

Making much of Jesus

present-day lessons from the letter to the Hebrews

Although written to Jews who had trusted in Jesus, and although drawing regularly on Old Testament references, the letter to the Hebrews has a very pressing contemporary significance.

This series of studies is intended to stir in our hearts both a deepening delight and a growing confidence in all that Jesus is and has done, imparting to us the fortitude and strength we need to serve Him faithfully in today's world.

You can find the background to this short series [here](#).

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9. Better! (Heb.7.1-8.13)

[w/b Sunday 27th October 2019]

“.. Therefore He is able to save completely ..”

Having twice already (5.10 and 6.20) indicated that Jesus as ‘our great high priest’ (4.14ff) has a significantly different priesthood, ‘*in the order of Melchizedek*’, the writer now explains not only how Jesus’ priesthood is different, but why it is so much better.

Keep that in mind as you study this passage! Don’t get too weighed down by the details, but aim catch some sense of just how and why Jesus is, in every regard, always so much better!

[Before attending your Community Group try to consider all 7 questions - even though your Group may not have time for them all. Key questions in this study are probably 1, 5 and 7. As always try to leave good time for shared prayer!]

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1. Read Genesis 14.1-24. This passage in Genesis (particularly vv.18-20) will give you the necessary helpful background to the section in the letter to the Hebrews on which this study focuses.

This is the sole glimpse we’re given of Melchizedek in the Scriptures (Ps.110.4 makes reference to him but sheds no further light on him): what do we learn about him from this passage?

What do you think would have prompted Abram to give Melchizedek ‘a tenth of everything’?

2. Read Hebrews 7.1-8.13. Before getting into any of the detail of the passage, it will help to read through the whole passage and thereby get the general sense of what the writer's on about.

Why is a man who is accorded just 3 verses in the narrative of the Bible given such prominence by the writer here?

How would you summarise the point which the writer is meaning to make in this whole passage?

3. Read Hebrews 7.1-10. The writer now starts to explain the phrase he has used twice (5.10 and 6.20), when he spoke of Jesus as a *"high priest in the order of Melchizedek"*.

According to these verses in what ways did Melchizedek 'resemble' Jesus as the Son of God (vv.1-3)?

What does the writer say is the significance of the fact that Abram gave Melchizedek *"a tenth of the plunder"* (vv.4-10)?

4. **Read Hebrews 7.11-19.** A contrast is now drawn between the so-called 'Levitical priesthood', and the priesthood of Melchizedek - and that, similarly, of Jesus.

What, according to the writer, was the deficiency in the Levitical priesthood of the Old Testament?

What is said to be the 'basis' on which Jesus became for us a priest - and how does that introduce 'a better hope'?

5. **Read Hebrews 7.20-28.** The writer elaborates further on what it is about Jesus' priesthood which makes it altogether better than the Levitical priesthood.

What are the features of the priesthood of Jesus which make it so superior to that of the Levitical priesthood?

How and why is Jesus able to '*save completely those who come to God through Him*'?

In what ways does that encourage you?

6. Read Hebrews 8.1-6. God's way of dealing with His people has not changed: the Old Testament 'pattern' (v.5) was intended as a pointer to what Jesus would effect for us.

The priesthood, sacrifices and tabernacle of the OT were only ever *'a copy and shadow of what is in heaven'*: to what did each point?

In what way(s) is the ministry of Jesus 'superior' to that of the Levitical priesthood?

7. Read Hebrews 8.6-13. Priests are God's 'operatives' who mediate His covenant; Jesus now mediates the 'new covenant', of which the 'old' was in essence the 'prototype'.

What was 'wrong' with the 'first covenant'?

In quoting Jer.31.31-34 what does the writer say are the 'better promises' (v.6) of the 'new covenant'?

Having read and reflected on the whole passage, what makes Jesus better by far as our high priest?