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NT369 The Letter to the Hebrews

Spring 2016

Class #6

Hebrews Chapter 6:4-7:22

Hour One

John

Chapter 6 and Dan's Teachings last week started out with these verses

6:1 Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary *principles* of Christ, let us go on to perfection (*maturity*), not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, 2 of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. 3 And this we will do if God permits.

Dr. Arnold: The immediate context, which began in 5:11, is that the author is trying to get them to press on to spiritual maturity. That is his goal. They must leave babyhood and milk, and press on to meat and maturity. The danger is that if they do not, they will make an irreversible decision that will permanently keep them in a state of spiritual immaturity and may lead to their physical death.

Guzik's preface to vs. 4-8...There is a great temptation to shape a difficult passage in to what we *think* it *should* say, according to our theology system or bent. Yet we must first be concerned with understanding what the text says (exposition), before we are concerned with fitting what it says into a system of theology.

Those who hold to a certain Theological bent see verses 4-5 as dabbling & not a total experience...

v.4 For it is impossible (no power, see other usages of 'impossible' in Hebrews, see Hebrews 6:18, see 10:4, see 11:6) **for those who were once 'and for all', as in see Heb. 9:28, see 1Pet. 3:18) enlightened** (see Heb. 10:32), **and have tasted** (See Heb. 2:9) **the heavenly gift, and have become partakers** (sharers of the H.S., see Heb. 3:1) **of the Holy Spirit,**

v.5 and have tasted (same as Heb. 2:9) **the * good** (see Heb. 5:14, see 13:9) **word of God**

-Guzik: The writer to the Hebrews speaks of people with impressive spiritual experiences. The big debate is whether this is the experience of *salvation* or the experience of something *short of salvation*. Looking at each descriptive word helps see what kind of experience this describes.

* good: *kalos* and *agathos* the primary words translated good in the NT. *kalos* denotes that which is intrinsically "good," and so, "goodly, fair, beautiful" because of its good nature. *Agathos* describes that which, being "good" in its character or constitution and is therefore beneficial in its effect; So *kalos* emphasizes intrinsic, inherent goodness. *Agathos* emphasizes inherent goodness and because of this goodness does good and beneficial things.

v.5 continues....and the powers of the age to come,

-Why does the writer phrase it: powers of the age to come, which is the Kingdom Age?

-Dr. Arnold: They once-and-for-all tasted of the power that will be manifested in the Messianic Kingdom,

the Millennium. The word *powers* is the same one used of miracles in 2:4. The author again says they *tasted* of it; it means they experienced real rebirth in their lives.

The phrase '*For it is Impossible*'.... Recalls to our minds Numbers 14 after ten of the spies gave a report stented in unbelief:

14:1 *So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night.*
2 *And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, "If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness!*
3 *Why has the Lord brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?"*

.... after Joshua and Caleb exhorted the people not to rebel against the Lord, nor fear the people of the land.... but they refused to hear and wanted to go back to Egypt...

.... then the Lord said...

11 *Then the Lord said to Moses: "How long will these people reject Me? And how long will they not believe Me, with all the signs which I have performed among them? **12** I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they."*

Moses then intercedes.... asks God to forgive them...

17 *And now, I pray, let the power of my Lord be great, just as You have spoken, saying, **18** 'The Lord is longsuffering and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He by no means clears the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation.' **19** Pardon the iniquity of this people, I pray, according to the greatness of Your mercy, just as You have forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now." **20** Then the Lord said: "**I have pardoned, according to your word;**....*

Now Numbers 14:22 relates well with what the Judean Christians experienced in our verses 4-5

22 *because all these men who have seen My glory and the signs which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have put Me to the test now these ten times, and have not heeded My voice, **23** they certainly shall not see the land of which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who rejected Me see it.*

-Now this is important: They were forgiven (Numbers 14:20) but they all died and did not enter into the land of rest. Will be for the just end for the Judean Christians?

v.6 and **if they fall away** *, to **renew them** (cause to start fresh...) **again to repentance** (is impossible!),

-* *fall away*: to come along side of error and then to fall from a high position of truth to a lower one of error. Only used here in Hebrews 6.

