

# EXPLANATION OF 58<sup>TH</sup> BIBLEBOOK

## HEBREWS 7 (A.D. 64)

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**Hebrews 7** teaches that the priesthood of Christ superseded the Levitical priesthood. Christ is the antitype of the type, Melchizedek, and not of Levi. The priesthood of Melchizedek is greater than that of Levi, because he is declared to be living (that is: *his genealogy is without beginning or end*), he received the tithes from Abraham and he blessed Abraham (from whom Levi descended)(7:1-10). The change of the Levitical priesthood brought about a change of the law (7:11-14). Christ became high priest not on the basis of a regulation from the law. The law is set aside because it is weak, useless and makes nothing perfect. A better hope is introduced on the basis of Christ's resurrection and indestructible life (7:15-19). Christ became priest with a sworn oath of God (7:20-22). This made him the guarantee of a better covenant. His priesthood is eternal and non-transferable. He saves believers completely and always lives to intercede for believers (7:23-25). He became a priest because he was completely blameless and sinless, made perfect forever (7:26-28).

### **Section 4. Hebrews 7:1-28.** **The priesthood of Christ superseded the Levitical priesthood.**

#### **7:1-3. The priesthood of Christ is the antitype of the type, Melchizedek the priest<sup>1</sup>.**

**7:1.** This Melchizedek then (was) king of Salem and priest of God Most High. He met Abraham from returning from the slaughter of the kings and he blessed him,<sup>2</sup>

#### **(1) Melchizedek in the Bible.**

The only record about Melchizedek in the Bible is found in Genesis 14:18-20 and Psalm 110:4. For the writer of the book of Hebrews this is a very important argument that *proves the superiority of the priesthood of Jesus Christ*. He makes a typological exegesis and regards *Melchizedek as a type (shadow) of the antitype (reality), Jesus Christ*. Melchizedek is a priest of "God Most High", a current divine title among Jews for the LORD, the God of the Bible<sup>3</sup>, but also among the Greeks for Zeus, who is of course not the God of the Bible<sup>4</sup>. The name nevertheless provides a common denominator in referring to 'the supreme God.'

The biblical narrative and archaeology points to the Elamite king, Chedorlaomer, who with three allied kings raided Transjordan and the Negev, defeated the city-states around the Jordan river and carried off a large number of captives, including Lot, the nephew of Abraham. Abraham and his neighbours set off in pursuit, overtook them at Damascus, launched a surprise attack, put them to flight and recovered the captives and plunder. On the return journey, Abraham was met by the king of Salem<sup>5</sup>, Melchizedek, who was also 'priest of God Most High, Creator<sup>6</sup> of heaven and earth'<sup>7</sup>. Melchizedek (being the greater) blessed Abraham and Abraham (being the lesser) gave Melchizedek a tenth of the spoils.

<sup>1</sup> The priesthood of Christ is based on Melchizedek, not on Aaron.

<sup>2</sup> **7:1.** This (ουτος-αυτη τουτο)(a-dnm-s=adjective *demonstrative* nominative masculine singular) Melchizedek then (γαρ)(cs=conjunction subordinating) (was) king (ο βασιλευς)(n-nm-s) of Salem and priest (ο ιερευς)(n-nm-s) of God (ο θεος)(n-gm-s) Most High (most exalted)(υψιστος-η-ον)(a-sgm-s=adjective *superlative* genitive masculine singular). He (ο)(dnms=determiner/definite article nominative masculine singular / aprnm-s=adjective pronominal *relative* nominative masculine singular) met (συναντησας>συνανταω)(vpaanm-s) Abraham from returning (υποστρεφοντι>υποστρεφω)(vppadm-s) from (απο)(pg) the slaughter (the defeat) (η κομη)(n-gf-s) of the kings (ο βασιλευς) (n-gm-p) and (κατα)(cc) he blessed (ευλογησας>ευλογεω)(vpaanm-s) him (αυτος-η-ο)(nramzs=noun pronoun accusative masculine 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular)

<sup>3</sup> Acts 7:48

<sup>4</sup> Acts 16:17

<sup>5</sup> Jerusalem

<sup>6</sup> Hebrew: qoneh

<sup>7</sup> Genesis 14:19,22

**7:2.** To whom also Abraham divided a tenth of everything. First, to be sure, (his name translated) means ‘king of righteousness’; then also ‘king of Salem’, that is king of peace<sup>8</sup>.

*The writer of Hebrews finds as much significance in what is not said about Melchizedek as he does in what is said about him. In the natural order, the name “Melchizedek” means ‘king of righteousness’<sup>9</sup> and the title “king of Salem” includes the word ‘peace’<sup>10</sup>. The writer of Hebrews uses him as an example in explaining the gospel and this is quite fitting, because in the spiritual order, peace with God is based upon the righteousness of God. Unless the righteousness of God is satisfied, there can be no peace with God!*

An absolute holy and righteous God must punish sin and atonement of sin must be made. Isaiah 32:17 says, “The work of righteousness shall be peace”. And Romans 5:1 says, “Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God.”

**7:3.** Without (a known) father, without (a known) mother, without (a known) genealogy, and not having (a known) beginning of days and without (a known) end of life, made as a copy of the Son of God, he remains a priest for all time.<sup>11</sup>

*The family of Melchizedek would never fail to have a male heir to rule; the antitype is Jesus Christ!*

When the writer refers to Melchizedek as being “without father and mother or genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life”, it does not mean that he regarded him as a biological anomaly or an angel in disguise. Historically, Melchizedek appears to have belonged to a dynasty of priest-kings in which he had both predecessors and successors. However, nothing is recorded in the Bible about this. *For the writer, the silences of Scripture were as much due to divine inspiration as were its statements.* In the biblical record nothing is said about his ancestry or progeny, birth or death. He appears and disappears within the biblical revelation as “a living person”. This makes him a fitting type of Christ. He remains a priest ‘without interruption’ or ‘continually’, thus forever.

The writer has the eternal being of the Son of God in view and not his human life (cf. for his human ancestry: our Lord descended from Judah)<sup>12</sup>. In his eternal being, the Son of God has *really*, as Melchizedek has *typically*, “neither beginning of days nor end of life”. And just as Melchizedek remains a priest continually for the duration of his appearance in the biblical narrative, so the exalted Son of God at the right hand of God remains a priest continually without qualification (cf. 7:23-25). It is not the type that determines the antitype, but the antitype (Christ) that determines the type (Melchizedek): Jesus is not portrayed after the pattern of Melchizedek, but Melchizedek is “made as a copy” of the Son of God. Similarly, the heavenly sanctuary is not portrayed after the pattern of the earthly sanctuary, but the earthly sanctuary is ‘made a copy’ of the heavenly sanctuary, in which Christ discharges his high-priestly ministry, and not vice versa (8:2-5).

## **7:4-10. The priesthood of Christ is great, because Melchizedek is great**

### **(2) That Melchizedek should be greater than Abraham constituted a problem for Jewish exegetes.**

Genesis 14 clearly indicates the greatness of Melchizedek. Earlier Jews said that Melchizedek was Shem, whose life according to the genealogy of the Masoretic text overlapped Abraham’s. Later Jews said that Melchizedek made the mistake to first bless Abraham before he blessed God and straightway the priesthood was given to Abraham. These Jews said that God’s words in Psalm 110:1 makes Abraham sit at God’s right hand and Psalm 110:4 makes Abraham the high priest forever. They say that Abraham’s priesthood was again superseded by that of Levi, who was still in the loins of his ancestor, Abraham.

Abraham was a great man indeed. He was ‘a mighty prince’ to his neighbours<sup>13</sup> and called ‘God’s friend’<sup>14</sup>. Yet, in the account of his meeting with Melchizedek, the latter appears greater than the first. The superior greatness of Melchizedek is evident from three reasons: he accepted tithes from Abraham, he bestowed his blessing on Abraham and he is declared to be living.

#### **a. Melchizedek accepted (collected) tithes from Abraham.**

**7:4.** You *must* observe, then how great this (Melchizedek) (is), to whom also Abraham, the patriarch gave a tenth from the top of the pile/heap (of the spoils).<sup>15</sup>

<sup>8</sup> 7:2. To whom (ω)(aprdm-s *relative*) also (καυ)(adverb) Abraham divided (εμερισεν>μεριζω)(via-zs) a tenth (tithe) (η εκατη)(apoaf-s *ordinal*) of (απο)(pg) everything (πας)(ap-gnp). First (πρωτος-η-ον)(apoan-s / ab) to be sure (but, on the one hand)(μεν) (cc)(his name translated) means (ερμηνευομενος>ερμηνευω) (vppnm-s) ‘king of righteousness’ (η δικαιοσυνη)(n-gf-s); then (επειτα)(ab=adverb) also (δε και)(ab) ‘king (ο βασιλευς) (n-nm-s) of Salem’ that (ο)(aprn-s *relative*) is (εστιν>ειμι)(vipa--zs) king (ο βασιλευς)(n-nm-s) of peace (η ειρηνη)(n-gf-s)

<sup>9</sup> Hebrew: melek+ zedek

<sup>10</sup> Hebrew: shalom

<sup>11</sup> 7:3. Without (a known) father (fatherless)(απατωρ)(a--nm-s), without (a known) mother (αμητωρ)(a--nm-s), without (a known) genealogy (αγενεαλογητος)(a--nm-s), and not (neither ...nor, without)(μητε)(cc) having (εχων>εχω)(vppanm-s) (a known) beginning (η αρχη)(n-af-s) of days (η ημερα)(n-gf-p) and without (μητε) (a known) end (το τελος)(n-an-s) of life (η ζωη)(n-gf-s), made as a copy (αφ-ομοιωμενος>αφ-ομοιωω)(vprnm-s *perfect tense*) of the Son (ο υιος)(n-dm-s) of God (ο θεος)(n-gm-s), he remains (continues) (μενει>μενω)(vipa--zs) a priest (ο ιερευς)(n-nm-s) for all time (εις) (πα) (το διηκες) (uninterrupted, continuously)(ap-an-s).

