have insisted that he was a Divine person, others that he was an angel, still others that he was Christ Himself in theophanic manifestation – as when He appeared to Joshua (Josh. 5: 14), or in Babylon's furnace (Dan. 3: 25), etc. Others, allowing that he was only a man, have speculated as to his nationality, family connections, and so on. But as the Holy Spirit has not seen fit to give us any information on these points, we deem it irreverence (Deut. 29: 29) to indulge in any surmises thereon. A.W. Pink

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### Verses 4-7

Now observe how great this man was to whom Abraham, the patriarch, gave a tenth of the choicest spoils. <sup>5</sup>And those indeed of the sons of Levi who receive the priest's office have commandment in the Law to collect a tenth from the people, that is, from their brethren, although these are descended from Abraham. <sup>6</sup>But the one whose genealogy is not traced from them collected a tenth from Abraham and blessed the one who had the promises. <sup>7</sup>But without any dispute the lesser is blessed by the greater. <sup>8</sup>In this case mortal men receive tithes, but in that case one receives them, of whom it is witnessed that he lives on. <sup>9</sup>And, so to speak, through Abraham even Levi, who received tithes, paid tithes, <sup>10</sup>for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.

### Genesis 14:14-29

Now when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his three hundred and eighteen trained servants who were born in his own house, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. <sup>15</sup> He divided his forces against them by night, and he and his servants attacked them and pursued them as far as Hobah, which is north of Damascus. <sup>16</sup> So he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his brother Lot and his goods, as well as the women and the people. <sup>17</sup> And the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley), after his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him. <sup>18</sup> Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. <sup>19</sup> And he blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; <sup>20</sup> And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And he gave him a tithe of all.

Melchizadek was a real king of a real place who provided real food and real drink and praised God Most High. To this real king and priest Abram gave ten percent from the spoils of war. Abraham who had the promises was blessed by him.-Wuest

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## Studies in Grace and Faith Hebrews 7

*The superior greatness of Melchizedek appears in two important respects: he accepted tithes from Abraham and bestowed his blessing on Abraham. F.F. Bruce*

*“To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all” (verse 2). Melchizedek’s “blessing” of Abraham was the exercise of his priesthood; Abraham’s paying him tithes was the recognition of it. A.W. Pink*

COMPARISONS	
MELCHIZADEK	JESUS
“No” beginning	Eternal pre-existence
Lives forever (we don’t know his end)	Lives forevermore
A priest not from Levi	Of the tribe of Judah
Priest of the Most High God	Priest of the Most High God
High Priest to Levi through Abraham	High Priest of all
Served bread and wine	Served bread and wine
King of righteousness	King of righteousness
King of Peace	King of Peace

*Righteousness must go first, and then peace will follow after. This is the uniform order of Scripture wherever the two are mentioned together: peace never precedes righteousness. A.W. Pink*

### ***In Jesus righteousness and peace came together.***

*He came here as the vicarious Representative of His people, being made under the law for them (Gal. 4: 4), obeying the law for them (Matthew 5: 17), and thus wrought out a perfect obedience for them (Rom. 5: 19). Therefore are they made “the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. 5: 21). He also came here to pacify the wrath of God against His people’s sins (Eph. 2: 3) to be a propitiation (Rom. 3: 25), to “make peace through the blood of His cross” A.W. Pink*

### ***Psalm 85:10***

***Lovingkindness and truth have met together;  
Righteousness and peace have kissed each other.***

### ***Was Melchisidek a super human being?***

*Melchizedek is described as having “neither father nor mother, without a genealogy,” and having “neither beginning of days nor end of life,” it is not suggested*

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## Studies in Grace and Faith Hebrews 7

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that he was a biological anomaly, or an angel in human guise. Historically Melchizedek appears to have belonged to a dynasty of priest-kings in which he had both predecessors and successors. If this point had been put to our author, he would have agreed at once, no doubt; but this consideration was foreign to his purpose. The important consideration was the account given of Melchizedek in holy writ; to him the silences of Scripture were as much due to divine inspiration as were its statements. F.F. Bruce