-BDAG: 'fall beside', then 'go astray

-*renew*: *anakainoo*, "to make new" (*ana*, "back" or "again," *kainos*, "new," be different again)

-*renew*: here is similar to *renew* in **see** 2Cor. 4:16 and **see** Col. 3:10. Not born again a second time but renew them to a place of entering His rest. As we read these two verses note that the renewal being spoken of will not, cannot happen to the Judean Christians if they fall away as in Numbers 14:20...23

20 *Then the Lord said: "**I have pardoned, according to your word;***

23 *they certainly shall not see the land of which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who rejected Me see it....**34** According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for each day you shall bear your guilt (as in bear the consequences) one year, namely forty years, and you shall know My rejection.*

-**rejection** reminds us of the sober warning to Paul and to us in **see** 1Cor. 9:27. **See** Titus 1:16. In the old

KJV *disqualified* in 1 Cor. 9:27 was 'castaway'. That certainly speaks of the first generation at Kadesh.

disqualified: is our word *rejected* in v. 8 which reads... *but if it bears thorns and briers, it is rejected and near to being cursed, whose end is to be burned.*

-Impossible Repentance here as in **Numbers 14:39-42**

39 Then Moses told these words of certain judgment to all the children of Israel, and the people mourned greatly. 40 And they rose early in the morning and went up to the top of the mountain, saying, "Here we are, and we will go up to the place which the LORD has promised, for we have sinned!" 41 And Moses said, "Now why do you transgress the command of the LORD? For this will not succeed. 42 Do not go up, lest you be defeated by your enemies, for the LORD is not among you.

-so we see a form of repentance from the people of Num. 14, but God did not grant or initiate or call for that repentance nor did He accept their words and bless their actions. NO repentance was accepted. No renewal was given. All that lie ahead of them was certain, earthly death, *not* eternal salvation death, because they were forgiven in v.20. This is very sobering!!

-The other side of this impossible to grant renewal and repentance is this: God cannot nor can they reverse their eternal salvation. How they live by faith or unbelief effects their earthly life experience and heavenly rewards.

v.6 continues...since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.

-Dr. Arnold: These Jewish believers felt they could go back into Judaism and be saved again later when the persecution subsided. The new salvation in their minds would erase the sin of their apostasy. ... The reason it is impossible for them to do this is that it requires a re-crucifixion of the Messiah. Jesus is never coming back again to be re-crucified. That is impossible. The second reason why it is impossible for them to do something is because it would put Jesus to *open shame*. Remember He for one time only despised the shame in Heb. 12:2, but never again...Because it requires crucifying Him *afresh* (or a re-crucifixion). For His was a once and all time, all encompassing crucifixion.

Dr. Arnold: To summarize: these Jewish believers did not have the option they thought they had. They did not have the option of giving up their salvation, going back into Judaism, and being saved again later because that requires Jesus' re-crucifixion. Moreover, Jesus will not be coming back to be re-crucified because He has already saved to the uttermost; He has already saved completely. They did have one of two options. The first option was to go back into Judaism. That will not mean the loss of salvation, but it will mean the loss of their physical lives in the judgment of A.D. 70. The second option was to make their break from Judaism once and for all complete.

Contrasting illustrations from Farming: same rain different results from the soil rained on.... These truths are observed in nature. In nature, men look for certain results from certain conditions and the right amount of rain.

v.7 For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it,

-The rain comes and the earth brings forth.... what comes forth is not the responsibility of the rain

-The rain comes as it should and the farmer has certain expectations for his hard work (2Tim. 2:6). The rain is God's blessings, His 'graces', if you will AND He is the Farmer thru His Holy Spirit as well expecting a good, useful crop.