<sup>12</sup> Hebrews 7:14

<sup>13</sup> Genesis 23:6

<sup>14</sup> 2 Chronicles 20:8

<sup>15</sup> 7:4. You *must* observe (θεωρειτε>θεωρεω)(vipa—yp / vmpa--yp *imperative*), then (δε)(cc) how great (large) (πηλικος-η-ον)(a-Tnm-s)

The patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils which were recovered from the invading kings to Melchizedek. The dedication of one tenth of the spoils of war to a deity (on whose behalf his priest acted) was practised among the Greeks and other nations, but is not attested for in Israel. The institution of ‘the holy war’ in Israel rather devoted everything and not just a tenth to God according to the law of the ban<sup>16</sup>.

**7:5.** And those indeed of the sons of Levi (the descendants of Levi) who received the priestly office have the commandment to collect a tenth from the people according to the law – that is, from their brothers, – although they descended from the loins of Abraham.<sup>17</sup>

**7:6a.** He however who did not trace his genealogical descent from them, had collected the tithe from Abraham<sup>18</sup>

**b. Melchizedek bestowed his blessing on Abraham.**

**7:6b.** and he (Melchizedek) blessed him who had the promises.<sup>19</sup>

**7:7.** And without all opposition (contradiction) the lesser is blessed by the greater.<sup>20</sup>

**c. Melchizedek is declared to be living.**

**7:8.** And in the one case indeed dying/mortal men (Levites) collect the tithes. In the other case he (Melchizedek) is reported (declared) that he lives.<sup>21</sup>

Another token of Melchizedek’s superiority to the Levitical priesthood is that the biblical record nowhere relates the fact that Melchizedek lost his priestly office by death, whereas there are many records of the Levitical priests who died and had to transfer their duty and dignity to their heirs. “It is being witnessed or reported that he lives” in the sense that we never read of Melchizedek otherwise than as ‘a living person’. Thus, *so far as the biblical record goes*, Melchizedek has “no end of life”. Likewise, of Christ it can be said that he lives in the sense that, having died once for all as a weak, mortal man and risen from the dead with a glorified, immortal body, he is alive for evermore<sup>22</sup>.

**7:9.** One might almost say in a word: through Abraham, Levi who collects tithes, had also paid the tenth.<sup>23</sup>

**7:10.** For he (Levi) was still in the loins of his ancestor when Melchizedek met him (Abraham).<sup>24</sup>

Much later the Old Testament law required that the Israelites ‘give a tenth’ of certain possessions to their brothers, the Levitical “priesthood<sup>25</sup>, even though they also ‘descended’ from Abraham. Although the Levites collected the tithes during the Old Testament period, by the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D. the priests administered the tithes. It may have been this knowledge that caused the writer to say that “the priests collected the tithes.”

*inTerrogative*)(correlative pronoun) this (ουτος-αυτη-τουτο)(apdnm-s *demonstrative*) (Melchizedek) (is), to whom (ω)(aprdm-s *relative*) also [κα] Abraham, the patriarch (ο πατριάρχης)(n-nm-s) gave (εδωκεν>διδωμι)(via--zs) a tenth (η δεκατη)(apofaf-s *ordinal*) from (εκ)(pg) the top of the pile/hear (of the spoils) (the best part) (το ακροθινον)(n-gn-p).

<sup>16</sup> Hebrew: herem. Deuteronomy 7:2

<sup>17</sup> **7:5.** And (και)(cc) those (οι)(dnmp / nprnmzpa) indeed (μεν)(cs) of the sons (ο υιοι)(n-gm-p) of Levi (the descendants of Levi) who received (λαμβανοντες>λαμβανω)(vppanm-p) the priestly office (η ιερατεια)(n-af-s) have (εχουσιν>εχω)(vira--zs) the commandment (η εντολη)(n-af-s) to collect (receive/take) a tenth from (αποδεκατου>αποδεκατω)(vnpa) the people (ο λαος)(n--am-s) according to (κατα)(pa) the law (ο νομος)(n--am-s) – that (ουτος-αυτη-τουτο)(apdnn-s *demonstrative*) is (εστιν>ειμι)(vira-zs), from their (αυτος-αυτη-αυτο)(npgmzp) brothers (ο αδελφος)(n-am-p), – although (καιτερ)(cs) they descended (εξεληλυθοτα> εξερχομαι)(vpraam-p) from (εκ)(pg) the loins (waist, hip) (η οσφυς)(n-gf-s) of Abraham

<sup>18</sup> **7:6a.** He (ο)(dnms / nprnmzs)(Melchizedek) however (δε) who did not (μη)(ab) trace his genealogical descent (γενεαλογουμενος> γενεαλογεομαι) (vpppnm-s) from (εξ)(pg) them (αυτος-η-ο)(npgmzp)(the brothers), had collected (received, taken) the tithe (δεδεκατωκεν>δεκατω)(vira--zs *perfect tense*) from Abraham

<sup>19</sup> **7:6b.** and he (Melchizedek) blessed (ευλογηκεν>ευλογεω)(vira--zs *perfect tense*) him (τον)(dams / nprnmzs) who had (possessed) (εξοντα>εχω)(vppaam-s) the promises (η επαγγελια)(n-af-p)

<sup>20</sup> **7:7.** And (δε) without (χωρις)(pg) all (πας)(a--gf-s) opposition (contradiction, quarrel) (η αντιλογια)(n-gf-s) the (το)(dnms) lesser (ελαττον>ελασσων-ον)(apmnn-s= adjective pronominal *comparative* nominative neuter singular) is blessed (ευλογειται>ευλογεω)(vipp--zs) by

(υπο)(pg) the greater (ο κρειττονος>κρεισσων-ον or κρειττων-ον) (apmgn-s / apmgn-s=adjective pronominal *comparative* genitive masculine/neuter singular)

<sup>21</sup> **7:8.** And in the one case (ωδε)(ab) indeed (μεν)(cs) men (ο ανθρωπος)(n-nm-p) dying/mortal (αποθνησκοντες>αποθνησκω)(vppanm-p) (the anarthrous participle is used as an attributive and emphasises the character of the people) collect (gather, receive)(λαμβανουσιν>λαμβανω)(vira--zs) the tithes (η δεκατη)(apofaf-p *ordinal*). In the other case (εκει)(ab) he (Melchizedek) is reported (testified, declared) (μαρτυρουμενος> μαρτυρεω)(vpppnm-s) that (στι)(cc) he lives (ζει>ζαω)(vira--zs *present continuous tense*)

<sup>22</sup> Romans 1:3-4; Philippians 3:21; 1 Corinthians 15:42-44; cf. Romans 6:9; Revelation 1:18

<sup>23</sup> **7:9.** One might almost say in a word (so to speak, as said in a word)(ως επος ειπεν) (ως=cs), (το επος=word)(n-an-s), (ειπειν>λεγω) (vnaa):

through (δια)(pg) Abraham, Levi who collects (λαμβανων>λαμβανω)(vppanm-s) tithes (η δεκατας) (apofaf-p), had also (και) paid the tenth (δεδεκατωται<δεκατω)(vitr--zs *perfect tense*) (passive=paid the tenth and active =receive the tenth)

<sup>24</sup> **7:10.** For (γαρ)(cs) he (Levi) was (ην>ειμι)(via--zs) still (ετι)(ab) in (en)(pd) the loins (η οσφυς)(n-df-s) of his ancestor (ο πατηρ)(n-gm-s) when

(οτε)(cs) Melchizedek met (συνητησεν>συνανταω)(via--zs) him (αυτος-αυτη-ο)(nprdmzs)(Abraham)

<sup>25</sup> Numbers 18:21,26

“Having come forth out of the loins of Abraham” (7:5) is *corporate thinking, not individual thinking*. In biblical thought, an ancestor is regarded as containing within himself, his ‘loins’ or ‘hip’ or ‘waist’ as reproductive organ, all his descendants (cf. 7:9-10)<sup>26</sup>. Thus, Abraham is regarded as containing in himself both the Israelites and the Levites and priests. Levi was Abraham’s great-grandson and was not yet born when Abraham gave a tenth to Melchizedek. And thus, so to speak (7:10)<sup>27</sup>, the Old Testament priests are regarded as having given tithes in and through Abraham to the priest Melchizedek, who did not ‘trace his descent’ from Levi. This way of corporate thinking is also reflected in Genesis 25:23, where ‘two nations’ are in Rebekkah’s womb<sup>28</sup>, and Romans 5:12, where “all people have sinned” in solidarity with the one man’s (Adam’s) sin.

This proves that *the earlier priesthood of Melchizedek enjoyed a permanent higher status than the later priesthood of the Levites. That this higher status is permanent is also indicated by the two perfect verbs*: Melchizedek “had taken/received/ collected and now possessed the tithe”<sup>29</sup> from Abraham (7:6) and Levi had paid the tithe (7:9). And Melchizedek “had blessed”<sup>30</sup> Abraham (7:6) and that blessing remained (7:4-6a)!

