

Hebrews

Dr. Charles “Buddy” Parrish
September, 2023



Hebrews 7:11-22

Vss. 11-12

- Recall that with the preacher to the Hebrews, his understanding of religion is a faith system where the path to God is completely open. Without any impediments to the throne, here now he presents a religion where people can be friends with God.
- He reminds them that the Jews hoped to accomplish this in two ways. First, by the giving of the Law. Ten commandments. Seems simple. But soon these ten became hundreds and it became impossible to keep the Law. Perfect obedience to the Law was seemingly impossible. So a second way to come to God was needed and that was the sacrificial system. For such a system to work, priests were needed. This when someone breaks the Law, a sacrifice to atone for the crime would have to be made. The problem was that everyone was aware that this too was ineffective in restoring the broken relationship with God, a relationship broken by our sin.
- So the preacher asked, if perfection could come through the old Levitical priesthood, then why would we need for a new way with a new High Priest. But since the old way was insufficient, then a new law and a new way would be required, a priesthood after the order of Melchizedek.

Vss. 13-17

- The old priesthood was entirely dependent on the human side of the equation. It was all about your genealogy, not your calling from God. If you were a descendant of Aaron and of the tribe of Levi, you were in. Now, the preacher says, rather than *fleshly* qualifications, the new order is based on “the power of an indestructible life”, that is, the power of God.
- The “*fleshly-ness*” he’s referring to is how 1) the priest had to be a direct descendent of Aaron 2) there were 142 physical blemishes that could disqualify the priestly candidate 3) as part of the ordination process the candidate would be ceremoniously bathed, then clothed in the four official priestly garments, then anointed with oil, then anointed with the blood of sacrifices. It all has to do with the external body. There were even rules for his haircut. All of it had to do with

the physical body. None of it had anything to do with the purely spiritual, with the condition of the heart.

- The new priesthood would begin and end with the spirit, with the heart, with the indestructible. It is not that the body and the external things were unimportant or without meaning, but they were wholly secondary to the spiritual, to the things of God.
- Again going back to Psalms 110:4, the preacher wants to reiterate his point that Christ is the perfect High Priest based solely on who He is in and of Himself. This was a revolutionary concept. From now on it would be the inner working of God in a man's life that made him a priest.

Vss. 18-22

- Because we were so sinful and weak as to not keep the Law, nor be restored to fellowship with God through sacrifice, God has now "set aside" the former commandment. The word here is the same as to annul or cancel a contract. The old way was a failure due to our sin.
- What Christ has done through the New Covenant is to make a way where there was not a way before. William Barclay points out that there are basically two things that keep us from God. First is fear, but Jesus said that He came because God so **loved** the world and he now calls us His friends (John 15:15). So now that Jesus has come there is no fear. The second roadblock says Barclay, is sin. On the cross, Jesus as High Priest made the perfect sacrifice as He became the perfect sacrifice and our sins are forgiven as we believe in Him. So now because of Christ, fear and sin are gone and the way to God is open to those who believe and follow Him.
- Finally, the order of Melchizedek is superior to the old order because while in the old order it is a person, the new priest, who makes an oath, here with the New Covenant in Christ it is God Himself who has made the oath (Psalms 110:4). This is an extraordinary thing that God takes an oath. When you or I take an oath, it is to guarantee that what we say is true by leaning on a higher authority. But on whom does God lean? He is the guarantor of His own word, just as His sending His only Son is the guarantee of a better, perfect New Covenant. Whereas the old covenant was based on the Law and sacrifice, this New Covenant is based on Love and Grace as a product of Christ's perfect sacrifice. The old way was based on what people could do. The New Covenant is based on God's love and what His love can do.