*and bears herbs useful** (*The 1st generation at Kadesh had lost their usefulness*) *for those by whom it is cultivated, receives blessing from God;*

* **'useful'** used two other places in the NT. **See** Luke 9:62 and **see** Luke 14:34-35

v.8 but if it bears thorns and briars, *it is rejected (disqualified) and near to being cursed, whose end is to be burned.*

-No fruitfulness comes forth when one gets to this point of falling away. For the burning and destruction would be the City of Jerusalem and the Temple to which they are literally tempted to go back to by going back into Judaism.

-**Dr. Arnold:** The timing for this approval or rewarding will come at the Judgment Seat of Christ (see 1 Cor. 3:10–15, note the words *burned & fire*). *For the land which has drunk the rain that comes often upon it; by way of application, all believers receive positional blessings from God. The land brings forth herbs* useful for those by whom it was cultivated. Some believers are fruitful for God and His glory. The result is they receive blessings from God; they are rewarded....

V. 8 gives the result of *fruitlessness, but if it bears thorns and thistles*. Land bearing thorns and thistles is characterized by *fruitlessness*. In the case of a believer, these are the works of the flesh and the mind apart from the Spirit as listed in Galatians 5:19–21. These are the fruits of carnality, not spirituality. This corresponds to those believers who have become dull of hearing in 5:11–14.

-Which are they? *'bears herbs useful'* or *'rejected thorns and briars'* to be burned?

v.9 *But, beloved (again a salvation reference), we (writer and others who know them) are confident (perfect tense: past performance has led to this present confidence) of the better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany ('echo': that have salvation's fruit in them) salvation, though we speak in this manner (vs. 4-8).*

-**Dr. Arnold:** The previous, severe description of what they are in danger of has not yet happened to them. The readers have not yet reached that condition. He is persuaded they will produce *better things*; better than the thorns, briars, and thistles of verse 8.

Examples of those things that accompany salvation...?

v.10 *For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name,*

-v.10 is an example and proof that they have not reached the *'impossible to renew and repent'* stage of vs. 4-6

How have they shown this?...the things that accompany Salvation

v.10 cont....in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

-This is a great application of **Matthew 25:37-40**; the context thereof speaks of how the nations will be judged at His second coming according to how these nations treated His brethren: Israel.

37 "Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? 38 When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? 39 Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' 40 And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'

-**Dr. Arnold:** He lists five things God will not forget concerning them: **(1)** He will not forget their *work*, their good works after salvation (Eph. 2:10); **(2)** He will not forget their *labor of love*. This word emphasizes both effort and the motivation behind the good works; **(3)** He will not forget those things which they have shown *toward his name*. This points out that the works they did in the past were for the glory of God; **(4)** He will not forget their past ministry to the saints; **(5)** He will not forget their present ministry to the saints.

v.11 *And we desire (same word for lust, covet) that each one of you show (display) the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end,*

-His desire, their desire is that show the same desire and works unto the end, whether by R. or R.

-This another way to say: *press on to maturity*, as he stated in 5:11-14

v.12 *that you do not become sluggish (Heb. 5:11, 'dull'), but imitate (our word 'mimic') those (see 1Cor. 11:1) who through faith and patience (μακροθυμία: patience with people and or God) inherit the promises.*

- Imitate those around you or from your past or saints from the Scriptures that did not become dull or sluggish but served and walked thru very tough trials.
- There must be continuous perseverance. They are not saved by perseverance, but they receive full rewards by persevering, pushing thru, not letting their senses direct and exercise them and looking up to the promises God has for them to help them *thru* their present trials; and not compromising or forsaking Christ for short term peace is not the answer.
- The Faith and walking by faith and walking according to what you believe; the body of truth you hold to, must be ever before you and this faith will produce patience with people and God.

We have Abraham as a great Example: The Father of the Jewish people and the Father of all those who believe as He did...

v.13 For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself,

- God is not dependent on anyone but Himself to fulfill His promises. He was not dependent on them being of child bearing age, which they were not when Isaac was conceived. He is totally dependent on Himself and therefore swears an oath 'by Himself'. Aren't we grateful He is not dependent on us to fulfill His promises; to fulfill His word. He may use us, He may bless us in the use of us, but He is not anxiously awaiting my faithfulness or my power to fulfill *His* promises.

v.14 saying to Abraham, *"Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you."*

-from Gen. 22:16-17

- What was His promise? To multiply His seed thru Sarah giving birth to the Son of Promise, Isaac.

v.15 And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise, which was the birth of Isaac, the heir of promise.

