

The Hope In Our Better Priesthood

Michael Woody | Hebrews 7:11–19

WHY THIS PASSAGE?

1. These believers were being tempted to leave the church, leave the Gospel, leave following Christ for a return to Judaism.
2. The Aaronic priesthood did not supersede any other priesthood of God, the priesthood of Melchisedek was shown to be earlier and superior.
3. What Hebrews does is it brings the Old Covenant into proper relationship.
4. This passage is somewhat chiasmic in how it presents the data:
 - v. 11 - speaks of perfection not being possible through the Levitical priesthood
 - v. 12a - a change in priesthood
 - v. 12b - a change in the law
 - v. 13 - a change in tribe - Judah versus Levi
 - v. 14-15 - the tribe of Judah
 - v. 16,18 - a new law not after the flesh
 - v. 17 - the priesthood of Melchisedek
- v. 19 - speaks of perfection being now completed by Christ

THE INABILITY OF THE AARONIC PRIESTHOOD (v. 11-13)

1. Perfection did not come through the Levitical priesthood (v. 11)
2. The Levitical priesthood was set aside with the Law (v. 12)
3. The priesthood of Christ was from a superior tribe (v. 13-14)
4. For all of these reasons the Levitical priesthood was inferior and Christ's priesthood superior.

THE SUPERIORITY OF CHRIST'S PRIESTHOOD (v. 15-19)

1. In Psalm 110:4 the Lord told His people that there would be this change coming.
2. Christ's priesthood is immortal (v. 15-17)
3. Christ's priesthood is based off a new law (v. 18-19)
 - a. The law which established the Aaronic priesthood is called a "fleshly commandment"; this is in reference to familial descent. No moral character was required of the priests - they were, at times, the most wicked; the law said from Levi, nothing more.
 - b. What changes was in the Old Covenant the symbols and elements emphasized the distance and gap between man and God. The Gospel accomplished what Levitical priests could not accomplish (Hebrews 10:19-22).
 - c. The old covenant lacked power - captured in v. 18 as weakness but it was also useless (a better word than unprofitable), it had no special benefit.

THE HOPE OF CHRIST'S PRIESTHOOD

1. Why is Christ's priesthood a better priesthood? We find the answer to this in Hebrews 7:19
2. We have a better hope which flows from three differences:
 - a. A better priest
 - b. A better intercessory priesthood
 - c. A better ministry
3. What does all of this sum up to - Hebrews 7:19
 - a. Since our high priest is exalted in heaven with power to transform us, the Christian life is not a matter of outward performance, but of drawing near to God by the Holy Spirit.
 - b. By the Spirit we also are able to fulfill the righteousness represented in the law, since by the Spirit we have both the power and the desire to keep it (see Rom. 8:2-4)
 - c. We have a better hope - by which we draw near to God.