

In Christ

Hebrews 7:24-28



Rock Hill Baptist Church

605 Rock Hill Road
Lexington, Tennessee 38351

Brother David Buffaloe
731-845-6104

online at bibleteacher.org

FOCAL Hebrews 7:24-28 (KJV) "But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. {25} Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. {26} For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; {27} Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. {28} For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore."

The great problem or error of the Christian in today's world - especially in America - is that we are plagued with an *identity crisis*. Who are we? Who you are, that is, who you perceive yourself to be, determines how you will interact with those around you. A baby of mere months will act the same regardless as to whether that baby comes from royal parentage or from a homeless mother because the baby does not perceive who it is. Yet when that child comes of age and begins to understand its source, the child begins to interact with others based on its perceived position in life.

So it is with the Christian of every era. Even in the Garden of Eden the serpent attacked mankind by saying:

Genesis 3:5 (KJV) "...God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

The implication was "God is unfair, He *does not* have your best interest at heart. He is jealous, and wants to deny you the best". Swallowing this lie Adam swallowed the forbidden, and in so doing doused humanity in the venom of sin.

The serpent continues his attack on God's Church. When the Church was first formed he led many to believe that Christianity was only *modified Judaism*, and that the Mosaic Law was still in full force over the Family of God. This distortion of Biblical truth has popped up in the Church from the beginning. Some have the strange idea that the Christian is governed by *certain portions* of the Mosaic Law, such as the Ten Commandments, yet other portions of the Law, such as the dietary or ceremonial codes, are invalidated. Yet we know that **the Law was designed as a _____ which, if you violated one portion of it, then you were guilty of breaking it all.** So says:

James 2:10-11 (KJV) "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. {11} For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law."

1. The Law was designed as a _____ which, if you violated one portion of it, then you were guilty of breaking it all.

The early Jew understood the Law to be a harsh taskmaster which governed every part of the adherent's

life. When the early Church considered admitting Gentiles to its ranks the Apostle Peter stood up at the Jerusalem Council and called the Law:

Acts 15:10 (KJV) "Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?"

"a yoke ... which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear .." Those saved by faith in Christ were *relieved from the whole Law* so they could serve God in newness of life. Equipped with the indwelling Spirit of God the Christian has the law of God written *on his heart*. We who know Him know right from wrong, as we are in intimate contact with Him on a minute by minute basis. We are under the "**law of liberty**",

James 2:12 (KJV) "So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be **judged by the law of liberty."**

the "**law of faith**",

Romans 3:27-28 (KJV) "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. **By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. {28} Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."**

the "**law of the Spirit of life**",

Romans 8:2 (KJV) "For **the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."**

the "law of righteousness by faith",

Romans 9:31-32 (KJV) "But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the **law of righteousness**. {32} Wherefore? Because they sought it not **by faith**, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone;"

and the "law of Christ".

Galatians 6:2 (KJV) "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the **law of Christ**."

The question that the Hebrew Christian would next ask would be, "But if this is true, by what means did God roll back the Mosaic Law? God established the Law through Moses on Mount Sinai - how did God revoke His Law?"

Which brings us to our text for today.

1. Christ Jesus Has A Specialized Priesthood

FOCAL Hebrews 7:24 (KJV) "But this man, because he continueth ever¹, hath an unchangeable priesthood."

The "man" that our verse refers to is the One we love, the Savior Who is Man, but *more than Man* for He is also God. This is a reference to Jesus Christ our Lord. We immediately see that He is *more than Man* for the text says "**He continueth ever**". Literally we read that our Savior *keeps on abiding for all ages or forever*. The

1 Present Active Infinitive meno {pronounced men'-o}, keeps on abiding, keeps on remaining + eis aien = for all ages

Savior, being God, co-equal with both Father and Spirit², has a *specialized priesthood* because He is eternal. In the first part of Hebrews the Bible tells us about a mysterious figure named **Melchisedec, king of Salem, the priest of the most high God**. Melchisedec was a person who was:

2 **Matthew 1:23** "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."

John 1:1-3, 14- "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.... And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

John 20:27-28- "Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God."

Philippians 2:5-8- "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

Colossians 1:15-16- "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible...."

1 Timothy 2:3-4; 3:16; 6:14-16 "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." ... "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." ... "...the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: Which in his times he shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen."