### **7:11-14. The priesthood of Christ is not based on the Old Testament Levitical priesthood (the law)**

*In God’s decree, two things must be superseded: the priesthood of the Old Testament and the law of the Old Testament.* The reasons for this supersession is given in the rest of the chapter: *Both the Old Testament priesthood and the Old Testament law belonged to the temporary order and were ineffective (unable to bring perfection)(7:15-19). ‘Perfection’ consists of regeneration, personal knowledge of God and absolute assurance of forgiveness/salvation (8:10-12). The Old Testament covenant had no guarantee that it could or would be fulfilled (7:20-22).* The Old Testament priesthood was characterised by many mortal priests who could never complete their task (7:23-25). And the Old Testament priesthood never possessed a sinless priest (7:26-28). Jesus became ‘the Guarantee of a better covenant’ (7:22), because he is the perfect sinless One and the One who always lives!

#### **a. A change of priesthood.**

The Qumran literature shows that some Jewish expectation did *look forward to a time of restoration in which the high priest (the Messiah of Aaron) would take precedence over the Davidic prince (the Messiah of Judah)*. This was probably influenced by the description of *the ideal commonwealth* in Ezekiel chapters 40-48, where the priesthood takes practical precedence over the prince. This expectation might have lived among the Hebrews.

**7:11.** Now if perfection was through the Levitical priesthood/priestly office, - for the people had received the (enacting of the) law on the basis of it (the Levitical priesthood) - Why is it said (there is) still a need for another priest to be raised up - namely (that is) (one) according to the order of Melchizedek, not according to the order of Aaron?<sup>31</sup>

Under the Levitical priesthood, the people of Israel were given the law, that is, the Levitical priesthood kept the Mosaic Law (especially the ceremonial law and the civil law) alive and functioning among the people. It cannot be argued that the Levitical priesthood superseded that of Melchizedek, because at the time that the Levitical priesthood was well established, God’s word hailed the Messiah of David’s line as “a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek”<sup>32</sup> (1000 A.D.). If God’s plan with the Levitical priesthood had brought ‘perfection’ in the sense of bringing direct and unfettered access to God, then why was there a need for “another priest to arise, one after the order of Melchizedek” (7:11)?

*The Levitical priesthood, however, was neither designed nor competent to inaugurate the age of fulfilment (perfection) (namely, the New Testament period). The Levitical priesthood according to the order of Aaron (together with the ceremonial law it served) was designed to be only for Israel and temporary, only during the Old Testament period, because God himself decreed another priesthood according to the order of Melchizedek, designed for all nations and eternal, for the Messianic Age.*

*This fact has great consequences for not to introduce aspects of the ceremonial law into the New Testament Church!*<sup>33</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Genesis 25:23; Malachi 1:2-4; Romans 5:12

<sup>27</sup> ὡς ἐπος εἶπεν.

<sup>28</sup> cf. Malachi 1:2-3; Romans 9:11-13

<sup>29</sup> δεδεκατωκεν indicative *perfect active*

<sup>30</sup> εὐλογηκεν indicative *perfect active*

<sup>31</sup> **7:11.** Now if (εἰ μὲν οὖν)(cs cs cc) perfection (ἡ τελειωσις)(n-nf-s) (8:10-12) was (ἦν)(via--zs)(could have been attained) through (διὰ)(pg) the Levitical priesthood/priestly office (ἡ ἱερωσυνῆ)(n-gf-s)(more abstract than ἱερατεία (7:5), emphasising the worth or honour of the office of being a priest) - for (γὰρ)(cs) the people (ὁ λαός)(n-nm-s) had received the (enacting of the) law (the functioning as lawgivers, the legislating especially of the ceremonial law through the priests)(νενομοθετήται>νομοθετοῦμαι)(virp--zs *perfect tense*) on the basis (ἐπι)(pg) of it (αὐτοῦ-αὐτῆ-αὐτο)(npfzs)(the Levitical priesthood) - Why (τις)(a-tnf-s *inTerrogative*) is it said (λεγεσθαί>λεγω)(vnp) (there is) still (εἶ)(ab) a need (ἡ χρεία)(n-nf-s) for another (ετερος-α-ον)(a--am-s) priest (ὁ ἱερευς)(n-am-s) (namely Christ) to be raised up (ανιστασθαί>ανιστημι)(vnp) - namely (that is) (καὶ) (one) according to (κατὰ)(pa) the order (ἡ τάξις)(n-af-s) of Melchizedek, not (οὐ)(ab) according to the order of Aaron?

<sup>32</sup> Psalm 110:4, a Psalm of David

<sup>33</sup> Thus, it is wrong to re-introduce aspects of the ceremonial law (holy people: priests, holy places: temple building, holy times: sabbath, Jewish

b. A change of law.

Jesus taught that he did not come to ‘destroy’ or ‘annul’<sup>34</sup> the law, but *once for all* to ‘fulfil’<sup>35</sup> the law<sup>36</sup>.

**7:12.** For *when* (there is) a change of the priesthood, out of necessity (compulsion) there (must) also be a change of the law.<sup>37</sup>

The writer to the Hebrews teaches that the Levitical priesthood was instituted under the Law of Moses and formed an integral part of it. Thus, *when there is a change of priesthood, there must also be a change of the law.*

*The Greek word: ‘μεταθεσις’ (a change) in Hebrews 7:12 and in Hebrews 12:27 implies not merely ‘a change’, but as in Hebrews 7:18 an actual αθετησις (‘abrogation/removal/setting aside’)!*

Compare the following three Bible passages:

- Matthew 5:17. Jesus Christ came to fulfil the law once for all<sup>38</sup>. These laws have been fulfilled.
- Colossians 2:14. Thereby he once for all cancelled/annulled/wiped out<sup>39</sup> the law with its requirements (regulations)<sup>40</sup>. These laws are no longer valid.
- Ephesians 2:14-15. And once for all repealed/revoked/invalidated (nullified, annulled, made of no effect)<sup>41</sup> the law<sup>42</sup> with its commands (precepts)<sup>43</sup> and requirements (regulations)<sup>44</sup>. These Old Testament laws may never be re-instituted either in Judaism or in Christianity. The old order is obsolete and makes nothing perfect! The new order has replaced the old order (8:6-13)!

If the Levitical priesthood was instituted for a temporary purpose, to be brought to an end when the age of fulfilment dawned, the same must be true of the law (the ceremonial law) under which that priesthood was instituted! Thus, *the ceremonial law has been brought to an end at the first coming of Christ and may never be re-instituted!*

**7:13.** For with reference to the one (Jesus Christ) these things are said, he belonged to (was out of his free will a partaker of) a different tribe, of which no one has ever served at the altar<sup>45</sup>.

Jesus “shared or partook or belonged to” another tribe, the tribe of Judah and not the tribe of Levi. The choice of this Greek word<sup>46</sup> points to the voluntary assumption of humanity by Jesus. It is not said simply that he was born of another tribe, but that of his own will he was born so. The perfect tense stresses a condition of fact, both historic and official. He “sprung up or arose (like the sun) to prominence” from that tribe. *The perfect tense*<sup>47</sup> expresses the condition of a historical and official fact based on his choice to be born from the tribe of Judah and not from the tribe of Levi. Beyond doubt this accentuates the absolute incompatibility between Jesus Christ and the priesthood according to the Old Testament law.

**7:14.** For<sup>48</sup> that our Lord descended from Judah, with regard to which tribe Moses said nothing (not one thing) about priests.<sup>49</sup>

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religious festivals, fasting days, holy actions: circumcision, ablutions, animal sacrifices, eating clean foods, giving tithes, wearing distinctive clothing) into the New Testament period and New Testament Church! Cf. [www.dota.net](http://www.dota.net) Manual 4 supplement 16.

<sup>34</sup> καταλυσαι<καταλυω. infinitive aorist active

<sup>35</sup> πληρωσαι<πληρωω. infinitive aorist active

<sup>36</sup> Matthew 5:17

<sup>37</sup> 7:12. For ( γαρ)(cs) when (there is) a change (μετατιθεμενης>μετατιθημι)(vpppgf-s) of the priesthood (η ιερωσυνη)(n-gf-s), out of (εξ)(pg) necessity (compulsion) (η αναγκη)(n-gf-s) there (must) also (και)(ab) be (γινεται>γινομαι)(vipn--zs) a change (η μεταθεσις)(n-nf-s) of the law

(ο νομος)(n-gm-s)

<sup>38</sup> πληρωσαι>πληρωω. infinitive aorist active

<sup>39</sup> εξάλειψας>εξάλειψω. participle aorist active

<sup>40</sup> το δογμα

<sup>41</sup> καταργησας>καταργεω. participle aorist active

<sup>42</sup> ο νομος

<sup>43</sup> η εντολη

<sup>44</sup> το δογμα

<sup>45</sup> 7:13. For (γαρ)(cs) with reference to (επι)(pa) the one (Jesus Christ) (ον)(apram-s=adjective pronominal relative accusative masculine singular) these things (ταυτα)(apdnn-p demonstrative) are said (λεγεται>λεγω)(vipn--zs), he belonged to (was out of his own free will a partaker of) (μετεσχηκεν>μετεχω)(vira--zs perfect tense) a different (ετερος -η -ον)(a--gf-s) tribe (η φυλη)(n--gf-s), of (απο)(pg) which (ης)(aprgf-s relative) no one (ουδεις)(apcnnm-s cardinal) has ever served at (attended to) (προσεσχηκεν>προσεχω)(vira--zs) the altar (το θυσιαστηριον) (n-dn-s)

<sup>46</sup> μετεχω

<sup>47</sup> μετεσχηκεν

<sup>48</sup> (it is) clear

<sup>49</sup> 7:14. For (γαρ) (προδηλος-ον >προδηλωω)(a--nn-s) that (στι)(cc) our (ημων)(npg-xp) Lord (ο κυριος)(n-nm-s) descended (to rise, spring up) (ανατεταλκεν>ανατελλω) (vira--zs perfect tense) from (εξ)(preposition +genitive) Judah, with regard to (εις)(pa) which (ην)(a-raf-s relative) tribe (η φυλη) (that tribe) Moses said (ελαλησεν>λαλεω)(via--zs) nothing (not one thing)(ουδεν)(apcan-s cardinal) about (περι)(pg) priests (ο ιερεις)(n-gm-p).

