

Part II, Week Six: Mysterious Melchizedek III

Digging Deeper

Read Hebrews 7:15-22

How can we describe anything as *permanent* in an age when the pace of change is accelerating, and astonishing developments in technology constantly render old ways of doing things obsolete? Even when we use the word permanent, as in a “permanent job position” or a “permanent marker” we are using the word loosely to mean something that we expect to stay the same for a fairly long time, not something that will remain completely unchanged forever.

Yet this passage zeroes in on one thing that is truly permanent – the priesthood of Jesus Christ. In Israel priests were selected to their role of representing the people to God based solely on who their parents were. Jesus claimed the right to be a priest because of His own identity, and the power of His permanent, indestructible life that conquered death. Israel’s priests offered sacrifices that served as partial and temporary coverings for sin, but as vs. 18-19 tell us, they were not able to make anything perfect, or righteous in God’s sight, because they could not remove sin.

The priesthood of Jesus Christ is of a different kind, pointed to by the mysterious king-priest Melchizedek who lived in the time of Abraham. Psalm 110:1-4 is quoted in this passage because it states that the promised Messiah would be a priest forever – a permanent priest whose work will never be outsourced or rendered obsolete. God never promised that the priesthood of Aaron would last forever, but God certified that the priesthood of the Messiah – Jesus – would never end.

Not only is the priesthood of Jesus permanent, it also offers a better hope (v. 19) and a better covenant (v. 22), allowing us to draw near to God. That’s reason to celebrate the permanent priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ!

Bible Study Questions

Read Hebrews 7:11-19

1. The first section of our study is verses 11-14. In these verses we are taught that the priesthood of Aaron was insufficient. Read v.11 - Why was the old priesthood replaced. "*Perfection*" - here means something on the order of "to place a person in the position to stand before God" in other

words *access* to God. This is also the application of the word in verse 19.

2. If we have access to God what is implied about our relationship? How then was the Law unable to give us access to God? Name some benefits of the Law: (Romans 7:7, 2 Corinthians 3:7ff, Galatians 3:24, Romans 8:3, 7)
3. The Law therefore could not atone for sin but only cover it. The Levitical sacrifices covered over sin but could not remove it. How does the unending repetition of animal sacrifices speak to this? To be sure, performing the sacrificial requirements had the benefit of easing one's conscience since the offerer was doing what was required but a total clearing of the conscience was never accomplished through the system.
4. How do Christians fall back into the trap of works based attempts to clear conscience?
5. The old covenant had profound problems as to;
 - providing access
 - making atonement
 - clearing the conscienceHow is Jesus much superior in these areas compared to the Law?

Group Application Questions

1. How are you taking advantage of this invitation to draw near to the God of the universe? Is your life currently moving in a direction of becoming more God-centered?
2. Are there any areas of life where you are keeping God at a distance instead of drawing near to Him?
3. Do you ever find yourself thinking that your sin makes you unworthy and undesirable to God? How does the ongoing, permanent priestly ministry of Jesus address this concern?

Prayer

Ps. 143:1 "Lord, hear my prayer, listen to my cry for mercy; in your faithfulness and righteousness come to my relief."

Take time to share prayer requests and pray for one another.

*Overview was adapted from Richland Hills Community Church

*Questions were adapted from "Hebrews, An Anchor for the Soul" by Kent Hughes and "The NIV Application Commentary" by George H Guthrie.