That Melchizedek was not a superhuman creature, a divine or angelic being, is unequivocally established by Hebrews 5:1, where we are expressly told, "For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God." To be possessed of human nature is an essential prerequisite in order for one to occupy and exercise the sacerdotal office. A.W. Pink

Had these statements in verse 3 referred to him as a man, it would surely be quite impossible to understand them. But it is not as man he is referred to, but as priest. Once this is clearly seen and firmly grasped little or no difficulty remains. A.W. Pink

"Without father, without mother, without descent." Now in connection with the Aaronic priesthood, personal genealogy was a vital prerequisite, hence the great care with which they preserved their pedigree: see Ezra 2: 61,62. But, in contradistinction from them, Melchizedek was priest of an order where natural descent was not regarded, an order free from the restrictions of the Levitical, Numbers 3: 10, etc; therefore was he an accurate type of Christ, who belonged not to the tribe of Levi. Neither the book of Genesis, nor any of the later scriptures, say a word about Melchizedek's parentage, and this silence was a part of the type. A.W. Pink

"Having neither beginning of days nor end of life" is to be explained on the same principle. The Jewish priests "began" their "days" as priests at the age of twenty-five, when they were permitted to wait upon their brethren: Numbers 8: 24 and cf. 1 Chronicles 23: 27, 28. At the age of thirty they began their regular priestly duties: Numbers 4: 3. At the age of fifty their priestly "life" ended: "from the age of fifty years they shall cease waiting upon the service, and shall serve no more" (Num. 8: 25). But no such restriction was placed upon the sacerdotal ministry of Melchizedek: so, in this too, he was an eminent type of Christ. A.W. Pink

"Abideth a priest continually" (verse 3). Note carefully it is not that the natural life of Melchizedek had no end, but that his priestly life did not cease at the age of fifty; in other words, he continued a priest to the very end of his earthly existence, which shows he had no vicar or successor, deriving a priesthood from his. "The expression 'abideth a priest continually', therefore, is the equivalent to saying that he had a perpetual priesthood in contradistinction from those whose office terminated at a definite period, or whose office passed over into the hands of others" A.W. Pink

"of whom it is witnessed that he lives on" These words have been appealed to in proof that he was a superhuman being. But if this statement be interpreted in the light of its context, there is no difficulty. It was not absolutely and personally that

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Melchizedek still lived, but typically and as a representation of Christ. Scripture frequently attributes to the type what is found alone in the anti-type. Thus, the paschal lamb was expressly called God's Passover (Ex. 12: 11), when in reality it was only a pledge and token thereof. So the emblems on the Lord's table are denominated the body and blood of Christ, because they represent such. A.W. Pink

### The power of knowing you are "in Him".

Adam stood for and transacted on the behalf of the whole human race, so that what he did, they legally did; hence his sin, guilt and death, are imputed to all his posterity, and God deals with them accordingly. So too Christ stood for and transacted on the behalf of all His seed, so that what He did, they legally did; hence, His meeting the demands of the law, His death and resurrection-life, are imputed to all who believe on Him. A.W. Pink

Just as Levi was "in Abraham," not only seminally but representatively, so every one of God's children was "in Christ" when He wrought out that glorious work which has honored and pleased God high above everything else. A.W. Pink

### **Romans 5:16, 17-21**

For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. <sup>17</sup> For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.)

<sup>18</sup> Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. <sup>19</sup> For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.

<sup>20</sup> Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, <sup>21</sup> so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

- ◆ **Is Hebrews 7 a lesson on tithing for new covenant believers?**
  1. Abraham gave ten percent of the spoils of war.
  2. He did not give him ten percent of his personal belongings or income.
  3. He gave it one time.
- ◆ Lesson 7 is an illustration of the superiority of Christ’s priesthood, **NOT A LESSON ON TITHING!**

**Verses 11-14**

*Now if perfection was through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the people received the Law), what further need was there for another priest to arise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be designated according to the order of Aaron? <sup>12</sup>For when the priesthood is changed, of necessity there takes place a change of law also. <sup>13</sup>For the one concerning whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no one has officiated at the altar.*