As far as *the law* of the Old Testament is concerned, no man in the tribe of Judah has ever ‘served’ at the altar or the place of sacrifice. However, as far as *the historical books* of the Old Testament are concerned, Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob built altars and sacrificed animals. Also David and Solomon had offered sacrifices on various occasions<sup>50</sup>!

*Like the writer of Hebrews, the apostle Paul also concluded that the Old Testament law was temporary.* “Therefore the law was our ‘tutor’ or ‘schoolteacher’ put in charge to lead us to Christ<sup>51</sup>. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law<sup>52</sup>. While Paul thinks of ‘the (moral) law’ as a means designed to promote people’s awareness of sin<sup>53</sup> and not (as he once believed) to procure their justification before God, the writer of Hebrews thinks rather of the (ceremonial) law as the sacrificial cult, as something that could never effectively remove sin<sup>54</sup>. *While Paul has the moral law in mind, the writer of Hebrews has the ceremonial law in mind!* However, both agree that *the law was a temporary decree of God, valid only until Jesus Christ came to inaugurate the age of perfection!* In the New Testament period the moral law is functioning in the heart<sup>55</sup> and is summarised by the new commandment of love<sup>56</sup>, but *the ceremonial law has been fulfilled, cancelled and repealed.*

### **c. The law was permanently changed at the first coming of Jesus Christ.**

With the first coming of Jesus Christ there has also come a permanent change of the law<sup>57</sup>. *The New Testament teaching clearly shows how different parts of the ceremonial law had been fulfilled and consequently cancelled and abolished. ‘The temporary shadows’ of the Old Testament period have been changed into ‘the permanent realities’ of the New Testament period<sup>58</sup>.*

#### **(1) The priests as shadow and reality.**

The Old Testament priests in the order of Aaron were *abolished and exchanged* for the New Testament priesthood in the order of Melchizedek. The mortal Old Testament high priests have been *replaced* by the Eternal High Priest, Jesus Christ<sup>59</sup> and also the Old Testament priests in the temple service of Israel were *abolished and replaced* by the New Testament priesthood of all believers in the Church<sup>60</sup>

#### **(2) The temple as shadow and reality.**

The Old Testament Tent of Meeting<sup>61</sup> and the physical temple in Jerusalem were *abolished<sup>62</sup> and replaced* by the Church in the New Testament that consists of an uncountable number of people in whom the Holy Spirit dwells<sup>63</sup>.

#### **(3) The Jewish feasts as shadow and reality.**

The Old Testament Jewish feasts were *abolished<sup>64</sup>*. Jesus instituted only two Christian celebrations in the New Testament: the Lord’s Supper<sup>65</sup> and baptism with water<sup>66</sup>. All the other modern Christian festivals like Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, Ascension and Pentecost arose in later tradition. They are not required, but may be celebrated. “One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. (They both do so to the Lord). Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind<sup>67</sup>”.

#### **(4) The Sabbath as shadow and reality.**

The Old Testament ceremonial aspect of the Sabbath, namely, keeping it on *the seventh day of the week (Saturday)*(as a sign of “the end/completion of the creation”), was *abolished and replaced* by resting and getting refreshed<sup>68</sup>, by meeting together with other believers in a holy assembly<sup>69</sup> and by doing good and saving lives<sup>70</sup> on *the first day of the week (Sunday)*(as a sign of “the beginning/inauguration of the new creation”)<sup>71</sup>.

<sup>50</sup> cf. 2 Samuel 6:13,17-18; 2 Samuel 24:25; 1 Kings 3:4; 1 Kings 8:62-64. Long before the institution of the ceremonial law, Noah (Genesis 8:20), Abraham (Genesis 12:7-8; 22:9), Isaac (Genesis 26:25) and Jacob (Genesis 33:20; 35:1,7) built altars and sacrificed animals.

<sup>51</sup> ὥστε ὁ νομὸς παιδαγωγὸς ἡμῶν γέγονεν εἰς Χριστόν

<sup>52</sup> Galatians 3:24-25

<sup>53</sup> Romans 7:7

<sup>54</sup> Hebrews 10:1-4

<sup>55</sup> Hebrews 8:10-12

<sup>56</sup> Mark 12:30-31; John 13:34-35

<sup>57</sup> Hebrews 7:12

<sup>58</sup> Colossians 2:17; Hebrews 8:5; 9:8-10; 10:1

<sup>59</sup> Hebrews 7:11-28

<sup>60</sup> 1 Peter 2:5,9.

<sup>61</sup> Hebrews 8:1-6; 9:1-8,24

<sup>62</sup> Matthew 27:51; Acts 7:48-49; Acts 17:24-25, Revelation 21:22

<sup>63</sup> 2 Corinthians 6:14; Ephesians 2:19-22

<sup>64</sup> Romans 14:5, Colossians 2:16-17, Galatians 4:8-11

<sup>65</sup> Matthew 26:26-28; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

<sup>66</sup> Matthew 28:19

<sup>67</sup> Romans 14:5

<sup>68</sup> Exodus 23:12

<sup>69</sup> Leviticus 23:3

<sup>70</sup> Mark 2:23-28, Mark 3:1-6

<sup>71</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:17

Note that the resurrection of Christ<sup>72</sup>; the outpouring of the Holy Spirit<sup>73</sup>; the beginning and gathering of the new community/the Church all happened on the first day of the week<sup>74</sup>.

**(5) The ceremonial prayers as shadow and reality.**

The Old Testament ceremonial prayers three times a day facing Jerusalem<sup>75</sup> were *replaced* in the New Testament by “the Lord’s Prayer”<sup>76</sup>, by praying with “unashamed boldness”<sup>77</sup> and by “always keeping on praying”<sup>78</sup>.

**(6) The fasts as shadow and reality.**

The Old Testament fasts together with their mourning<sup>79</sup> were *abolished and replaced* by the New Testament joy of Christ’s continual presence<sup>80</sup>. The prophet Zechariah had prophesied that this would happen.

**(7) The sacrifices as shadow and reality.**

The Old Testament offering of all sacrifices was *abolished*, because they were *once for all time* fulfilled and *replaced* by the unique and final sacrifice of atonement of Christ on the cross<sup>81</sup>. The Greek word “*efhapax*” means “at one time” or “*once for all*” and designates that the sacrifice of Christ was definite and final!<sup>82</sup>

**(8) The tithes as shadow and reality.**

The Old Testament giving of tithes<sup>83</sup> was *abolished and replaced* by the New Testament way of giving<sup>84</sup>. The Old Testament regulation of tithing<sup>85</sup> may NOT be re-introduced into any Christian Church as a Christian duty or requirement! God does not require of Christians that they should give tithes or any other percentage of their income. But God does teach that Christians should give generously, with conviction, not reluctantly or under compulsion, but cheerfully<sup>86</sup>! And he even recommends that Christians should give sacrificially<sup>87</sup>.

**(9) The firstborn and first fruits as shadow and reality.**

The Old Testament dedication of the firstborn boys and animals in Israel<sup>88</sup> to God were *abolished and replaced* by all New Testament male and female Christians who were redeemed (bought) with the precious blood of Christ<sup>89</sup>. And the Old Testament first fruits of the harvest in Israel<sup>90</sup> have been abolished and replaced in the New Testament by God giving to Christians everything they have and need<sup>91</sup>.

**(10) Circumcision as shadow and reality.**

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<sup>72</sup> Mark 16:1-2

<sup>73</sup> Leviticus 23:15-16; Acts 2:1

<sup>74</sup> Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2

<sup>75</sup> Psalm 55:17; Daniel 6:10

<sup>76</sup> Matthew 6:5-15

<sup>77</sup> Luke 11:1-13; Luke 18:1-14

<sup>78</sup> Ephesians 6:18

<sup>79</sup> The days of fasting were connected with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple at the beginning of the exile to Babylon (Zechariah 7:3,5; Zechariah 8:19):

i) The fast of the 10<sup>th</sup> month was mourning *the siege of Jerusalem* by Nebuchadnezzar’s army (Jeremiah 39:1; 52:4).

ii) The fast of the 4<sup>th</sup> month was mourning *the fall of Jerusalem* and royal house (2 Kings 25:3-4; Jeremiah 39:2).

iii) The fast of the 5<sup>th</sup> month was mourning *the destruction of Jerusalem* and temple (2 Kings 25:8-12; Jeremiah 52:12-16).

iv) The fast of the 7<sup>th</sup> month was mourning the assassination of the governor Gedaliah and *flight of the remnant to Egypt* (2 Kings 25:25-26).

Although God had never required these fasts, it nevertheless became a tradition among God’s Old Testament people since the beginning of the exile.

<sup>80</sup> Matthew 6:16-18, Matthew 9:14-17; Mark 2:18-22; John 16:16-22

<sup>81</sup> John 1:29, Hebrews 7:27, 9:9-14,25-26; Hebrews 10:10

<sup>82</sup> Ezekiel 45:15-20 is NOT a prophecy about atonement sacrifices in Israel during the so-called future millennial kingdom of peace envisioned by followers of dispensationalism. Ezekiel chapter 40-48 is a prophetic picture of the perfect ideal of God’s Old Testament people after the return from

exile which points to the perfect ideal of God’s New Testament people in the Kingdom of God (cf. Revelation chapter 21-22). The belief in future atonement sacrifices *nullifies the once for all time atonement sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross* (cf. Mark 7:1-13)!

