

The High Priest of Our Confession: 1

Hebrews 4.14

“Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession”

Jesus is our Great High Priest. Chapters 5 and 7-10 contain teaching on the High Priestly ministry of Jesus.

His priesthood is like no other – it is not like the Levitical priesthood, with Aaron as High Priest.

What has the High Priestly ministry of Jesus to do with our confession?

“Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus” **Hebrews 3.1**

Jesus is Apostle and High Priest of our confession

As Apostle – (sent by God) – He pleads God’s cause with us.

- He ministers what God says and requires of us

As High Priest – He pleads our cause with God

- He takes our confession of faith and hope and goes before the Father
 - Jesus is Lord over sin, but High Priest of our salvation
 - Jesus is Lord over sickness and High Priest of our healing

One of the key theme's of Hebrews can be summed up in one word – BETTER

- There are no less than 12 occurrences of the word *better* in the book, more than any other book in Holy Scripture.
- This book of Hebrews highlights the differences between the High Priestly ministry of Aaron and that of Jesus.
- This theme of BETTER is reflected in our teaching because the High Priestly ministry of Jesus is:
 - ⤴ of a *better* order (Ch 7)
 - ⤴ under a *better* covenant (Ch 8)
 - ⤴ in a *better* sanctuary (Ch 9)
 - ⤴ because of a *better* sacrifice (Ch 10)

Better Order

Hebrews 5. 1-10

In Hebrews 5 we read that Jesus was called by God, as was Aaron.

The basic ministry of Aaron is briefly outlined in the first few verses -

“For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things *pertaining to* God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. He can have compassion on those who are ignorant and going astray, since he himself is also subject to weakness. Because of this he is required as for the people, so also for himself, to offer *sacrifices* for

sins. And no man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was.” (v1-4)

- he represented God
- offer gifts and sacrifices for sins for both himself and the people
- compassionate to those he serves because he to was not perfect

God declares about Jesus in verse 6 (the writer is quoting **Psalm 110.4**) “you are a priest for ever according to the order of Melchizadek” (v6)

This is repeated in Ch 6.20

“where the forerunner has entered for us, *even* Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek”

- this continues from where we left off last time
- this is our hope – Jesus our High Priest – He takes our confession within the veil, to the Father and offers it with His blood.

Jesus is not High Priest after the order of Aaron – He is High Priest after the order of Melchizadek.

Hebrews 7.1-3

“For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated "king of righteousness," and then also king of Salem, meaning "king of peace," without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually”

This Melchizadek was king of Salem – translated King of Righteousness and also King of Peace.

He was made like the Son of God – without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life.

Melchizadek is a type of Christ, as also was Aaron

- Aaron was a type of Christ dealing with atonement and salvation
- Melchizadek's type deals with the power to live the eternal life in righteousness and holiness.

Aaron's ministry was earthly, but Melchizadek's ministry was heavenly.

Jesus was declared to have a ‘*priesthood forever after the order of Melchizadek*’ – the key words in this statement are *for ever*.

Melchizadek's priestly order is an eternal priesthood. Aaron's order was subject to death, therefore there could be no continuation in the ministry, but Jesus has an unchangeable priesthood because He continues for ever.

Having an eternal priesthood doesn't just signify that it never ends but much more. God is the Eternal One, His life is eternal life – eternal is that which is divine; there is no change nor decay because God is in it.

The Greatness of the Order of Melchizadek

Hebrews 7.4

“Now consider how great this man was”

In this verse the writer to the Hebrews focuses our thoughts on the greatness of Melchizadek.

If we rightly understand the greatness of Melchizadek it will help us understand the greatness of Jesus our great High Priest.

- The Jews looked up to and honoured Abraham (as their father of their faith and religion) - they made reference to Abraham as their father in response to a challenge from Jesus (**John 8.33-39**)
- The Jews gloried in Aaron (as High Priest) as the representative of God and their worship of Him. Their worship was based on sacrifice with its limitations.
- Then finally, the Jews were strict sticklers for the Law, this was God's covenant with them - they observed it to the last letter (**Matthew 23.23**)

However, this chapter reveals that Melchizadek:

- is greater than Abraham (vs 4-10)
- he is greater than Aaron (vs 11-14)
- he is greater than the Law (vs 11-19)

We will continue examining these next time