
Tuesday Evening Bible Study at Tokyo Baptist Church
The Letter to the Hebrews – Chapter 7 (Background Concerning Melchizedek)
Notes From Class on October 27, 2009
Last Revised on (October 28, 2009)

Good evening everyone!

Welcome to our continuing study of the New Testament Book of Hebrews.

Before we begin please make sure that you have everything you need.

Tonight you will need a Bible and a song book.

If you are using an English translation of the Bible other than the English Standard Version ("ESV"), then it may help you to have the handouts which I have prepared:

One has the ESV text of Hebrews.

The other has the ESV text of Psalm 110 and selected verses from Matthew 22 and Genesis 14.

There is coffee and tea at the back.

Please get what you need and, then, let's get started....

Introduction

Last week we finished reading **Chapter 6**,

which means we are nearing the **halfway** point in our study of Hebrews.

Tonight for a change I am **not** going to begin with an extensive review of what we have studied thus far.

But before we get started in Chapter 7, let me ask you this.

Q. What would **you** say are the most important points that the author has made in the first 6 chapters?

A. Unqualified **supremacy** of Christ, including Him being the most **beneficial** thing for us.

A. Importance of holding **fast** our confession of Christ until the **end**.

A. (Conversely) the importance of **not** falling away

A. (Anything else?)

n.b. in addition to the foregoing someone mentioned the importance of Christ being described as our great high priest.

OK, then, let's get ready to move on into Chapter 7, by looking at the last two verses of Chapter 6, which read as follows

Will someone please read Verses 19 and 20 of Chapter 6 in Japanese (Shin Kaiyaku).

Thank you. Will someone please read those same verses in English (ESV).

(Chapter 6, Verses 19 and 20)

We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

Thank you.

Q. In verse 19, what **is** the "steadfast anchor of the soul" to which the author refers?

A. The **promise** that God had made and sworn to uphold.

Q. Yes, and what promise is that?

A. **Salvation**. Blessed eternal life with God.

And as we have just read, Jesus is there **already**, as a "forerunner on our behalf,"

"having become **a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek**."

This looks back to Chapter 5, where this same **Melchizedek** was mentioned twice: once in verse 6 and again in verse 10.

Would someone please **read** Chapter 5, Verses 1-10 in Japanese (Shin Kaiyaku)

Thank you. Now would someone please reread Chapter 5, Verses 1-10 in English (ESV).

1 For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins.

2 He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness.

3 Because of this he is obligated to offer sacrifice for his own sins just as he does for those of the people.

- 4 And no one takes this honor for himself, but only when called by God, just as Aaron was.
- 5 So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you";
- 6 as he says also in another place, "You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek."
- 7 In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence.
- 8 Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered.
- 9 And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him,
- 10 being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

Thank you. **Verse 6** of Chapter 5 is the **first** time that Melchizedek is mentioned in Hebrews,

and you will want to notice the **quotation marks**.

Our author is quoting these words from someplace: **"You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek."**

Q. From **where** are these words quoted? Do you remember?

A. **Psalm 110**

O.K. So would somebody please **read** Psalm 110 in Japanese (Shin Kaiyaku)

Thank you. Now would somebody please read Psalm 110 in English (ESV)

- 1 The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool."
- 2 The LORD sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of your enemies!
- 3 Your people will offer themselves freely on the day of your power, in holy garments; from the womb of the morning, the dew of your youth will be yours.
- 4 The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, "You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."
- 5 The Lord is at your right hand; he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath.
- 6 He will execute judgment among the nations, filling them with corpses; he will shatter chiefs over the wide earth.
- 7 He will drink from the brook by the way; therefore he will lift up his head.

Thank you. Psalm 110 is obviously very **short**, only 7 verses, but it is extraordinarily **important**.

It is quoted more **frequently** in the New Testament than any other chapter of the Old Testament!

Q. The **voice** speaking in this Psalm is whom?

A. **David**. At least the psalm is inscribed as a "Psalm of David."

Q. And what is so **special** about David?

A. He was the greatest **King** in Israel.

A. It was widely understood and agreed that the Messiah would come from the **House** of David.

A. It was generally understood and agreed that David spoke and sang with an inspired, **prophetic** voice.

A. Other?

Q. So in verse 1 of Psalm 110, when the voice of **David** says, "the LORD says to **my** Lord, "sit at my right hand and etc," who is speaking to whom?