<sup>83</sup> *The Old Testament teaches three tithes*, not just one tithe, compulsory for the nation of Israel and not for other nations! First tithe (Leviticus 27:30-33; Malachi 3: 6-12). Second tithe (Deuteronomy 12:17-19). The third tithe (Deuteronomy 14:28-29). After the death and resurrection of Christ tithing in Israel has been *abolished and replaced* by New Testament giving in the Church (Luke 6:38; 2 Corinthians 9:6-7)!

<sup>84</sup> Mark 12:41-44, Luke 6:38, 1 Corinthians 16:2, 2 Corinthians 8:3,12,14; 2 Corinthians 9:6-7; See “Giving” in www.dota.net manual 4, lesson 44.

<sup>85</sup> Malachi 3:10

<sup>86</sup> 2 Corinthians 9:6-7

<sup>87</sup> Luke 6:38; Acts 20:33-35; 2 Corinthians 8:3,9

<sup>88</sup> Exodus 4:22; 13:2; Numbers 3:13,41

<sup>89</sup> Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 1:18-19

<sup>90</sup> Numbers 18:12-13; Deuteronomy 18:4-5

<sup>91</sup> Acts 17:24-26; Romans 8:32; 1 Corinthians 2:12; 4:7; 1 Timothy 6:6-7

The Old Testament circumcision of boys was *abolished and replaced* by the New Testament spiritual circumcision of the heart of men and women<sup>92</sup>.

**(11) The ablutions (purification rites) as shadow and reality.**

The Old Testament ceremonial ablutions were purification rites or washings by way of sprinkling<sup>93</sup> or pouring water from above on and over<sup>94</sup> a person. They symbolised the washing away of sin and pollution of the world<sup>95</sup>.

The Old Testament ceremonial washings as shadows were *abolished and replaced* by the New Testament rebirth (the washing away of sins) and sanctification by the Holy Spirit as the realities<sup>96</sup>. The baptism with the Holy Spirit (that is, rebirth) is given a sign and sealed with the Christian baptism with water<sup>97</sup>.

**(12) Clean foods as shadow and reality.**

The Old Testament regulation with respect to eating unclean food served as a shadow pointing forward to sanctification<sup>98</sup>. This regulation of only eating clean food was *abolished and replaced* in the New Testament by the Word of God that cleanses believers once for all<sup>99</sup>. Since his first coming Jesus Christ declared all food “clean”<sup>100</sup>. “Nothing outside a man can make him ‘unclean’ by going into him (into his belly). Rather, it is what comes out of a man (out of his heart and mouth) that makes him ‘unclean’”<sup>101</sup>.

**(13) ‘Israel’ as shadow and reality.**

Israel as the beginning of God’s people, consisting of the chosen and believing remnant during the Old Testament period, is not terminated at the first coming of Christ or replaced by the New Testament Church during the New Testament period, but is continued as God’s elect believers on the higher plane of ‘fulfilment’ and ‘realities’ during the New Testament period and enlarged to include all elect believers from all nations in the world<sup>102</sup>.

**Conclusion.**

*Jesus Christ once-for-all-time fulfilled<sup>103</sup>, cancelled (repealed)<sup>104</sup> and abolished (blotted out, terminated the existence)<sup>105</sup> of the ceremonial laws in the Old Testament. These Old Testament ceremonial laws in Israel may never again be re-introduced into the New Testament Christian Church, because it would again cause divisions among Christians (from among the Jews and from among the non-Jews).*

Therefore, regulations of the Old Testament ceremonial law like electing high priests, building temples and altars, keeping the seventh day as the Sabbath and other Jewish feasts and periods of fasting, bringing animal sacrifices, circumcising boys in their flesh, ablutions before religious ceremonies and eating ceremonial clean foods may NOT be re-introduced into the Christian Church.

**7:15-19. The priesthood of Christ is superior, because it is permanent and effective<sup>106</sup>**

The reason why both the Old Testament priesthood and Old Testament law had to be superseded, is that they both belonged to the temporary order and were ineffective (unable to bring perfection). The priesthood of the Old Testament was characterised by externalities and transience and therefore had to be set aside. God raised up another priest whose priesthood is characterised by permanence and effectiveness. The priesthood of Jesus Christ enables people to draw near to God and to become perfect.

**a. The priesthood characterised by externalities and transience contrasted with the priesthood characterised by permanence and effectiveness.**

**7:15.** And it is even more clear if another priest according to the likeness of Melchizedek arises,<sup>107</sup>

<sup>92</sup> Romans 2:28-29, 1 Corinthians 7:17-20, Galatians 6:13-16; Colossians 2:11-12

<sup>93</sup> ραντιζω. Hebrews 9:21; 10:22; 11:28

<sup>94</sup> εκχεω. 2 Kings 3:11; Luke 11:38-39; cf. Acts 22:16

<sup>95</sup> Leviticus 14:1-9; cf. Leviticus 4:1 – 5:13; Leviticus 15:11; Ezekiel 36:25-27; Mark 7:2-4; Luke 11:38-39; John 13:5,9-10; Hebrews 10:19-22

<sup>96</sup> Acts 2:38; Titus 3:5-6; Hebrews 10:22

<sup>97</sup> Mark 1:8; Acts 10:47-48; Acts 22:16

<sup>98</sup> Deuteronomy 14:1-3

<sup>99</sup> John 15:3; Ephesians 5:26

<sup>100</sup> Mark 7:19, Romans 14:2-6,13-23, Colossians 2:16, 1 Timothy 4:3-5

<sup>101</sup> Mark 7:15,23

<sup>102</sup> John 10:16; Acts 13:46-48; Romans 2:28-29; Romans 10:12-13; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:15 – 4:7; Ephesians 2:11-22; Ephesians 3:2-6; Colossians 3:11; 1 Peter 2:9-10; Revelation 21:12-14.

<sup>103</sup> Matthew 5:17

<sup>104</sup> Colossians 2:14

<sup>105</sup> Ephesians 2:14-15

<sup>106</sup> The priesthood of Christ is based on an indestructible life and saving completely

<sup>107</sup> 7:15. And (και) it is (εστιν>ειμι)(vīpa--zs) even (ετι)(adverb) more (περισσοτερος-α-ον)(apman-s /abm coMparative)(comparative of πολυ) clear (καταδηλος -ον)(a--nn-s) if (ει)(cc) another (ετερος-α-ον)(a--nm-s) priest (ο ιερεις)(n-nm-s) according to (κατα)(pa) the likeness (η ομοιοτης)(n-af-s) of Melchizedek arises (ανισταται>ανιστημι)(vīpm--zs),

**7:16.** (one) who has not become (a priest) according to (based on) the law of a physical regulation (norm), but according to the power of an indestructible life.<sup>108</sup>

The Levitical priesthood was instituted not simply “on the basis of a regulation of his ancestry” (NIV), but on the basis of “the law of a carnal commandment”, that is, it was *based on ‘a system of earth-bound or external rules, like the physical descent of the priests, the hand-made sanctuary and animal sacrifices (the Mosaic Law)’ and remained such an earthbound priesthood. It is characterised by transience and externalities of religion.*

**7:17.** For it is declared namely, “You (are) a priest unto eternity, according to the order of Melchizedek.”<sup>109</sup>

In contrast, this ‘other priest’ ‘arises’ (cf. 7:11) on the basis of ‘the power of an endless or indestructible life’, because Psalm 110:4 witnesses of him, ‘you are a priest for ever’. It is characterised by *permanence and effectiveness*. No Levitical priest is ever described as an everlasting priest. If the words ‘for ever’ were applied to a dynasty of priests, it could only be understood of a hereditary succession of indefinite duration. Exodus 40:15 says, “Anoint them so they may serve me as priests. Their anointing will be a priesthood that will continue for all generations to come.”<sup>110</sup> Jeremiah 33:14-26 is missing in the Greek text and the Hebrew text may possibly be a much later Jewish addition<sup>111</sup>. Nevertheless, in contrast to the mortal Levitical priests, Jesus Christ is immortal. Having died once for all and having arisen from the dead, he exercises his function in the power of a life that can never be destroyed.

**b. The setting aside of the earlier regulation and the introduction of a better hope.**

**7:18.** For indeed the cancellation (setting aside, annulment of a legal enactment) of the former regulation is effected through (being) weak and useless.<sup>112</sup>

**7:19.** - for the law made nothing (not one thing) perfect (brought nothing to its goal) – but (there is) an introduction (a bringing in in order to replace) of a better hope, by which we *again and again* draw near to God.<sup>113</sup>

Thus, there came about an ‘annulment’ or ‘setting aside’ or ‘cancellation’ or ‘abrogation’<sup>114</sup> of the earlier law that instituted the Levitical priesthood. The word ‘cancellation’ (7:18) was a legal term used in the papyri for the cancellation or annulment of a legal enactment. It is *a much stronger word than the word ‘change’* (7:12)<sup>115</sup>. *The Old Testament ceremonial law was ‘weak’ and ‘useless’ or ‘profitless’ and ‘made nothing perfect’ or ‘brought nothing to the goal’* (7:19). *It brought no real peace of conscience and no immediate access to God!*

This does not mean that faithful men and women in the Old Testament period did not enjoy peace of conscience and a sense of the nearness of God<sup>116</sup>. But these men experienced peace of conscience and the nearness of God, *not because of keeping the law, but because they believed!* Their experience had nothing to do with keeping the Mosaic Law! The whole ceremonial (ritual) law of the Old Testament was calculated to keep people at a distance from God rather than to bring them near to God.<sup>117</sup> With the first coming of Jesus Christ this ceremonial law is (fulfilled and) ‘set aside’<sup>118</sup>.