Hebrews 7:3 (KJV) "Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually."

Who was Melchisedec? No one really knows. Some believe that he was an Old Testament *manifestation* of Jesus Christ since we read that he was "**Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life**", as our text states. But we also see further along in our Hebrews text that

Hebrews 7:17 (KJV) "For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after³ the order⁴ of Melchisedec⁵."

How Jesus could be *after the norm or standard of Melchisedec* and yet still be Melchisedec makes no sense to me. This comparison is **repeated in Hebrews 5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:1, 10-11, 15, 17**. If Christ and Melchisedec were the same, it seems to me that the Scripture would have clearly declared this. Yet it has not, and so we end with the speculation here. The fact of the matter is there are times when we must humbly admit before God that He

3 kata {pronounced kat-ah'}, preposition of norm or standard

4 taxis {pronounced tax'-is }, condition or arrangement of, genus of - where we perhaps get *taxidermy*

5 **International Standard Bible Dictionary** "The conclusions we come to are: (1) There was a tradition in Jerusalem of Melchizedek, a king in pre-Israelitish times, who was also priest to 'El 'Elyōn. This is the origin of Gen 14:18 ff, where 'El 'Elyōn is identified with Yahweh. (2) Psa 110:1-7 makes use of this tradition and the Psalmist's king is regarded as Melchizedek's successor. (3) The Epistle to the Hebrews makes use of (a) Psa 110:1-7, which is taken to be a prophecy of Christ, (b) of Gen 14:18 ff, and (c) of oral tradition which was not found in the Old Testament. It is this unwritten tradition that is possibly explained by the Tell el-Amarna Letters. See, further, articles by Sayce, Driver, and Hommel in Expository Times, VII, VIII. See also JERUSALEM."

was accurate when He said:

Isaiah 55:8-9 (KJV) "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. {9} For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

God is *above us*, and some things are not revealed to us at this time. But what is revealed in Hebrews is this.

a Melchisedec appeared before Abraham, who paid him tithes (**Hebrews 7:2-4**).

b The children of Levi, God's priestly tribe under the Mosaic Law, came out of Abraham (**Hebrews 7:5**).

c Since Abraham paid tithes to Melchisedec, and Levi came out of Abraham, then *Levi paid tithes* to Melchisedec (**Hebrews 7:9-10**).

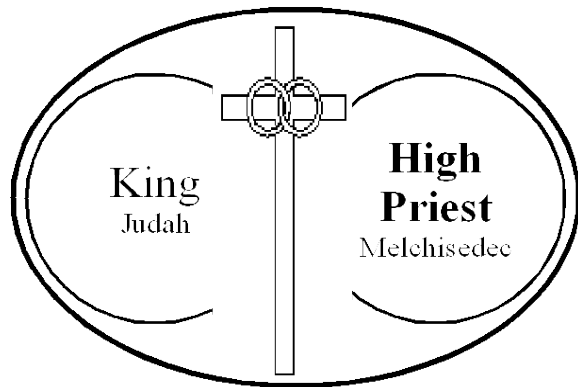
d If Levi or the *Mosaic Priesthood* paid tithes to the *Melchisedekian Priesthood*, then the former priesthood was the superior priesthood. So why did God establish a later priesthood through Aaron/ Levi? (**Hebrews 7:11**).

e The answer is in the Davidic Covenant. Jesus Christ was born of the ruling tribe of Judah (**Hebrews 7:14**) in fulfillment of God's promise to King David in **2 Samuel 7:11-16**. When David had secured the land for God and established Israel as a nation he came to God and asked permission to build the Lord a Temple. God forbade David this, and told him that his son Solomon would

build this Temple. David's job was to establish Israel, Solomon's job was to build the Temple (2 Samuel 7:5-10). However, the Lord comforted David by making a covenant with Him promising that the Throne of David would never end - it would be eternal. Jacob (who was renamed Israel) who preceded King David prophesied long before the giving of the Davidic Covenant that:

Genesis 49:10 (KJV) "The scepter⁶ shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be."

that "The scepter shall not depart from Judah". This meant that Judah was supposed to be the ruling tribe within Israel. The Bible reminds us in Hebrews that Jesus was born of the tribe of Judah, not of the tribe of



Levi. He was born of the Tribe of Judah to fulfill the promise that God made to King David. But if born of the Tribe of Judah:

Hebrews 7:14 (KJV) "For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood."

