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Unlocking Hebrews 7 The Misunderstood Mystery of Melchizedek

For generations, many believers have pointed to Hebrews 7 as “proof” that God’s law has been abolished. But what if this chapter has been radically misunderstood? What if the key to interpreting Hebrews 7 correctly is hidden not only in the Scriptures themselves but also in ancient Jewish writings—including the Dead Sea Scrolls?

In this week’s study, we return to the first-century world of the New Testament authors and rediscover what they actually meant when they spoke about Melchizedek, the priesthood, and the law. When we strip away modern assumptions and read Hebrews 7 through Hebraic eyes, everything changes.

Welcome to Passion for Truth Ministries. I’m Jim Staley, and today we are going verse-by-verse through one of the most important chapters in all of Scripture.

Why You Cannot Read Hebrews Through Modern Eyes

Before diving into the text, we must remind ourselves of something crucial: if we do not understand the first-century Hebrew mindset, we are doomed to read our own beliefs into the Scriptures—a practice called *eisegesis*. True biblical interpretation (*exegesis*) requires that we pull meaning from the author’s world, not impose ours onto them.

The early believers didn’t think like modern Western Christians. They spoke Hebrew idioms, used Jewish logic, and debated Torah-based ideas. Without that context, Hebrews 7 becomes one of the most misunderstood chapters in the entire New Testament.

Who Exactly Was Melchizedek?

Hebrews opens its discussion by quoting Genesis:

“Melchizedek, King of Salem... priest of the Most High God... without father, without mother, without genealogy... remains a priest continually.”

To modern ears, this sounds mysterious—even confusing. But in the first century, Jewish believers had an entire theological framework for Melchizedek. Here’s what they believed:

1. Melchizedek Was Universally Considered Superior to Abraham



The author points out: the lesser is always blessed by the greater. Abraham tithed to Melchizedek. Therefore, Melchizedek was greater.

This establishes the precedent needed for Yeshua (Jesus) to be a high priest—even though He was not from the tribe of Levi.

2. Melchizedek Means “King of Righteousness”

The Hebrew **melek** (king) and **tzdek** (righteousness) form the name Melchizedek. He is also “King of Salem”—*shalom*, peace. In Hebrew thought, righteousness always produces peace.

3. Ancient Judaism Saw Melchizedek as an Exalted, Even Heavenly, Figure

From the Dead Sea Scrolls to Philo to Josephus to the Talmud, Melchizedek is portrayed as:

- a righteous king,
- a divine agent of judgment,
- the builder of the first temple,
- and even placed on par with Elijah and the Messiah.

In other words, Melchizedek was viewed as a king-priest unlike anyone else—precisely the role Yeshua fulfills.

The Real Issue in Hebrews 7: A Corrupt Priesthood

Now we get to the heart of the controversy. Hebrews 7:11 is often mistranslated and misunderstood:

“If perfection were through the Levitical priesthood... what need was there for another priest?”

Many Christians read this as:

“The Levitical system failed, therefore God’s law failed.”

But that is *not* what the text says.

The Key Word Many Don't Know

The Greek term often translated “law” here is not the common word *nomos*. It is **nomotheteo**, which—according to the Septuagint and classical usage—means:

- *to teach*
- *to instruct*
- *to administer*
- *to legislate or implement*

The verse is not saying “the law was imperfect.” It is saying: **the law was administered through an imperfect priesthood.**

The problem was never the Torah.
The problem was the *people administering it*.



This aligns with Jeremiah 31, where God says He found fault “with *them*”—the people—*not* with His commandments.

Why a Change Was Necessary

Hebrews argues that because the human high priests were sinful, mortal, and frequently corrupt, perfection—meaning *covenantal restoration*—could never be accomplished through them. God needed a perfect, eternal high priest.

So when Psalm 110 prophesied:

“You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek,”

it established a built-in legal provision for a priesthood outside Levi. Therefore, Hebrews 7 is not abolishing God’s law. It is identifying the specific law that had to change: **the one requiring the high priest to be from Levi. *Nothing more.***

Why Yeshua’s Priesthood Is Infinitely Better

Hebrews continues by contrasting the two priesthoods:

Levitical Priests

- mortal
- sinful
- required sacrifices for themselves

- temporarily served
- corrupted repeatedly in history

Yeshua, the Melchizedek Priest

- appointed by divine oath
- perfect, righteous, undefiled
- lives forever
- offers one sacrifice for all
- intercedes continually
- brings believers into true peace (shalom)

With a perfect priest, the entire covenant becomes “better” because it is administered perfectly.

Just like a child in a broken foster system who is later adopted by loving parents—the rules may be the same, but the environment and administration make all the difference.

The Practical Takeaway: Who Sits on the Throne of Your Heart?

All of this theology leads to a simple but profound personal question:

Is the King of Righteousness reigning inside you?

If Yeshua—the true Melchizedek—is seated on the throne of your heart, He will produce peace even in the midst of chaos. You will become the “eye of the storm”—surrounded by turbulence yet untouched by it internally.

No person can pull you off your square.
No situation can steal your peace.
Because righteousness always produces shalom.

Don’t Stop at Chapter 7

The author of Hebrews intended for chapter 7 to be read together with chapter 8. In fact, Hebrews 8:1 says:

“Now this is the main point...”

So to truly understand the priesthood, the covenant, and what God is doing through Messiah, chapter 8 is absolutely essential. *Don’t stop at Hebrews 7!*

Watch full teaching here:
<https://youtu.be/d3fRFffki64>



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