- After a long delay He reconfirmed His promises to Abraham, who then had to endure even longer, though the promise was reconfirmed.
- In verse 15, he summarizes the long wait for Isaac. Between the promise God made to Abraham and the time Isaac was born in fulfillment of it, twenty-five years had passed. Abraham exercised twenty-five years of patient endurance to obtain the promise.

In verses 16–18, he next points to the unfulfilled promises given to them that need to be waited for in confidence....

v.16 For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation *is* for them an end of all dispute.

- Dr. Arnold:** Now, men swear by something that is greater. Men will swear by the Altar and the Temple for example because they are greater than any man. For men, that is supposed to settle the issue. When a man swears by something greater, he pledges himself to fulfill his promise. It is the nature of swearing by appealing to a higher authority. God is the highest authority, so His Word settles and confirms. God made the same affirmation men make. Yet, God could not appeal to a higher authority; there is nothing higher or greater than God Himself.

v.17 Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability (*unchangeableness*) of His counsel, confirmed *it* by an oath,

- God is doing what Abraham/Men would understand and be comforted by, He made an Oath to confirm His word given to Abraham.
- Dr. Arnold:** God did not need to give anymore assurance, but He chose to give more. As if His Word were not enough, He gave an oath. Thus, God's promise can be trusted because of His oath.

v.18 that by two immutable (*unchangeable*) things, in which it *is* impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us.

- Two immutable, unchanging things: First, the *promise* given to Abraham in Genesis 12 was immutable.
- When Abraham was seventy-five years old, God promised him a son. The promise contained the content of the unconditional covenant. Second, the promise with an oath was given in Genesis 17. This reaffirmed God's promise, His word to Abraham, by adding an oath. This was given when Abraham was ninety-nine years old. The promise and the oath were the unconditional guarantees of the covenant. Nearly ten years later His promise was fulfilled.

Hour Two

Dan

The Application of vs. 13-18 to the Judean Christians and us.....

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- 37 “Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed *You*, or thirsty and give *You* drink?
38 When did we see You a stranger and take *You* in, or naked and clothe *You*?
39 Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’
40 And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did *it* to one of the least of these My brethren, you did *it* to Me.’

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Hour Two – *A Better Priesthood*

Dan



19 This *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence *behind* the veil,

- Our hope in Christ is like an anchor for the soul. While the anchor was a popular Christian symbol in the early church, the cross became popular later. Many pictures of anchors have been found in the catacombs (underground burial chambers in Rome, used in 2nd & 3rd century AD).
- [BBC] However, this spiritual anchor is different from material anchors on ships. For one thing, we are anchored *upward* — to heaven — not downward. We are anchored, not to stand still, but to *move ahead!* Our anchor is sure — it cannot break — and steadfast — it cannot slip. No earthly anchor can give that kind of security!
- Since our hope is Christ the anchor, the meaning is that our hope is secured in God's very Presence behind the veil. Just as sure as Christ the anchor is there, we shall be there also.

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

- Forerunner is one of the titles for Jesus on your Names/Titles handout
- The Greek word *pródromos* (G4274) translated as “forerunner” is found nowhere else in the NT. It means “one who comes in advance to a place where the rest are to follow.”
- [BBC] This expresses an idea never contemplated in the Levitical economy, for the high priest entered the holiest only as a representative. He entered where none could follow. But our Forerunner is a pledge that where He is, we also shall be. As Forerunner He (1) announced our future arrival there; (2) took possession of heaven's glories on our behalf; and (3) has gone to be able to bid His people welcome when they come, to present them before the Majesty of heaven.