<sup>108</sup> **7:16.** (ος) who (ος)(apnm-s relative) has not (ου)(ab) become (γεγονεν>γινομαι)(vira—zs perfect tense) (a priest) according to (based on)(κατα)(pa) the law (ο νομος)(nn-am-s) of a physical (η σαρκινη)(a--gf-s) regulation (norm) (η εντολη)(n-gf-s), but (αλλα)(ch) according to

(on the basis of)(κατα)(pa) the power (η δυναμις)(n-af-s) of an indestructible (not able to be destroyed, endless) (ακαταλυτος-ον)(a--gf-s) life (η ζωη)(n-gf-s)

<sup>109</sup> **7:17.** For (γαρ)(cs) it is declared (μαρτυρεται>μαρτυρω)(vipr--zs) namely (that) (ου)(cc), “You (συ)(nprn-ys) (are) a priest (ο ιερεις) (n-nm-s) unto (εις)(pa) eternity (ο αιων)(n-am-s)(forever), according to (κατα)(pa) the order (η ταξις)(n-af-s) of Melchizedek.”

<sup>110</sup> Hebrew: le-kehunet/kehunah olam le-dorotam >dor (generation, age) = a priesthood for all generations to come. Exodus 40:15; Numbers 25:13

<sup>111</sup> Jeremiah 33:17-22. “David will never fail to have a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel, nor will the priests, who are Levites ever fail to have a man to stand before me continually (they will be a priesthood that will continue for all generations to come)”. ... If you can break my covenant with the day and my covenant with the night... then my covenant with David my servant - and my covenant with the Levites who are priests ministering before me – can be broken. ... I will make David my servant and the Levites who minister before me as the stars of the sky and as measureless as the sand of the sea shore.”

<sup>112</sup> **7:18.** For (γαρ)(cs) indeed (μεν)(cs) the cancellation (setting aside, annulment of a legal enactment)(η αθετησις)(n-nf-s) of the former (to precede) (προαγουσις>προαγω)(vppagf-s)(used in adjective sense) regulation (η εντολη)(n-gf-s) is effected (γινεται>γινομαι)(vipr--zs) through (δια)(pa) (δια+το=because it is) (being) weak (ασθενησις-εις)(ap-an-s) and useless (ανωφελησις-εις)(ap-an-s)

<sup>113</sup> **7:19.** - for (γαρ)(cs) the law (ο νομος)(n-nm-s) made nothing (not one thing)(ουδεν)(apcan-s cardinal) perfect (brought nothing to its goal) (ετελειωσεν>τελειωω)(via-zs) - and (δε)(ch) (there is) (+ γινεται) an introduction (a bringing in)(η επεισαγωγη)(n-nf-s)(Josephus: a bringing in

to replace the former) of a better (κρειττων-κρειττονος)(a-mgf-s)(comparative of αγαθος) hope (η ελπις)(n-gf-s), by (pg) which (ης)(aprgf-s relative) we *again and again* draw near (εγγιζομεν>εγγιζω)(vipa--xp) to God (ο θεος)(n-dm-s)

<sup>114</sup> η αθετησις. cf. Mark 7:9

<sup>115</sup> η μεταθεσις

<sup>116</sup> cf. Psalm 32:1-2; Psalm 73:28

<sup>117</sup> Galatians 3:21-25. “For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law. But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin. so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe. Before this faith came we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith” (ωστε ο νομος ημων γεγονεν εις χριστον, ινα εκ πιστεως δικαιοθωμεν). Now that faith

has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law.” A ‘παιδαγωγος’ was a slave as custodian in charge of a boy between 6-16 years of age.

<sup>118</sup> Hebrews 7:18-19a; cf. Matthew 5:17; Ephesians 2:14-15; Colossians 2:14

“The law made nothing perfect, but (there is) ‘an introduction’ or ‘a bringing in in addition to’ of the better hope”. This hope, introduced in the gospel in the New Testament, is better, because it accomplishes what was impossible under the old ceremonial law in the Old Testament. It enables believers in Christ to draw near to God<sup>119</sup>. Through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, all people who believe have forgiveness of sins, have a clear conscience and have an uninhibited access to fellowship with God!<sup>120</sup>

### **7:20-22. The priesthood of Christ is superior, because God guarantees the fulfilment of the covenant<sup>121</sup>**

The priesthood of the Old Testament had to be superseded, because it could not guarantee the fulfilment of the Old Testament covenant.

While the Old Testament covenant had a mediator, but no guarantor, *the new covenant has a Mediator and a Guarantor*. Therefore also the Old Testament covenant in the sense of the Mosaic Law had to be superseded.

#### **a. The new priest is confirmed by God’s oath.**

**7:20.** According to how much (inasmuch) (it was) not without an oath! But others (Old Testament priests) indeed are without an oath having been made priests and acted as priests,<sup>122</sup>

**7:21.** but he (became a priest) with an oath through (by) (God) saying to him: “The Lord has *once for all* sworn and will *certainly* not change his mind: ‘You are a priest forever.’”<sup>123</sup>

While the inauguration of the Levitical priesthood rested on a divine command of God<sup>124</sup> (valid for a limited time), the priesthood of Christ rests on a divine oath (valid forever). The supreme oath in Israel is, “as surely as the Lord lives”. Abraham himself swore by God and made others do the same<sup>125</sup>. But because God has none greater than himself by whom to swear, he swears by himself, “As sure as I live”<sup>126</sup>. While the bare word of God is guarantee enough<sup>127</sup>, confirming it with an oath makes assurance double sure<sup>128</sup>!

*The purpose of God’s oath is to make the unchanging nature of God’s purpose very clear* to the heirs of what he promised (6:17). The institution of the Levitical priesthood was never accompanied by God’s oath. People were “made priests and acted as priests”. *The perfect tense marks the imparting as well as possession of the office of priesthood*. But in Psalm 110:4, the appointment of Jesus Christ as priest was confirmed by God’s oath, God ‘swearing’ or ‘taking an oath’ and not ‘regretting’ or ‘repenting’ or (best translation:) ‘not changing his mind’<sup>129</sup>! The purpose of God’s oath is to show the unchanging nature of his purpose with Jesus Christ and to suggest the superior dignity of his priesthood.

#### **b. The new covenant is a better covenant.**

(This is the first occurrence of the word ‘covenant’ in Hebrews).

**7:22.** Because of this (oath) Jesus has become *and forever remains* the guarantee of a better covenant.<sup>130</sup>

*The divine oath became “the guarantee of a better covenant”*. The word ‘covenant’ means ‘contract’, ‘agreement’ or ‘testament’. The word ‘guarantee’ or ‘surety’ is frequently used in common Greek in legal and other documents in the sense of ‘a surety’ or ‘bond’ or ‘bail’ or ‘collateral’ or ‘guarantee’ that a promise would be fulfilled. ‘The guarantor’<sup>131</sup> is the ‘one who stands security’. He undertakes a weightier responsibility than the ‘mediator’<sup>132</sup> (8:6; 9:15; 12:24), because *he is answerable for the fulfilment of the obligation which he guarantees*. Note the relationship between the functions of a mediator and a guarantor. The old covenant had a mediator<sup>133</sup>, but no guarantor. There was no one to guarantee the

<sup>119</sup> cf. Hebrews 4:16

<sup>120</sup> Ephesians 2:18; 3:12

<sup>121</sup> The priesthood of Christ is based on God’s sworn oath.

<sup>122</sup> **7:20.** According to (κατα)(πα) how much (οσον)(apran-s relative)(inasmuch) (it was) not (ου)(ab) without (χωρις)(pg) an oath (η ορκωμοσια)(n-gf-s) (of God)! But (γαρ)(cs) others (ου)(dnmp / nprnmzp)(Old Testament priests) indeed (μεν)(cs) are (εισιν>ειμι)(vipa--zp) without an oath (of God) having been made (γεγονοτες>γινομαι)(+vpranm-p)(periphrastic perfect active construction marks the possession as well as the impartation of the office) priests and acted as priests (ο ιερεις)(n-n-nm-p)

<sup>123</sup> **7:21.** but (δε) he (ο)(dnms=determiner nominative masculine singular / nprnmzs=noun pronoun nominative masculine 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular) (became a priest) with (μετα)(pg) an oath (η ορκωμοσια) through (by)(δια)(pg) (God) saying (λεγοντος>λεγω)(vppagm-s) to (προς)(pa) him (αυτος-η-ο)(npramzs): “The Lord (ο κυριος)(n-nm-s) has *once for all* sworn (ωμοσεν>ομυμι)(viaa--zs) and (και) will *certainly* not change his mind (μεταμεληθησεται>μεταμελομαι)(vifo-zs): ‘You are a priest forever.’”