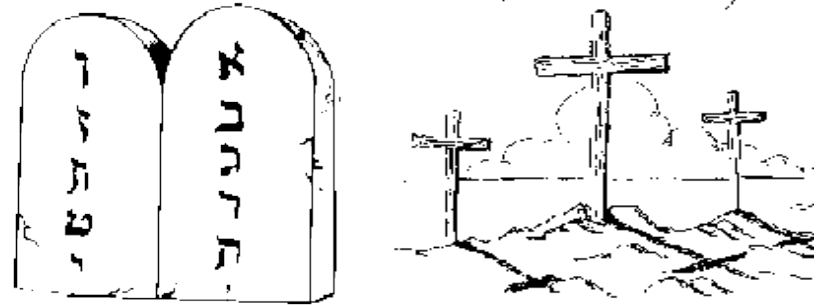
He cannot be of the Tribe of Levi, the Priestly Tribe.

⁶ shebet {pronounced shay' - bet }, the rod, staff, or mark of authority

Judah was the ruling tribe, Levi the priestly tribe. So how can Jesus Christ our Savior be *our High Priest*?

2. Jesus Christ was born of the tribe of _____ to fulfill God's promise to David. But if He was born of Jesse He could not be a High Priest after the tribe of _____.

Hebrews 7:17 (KJV) "For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."



Which Did You Believe In To Be Saved?

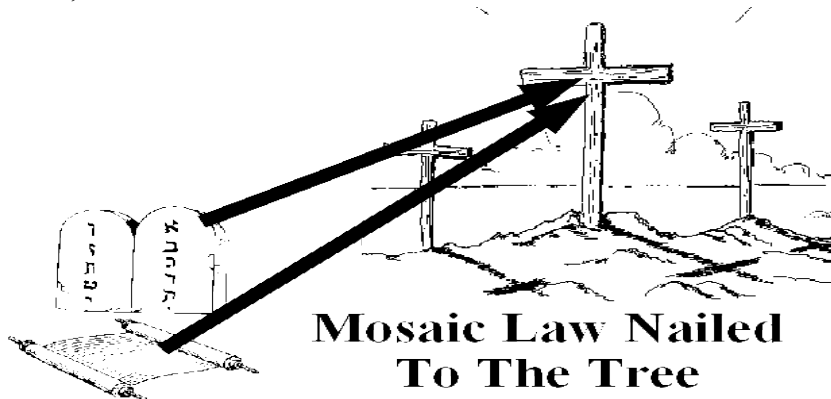
He is a Priest *forever* after the "order of Melchisedec" - the *superior* priesthood. Just as He is a King forever, He is a Priest forever. In Christ Jesus we have an Eternal King and an Eternal Priest. He is King because He is from the Tribe of Judah. He is Priest because He is after the order of Melchisedec NOT Levi. And because He is God, this priesthood is **unchangeable**.

Hebrews 7:24 - 25 (KJV) "... because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. {25} Wherefore he is able also to save them to the

uttermost⁷ that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

Those who come unto God **by Him** are saved "**to the uttermost**", or literally *completely* or *perfectly*. Salvation secured through Christ *cannot be abrogated* because *He is unchangeable*. The work that He accomplished on the Cross *nailing the ordinances of the Law to that Tree* is what saved us.

Colossians 2:13-14 (KJV) "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; {14} Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;"



That **handwriting of ordinances** we know as the Mosaic Law was nailed to the Cross, and "paid" was marked across it with the Blood of Christ. Our salvation is secured because He Who is eternal **ever liveth to make intercession for us**. I praise God for this as well, for

⁷ panteles {pronounced pan-tel-ace?}, completely, perfectly, utterly

there is not a day that goes by I do not, in some way, err or sin. I strive to live for Him, yet since I am imperfect in my flesh error still occurs. This is true of every creature of God on this earth, no matter how holy or pure they think they are.

Hebrews 7:26-27 (KJV) "For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; {27} Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.

3. We are only saved because **we came unto God by _____**. There was no sin in Christ our Savior. Our High Priest offered *no animals* to make payment for us, but He offered _____.

We are only saved because we came unto God by Him. There was no sin in Christ our Savior. Our Melchisedekian High Priest offered *no animals* to make payment for us, but He offered His *sinless self*. The believer in Christ is saved strictly because of His offering up of Himself. Nothing else saves!

