

"The Lord says to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet." The Lord will stretch forth Your strong scepter from Zion, saying, "Rule in the midst of Your enemies." Your people will volunteer freely in the day of Your power; In holy array, from the womb of the dawn, Your youth are to You as the dew. The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind, "You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek." - Psalm 110:1-4

## sermonnotes

### Introduction

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As we saw a few weeks back in chapter five, Melchizedek is a strange figure. **Genesis 14:18-20** written 4000 years ago gives us all the information we have of this person. David, writing in the Psalms (110:1-4) under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, connects Melchizedek with someone God was going to send into the future to be a "priest forever."<sup>94</sup> Who is this guy? Now in our passage we return to Melchizedek after a few weeks during Christmas, and look at the fourth warning the author levied on his people in **5:11-6:20**. The Psalms passage is definitely a key to understanding Melchizedek. Psalms 110 has already been quoted by our author (**Hebrews 5:6, 10**), but it is also a very important verse in the early church and quoted in the New Testament books like Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, Colossians and the "synoptic"<sup>94</sup> gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke). One of the key ideas that come from such a verse is that Melchizedek is both priest and king, an office not held by anyone in Israel's history. It highlights both the regal aspect of the person and his mediatorship. Today the author unites the person of Melchizedek clearly with the person of Jesus Christ, and then continues to promulgate his identity, his greatness, and his sufficiency. The priesthood in Israel, as with priesthoods in any religion that has priests, are fallible, very human subjects. Our author is going to give us more reasoned arguments for why nothing can compare to Jesus Christ.

#### From the Head...

##### His Identity (Hebrews 7:1-3)

There have been many kings that move onto the throne preaching that there will be peace and righteousness during their reign, but in reality we have seen anything but. Peace is most often gained by force, and righteousness is most often seen in conjunction with a moral code that they institute, which usually leads to more injustice. Our passage paints a picture of who this person is. His name translated is righteousness, and he is the king of "Salem,"<sup>94</sup> which translated means peace. As a special note, **Isaiah 9:6-7** also calls the future Messiah righteous and the "Prince of peace."<sup>94</sup> Some commentators struggle with trying to determine what place Salem is. Some say Jerusalem (Psalm 72), while others say Salim (John 3), but I believe we might be missing the point by trying to locate Salem as a place, rather than an attribute. Melchizedek is "The righteous king, whom strives after peace."<sup>94</sup> The New Testament reiterates these distinctions about Christ (**1 Corinthians 1:30; Ephesians 2:14; 1 John 1:21**). I believe that we seek both peace and righteousness, but rarely find it. According to our author it is found in Christ, who has no genealogy; no mother nor father, no beginning nor end. The author clearly sees Melchizedek as something beyond human and mortal. It is important to note that some biblical scholars see Melchizedek as a real guy who was a type of the Christ to come, like Moses, Joseph, David, etc. I don't, I actually think that Melchizedek is a pre-incarnate Christ.

##### His Greatness (Hebrews 7:4-10)

The author gives a detailed account of Abraham's offering to Melchizedek in Genesis 14 to make his point that Melchizedek was greater than the Levitical priesthood, and subsequently so is Christ. Christ, like Melchizedek, is not from Aaron or the Levites. He is from the tribe of Judah, a non priestly tribe, yet He is still a priest anointed by God, and He is of the order of Melchizedek, which was never established anywhere as an order, but by Psalms 110 and here in Hebrews. Jesus is a priest of a totally different order, and His priesthood transcends anything that came before Him.

##### His Sufficiency (Hebrews 7:11-17)

Man's religious attempts do nothing but appease our own guilt, yet do nothing to remove it. The Old Testament sacrificial system was no different. According to verse 11, perfection is not attained through the Levitical system, or through the Aaronic priesthood. The Hebrews author is not saying that the sacrificial system is useless, but he is making the point that it is not complete (perfect). Christ came not to abolish the law, but to "fulfill" it.<sup>94</sup> Christ's coming was necessary to fulfill man's greatest longing: to know God and draw near to Him. This is only possible through Christ. This is basically the same argument Paul makes in regards to the Law. The law is good and needed in order to show how separated we are from God's perfection, but it doesn't save anyone (**Romans 7:14-25; Galatians 3:15-29**). Our author is clear on this truth (**Hebrews 10:4**), and is the reason he says that both the Levitical nor Aaronic priesthood saved anyone; which is the reason that Christ had to be born, die, and raised from the grave in order to establish the "new" covenant, which in reality is not new (**Jeremiah 31:33-34** cf. **1 John 2:7-8**). The new covenant did not atone for sins (**1 Peter 2:24**), give us life (John 11:25-26, clear our conscience so that "We may serve the living God" (**Hebrews 9:14**), or give us direct access to the Father (**John 14:6; Hebrews 10:25**). Christ is not our sufficiency just because of the above truths, but also according to the Hebrews author of the "Power of an indestructible life."<sup>94</sup> Christ defeated our biggest problem, death. Death is not final. This earth is not final. Christ gives us hope because we know that our life counts now and in the future. There is a battle being waged, and this life matters in order to bring as many people as we can the delights and

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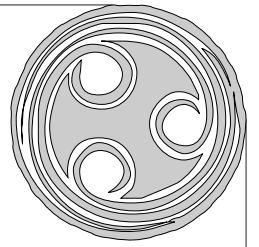
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joy of our faith in Christ.

### ...to the Heart

The power of Christ's life and the reason for our worship is that He is eternal God! His works are certainly a reason to praise Him, but whether or not He did these great works are secondary to His identity. It is because of who He is, a loving, compassionate God, that He remains sufficient for our lives and spiritual condition. There is nothing that we can turn to that compares to who He is, what He has done, and what He calls us to join Him in. Let's begin to love Him for that, and to love those that He loves!

sermonnotes



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#### pastors

mikegunn ::  
mike@vivaharambee.com  
bradsessler ::  
brad@vivaharambee.com  
marksteeds ::  
mark@vivaharambee.com  
bryanzug ::  
zug@vivaharambee.com

#### deacons

bryannelson :: administrator  
bryan@vivaharambee.com  
aaronyoungren :: music  
aaron@vivaharambee.com  
mike&sandysmith :: prayer  
prayer@vivaharambee.com  
jennyrygel :: hospitality  
jenny@vivaharambee.com

[www.harambeechurch.com](http://www.harambeechurch.com)

206.243.0702

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