

18—Hebrews 7:1-10—The King of Righteousness and Peace

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I. Introduction

- A. The NCAA which is the governing body of college sports showed up on the campus of Tennessee to speak with them about an investigation concerning recruiting and NIL.
 - 1. The point I want to make is how the NCAA is handling this. The SCOTUS ruled in 2021 that NIL was legal and the NCAA could not prohibit the payment of athletes.
 - 2. Upon that ruling, the NCAA did not create rules to govern this new law so many states passed laws themselves and the state of Tennessee did that a few years ago.
 - 3. Now the NCAA wants their authority back and so they created rules for NIL but here's the problem, they want to go and apply them to things that happened BEFORE they made the rules.
 - a) This is like changing the speed limit on Brick Church Pike to 30 and then coming to your house and writing you a tickets for driving 40.
 - b) This is an unjust way of governing.
 - c) In fact, the attorney general of Tennessee has filed a lawsuit against the NCAA. This has the support of the governor and at least one other state has joined the lawsuit.
 - 4. I didn't share that information so that you would know what's going on in Knoxville. I share that to show you how governing bodies rule in unjust ways and it has disturbed the peace in Knoxville and beyond.
 - 5. Because humanity is, by nature, sinners we have sought to form a government that has checks and balances in the process of law.
 - a) It would not shake out very well for the Vols if the NCAA was the governing body and the Supreme Court. They would simply rule in favor of what they wanted to do.
- B. There is a clear connection between righteousness and peace. When evil is not governed, peace is lost.
 - 1. But as we've watched over the years, a balance of power in government does not guarantee justice.
 - a) How many murders have not been convicted due to lack of evidence or a technicality?
 - 2. What if you had a ruler who was perfectly righteous, had all-power to enforce just laws and maintain peace? What if that ruler was also the Supreme Court, the congress that passes laws, and our representative?
 - 3. What if that ruler came and paid the penalty for our law breaking himself? Restored peace and kept you in perfect peace forever?
 - 4. Now the risk here is do you want that much authority and power resting in one person?
 - 5. Well, in part that's the argument of Hebrews 7. The preacher is trying to persuade these believers that Jesus is the King and priest of Righteous and peace and he is a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul. He is the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him.

II. Main Point

- A. The main point is simply that Jesus is the priest and king after the order of Melchizedek who is King of righteous and King of peace.

III. Outline

- A. Abraham was blessed by Melchizedek and gave him a tenth of everything
- B. See the greatness and superiority of this priesthood
- C. Do not look to anything else for salvation

IV. Exposition

- A. There's one problem these Hebrew Christians are facing—they are tempted to abandon Jesus and return to the old covenant maybe because this priesthood of Jesus doesn't come from the priestly line. This text sets out to prove that there is another priestly order that is better and that even Abraham is inferior to Melchizedek. So the first section, 1-3, revisits the story of Abraham and the King of Salem from Genesis 14. The preacher is seeking to remind the Hebrews what Abraham was blessed by Melchizedek and gave him a tithe of everything.