As cultural background, keep in mind the ministry of the priests was the focal point of Judaism. The priests were held in highest esteem among the people as the ones who represented them before God, made atonement for sin, and instructed them in righteousness. They tenaciously clung to the priests' ministry as their only hope of acceptance with God.

The Jews of this time (~65 AD) were faced with some perplexing questions concerning Christ's high priestly ministry. Why wasn't He called a priest during His earthly ministry? How could He be a legitimate high priest if He was not from the tribe of Levi? Because He was not from the tribe of Levi, was His atoning work effective on their behalf? These intellectual hang-ups were keeping these Jewish believers from continuing on to maturity in Jesus.

Now that the author has completed the 3rd warning (1st – Drifting from the Word; 2nd – Doubting the Word; 3rd – Dullness toward the Word) he returns to the topic of Melchizedek to address these questions by showing that Christ's priesthood is better than Aaron's. This will address their hang-ups.

In the same way, too many Christians today are hung up on intellectual things that could be resolved so they could move on with Jesus. If a Christian is hung up on issues like creation and evolution, the validity of miracles, or other such things, they should get the issues resolved so they can mature.

Heb 7:1-3 presents historical facts about Melchizedek

7:1 For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him,

- **See** Genesis 14:18-20 for OT history of Melchizedek
- [Guzik] Who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings: After Abraham defeated the confederation of kings who took his nephew Lot captive, he met with a mysterious priest named Melchizedek, who was also king over the city of Salem (an ancient name for the city of Jerusalem).
- In OT Israel, kings could not be priests, and priests could not be kings. Melchizedek was a unique exception because he had both roles
- Priest of the Most High God: Melchizedek was not merely a worshipper of the true God. He had the honored title priest of the Most High God.

2 to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated “king of righteousness,” and then also king of Salem, meaning “king of peace,”

- And blessed him: Melchizedek blessed Abraham, and Abraham gave Melchizedek a tithe, which is a tenth part of all (of the spoils of battle). Later in this chapter we'll learn more about this tithe.
- First being translated “king of righteousness,” and then also king of Salem, meaning “king of peace,”: The name Melchizedek means “king of righteousness,” and he was also king of peace (because the name Salem means “peace”). Note that righteousness comes before peace.
- Melchizedek was a priest of the Most High God, and a king. So he was both the political leader and the spiritual leader of his people. When Christ reigns in righteousness the two roles of priest and king will also be united.

3 without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually.

- [BBC] The puzzle concerning Melchizedek deepens when we read that he had neither father nor mother, neither genealogy, birth, nor death. If we divorce these statements from their context, we would have to conclude that he was a visitor from heaven or from another planet, or that he was a special creation of God.
- The key to understanding lies in taking these statements in their context. The subject is priesthood. The writer is distinguishing between the Melchizedekan priesthood and the Aaronic. In order to qualify for the Aaronic priesthood a man had to be born of the tribe of Levi and of the family of Aaron. Genealogy was all-important. His qualification began at birth and ended at death.
- Melchizedek's priesthood was quite different. He did not inherit the priesthood by being born into a priestly family. God simply picked him out and designated him as a priest. *As far as his priesthood was concerned*, there is no record of his father or mother or genealogy. In his case, this was of no

importance, *and as far as the record is concerned*, no mention is made of his birth or death; therefore his priesthood continues.