Aaronic Priesthood based on the Law Not Sufficient	Need for Another Priesthood (and law) According to Order of Melchizedek
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Did not bring perfection because the priest was imperfect</li> <li>◆ Based on the Law of Moses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Perfection was needed thus a new type of priest.</li> <li>◆ When the priesthood changed the Law had to also be changed.</li> </ul>

*Verse 11: The word "perfection" is the translation of teleiosis which signifies the act or process of consummating. It speaks of completeness. An institution is perfect or complete when it effects the purpose for which it was instituted, and produces a result that corresponds to the idea of it.-Wuest*

*"Perfection" means the bringing of a thing to that completeness of condition designed for it. Doctrinally it refers to the producing of a satisfactory and final relation between God and men. It speaks of that unchangable standing in the favor and blessing of God which Christ has secured for His people. A.W. Pink*

*The purpose of the priesthood was to remove the obstacle, sin, which kept man from God, and make a way of access for man to God. The Levitical priesthood could do that in a typical but not in an actual way. The priesthood and the sacrifices were an index finger pointing to the Messiah and His substitutionary death on the Cross.-Wuest*

**Verse 12**

*The words "being changed" are the translation of meta-tithemi which means "to transpose, to put one thing in the place of another."-Wuest*

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## **Studies in Grace and Faith Hebrews 7**

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Now the author of Hebrews, gets to His point. Jesus' priesthood is superior to Aaron's, and the writer shows them exactly in what ways He is superior and the changes that must take place when there is a change of priesthood. -Wuest

Nor is it only the Aaronic priesthood which must be superseded. That priesthood was instituted under the Mosaic law, and was so integral to it that a change in the priesthood carries with it inevitably a change in the law. F.F. Bruce

Paul: the law was a temporary provision, "our custodian until Christ came" (Gal. 3:24). Paul, indeed, thinks of the law as an institution designed to arouse men and women's awareness of sin and not (as he had once believed) to promote their justification before God, whereas our author thinks rather of the sacrificial cultus as something which could never effectively remove sin. If we like, we may say that Paul has the moral law mainly in mind, whereas the author of Hebrews is concerned more with the ceremonial law-although the distinction between the moral and ceremonial law is one drawn by Christian theologians, not by those who accepted the whole law as the will of God, nor yet by the New Testament writers. F.F. Bruce

### **Verses 14-17**

**For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, a tribe with reference to which Moses spoke nothing concerning priests. <sup>15</sup>And this is clearer still, if another priest arises according to the likeness of Melchizedek, <sup>16</sup>who has become such not on the basis of a law of physical requirement, but according to the power of an indestructible life.**

**<sup>17</sup>For it is attested of Him,  
"YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER  
ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK."**

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**David prophesied that another priest would arise like Melchizedek.  
(Psalm 110:4)**

"By Him that said unto Him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." As this is the final reference in Scripture to Melchizedek perhaps we had better summarize the cardinal features in which he foreshadowed Christ. First, Melchizedek was the only priest of his class or order, and thus pointed to the solitariness of Christ's priesthood —He shares it with none. Second, Melchizedek had no predecessor, and therefore his right to office depended not on fleshly descent; foreshadowing the fact that Christ's priesthood was quite distinct from the Aaronic . Third, Melchizedek had no successor: typifying the fact that Christ's priesthood is final and eternal. A.W. Pink

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*Studies in Grace and Faith Hebrews 7*

<b>AARON</b>	<b>JESUS</b>
<i>Descendant of Tribe of Levi (the only tribe from which a priest could be selected under the Law)</i>	<i>Descendant of Tribe of Judah (from which the Law did not assign priesthood).</i>
<i>Priest selected on the basis of a law of physical requirement (that of being a Levite)</i>	<i>Not on the basis of the law (being a Levite), but according to the power of an indestructible life</i>

**Verses 18-22** *For, on the one hand, there is a setting aside of a former commandment because of its weakness and uselessness <sup>19</sup>(for the Law made nothing perfect), and on the other hand there is a bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.*

*<sup>20</sup>And inasmuch as it was not without an oath <sup>21</sup>(for they indeed became priests without an oath, but He with an oath through the One who said to Him,*

