

Hebrews 7:5-13

The section of Hebrews 7 starts to elaborate on the superiority of the Melchisedec priesthood over the Levitical priesthood by stating a number of contrasts.

1. The Levitical priesthood was temporary while the Melchisedec priesthood is eternal.
2. The Jewish people gave tithes to the Levites while Abraham (from whom came Jewish people) gave tithes to Melchisedec.
3. Because the greater blesses the lesser, Melchisedec blessing Abraham shows he is greater than Abraham and his descendants.
4. The change in priesthood necessitated a change of the Mosaic Law (Covenant) to a better Law (Covenant).

5 And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham:

And verily they that are of (ek) the sons of Levi, "The implication is that the reference here is not to all Levites, for not all were priests but only those who were out of (preposition ek = out of or from) the tribe of Levi and from the house of Aaron and thus were duly qualified to be priests."

"The differences between Levites and priests are complex and partly uncertain. It is not even certain that the author of Hebrews distinguished between priests and Levites, that is, between those Levites who descended from Levi through Aaron, and those who belonged to other branches of the Levi family. Those descendants of Levi who are priests assumes that the writer did make this distinction, but it is made nowhere else in Hebrews, not even in verse 11 where one might expect it."

Ellingworth, P., & Nida, E. A. A Handbook on the Letter to the Hebrews. New York: United Bible Societies

who receive the office of the priesthood

An Israelite didn't choose to be a priest, he received the office of priest from the LORD.

Numbers 18:21,26

"And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation."

"Thus speak unto the Levites, and say unto them, When ye take of the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then ye shall offer up an heave offering of it for the LORD, even a tenth part of the tithe."

In the same type of way today those who are in full time ministry receive the position from God.

"And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry." 1 Timothy 1:12

have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law

This is the first time LAW is used in Hebrews. It will be used 13 times in Hebrews: 7:5,12,16,19,28; 8:4,10; 9:19,22; 10:1,8,16,28.

The point is that Levites took a tithe because God commanded it. In contrast Abraham gave tithes to Melchisedec freely.

6 But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises.

Melchisedec is not from the lineage of the Abraham (them = they of vs. 5) but received tithes from Abraham. Melchisedec blessed Abraham who had received the promises of God (Genesis 12:1-3).

7 And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better.

There is no argument against the logic that the better blesses the less. Melchisedec blessing Abraham, even though he received the promises of God, shows that Melchisedec is better than Abraham.

Dwight Pentecost commented about the "less is blessed of the better."

"The Oriental view of superiority and subordination is a concept foreign to our modern Western culture. Therefore it is popular among unbelievers to stand in judgment of God and raise questions like, "How can a loving God allow suffering?" or "How could a God of love send people to hell?" Sometimes this attitude carries over into our Christian lives after we trust Christ as Savior, and we find ourselves questioning His wisdom, His love, or His understanding. Interestingly, the Bible seems to indicate that real understanding of God's work in our lives begins with our humble acknowledgment that He is superior to us, and based on that alone—whether we understand or not—we submit to His will in our lives. This was the lesson Job had to learn, and it was Abraham's attitude as well. Shouldn't it be ours?"

Dwight Pentecost, J. D., & Durham, K. Faith that Endures: A Practical Commentary on the Book of Hebrews.
Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications

8 And here men that die receive tithes; but there he *receiveth them*, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth.

The levitical priests (here) would cease functioning at their death but the receiving of tithes under the Mosaic levitical system would continue with other priests. With Melchisedec (there) he received the tithe of Abraham and there is no record of Melchisedec's death and thus his priesthood is (implied) eternal. The emphasis is not on the giving or receiving of tithes, but on the eternity of the Melchisedecian priesthood versus the temporal nature of the Levitical priesthood, since Melchisedec continues to live (Melchisedec is a type of Jesus and there is no record of his dying).

**9 And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham.
10 For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him.**

The opening phrase "as I may say so" is used to alert the readers that what is said is not to be understood in complete strictness.

Since Abraham is the "head" of Israel, Levi, in a sense, paid tithes to Melchisedec when Abraham paid tithes to him, as "he was yet in the loins of his father."

The argument of the writer is that the Melchisedec priesthood is better than the Levitical priesthood.

11 If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need *was there* that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?

"In Scripture, the word *perfect* is often used in the sense of maturity or completion, of being what something or someone is meant to be. Sometimes it means full-grown. Paul often uses it this way. In Hebrews, however, it is used to refer to the goal and aim of Christianity. This goal, this maturity, is access to God. In this sense it does not mean spiritual maturity (being advanced in the faith) but salvation in Christ (coming to faith)." Dr. John MacArthur, *Hebrews*, Page 159

perfection - see Hebrews 7:19, 10:14

"For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God."

"For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

the Law was a shadow - Hebrews 9:8-9; 10:1-2

the Law required perfection (which was impossible for sinful man) - Galatians 3:21-22

21 Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.

22 But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

because the Levitical priesthood could not bring salvation there obviously, then, had to be a new priesthood that could accomplish salvation

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

Changed - μετατιθημι met-at-ith'-ay-mee

Meaning: 1) to transpose (two things, one of which is put in place of the other) 1a) to transfer 1b) to change 1c) to transfer one's self or suffer one's self to be transferred 1c1) to go or pass over 1c2) to fall away or desert from one person or thing to another

With a change in the priesthood there was also the necessity of a change of the Law (not in the Law). The old, Mosaic Covenant, is done away with and the new, the New Covenant, is established. In other words we are no longer practicing "Judaism" but "Christianity."

See Hebrews 8:6-13; 13:12-13
Galatians 3:1-5; 4:1-9

"Every distinction between a moral law and a ceremonial law is fake, because thereby arises an impression that there are two laws, of which the one - the 'ceremonial' law - could be fulfilled by the work of Christ, but the other not." Erich Sauer, The Dawn of World Redemption (p. 126)

"Paul and the writer to the Hebrews clearly insisted that the ceremonies of the Torah should not be kept as a means of salvation or as the way to spiritual progress. Torah-keeping in that sense forms no part of our religion, whether we are Jewish or Gentile. The rabbinic assumption that Jewish national identity and any form of religious duty are one and the same is correct only in the sense that Jews, as Jews, are under obligation to believe in Jesus because he is the promised Lord Messiah. Rabbinic Judaism is not Jewish. It constitutes a determined denial of the lordship of Jesus, and its most fundamental concepts are contrary to biblical teaching." Baruch Maoz, Judaism is not Jewish, pgs. 111-12 (also found in Come, Let US Reason Together, pgs. 88-89, third edition - book title changed, with slight variation)

The doing away of the Mosaic Law did away with the 10 Commandments which are part of the Mosaic Law.

2 Corinthians 3:7-13
Colossians 2:14, 16-17
John 1:17

The Mosaic Sabbath was established for the Jewish people. It is a unique sign between God and the Jewish people (Israel). Consider Exodus 31:12-18.

1. It is a "sign" between God and the "children of Israel" (Jewish people). If any other people were under the Mosaic Sabbath it would destroy the unique sign of between God and Israel.
2. It is a "perpetual covenant" between God and Jewish people.

13 For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar.

14 For *it is* evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.

The requirement of the priesthood was to be from the tribe of Levi. Jesus as the Messiah was from the tribe of Judah.