1. Let's back up and recall how we got here.
 - a) The first time Melchizedek is mentioned is in Hebrews 5:6 which is a quotation from Psalm 110.
 - (1) "You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek."
 - b) There the preacher was also explaining that the begotten Son of Psalm 2 who is God's chosen King in Zion is also a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.
 - (1) He was combining the two.
 - c) However, he has yet to explain how Jesus is a priest from that order.
 - (1) One reason he has not explained how all this fits together is stated in Hebrews 5:11 About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.
 - (2) All of chapter 6 was an attempt to warn them of dangers of dull hearing.
 - (a) The implications of not hearing this explanation of why they shouldn't give up on Jesus is eternally important.
 - (b) Their salvation of their souls rested on the fact that they CONTINUE to trust in Jesus instead of turning to something else.
 - d) The preacher returned to Melchizedek at the end of chapter 6—Hebrews 6:19–20 ¹⁹We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, ²⁰ where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.
 - (1) He now sets out to explain how and why this is important. Verses 1-10 are just the beginning of that explanation.
2. I feel the need to say this BEFORE the explanation. I wonder if you think this whole discussion about Melchizedek isn't worth leaning into. Well, I think one of the fastest growing religions here is politics.
 - a) While we want to be involved in the process to elect officials who will write laws that govern the nation towards justice for all, we also realize that earthly governments are unable to save us eternally.
 - b) You may be tempted to simply put all your trust in yourself or something other than Jesus. All of us are tempted and prone to wander away from the Lord.
 - c) If you deem yourself incapable of doing that you are in a dangerous place.
3. Let's look there at verse 1 which begins with "for" to indicate that he is about to explain Melchizedek.
 - a) The two offices that were prophesied in Psalm 2 and 110—king and priest—find their origin in Melchizedek the king of Salem and priest of the most high God.
 - (1) Throughout Israel's history, kings and priests were separate offices occupied by separate people.
 - (a) While David was a man after God's own heart, he was not allowed to be a priest who offered sacrifices to God.
 - (b) Zadok was the priest during the reign of King David but he would not have been allowed to be king.
 - i) In part, was due to the fact that David was of the tribe of Judah not Levi.
 - b) But before the nation of Israel even existed, there was a man by the name of Melchizedek who was both king and priest.
 - (1) Genesis 14 introduces us to him. The story began with kings of four nations joining together to fight against five other nations.
 - (a) This is simply a political war over who rules and attack of those who have rebelled.
 - (b) It's important to note that Abraham was living in peace while the nations that did not join with him had not peace. God had promised to bless the nations who blessed Abraham.
 - i) The same was true for Abraham's nephew, Lot who had separated from Abraham.
 - ii) Abraham joins the battle only when Lot, his nephew, is captured.
 - iii) In short, the Lord gives the kings into the hand of Abraham who defeats them and sets the captives free. They are blessed through Abraham.
 - (2) Upon his return, Melchizedek met Abraham when returning from the slaughter of the kings.

- (a) The King of Salem blessed Abraham which rings the bell of Genesis 12—I will bless those who bless you.
 - (b) Abraham then divided a tenth part of everything...that is from the spoils of war.
 - i) There's no indication that the King of Salem was involved in the battle.
 - ii) There's no reason to think he was king over Abraham.
 - iii) The question arises—why did he give Melchizedek the spoils of a war for which he had nothing to do with?
 - (1) Here's what I know. No one gives away such wealth as this unless that person is superior to the one giving it.
 - (a) We do not pay taxes to the government because we are superior to them.
 - (b) Verse 7 stated this plainly—It is beyond dispute that the inferior is blessed by the superior.
- 4. His superiority is demonstrated by his name and his title.
 - a) Notice there in the middle of verse 2—he is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then also king of Salem, that is king of peace.
 - b) Additionally, he is described right after king of peace like this—no father, no mother, no genealogy.
 - (1) Some people think he is the pre-incarnate Jesus or some divine figure.
 - (a) Genesis 14 doesn't suggest that at all.
 - (b) I don't think that's right because it goes on to say that he resembles or was made like the Son of God.
 - (2) However, **I take this to mean that the author of Hebrews reads Genesis 14 and Psalm 110 and concludes that Jesus's priesthood follows this order.**
 - (a) Though Melchizedek is not divine, he resembles the divine Son of God.
 - (3) Here's what needs to be said. Melchizedek is like the Son of God, not the other way around.
 - (4) This king is a type of the divine Son. Jesus isn't like Melchizedek. Melchizedek is like Jesus.
 - (a) The Son of God is eternal.
 - (b) The Son of God is righteous.
 - (c) The Son of God is peace.
 - (d) The Son of God is King.
 - (e) You can't have a type without an original.
 - i) Similar to God instructing Moses to build the tabernacle which was a copy of the original in heaven.
 - (f) Therefore, this priesthood having no limits on it by way of genealogy or passed down from son to son, but only that of righteousness and peace.
 - (g) He remains a priest forever.
- 5. It seems God gave us a picture of the King and Priest we need in the life of Melchizedek.
 - a) Having been made like the Son of God tells us that God did that. God made him. He gave him the roles of priest and king. He did that before Israel was founded and before the law was given.
 - b) He did this to give us the clearest picture of what we needed and what this one looked like.
 - c) Because only the one who is Priest and King can save us eternally (7:25).
- B. This description from Genesis 14 was brought forth so that they could see the greatness and superiority of this priesthood order. It endures because it is righteous. And because it is righteous, it also brings about and maintains peace forever. Jesus is a priest after the order of Melchizedek. He is superior to even Abraham and his priesthood is superior to Levi's. Indeed, as we will see more clearly why this is necessary down in verse 25—Jesus is able to save to the uttermost because he lives to make intercession for us.
 - 1. Beginning in verse 4, he wants us to see how great a man Melchizedek to whom Abraham the Patriarch (which means father of a nation) gave a tenth of the spoils.
 - 2. While having made the point that Abraham is inferior by pointing out that he gave him a tenth, then all who follow in this nation that is forming through Abraham is inferior too—even the priesthood.