- We should not conclude that Melchizedek had no parents, that he was never born, and that he never died. That is not the point. The thought is that *as far as his priesthood was concerned*, there is no record of these vital statistics because his ministry as priest was not dependent on them.
- He was not the Son of God, as some have mistakenly thought, but was made like the Son of God in this respect, that his priesthood continued without interruption.
- [Missler] Speculations about Melchizedek:
 - Was Melchizedek Shem? No: we know his genealogy (Heb 7:3).
 - Was Melchizedek a celestial being? No: a man (Heb 7:4).
 - Pre-incarnate Christ, Christophany or theophany? No
 - The text does not use an adjective that would describe Melchizedek in his being and essence to be like the Son of God; instead, it uses a participle, meaning that Jesus was similar to Melchizedek only in the likeness of the Biblical statement.
 - The word for being made, *aphomoioo*: to cause a model to pass off into an image or shape like it; to express itself in it, to copy; to produce a facsimile—found only here in the NT
 - He states that Melchizedek was like the Son of God; it does not say that he “was” the Son of God in the Old Testament.
 - The 2nd passage where he is mentioned, Ps 110:4, distinguishes Melchizedek from Messiah.
 - One of the prerequisites for priesthood was that the priest had to be human (Heb 5:1). Jesus did not become a man until the Incarnation when He was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of Mary. Before that time, Jesus appeared in the form of a man, but He was not an actual man.
 - Another reason why Melchizedek could not have been a theophany is that theophanies appeared and disappeared; they held no long-term office. The Melchizedek of Genesis 14 was a king of the city-state of Jerusalem, which required a position and a permanent residency. Theophanies never held a position; they were always short and temporary ad hoc manifestations.

We conclude that Melchizedek is a type (or picture) of Christ – a High Priest and king.

Next, Heb 7:4-10 argues that Melchizedek's priesthood is better than Aaron's priesthood because Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek, and because Melchizedek blessed Abraham.

4 Now consider how great this man was, to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils.

- consider how great this man was refers to Melchizedek (v.1-3). As great as Abraham was (especially to the Jews), here Abraham gives tithes to Melchizedek which means that Melchizedek was greater than Abraham.

5 And indeed those who are of the sons of Levi, who receive the priesthood, have a commandment to receive tithes from the people according to the law, that is, from their brethren, though they have come from the loins of Abraham;

- Levitical priests were authorized by the law to collect tithes from their fellow Hebrews. Both the priests and the people traced their descent from Abraham, the father of the faith.

6 but he whose genealogy is not derived from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises.

- [BBC] But when Melchizedek received tithes from Abraham, it was an unusual and unconventional transaction. Abraham, called to be the father of the nation from which Messiah would come, was

paying deference to one who was not connected with the chosen people. Melchizedek's priesthood leaped over racial barriers.

- Fruchtenbaum points out that the second part of Melchizedek's name, *zedek*, shows his name was a Jebusite dynastic name (another reason he wasn't Shem).
- Another significant fact is that Melchizedek blessed Abraham. He said, "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth" (Gen. 14:19).

7 Now beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better.

- When one man blesses another man, it is understood that the superior blesses the inferior. This does not imply any personal or moral inferiority, just an inferiority of position.
- Can you imagine the reactions of the original hearers/readers of this letter? Abraham was a great national and spiritual hero. Now they learn that Abraham acknowledged a "non-Jewish" priest as his superior. That gave them something to chew on.

8 Here mortal men receive tithes, but there he *receives them*, of whom it is witnessed that he lives.

- Here refers to the time (~65 AD) and place of the hearers/readers (Judean believers) when the Levitical priesthood was still operating. There refers to the meeting place and time of Abraham and Melchizedek.
- In the Levitical priesthood tithes were received by mortal men. There was a constant succession of priests, each one serving his own generation, then passing on. In Melchizedek's case there is no mention of his having died. Therefore he can represent a priesthood which is unique in that it is perpetual.

9 Even Levi, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, so to speak,

10 for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.

- In receiving tithes from Abraham, Melchizedek *virtually* received them from Levi. Since Levi was the head of the priestly tribe, it amounts to saying that the Aaronic priesthood paid tithes to Melchizedek and thus acknowledged the superiority of the latter.
- Isn't this a stretch? How can it be said that Levi paid tithes to Melchizedek? [BBC] Well, first of all, Abraham was actually the one who paid the tithes. He was the great-grandfather of Levi. Though Levi had not yet been born, he was in the loins of Abraham, that is, he was destined to be descended from the patriarch. Abraham really acted as a representative for all his posterity when he gave a tenth to Melchizedek. Therefore Levi, and the priesthood that sprang from him, took second place to Melchizedek and to his priesthood.
- So to speak – the author acknowledges he is making an allegorical point, that he doesn't want to be taken too literally.
- But, Paul used a similar argument to demonstrate that when Adam first sinned we all sinned (**See** Romans 5:12-14).
- By the way, here are some marks of a mature believer:
 - Teaching or sharing with others Biblical truth (today's memory verse 5:12)
 - Eating meat; skilled in the Word (5:13)
 - Discerning good and evil (5:14)
 - Giving to the Lord (7:4-9)
 - Not drifting from the Word, not doubting the Word, and not being dull to the Word
 - Have you seen other marks of spiritual maturity in Hebrews?

