

We are in deep water today; the content of Hebrews 7 is crucial to the argument about the superiority of Jesus' high priesthood over any other depends on the logic and facts about Melchizedek (about whom almost nothing is known or recorded in the Bible).

There is just enough in Psalm 110:4 and Genesis 14:17-20 to provide the material that the author of Hebrews develops beautifully in several chapters of Hebrews. The reason that this is important to the development of Hebrews is that Jesus, the true High Priest was from the tribe of Judah, not the tribe of Levi (from which the traditional priesthood of the Jews was derived through the sons of Aaron).

The writer takes the mystical figure of Melchizedek and the affirmation of a priesthood after the order of Melchizedek (from Psalm 110) and applies the matter to Jesus. This long chapter which will continue on Saturday (and I'll write a little more for a weekend devo you will receive on Saturday) sets up Jesus as the superior priest building on characteristics and traits of Melchizedek that are apparent in Jesus as well.

I know this sounds like double-talk. It really isn't. I'll be spending a large amount of time on this subject in my Sunday class in a couple of weeks, and if you are in Baton Rouge maybe you will be able to join me then.

In the meantime, with thanks to William Barclay, here are the points of similarity that make the High Priesthood of Jesus like that of Melchizedek:

- Jesus is the High Priest, whose priesthood depends not on any genealogy but on himself alone.
- Jesus is the High Priest who lives for ever.
- Jesus is the High Priest who himself is sinless and never needs to offer any sacrifice for his own sin.
- Jesus is the High Priest who in the offering of himself made the perfect sacrifice which once and for all opened the way to God. No more sacrifice need be made.

To be continued on Saturday; but for now, give thanks to God that our access to him does not depend upon our station in life, our genealogy, or anything else--the new kingdom of God is open to all and the High Priesthood of Jesus makes it possible. RBK+