3. He immediately brings up the descendants of Levi because they had been given the priesthood of the old covenant.
 - a) In Numbers 18:21 and 26, a command had been given to the descendants of Levi to collect a tithe from the people.
 - (1) This was due to the fact that the tribe of Levi did not receive an inheritance of land. They were to have what they needed to live on from the people of God—their brothers.
 - (2) The tithe was their inheritance. It was in return for their service in the tent of meeting.
 - b) Let's try to simplify the rest of this. Let's start at the conclusion there in verse 7—Abraham who is inferior is blessed by the superior Melchizedek.
 - (1) If Abraham is inferior, then his children are inferior too. If the father of the nation is below this King of Salem then Levi—his great grandson is below him.
 - (2) That means the priesthood of the Levites is inferior to the priesthood of Melchizedek.
 - (a) It's also inferior because here—the tithe is given to them who are mortal (dying) men.
 - (b) But, there the superior received who is said that he lives.
 - (c) The simple point is—the superior one is the one who lives.
 - (d) As we will dig deeper next week—Hebrews 7:23 The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office.
 - (e) Even the Levites paid the tithe through Abraham even though they had not been born.
4. **If I might say this—don't put the salvation of your soul in the hands of anything that dies.**
- C. So what does this mean for us? How does this help me trust Christ alone and endure to the end?
 1. Simply stated, we need a righteous King to rule us. Death and the pains of this world come to us because of unrighteousness.
 - a) All the kings of Israel were promised to live and prosper if they would obey God's law. However, none of them did...not even one. As Paul quotes in Romans 3—none are righteous. No not one.
 - (1) But Jesus, did not fail. He obeyed the Father perfectly. He was perfectly righteous. Therefore, he shall live and rule forever.
 - (a) But you might say...but Jesus died. Yet he did not die because of his own sin and unrighteousness. The Gospels prove this over and over.
 - b) But now here comes the priestly work. The priest was to go before God to make peace with for the unrighteous people through a blood sacrifice.
 - (1) To make atonement for the unrighteous required a perfect, unblemished sacrifice but they had to be continually offered because these payments were pointing to and waiting on the only perfect and sufficient sacrifice—the Lamb of God!
 - (2) In this case, the priest is the perfect sacrifice. He offered himself to make peace with God for us. The sacrifice alone satisfies God's righteousness and just wrath towards the unrighteous.
 - c) Through repentance and faith in Jesus, we are forgiven of our unrighteousness and we are at peace with God.
 - (1) His wrath is turned away and we have been accepted into God's Kingdom.
 - d) And here's the amazing thing—the one who lived a perfect life for us and died the death we should have died was raised from the dead. All authority in heaven and earth was given to him.
 - (1) He will rule and reign over us forever as we live in his righteousness in perfect peace.
 - (a) Before he ascends into heaven, Jesus says this to his disciples—My peace I give to you!
 2. Jesus is superior to Abraham the father of Israel. He is superior to the old covenant priesthood.
 - a) Abraham died. The Levitical priests die. But Jesus lives.
 - b) The government of America cannot save you. It's presidents and leaders die.
 - c) Jesus is superior to them all as our King of Righteousness and Peace.
 - (1) He will never act like the NCAA and form laws after the fact and then punish you for them.
 - (2) No righteousness, no peace.
 - (a) No peace with God and no peace with each other.
 - (b) But we are to be a people who are united in the Gospel of Christ who is our eternal King who will save us to the uttermost.

3. Are you unrighteous? Are you at peace with God?
 - a) Your unrighteous demands perfect payment. God's wrath is against your unrighteousness and he will unleash it someday.
 - b) But the unrighteous can be saved. Jesus demands that you turn from your sins and believe and be baptized.
 - c) Romans 10:9–10 ⁹ if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes and is justified (declared righteous), and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.