<sup>124</sup> Exodus 28:1

<sup>125</sup> cf. Genesis 14:22; Genesis 21:23-24; Genesis 24:3

<sup>126</sup> Numbers 14:28; Deuteronomy 32:40; Jeremiah 22:24; Ezekiel 14:16,18,20; Romans 14:11

<sup>127</sup> Numbers 23:19

<sup>128</sup> Psalm 110:4

<sup>129</sup> μεταμεληθησεται<μεταμελομαι)(indicative future passive)

<sup>130</sup> **7:22.** Because of this (oath)(according to so much) (κατα τοσουτο)(apdan-s demonstrative) Jesus has become *and forever remains* (γεγονεν>γινομαι)(vira--zs) the guarantee (surety, bond, bail, collateral) (ο εγγυος)(ap-nm-s) of a better (κρειττων-ονος)(a-mgf-s) *comparative*

of κρατος but functions as a comparative of αγαθος) covenant (η διαθηκη)(n-gf-s)

<sup>131</sup> ο εγγυος

<sup>132</sup> ο μεσστης

<sup>133</sup> cf. Galatians 3:19

fulfilment of the people's undertaking. The people promised to God, "We will do everything the Lord has said; we will obey"<sup>134</sup>, but no one guaranteed that this would actually happen! In comparison, the new covenant has a mediator and a guarantor! *Jesus Christ not only mediates the covenant between God and mankind, but also guarantees the perpetual fulfilment of the covenant, which he mediates, on the manward side<sup>135</sup> as well as on the Godward side<sup>136</sup>*. Jesus Christ as the Son of God confirms God's eternal covenant with his people and as his people's representative he satisfies its terms with perfect acceptance in God's sight.

### **7:23-25. The priesthood of Christ is superior, because it is non-transferable and never-ending<sup>137</sup>**

The priesthood of the Old Testament had to be superseded, because it was characterised by many mortal priests who could never complete their tasks.

a. The priesthood of the Old Testament was characterised by discontinuance and imperfection.

**7:23.** Now they are many *who* have become (*and still are*) priests that because of death *are continually* prevented from continuing (in office);<sup>138</sup>

#### **(1) The Old Testament priesthood was characterised by discontinuance.**

If the words 'for ever' were applied to a dynasty of priests, it *could only be understood of a hereditary succession of indefinite duration* (cf. 7:17)<sup>139</sup>. There were "many" priests in the Levitical priesthood of the Old Testament covenant (at the same time and in succession) that followed one another up, because death prevented or hindered them from continuing or remaining in their office. Generation after generation, the high priests in Israel died and their office was passed on to another high priest<sup>140</sup>. The historian Josephus<sup>141</sup> calculated that *there had been 83 high priests in Israel from Aaron to the fall of the second temple in A.D. 70*.

#### **(2) The Old Testament priesthood was also characterised by imperfection.**

People, who counted on their high priest to intercede for them with God, were suddenly confronted with the fact that he died and was replaced by another high priest, who did not know their situation. People felt that the new high priest was less qualified to discharge his duties as far as their personal needs were concerned.

b. The priesthood of Jesus Christ is non-transferable and never-ending.

**7:24.** However he, because he (Jesus) remains forever, has *continually* the non-transferable priesthood.<sup>142</sup>

Because Jesus Christ 'remains' forever, his priesthood is 'unchangeable' ('not transmittable, non-transferable, permanent). *Because he is the only everlasting High Priest and Bishop<sup>143</sup>, the New Testament does not teach the succession of earthly bishops!<sup>144</sup> The present tense indicates the unending and continuing action or state.*

**7:25.** Therefore also he is *always* able to *always* save for ever, those who *continually* come through him to God. He *always* lives in order to *continually* intercede for them.<sup>145</sup>

<sup>134</sup> Exodus 24:7

<sup>135</sup> Philippians 2:12-13

<sup>136</sup> Philippians 1:6

<sup>137</sup> The priesthood of Christ is based on the fact that Christ always lives.

<sup>138</sup> **7:23.** Now (και) they (ου)(dmmp / npnmzp) (μεν)(cs) are (εισιν>ειμι)(vipa—zp+) many (in succession)(πλειων-ονες) (apnmn-p=adjective pronominal *co*Mparative nominative masculine plural of πολυς 'many') *who* have become (*and still are*) (γεγονοτες>γινομαι)(+vpranm-p) priests (ο ιερεις)(n-nm-p) that because of (δια)(pa) death (ο θανατος)(n-dm-s) *are continually* prevented (hindered) (κωλυεσθαι>κωλυω)(vnpaa) (το+infinitive expresses cause/reason) from continuing (remaining alongside) (παραμενειν>παραμενω)(vnpa) (in office).

<sup>139</sup> Jeremiah 33:17-22

<sup>140</sup> Numbers 20:28; Joshua 24:33

<sup>141</sup> Antiquities 20:227

<sup>142</sup> **7:24.** However (δε) he (ο)(dnms / npnmzs), because (δια)(pa) (το+infinitive expresses cause/reason) he (Jesus) (αυτος-η-ο)(npamzs) remains (continues, lives) (μενειν>μενω)(vnpaa) forever (εις τον αιωνα), has *continually* (εχει>εχω)(vipa--zs) the non-transferable (in-transmittable, not able to pass on to another)(απαρβατος-ον <a+παρβαυνω, 'not deviate-able')(a--af-s) priesthood (η ιερωσυνη)(n-af-s).

<sup>143</sup> 2 Peter 2:25

<sup>144</sup> cf. Matthew 16:18

<sup>145</sup> **7:25.** Therefore (οθεν)(ch=conjunction hyper/supercoordinating) also (και) he is *always* able (δυναται)(vipn--zs) to *always* save (σωζειν>σωζω) (vnpa) for (εις)(pa) ever (all time to its end)(completely, fully)(παντελης-ες>πας+ τελος)(ap-an-s) those who *continually* come (προσερχομενους>προσερχομαι)(vppnam-p) through (δια)(pa) him (αυτος-η-ο)(npgmzs) to God (ο θεος)(n-dm-s). He *always* (παντοτε)(ab) lives (ζων>ζωω)(vppanm-s) in order to (εις) το(+infinitive expresses purpose) *continually* intercede (εντυγχανειν>εντυγχανω) (vnpaa) for (in behalf of) (υπερ) them (αυτων)(npgmzp).

People who have Jesus Christ as their Mediator and Guarantor, have in him a Saviour whose saving power is at all times fully available. This expression “εις το παντελες” has the temporal sense: ‘for all time’ or ‘without end’<sup>146</sup> or ‘qualitative sense: ‘complete’<sup>147</sup>. It probably has both senses. The priesthood of Jesus Christ is not liable to the mischance of mortal priests or the changing circumstances of this life. Believers have in him a Saviour whose salvation, which he secured by his death and resurrection, is qualitatively ‘complete’ and temporally ‘for all time’!

Jesus Christ effectively saves people, because he always lives to intercede for them in God’s presence. He never stops ‘to intercede’ for them in the presence of God (7:25)<sup>148</sup>. He should not be thought of as ‘an intercessor, *standing* before God the Father with outstretched arms, like the figures in the mosaics of the catacombs, and with strong crying and tears pleading our cause in the presence of a reluctant God’. He should be thought of as ‘the *enthroned* Priest-King, asking whatever he wills from God the Father who always hears and grants his requests! *While the rabbinical scholars assigned an intercessory function to angels and the Roman Catholics to Mary and the saints, the writer makes it perfectly clear that Christ is the only Mediator*<sup>149</sup> and Intercessor!

**7:26-28. The priesthood of Christ is superior,  
because of the perfect character of Christ**<sup>150</sup>

The priesthood of the Old Testament had to be superseded, because it never possessed a sinless priest. The final argument for the superiority of the priesthood of Christ is that Jesus as High Priest has a unique perfect character. He brought a unique perfect sacrifice that dealt with sin once for all. Thus, Jesus perfectly qualifies to be the Saviour and High Priest of the new covenant.

a. Jesus Christ is a High Priest that meets our needs perfectly.

**7:26a.** Such a high priest is *always* suitable<sup>151</sup>

“Such a High Priest does indeed ‘suit’ or ‘fit our condition’ or ‘meet our need’. *The imperfect tense in the Greek stresses the continuance.* Jesus Christ was resurrected and lives forever. Also his human nature has become immortal and glorious<sup>152</sup>. By God’s oath, he received a high priesthood forever.

His high priesthood comprises of the following:

- *Jesus Christ is the unique ‘Mediator’*<sup>153</sup> between God and man, because *in him God draws near to people and in him people may draw near to God*, with the assurance of constant and immediate access.
- *Jesus Christ is the unique ‘Guarantor’*<sup>154</sup> of God’s new covenant, because he *guarantees the complete fulfilment of both God’s part and man’s part* in that covenant in God’s sight.
- *Jesus Christ is the unique ‘High Priest’*<sup>155</sup>, merciful and faithful, who *ensures people’s never-failing acceptance before God* through his sacrifice of atonement for their sins (2:17); is able to help them in their temptations (2:18); sympathises with their weaknesses (4:15); ensures that they always find mercy and grace to help them in their time of need (4:16); never stops to intercede for them in the presence of God (7:25).

His once-completed self-offering is utterly acceptable and efficacious. His contact with the Father is immediate and unbroken. His priestly ministry on behalf of his people is never-ending. Therefore, the salvation which he secures to them is ‘never-ending’ (in temporal sense) as well as ‘absolute’, ‘complete’, ‘fully’, ‘wholly’, ‘entirely’ (in qualitative sense)!

b. Jesus has a unique perfect character.

**7:26b.** – (one who is) holy<sup>156</sup>, innocent pure, set apart *permanently* from sinners, has *once for all time* become higher than the heavens.<sup>157</sup>

While in the Old Testament, the high priest of Israel was never personally free from sin, in the New Testament (new covenant), the new and permanent High Priest, Jesus Christ, is absolutely perfect. He is ‘holy’, that is, ‘holy’ or ‘godly in manner’, ‘pleasing to God’. He is ‘blameless’ or ‘free from evil’, that is, ‘all that is bad or wrong is absent’. He is ‘pure’ or ‘free from defilement’, that is, ‘not merely ritual cleanliness, but moral purity’.

