

New Testament Lesson # 44  
November 11-17  
“An High Priest of Good Things to Come”  
Hebrews 7-13  
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I. This epistle, with the additional light of latter-day revelation, helps us understand the significance of the Melchizedek Priesthood as well as of Jesus as the True High Priest.

A. Two converts to the church once shared with me an interesting experience of their conversion. One day one excitedly called the other and said, “Have you read the ‘Epistle to the Hebrews’ since you joined the church?”

Suddenly this epistle which had been so dark and confusing in the past suddenly made sense, as she now understood the significance of the Melchizedek Priesthood and its relationship to Christ and His Church.

She now rejoiced that modern revelation helped her understand what Paul had been saying about a Priesthood Power which the rest of Christianity did not have, did not understand, and had totally ignored.

B. Christianity as a whole does not understand what the Melchizedek Priesthood is because the Old Testament recorded only two verses of Melchizedek’s history (Gen. 14:18-20), so most churches and even Biblical scholars have missed the importance of Melchizedek and His Priesthood.

C. However, in modern times, now that more ancient records have been discovered, scholars are recognizing that the person of Melchizedek was very significant. (See Hugh Nibley, *Enoch the Prophet*, Deseret Book and Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1986, pp. 29-30, 32-33, 58.)

1. One of the things said in ancient writings is that Melchizedek was the “Head of the Priests” or the “Priest of Priests” ( See p. 29 of Nibley).

II. We are blessed to understand some very specific things from the “Epistle to the Hebrews” about the Melchizedek Priesthood, because it has been illuminated by modern revelation.

A. Jesus Christ is our Eternal High Priest, after the Order of Melchizedek (Hebrews 2:17; 5:6, 9-10).

B. The Melchizedek Priesthood is actually the Priesthood of the Son of God. But it was given Melchizedek’s name in order to avoid overusing the name of God (Doctrine and Covenants 107:2-4).

C. Melchizedek was a “type” of Jesus as the True King of Righteousness and the True High Priest. Thus since he himself was both a king and a high priest, He taught of Jesus’ combined roles as both King and High Priest (Hebrews 7:1-2).

III. We learn that Melchizedek actually had a role higher than Abrahams.

A. Abraham paid tithing to Melchizedek (Genesis 14:18-20). This pattern showed that when Jesus came, He would definitely be greater than Abraham (Hebrews 7:1-4).

IV. We also learn from *Hebrews* that no one can truly hold the office of High Priest except he be ordained of God (Heb. 5:1- 4).

A. This shows that the True Priesthood is not to be obtained by simply attending theological schools, but is to be a Blessed Gift given by those in authority, who recognize and understand the will of the Lord in regards to His Priesthood Power.

V. We also learn from *Hebrews* other rules pertaining to the office of High Priest.

A, Authority to hold it is absolutely required. It cannot be usurped.

B. Even **Jesus Christ held it because it had been bestowed upon Him by His Eternal Father** (Heb. 5:5-6).

C. This verifies that those who took upon themselves the role of High Priest under the Maccabees or were given it by the Romans, or even receive it through unauthorized channels today, could only be considered as unauthorized, and therefore “unlawful priests.”

D. There are no exceptions to the need for authority.

1. Through revelation, Joseph Smith taught “All the prophets had the Melchizedek Priesthood and were ordained by God himself.” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), p. 181.

VI. The **role** of ancient Israel’s High Priest itself taught of Jesus the Christ, which Paul seeks to explain in this epistle (Ch. 8, 9).

A. **Once a year on the Day of Atonement the High Priest took an offering through the temple veil into the Holy of Holies.** That offering was supposed to be for forgiveness of Israel’s sins.

B. Paul helps us see the connection between this ritual and Jesus the Christ.

1. Jesus, as the **True High Priest, offered His own blood as sacrifice** (Chapter 8).

“But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also **he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises**” (8:6).

2. Jesus’ **offering of His Blood issued in a New Covenant** to replace the Old Covenant of the Law.

3. Paul explained **that the wilderness tabernacle was a pattern for God’s Heavenly Realm. And that Jesus’ sacrifice helps us enter Heaven, the True Holy of Holies** (Chapter 9).

a. Thus *many things* in that tabernacle taught of Jesus and of how His sacrifice of Himself would lead men into God’s Kingdom.

b. “But **Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands [thus Heavenly],...; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us**” (Hebrews 9:11-12).

c. Paul is testifying that Jesus, as our True High Priest, paid for our sins by offering His *own* blood, not blood of animals, as sacrifice.

And He then passed through the True Veil which separates us from God. Thus Jesus prepared the way for us to enter into God’s presence, or His Rest.

C. Understanding the way this symbolism was used in the ancient Israelite temple should help us understand the way the Lord has set up our Modern Day Temple Ceremony.

Reflect for yourself on some of the parallels.

VII. Paul continues by contrasting the work of the previous High Priests to Jesus, showing how the rest fell short of the True and Ultimate High Priest.

A. He stresses that Israel's high priest was required to make an offering for forgiveness of sin *every year*, [which shows that it did not actually bring about a forgiveness of sins. ]

B. But Jesus Christ **made His offering only once, and that provided a forgiveness of True Sins forever for the Truly Repentant.** (Hebrews 9:24-28).

Truly Jesus Christ was a High Priest of "good things to come!"