**"THE LORD HAS SWORN  
AND WILL NOT CHANGE HIS MIND,  
'YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER'");**

*<sup>22</sup>so much the more also Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.*

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Try to imagine what might be going on in the minds of the Hebrew believer. The writer already claimed that Jesus is better than Moses, angels, Joshua, and even Aaron, but now he is beginning to speak more boldly, using language that would have seemed quite strong to the Jews who treasured all these things as not only their religion, but their heritage, culture, and traditions. He is beginning to edge over more increasingly into the inferiority of the Old Covenant. This must have been extremely shocking for them. They might have wanted to hold on to the former while embracing the new. The writer of Hebrews will increase his/her case that this is not acceptable.

Likewise, imagine how the message of the gospel of grace that Paul taught sounds to believers today who are heavily inundated with centuries of traditions about what it means to live the Christian life. What we have today is something that would have been anathema to the early believers. We would seem to have strayed from Jesus into some merged religion with the Old Testament minus animal sacrifices and other ceremonies. When we preach this pure gospel today, we are similarly seen as attacking people's traditions, even Christianity itself. How sad it is that the pure gospel seems extreme to many believers.

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## Studies in Grace and Faith Hebrews 7

FORMER COMMANDMENT	BETTER COVENANT
<p>Former commandment which is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Weak</li><li>◆ Useless</li><li>◆ Not able to make anything perfect</li><li>◆ The priest were made priests due to their physical lineage, not by any promise</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Is of a better hope</li><li>◆ Through which we draw near to God</li><li>◆ Jesus was made priest by the oath of God</li><li>◆ Thus, Jesus is the guarantee of a better covenant</li></ul>

When the Levitical priests were inducted into office, God took no oath. But when Messiah was made a high priest, God took an oath guaranteeing the unending character of His priesthood. This shows the inferiority of the Aaronic priesthood to that of Melchizadek. -Wuest

The former commandment (the Law) is set aside because it is WEAK, USELESS, MAKES NOTHING PERFECT. Notice also that the writer spoke of the weakness and non-profitability of the O.T. law. This would have been considered blasphemy to many of the religious Jews of the day, just as it is to the religious people of today. Yet this is as true now as it was then. -Wuest

In contrast to the O.T. law, the New Covenant of grace does make us perfect by the new birth. The New Covenant deals with the inner man. The O.T. law dealt with the outer man. The N.T. ministers life, while the O.T. ministers death (2 Cor 3:6). -AWMI

Everything which kept us at a distance from God has been removed by the bringing in of the Better Hope. A.W. Pink

The whole apparatus of worship associated with that ritual and priesthood was calculated rather to keep people at a distance from God than to bring them near. But the "hope set before us" in the gospel is better because it accomplishes this very thing which was impossible under the old ceremonial; it enables Christians to "draw near to God." F.F. Bruce

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### Verses 23-28

**The former priests, on the one hand, existed in greater numbers because they were prevented by death from continuing, <sup>24</sup>but Jesus, on the other hand, because He continues forever, holds His priesthood permanently. <sup>25</sup>Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. <sup>26</sup>For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; <sup>27</sup>who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the sins of the people, because this He did once for all**

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*Studies in Grace and Faith Hebrews 7*

**when He offered up Himself. <sup>28</sup>For the Law appoints men as high priests who are weak, but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, appoints a Son, made perfect forever.**

<b>Levitical Priesthood</b>	<b>Jesus' Priesthood</b>
<i>Multiple high priests (since death forbid one to continue)</i>	<i>Jesus' priesthood is permanent because He lives forever.</i>
<i>Unable to save forever</i>	<i>He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him.</i>
<i>Could only intercede while living</i>	<i>He always lives to intercede for us</i>
<i>Unholy, guilty, defiled</i>	<i>Holy, innocent, undefiled</i>
<i>Sinners</i>	<i>Separated from sinners</i>
<i>Subject to death</i>	<i>Exalted above the heavens</i>
<i>Had to offer up sacrifices first for their own sins and then for the people</i>	<i>He offered ONE sacrifice of Himself but not for Himself</i>
<i>The Law appoints priest who are weak (mere men)</i>	<i>The word of God's oath which came after the law, appoints a Son</i>
<i>Priest could never become perfect</i>	<i>Jesus is perfected forever</i>

