

A STUDY IN HEBREWS

week 8: Hebrews 7:1-8:13

Have you ever upgraded? Have you ever gotten a new phone? Remember that feeling? How about that feeling when you finally make it to a higher-grade level? We naturally love to upgrade in life, and once we do, it's hard to believe we ever lived life without that upgrade! This week, the author of Hebrews invites us to fully grasp the upgrade that Jesus brings into our life.

But first, we have to deal with this guy Melchizedek (Mel-kiz-a-deck).

Read Hebrews 7:1-4 and then **read Genesis 14:17-20**

Why does this Mel guy seem like such a big deal in this context with Abraham, who Jews revere as the founder of their faith?

Why do you think the author is taking so much time to describe why Mel is a bigger deal than Abraham?

In verse 3, Mel is described as resembling the son of God. What similarities do you notice between Mel and Jesus?

READ: HEBREWS 7:11-12

What is the author saying here?

How is Jesus' eternal priesthood more like Mel's than the Levite's?

Clearly, these Jewish Jesus-followers were tempted to believe that salvation could come through the "old way" of the law and the priests, and yet, perfection cannot be obtained through the old ways.

Are there any "old ways" we turn to in an attempt to bring perfection into our lives?

The author makes it clear that Jesus is a priest "in the order of Melchizedek", one who was promised with an oath in Psalm 110. This matters because Jesus didn't descend from the tribe of Levi. Therefore, his priesthood is in the order of Melchizedek, who came before the Levitical priesthood was established. Mel was referred to as "the king of righteousness" and "the king of peace," and though he had those titles, Jesus fully embodies those traits as our King. This is all pointed out to show that Jesus is superior to Melchizedek, Abraham, and all of the Levite priests.

JESUS > MELCHIZEDEK > ABRAHAM > LEVI & HIS PRIESTHOOD

The author helps us to see why this truth matters. Think back to verse 12 of chapter 7: *For when the priesthood is changed, the law must be changed also.* This means that because there is a new priest in town, who brings his own priesthood, the covenant must also change.

READ: HEBREWS 8:1-7

Sitting at someone's right hand signified a position of power.

What does it mean that Jesus, our high priest, sits at the right hand of God?

What kind of privilege and access does that afford us, that the Levite priests could never have offered?

What was the temple a copy and shadow of?

How is Jesus' covenant superior to the covenant God made with the Israelites?

READ: HEBREWS 8:8-13

The ministry of Jesus is superior to the ministry of the Levitical priests of the Old Testament days. His covenant is also a massive upgrade to the covenant under which they served, simply because it's based on a better set of promises! What are those promises?

What sticks out to you about the description of the covenant that God will make with His people?

How is it different than the old covenant?

Why is verse 10 such a big deal?

In the old covenant, salvation was dependent upon each person's individual sacrificial and religious performance. We can sometimes be tempted to slip into similar tendencies. However, God promises in the new covenant that, due to the work of Jesus our high priest, all believers are guaranteed a life-giving relationship with God. He becomes ours, and we become His.

We finished the service this week with communion. Jesus invited His disciples into this beautiful practice, but Melchizedek also invited Abraham into communion in Genesis 14.

Even if you didn't join us, the point of communion is to stop, remember what Jesus did for us, examine our heart, and invite His grace into the areas of our life where we need it.

Where do you need God's grace today? Are you willing to share that with others so they can pray for you?

If you are in a group, take time to share your needs. Then, collectively thank Jesus for the work He has done, and pray for those in need that they will receive God's grace where they need it.