2. We Who Have Believed Are "In Christ"

FOCAL Hebrews 7:28 (KJV) "For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore."

This is the point that Christianity makes: you are either *in Christ* or you are *under the Law*. If you are *under the Law* then you are *under infirmity*, for by the Law no person has *ever* been saved. If you are saved, then you are a product of God:

2 Corinthians 3:3 (KJV) "Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart."

a living *epistle* of Christ. In the Old Testament God gave Moses:

Exodus 31:18 (KJV) "... two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God."

two tablets of stone written with God's own finger. Though His finger was living, the stone was dead - and laws on a dead stone had no power to change living flesh. If you are *under* the Law you are *under* infirmity.

When the believer comes to Christ, accepting Him as Savior and Lord, God the Holy Spirit *writes the Law of Love* in his heart. Saved by faith, indwelt by His Spirit, the Christian follows no list of "do's and don't", but follows God - Who is Love - Who indwells him. C.H. Spurgeon wrote:

"The fact is, that faith is counted to us for righteousness because she has Christ in her hand; she comes to God resting upon what Christ has done, depending alone upon the propitiation which God has set forth; and God,

therefore, writes down every believing man as being a righteous man, not because of what he is in himself, but for what he is in Christ. He may have a thousand sins, yet shall he be righteous if he have faith. He may painfully transgress like Samson, he may be as much in the dark as Jephtha, he may fall as David, he may slip like Noah; but, for all that, if he have a true and living faith, he is written down among the justified, and God accepteth him.

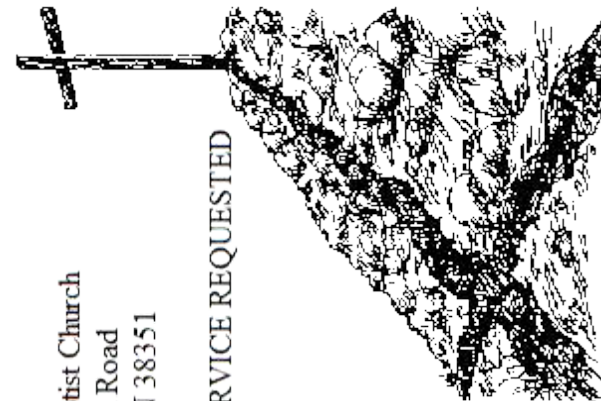
While there be some who gloat over the faults of believers, God spieth out the pure gem of faith gleaming on their breast; he takes them for what they want to be, for what they are in heart, for what they would be if they could; and covering their sins with the atoning blood, and adorning their persons with the righteousness of the Beloved, he accepts them, seeing he beholds in them the faith which is the mark of the righteous man wherever it may be."

4. Perhaps the two most important words you will ever learn are those words that echo throughout the New Testament: _____

Perhaps the two most important words you will ever learn are those words that echo throughout the New Testament: **in Christ**. If you are **in Christ** you are redeemed and justified (**Romans 3:24**). If you are **in Christ** you are no longer condemned with the world (**Romans 8:1; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:19**). If you are **in Christ** you are freed from the Law (**Romans 8:2; 2 Corinthians 3:14; Galatians 2:4; 6:15**). If you are **in Christ** you are in the love of God (**Romans 8:39**). If you are **in Christ** you are bound together with other believers into one Body called the

Church (**Romans 12:5**). If you are **in Christ** you are *sanctified*, set apart for service to God (**1 Corinthians 1:2**). If you are **in Christ** you are made alive (**1 Corinthians 15:22**). If you are **in Christ** you are established (**2 Corinthians 1:21**) as a new creature (**2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:10**). If you are **in Christ** you are the children of God (**Galatians 3:26**). If you are **in Christ** then you are the inheritor of ever spiritual blessing (**Ephesians 1:3**), and are made to sit in Heavenly places with Him (**Ephesians 2:6**). You are in the eternal purposes of God (**Ephesians 3:11**), His Beloved, His treasure, His child, His inheritor, co-kings and co-priests with Him (**1 Peter 2:9**).

Because He lives, you live. And if you have not believed Him, you are yet dead in your sins and condemned under that Mosaic Law. I pray that God touches your hearts to draw close to Jesus, our High Priest, and the only Savior of mankind!



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