*Jewish records inform us that there were no fewer than eighty-three high priests from Aaron, the first, to Phinehas, who perished with the temple. A.W. Pink*

*Verses 24-25*

*The word "unchangeable" is the translation of apara-bation which is made up of baino "to step," para, "across," and a "not," the compound word meaning "not stepping across." Thus, the word describes that which cannot be violated, or that which does not pass over to another. The priestly ministry of Messiah is in view here, a ministry such that no other person can step into it, a ministry that cannot be transferred to another. -Wuest*

*Verse 26 The word "intercession" is the translation of entugchano which speaks of intervention rather than merely intercession. It includes every form of Messiah's identifying Himself with humanity, and includes the idea of intercession. The writer speaks here of the present intercession of Messiah on behalf of believers, which is based upon and follows His once-for-all offering of Himself as the sacrifice for sin.- Wuest*

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*Why is it that Christ is here said to be able to "save unto the uttermost"? "Wherefore"— because of the oath of His consecration (verse 20), because of the immutability of the Father's purpose (He "will not repent") verse 21, because of the better covenant of which He is "Surety" (verse 22), and because He "continueth ever" an unchanging Priest (verse 24)—" He is able also to save them unto the uttermost." A.W. Pink*

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*What is our Lord's special function as his people's high priest with God, apart from ensuring their never-failing acceptance before God? In 2:17f. we have been told that he became high priest to make atonement for his people's sins and strengthen them in temptation; in 4:15f. we have been told that he sympathizes with their weakness and supplies the mercy and grace to help them in time of need. Here his high-priestly function is summed up in terms of intercession: "he lives continuously to intercede for them." The intercessory work of Christ at the right hand of God is not a doctrine peculiar to our author; it appears in one of Paul's great lyric outbursts: Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies; who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus who died, yes, who was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. (Rom. 8:33f.) F.F. Bruce*

*If it be asked what form his heavenly intercession takes, what better answer can be given than that he still does for his people at the right hand of God what he did for Peter on earth? And the prayer recorded in John 17, also belonging to the same night in which he was betrayed, is well called (after David Chytraeus) his high-priestly prayer, and (such is the affinity of mind between the Fourth Evangelist and our present author) a careful study of John 17 will help us considerably to understand what is intended here when our Lord is described as making intercession for those who come to God through him. F.F. Bruce*

*The way of approach to God through him is a way which is always open, because in the presence of God he represents his people as "a priest forever." A.W. Pink*

*Second, He was "harmless." "Holy" tells of what Christ was God -wards: perfectly conformed to the Divine will inwardly, evidenced by His perfect outward conduct. "Harmless" tells of what He was man-wards. A.W. Pink*

*He is not to be thought of "as an orante, standing ever before the Father with outstretched arms, like the figures in the mosaics of the catacombs, and with strong crying and tears pleading our cause in the presence of a reluctant God; but as a throned Priest-King, asking what he will from a Father who always hears and grants his request. Our Lord's life in heaven is his prayer." F.F. Bruce*

**We now begin to see where the author of Hebrews was headed when he/she wrote:**

**1:2**—in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.

**2:1**—For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it.

**4:1**—Therefore, let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it.

**5:9-10**—And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation, <sup>10</sup>being designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

**6:19-20**—This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil, <sup>20</sup> where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having

## ***Studies in Grace and Faith Hebrews 7***

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become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

The writer is imploring the readers to NOT GO BACK TO THE OLD BUT EMBRACE THE NEW!!!

We also, the church today, must not go back to relying on religious traditions, not those of the Jews nor of those who teach a “Christian” law system of justification. Don’t go back there. Embrace entirely the New Covenant which has been ratified for you. Move on to the perfect High Priest and the perfect covenant, not a mixture of the two!!! Let us not nullify the accomplishments of the cross of Christ.

### ***Galatians 2:21***

*I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.*

### ***Galatians 5:1,4***

*Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage...<sup>4</sup> You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.*

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