Heb 7:11-19 establishes the need for a new, better priesthood

11 Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need *was there* that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron?

- Perfection was not attainable through the Levitical system. Sins were never put away and the worshipers never obtained rest of conscience. The priesthood that was set up under the Law of Moses was not the ultimate one.
- Another kind of priesthood is now in effect. The perfect Priest has now come, and His priesthood is not reckoned according to the order of Aaron but rather after the order of Melchizedek.

12 For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law.

- The fact that the priesthood has been changed forces the conclusion that the entire legal structure on which the priesthood was based has been changed also. This is a very radical announcement! We are no longer under the law.

13 For He of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar.

- That there has been a change in the law is evident from the fact that the Lord Jesus belongs to a tribe which was not allowed to perform priestly functions by the Levitical law

14 For *it is* evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood.

- Jesus was descended from the tribe of Judah. The laws of Moses did not allow anyone from that tribe to be a priest. Yet Jesus is a Priest. How can that be? Because the law has been changed.
- (recall our questions at bottom of page 1)

15 And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest

16 who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life.

- Additional evidence is presented that the law of priesthood changed – the qualification for the office is quite different from that of Aaron's sons.
- The Levitical priests were mortal men who had to be born of the tribe of Levi. But what qualifies the Lord to be a Priest like Melchizedek is His endless life. It is not a question of pedigree but of personal, inherent power. He lives forever.
- Another in verses 13 and 15 mean “another of a different kind” emphasizing the contrast with the Levitical priesthood.

17 For He testifies:

“You are a priest forever

According to the order of Melchizedek.”

- **See** Psalm 110:4 (3rd time this is quoted in Hebrews)
- Psalm 110 is prophecy (fulfilled) that the Messiah is both king and priest (forever)

18 For on the one hand there is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness,

19 for the law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, *there is the* bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.

- The law which set up the Levitical priesthood has been annulled because of its weakness and unprofitableness. It has been canceled by the advent of Christ. **See** Romans 8:3
- God never intended the OT law to be the ultimate law of priesthood. It was in preparation for the

coming of God's ideal priesthood. It was a picture, a shadow of that which is perfect.

- It was also weak and useless in the sense that it made nothing perfect. The people were never able to go into the presence of God in the Most Holy Place. This enforced distance between God and man was a constant reminder that the sin question was not settled once for all.
- But now a better hope has been introduced through which we draw near to God. Drawing near to God is the essence of Christianity as compared with the Levitical system, which kept people outside His presence. As believer-priests we are all to draw near to God – that's what priests do!

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NT369 The Letter to the Hebrews

The Better Aroma

Spring 2016

Class #6 Homework: What is the Difference between unconditional promises and conditional promises?

God makes two types of promises:

Unconditional Promises – This is a promise that is made without attaching any conditions whatsoever.

Conditional Promises – This type of promise is subject to certain qualifications or requirements. This is why it is important to understand the context of a promise. It is not wise to pick a random promise and claim it for our own. Perhaps that promise was conditional and we do not meet the requirements.

Conditional or Unconditional and Why?

Luke 24:49

Matt. 11:28-30

Ps. 37:3-6

Phil. 1:6

John 14:1-3

John 10:27-29

Phil. 4:19

1 John 1:9

Gal. 3:14

Go no further..... Remember to do all of your readings for chapters 7-8 of Hebrews