<sup>146</sup> Latin Vulgate, Syrian, Coptic translations

<sup>147</sup> Armenian translation, NIV, cf. Luke 13:11

<sup>148</sup> Isaiah 53:12; Luke 22:32; John 17:1-26; Romans 8:33-34; 1 John 2:1-2

<sup>149</sup> 1 Timothy 2:5

<sup>150</sup> The priesthood of Christ is based on the fact that Christ is sinless

<sup>151</sup> **7:26a.** Such (τουτουτος)(a-dnm-s *demonstrative*) a high priest (ο αρχιερευς)(n-nm-s) also (και) is *always* suitable (suited for, fits, meets) (επρεπεν>πρεπω)(via--zs)

<sup>152</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:42-44

<sup>153</sup> 1 Timothy 2:5

<sup>154</sup> Hebrews 7:22

<sup>155</sup> Hebrews 5:14-16

<sup>156</sup> Hebrew: chasid

<sup>157</sup> **7:26b.** – (one who is) holy (οσιος-α-ον)(a--nm-s), innocent (guileless, blameless, without evil) (ακακος-ον)(a--nm-s), (ritually and ethically) pure (undefiled) (αμικτος-ον)(a--nm-s), set apart *permanently* (κεχωρισμενος>χωριζω)(vprnm-s) from (απο)(pg) sinners (ο αματωλος)(pap-gm-p), has *once for all time* become (γενομενος>γινωμαι) (vpadnm-s) higher (exalted) (υψηλοτερος)(a-mnm-s) *Comparative* of υψηλος ‘higher’) than the heavens (ο ουρανος)(n-gm-p)

While the Jewish philosopher, Philo, regarded the Logos in the realm of ideas as the ideal high priest, free from all defilement here on earth, the writer of Hebrews says that *Jesus Christ preserved his purity even when in his incarnation he walked among defiled people in a defiled world!* Although Jesus Christ came into the world “in the likeness of sinful flesh”<sup>158</sup>, that is, he shared our weak human nature, he lived amongst sinners, received sinners, ate with sinners, was known as the friend of sinners, yet he is “set apart from sinners”. *The perfect tense suggests that he is permanently (forever) in a class separate from sinners.* In his human nature, he remained completely separate from sin in all its forms and completely dedicated to God the Father (cf. 4:15)<sup>159</sup>.

The Levitical high priest was not personally free from sin, but was ceremonially and temporally set apart from his fellows for the proper discharge of his sacred functions. In contrast, *Jesus Christ did not need to be set apart in any such ceremonial manner, because he is permanently in a class separate from all sinners.* On the one hand, his separation from sin is inward and moral, not merely outward and ceremonial. *In his glorified resurrected body Jesus Christ is now exalted to the right hand of God and thus withdrawn from the midst of a sinful world.* However, *in his Spirit Jesus Christ is now always present with his people, the believers.* “I am with you always to the very end of the age”<sup>160</sup>.

The Spirit of Jesus Christ (the Holy Spirit) will be with believers forever and will live with believers and live in believers. He will not (and did not) leave believers as orphans, but has come to be with them<sup>161</sup>!

### c. Jesus brought a unique sacrifice that dealt with sin once for all.

**7:27.** Who does not have the necessity, day after day, as the high priests, to *continually* offer (bring up) sacrifices, first on behalf of his own sins, then (on behalf of) the (sins) of the people. He did this once for all *when he once for all* sacrificed himself.<sup>162</sup>

The Old Testament high priests had to offer daily sacrifices, first for their own sins and then for the sins of the people of Israel. The high priest brought a *yearly* sacrifice on the Day of Atonement to make atonement for his own sins and that of his household<sup>163</sup>. But the high priest often had to bring such a sacrifice *daily* to make atonement for his inadvertent sins in order not to bring guilt on the people of Israel<sup>164</sup>. According to Philo “the high priest ... day by day offered prayers and sacrifices ...”.

But *Jesus had no need to present a daily sacrifice, nor even a yearly sacrifice, either for his own sins (He himself was perfectly sinless) or for the sins of his people (He did that once for all time on the cross).* For himself, he had no need to be set apart in any such ceremonial manner. For other people, “he sacrificed for their sins *once for all* when he offered himself”. The word “once for all”<sup>165</sup> is used repeatedly in the book of Hebrews to convey the finality and perfection of the self-offering of Christ (6:4; 7:27; 9:7,26,27,28; 10:2; 12:26,27). He ‘offered up’ or ‘sacrificed’ himself. The writer of Hebrews need not look for extra-biblical precedents to enable him to interpret the death of Jesus in terms of a unique and voluntary sin offering. It was prophesied in the Old Testament<sup>166</sup> and Jesus himself envisaged his death as such<sup>167</sup>.

Other examples of people trying to make atonement for sins:

- The Maccabean martyrs yielded up their lives with the confidence that they would be accepted as an atonement on behalf of their fellow-Israelites<sup>168</sup>.
- The Qumran sectarians believed that their piety and privations would make propitiation for the land of Israel<sup>169</sup>.
- *The Roman Catholic practice of daily mass or Eucharist is viewed as Jesus Christ “making continual purification of sins” (see 10:11-12). This teaching and practice cannot be deducted from the New Testament.*

### d. Thus, Jesus perfectly qualifies to be the Saviour and High Priest of the new covenant.

**7:28.** For the law appoints (present tense) (before 70 A.D.) men *as* high priests who have weaknesses. But the word of oath which (came) after the law, (appointed) the Son who has been made perfect (i.e. perfectly qualified to be the only High Priest) (5:9) forever.<sup>170</sup>

<sup>158</sup> Romans 8:3

<sup>159</sup> John 8:46

<sup>160</sup> Matthew 28:20

<sup>161</sup> John 14:16-18

<sup>162</sup> **7:27.** Who (ος)(apmm-s *relative*) does not have (εχει>εχω)(vipa-zs) the necessity (η αναγκη)(n-af-s), day after day (καθ ημεραν), as (ωσπερ)(cs) the high priests (ο αρχιερευς)(n-nm-p), to *continually* offer (bring up) (αναφερειν>αναφερω)(vnpa) sacrifices (η θυσια)(n-af-p), first (προτερον)(apman-s / abm *comparative*) on behalf of (υπερ)(pg) his own (ιδιος-α-ον)(a--gf-p) sins (the acts of sin and its results)(η αμαρτια)(n-gf-p), then (επειτα)(ab) (on behalf of) the (sins) of the people (ο λαος)(n-gm-s). He did (εποιησεν>ποιεω)(viaa--zs) this (ουτος-αυτη-τουτο)(apdan-s *demonstrative*) once for all (εφαπαξ)(ab) *when he once for all* sacrificed (brought up, offered) (ανενηγκας>αναφερω)(vpaanm-s) himself (εαυτον)(npamzs)

<sup>163</sup> Leviticus 16:6

<sup>164</sup> Leviticus 4:3

<sup>165</sup> εφαπαξ, απαξ

<sup>166</sup> cf. Isaiah 53:10

<sup>167</sup> cf. Mark 10:45; Mark 14:21; John 10:18

<sup>168</sup> cf. 2 Maccabees 7:3f; 4 Maccabees 6:27ff; 17:22; 18:4

<sup>169</sup> cf. Rule of Community, Qumran cave 1, 3:6-12; 4:20f; 5:6f; 9:3-5

<sup>170</sup> **7:28.** For (γαρ) the law (ο νομος)(n-nm-s) appoints (constitutes) (καθιστησιν>καθιστημι)(vipa--zs) (the present tense, thus before 70 A.D.) men (ο ανθρωπος)(n-am-p) *as* high priests (*double accusative* construction)(ανθρωπους + αρχιερεις) who have (εχοντας>εχω)(vppaam-p)

The *temporary* priesthood after the order of Levi or Aaron was designed to be superseded by the *perpetual* priesthood after the order of Melchizedek. The Old Testament law ‘appointed’ (constituted) a high priest that was weak. *The present tense implies that the time when this letter was written, the Levitical priesthood was still functioning, with the further implication that the Jerusalem temple was still standing.* But this Old Testament priesthood was superseded at the moment Jesus Christ came (i.e. at his first coming).

The law<sup>171</sup> was given via Moses (about 1447 B.C.), but the oath<sup>172</sup> was given later via David (about 1000 B.C.) and realised in Jesus Christ (about 30 A.D.). The law appointed imperfect high priests, but the oath appointed a Son that is perfected for evermore, that is, ‘perfectly qualified for evermore’. His perfection consists in being forever qualified to be the Saviour and High Priest of his people. His priesthood was absolutely ‘efficacious’ or ‘sure to produce the desired effect’ and ‘eternally suited to meet his people’s need’, namely to bring people perfectly to their goal.

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weaknesses (ἡ ἀσθενεία)(n-af-s). But the word (ὁ λόγος)(n-nm-s) of oath (ἡ ὀρκωμοσία)(n-gf-s) which (της)(dgfs=determiner genitive feminine singular) (came) after (μετα+accusative) the law (ὁ νόμος)(n-am-s), (appointed) the Son (ὁ υἱός)(n-am-s), who has been made perfect (i.e. perfectly qualified to be the only High Priest) (5:9) (τετελειωμενον>τελειω)(vprpam-s)(*perfect tense*) forever (εις τον αιωνα)

<sup>171</sup> Exodus 19:1; 24:4-7

<sup>172</sup> (Psalm 110:4)