

February 24, 2019 -

Hebrews 7:3-10 - "Righteousness, the true path to Peace"

Introduction:

Telemachus was a monk who lived in the 4th century. He felt God calling him, "To go to Rome." He put his possessions in a sack and set out for the city. When he arrived in Rome, people were flocking in the streets. He asked why all the excitement and was told that this was the day that the gladiators would be fighting and killing each other in the coliseum. He thought to himself, "Four centuries after Christ and they are still killing each other, for enjoyment?" He ran to the coliseum and heard the gladiators saying, "Hail to Caesar, we die for Caesar" and he thought, "this isn't right." He jumped over the railing and went out into the middle of the field, got between two gladiators, held up his hands and said "In the name of Christ, forbear."

The crowd protested and began to shout, "Run him through, Run him through." A gladiator came over and hit him in the stomach with the back of his sword. It sent him sprawling in the sand. He got up and ran back and again said, "In the name of Christ, forbear." The crowd continued to chant, "Run him through." One gladiator came over and plunged his sword through the little monk's stomach and he fell into the sand, which began to turn crimson with his blood. One last time he gasped out, "In the name of Christ forbear."

A hush came over the 50,000 people in the coliseum. Soon a man stood and left, then another and more, and within minutes all 50,000 had emptied out of the arena. It was the last-known gladiatorial contest in the history of the Rome Empire. The Roman Emperor Honorius issued a historic ban on January first 404 AD on gladiatorial fights. By one man's sacrifice came the termination of death and destruction in the Roman coliseum. However, lasting peace for Rome never came. God's way for finding peace is the only one that works.

Last week we noted the name Melchisedec means King of righteousness (7:2). So, he was the King of peace and righteousness. We can only experience peace through righteousness. Isaiah 32:17 expresses this fact," And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever.

Peace is not something we find or earn. It is the fruit of righteousness. That's why Jesus said, **Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you** (Jn. 14:27) Jesus can give us peace because He is our High Priest who makes us righteous. Reference: **Acts 10:36 & Romans 5:1 & 14:17**

III Peace comes from Christ our High Priest (7:3)

1. In the Old Testament, a priest had to be from the Tribe of Levi and a descendant of Aaron. Therefore, priests were more concerned with physical genealogy than their holiness, so there were many corrupt priests.

2. The priesthood of Melchizedek had nothing to do with heredity, but with personal qualifications, thus is superior, because in Aaron priesthood, you got some bad priest from time to time. Now, when you come to Melchizedek, look at verse 3. It says, "**Without father, without mother, without descent.**" Does that mean the guy came from nowhere? No, it means in the record of Genesis, there is no indication of his genealogy. That is totally foreign to any Judaist king, totally foreign to any priest of Judaism, who all based their rights on their genealogy.

3. Some have speculated this means Melchisedec was a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ called a "Christophany" (Chris-tof -uh-nee). However, having no parents or genealogy doesn't necessarily mean he was eternal or came from nowhere. So, it probably means there is nothing recorded in the Old Testament about his parents, origin, or death. Since Melchisedec lived before Aaron, he had no priestly genealogy going back to Aaron. Therefore, he was without the required genealogy. If Melchisedec had lived under the Law, he would not have been allowed to serve as a priest, much less as the high priest.

4. Jesus, our High Priest, is also without the required genealogy because He is from the tribe of Judah. So, Jesus' high priesthood, like Melchisedec's, is based on God's appointment, not on heredity. Chapter 7 is really the main chapter in the epistle to the Hebrews, because it tackles the key question which concerned the Jews, and that was the question of the priesthood... Jesus Christ, our mediator.

III Peace about proper giving. (7:4-10)

1. Melchizedek is greater than Abraham because Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek and because Melchizedek blessed Abraham. This makes Abraham's giving to Melchizedek greater than Israel's payment of tithes to the priesthood instituted by Moses.

2. This is the first time a tithe is mentioned in the Bible. Melchizedek the high priest of Salem recognized that God had granted this victory to Abram. He then gave a tenth to Melchizedek as an act of faith in thanksgiving for his victory. His tithe was from the loot not income. He owned none of the property in question before the battle but was entitled to have the spoils as the victor. Abram knew the battle was the Lord and worship him in giving.

Application:

Giving has always been part of worship. Folks, God doesn't so much want our money; as he desires our love and obedience it represents. Jesus expressed this fact in Luke 12:34.

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

When we worship the Lord, we are to give in proportion to how we prosper, or what we have received, rather than a flat rate. Only one proportion is specified in the Bible that is the tithe.

Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: Proverbs 3:9

That is where we begin to give. God first instituted it as a requirement of law for His people. We find the Bible states the Law came through Moses. Moses introduced the tithe because of the priesthood and the sacrificial system as Israel was to be a theocracy. Leviticus 27:30: "And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD'S: it is holy unto the LORD.

Through the prophet Malachi, God asks: Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, wherein have we robbed thee? (Mal. 3:8a-d) What is God's answer (3:8e)? He said in tithes and offerings. In the New Testament, Jesus confirms the practice of tithing. He con-

demns the Pharisees, who tithed of everything, even worthless garden herbs, while neglecting more important things such as judgment, mercy, and faith (Mt 23:23a-c). Then, our Lord says, these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

The writer of Hebrews says Melchisedec's preeminence over the Levitical priesthood is proven by the fact Abraham paid tithes to him. Also, Melchisedec blessed Abraham and the less is blessed of the better (7:1, 7). Therefore, the writer explains that the Levites, who later collected tithes, paid a tithe to Melchisedec when their ancestor Abraham paid a tithe to him. This is because although Levi was not yet born, he was genetically in the *loins*, or seed, of his ancestor, his great-grandfather Abraham (7:9-10). Because Abraham gave tithes to him, Melchisedec is greater than Levi and the Levitical priesthood. This also clearly indicates tithing pre-dates the Law of Moses by more than 400 years.

Conclusion:

He presented to us five ways that the priesthood of Melchizedek is better than Aaron's.

First, it was a universal priesthood, and you'll remember that Aaron's was national. It includes Jew and Gentile - far broader than the Jewish term Jehovah.

Secondly, it was a royal priesthood. He was a priest king. Aaron's was subject to kings.

Thirdly, it was a righteousness and peace priesthood. Aaron's could not provide either righteousness or peace.

Fourth, it was a personal priesthood. It was based on Melchizedek's own character. Aaron's was based on descent and heredity and had nothing to do with character.

Fifth, it was an eternal priesthood, and Aarons was definitely limited by time.