A. God the Father is **speaking** to someone...someone whom **David** calls "my Lord."

Q. **Who** could David call my Lord, other than God?

A. The answer might at first seem to be "**nobody**" (For David to refer to someone other than God as my Lord might seem like blasphemy---the worship of a strange god!)

A. Upon reflection one realizes that this could only be the **Messiah**, someone other than David, and greater than David, who had been anointed King by the God of Israel.

It could **not** be **Solomon** or any other ordinary king of Israel descended from David, since David himself defers to this person as Lord,

and since God himself speaks to this Messiah as one who **sits** at God's **right hand**,

and who rules over **everything**,

and who is "**a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek**."

Clearly, then, this was a **messianic** Psalm.

Which Christians understand to have been fulfilled in **Jesus of Nazareth**.

And we know from the New Testament that Jesus **did** claim this Psalm to be about **himself**.

Will someone please read **Matthew, Chapter 22, verses 41-46** in Japanese (Shin Kaiyaku)

Thank you. Now will someone please read Matthew, Chapter 22, verses 41-46 in English (ESV)

- 41 Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question,
 42 saying, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" They said to him, "The son of David."
 43 He said to them, "How is it then that David, in the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying,
 44 "'The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet?'"
 45 "If then David calls him Lord, how is he his son?"
 46 And no one was able to answer him a word, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.

Thank you. Without any doubt, **Jesus** is here referring to **Psalm 110**.

And he sees this messianic Psalm as referring to **himself**, and in a way that points to his **deity**.

How **could** the Christ, that is the Messiah, be an ordinary son of David, if David calls him Lord?

From this reference to Psalm 110, then, it **also** follows that Jesus claims to be a **priest forever after the order of Melchizedek**.

Melchizedek is, then, without any possible doubt, a Biblical figure who **foreshadows** Christ.

He is what Bible scholars sometimes refer to as a "**type**" of Christ,

meaning a copy, likeness, or impression of him

Therefore what the Bible tells us about Melchizedek is **important**.

It is important **because** it tells us about Jesus,

even though the name Melchizedek appears in the Old Testament only **twice**:

once in Psalm 110 and (as we have already read) and once in **Genesis**.

Will somebody please read Genesis, **Chapter 14, verses 17-20** in Japanese (Shin Kaiyaku)

Will somebody please read that same passage in English (ESV)

17 After his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley).

18 And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.)

19 And he blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth;

20 and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!" And Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

Thank you. In verse 17 the possessive pronoun "his" refers to (who?) Abraham.

Q. Is Abraham important?

A. Yes, of course.

Q. Why is he important?

A. He is the "patriarch," the father of all the faithful, and the head of the church.

A. It was to Abraham that God first made the promises which are referred to, in verses 19 and 20 of Chapter 6, as the sure and steadfast anchor of the soul.."

Other than Christ himself, in the entire history of Israel and the Church, there is hardly anyone more important than Abraham.

And that (the surpassing importance of Abraham) is what is important for us to grasp here.

Because Abraham is so high and important, and because Melchizedek is even higher, and because Melchizedek is but a dim shadow of Christ, well then, we then know that Christ is almost unimaginably high and substantial --- this is the argument being developed.

O.K. So in the passage we just read, Abraham has heroically and somewhat miraculously defeated a group of Kings, who had kidnapped his nephew Lot and plundered the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

It was following this battle that we first encounter the name Melchizedek in the Bible.

And outside of Psalm 110, the four verses we just read from Genesis are the only place that Melchizedek's is even considered in the Old Testament.

He is not considered at all in the New Testament, outside of Hebrews.

Were it not for Hebrews, I suppose that very few Christians would ever have paid much attention to the two brief mentions of Melchizedek in the Old Testament.

Were it not for the typological reference in **Psalm 110**, I suppose that the author of Hebrews would never have written about Melchizedek in the first place.

It is because Melchizedek is mentioned in Psalm 110, by David, in what is the most frequently quoted chapter of the OT in the NT, one that is quoted by Christ himself, about himself, and because the Psalm 110 puts the mention of Melchizedek in the mouth of God the Father as he is describing his eternal and only begotten son, Melchizedek is rightfully a very important figure.

But his importance is entirely **derived** from Christ whom he foreshadows.

Which is to say that Christians study Melchizedek in order to understand **Christ** better.

And the New Testament book of Hebrews is **where** Christians do that.

Hopefully that puts Melchizedek in a proper perspective.

Next week we will begin reading Chapter.

Questions?

Comments?