

## Text: Heb 7.15-17

We are on the topic, “Why Must There Be a Change?”

We mean in the priesthood through which men have access to God.

In the OT, God established the Aaronic Priesthood to mediate between men and God. As the sons of Aaron stood at the altar, they offered up the prayers, sacrifices, substitutes for the worshiper which connected the individual with the God they worshiped.

All of that was by God’s order in the OT economy.

Now, in the NT economy, things have changed. We no longer access God through a sacrificial system, but through one sacrifice. We no longer need a priestly class to stand between us and God, we have *one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus*.

So, two weeks ago, we were in part one of the question. Today is part two:

### *Why Must There Be a Change? (Part 2)*

The first reason there must be a change lies in the fact that perfection could not be achieved through imperfect means: the law, the mortal priests, the anticipatory OT system.

*This was shown in that God spoke of another order even while the old order was still serving.*

But now we come to an even more powerful reason, and it is the reason the Hebrew Christians need to stick with Jesus rather than going back to Judaism.

For us, this is the reason believers should order their spiritual lives around Jesus Christ. Everything you do should be dictated by his will, by his word, by his work on your behalf.

If you aren’t a believer, this one fact ought to move you to faith. You cannot find salvation in any other person.

Read Heb 7.11-17, text 15-17

**Proposition:** We need a mediator who can really give us eternal life.

## I. The inadequacy of physical requirements

### A. Defining “physical”

#### 1. The word trans. “physical” by NAU

a. Versions:

- 1) KJV: “carnal commandment”
- 2) ESV: “legal requirement concerning bodily descent” [kind of a paraphrase]
- 3) NET: “a legal regulation about physical descent”
- 4) NIV: “a regulation as to his ancestry”
- 5) YLT: “a fleshly command”

b. The unique word: σάρκινος (rarely used)

- 1) Synonym: σαρκικός
- 2) Sometimes interchangeable, but one tends more to refer to “fleshly”
- 3) The word here means something like “flesh-made” or “flesh-bound” → “physical” (NAU)

c. In other words, physical requirements are earthly, visible requirements

B. Basis of the old priestly office

1. Physical descent from Aaron
2. Physical wholeness in person (no defects)
3. Physical consecration by rite
4. Physical distinction of dress
5. Physical limitation of age (to age 50 after in the land)
6. Physical limitation of mortality

C. Fundamental inadequacy

1. Being earthly and physical, they cannot communicate the eternal and spiritual
2. The best they can do is act as an image of greater reality than they possess

## II. The power of indestructible life

### A. Emphatic “indestructible”

“The adjective ‘indestructible’ is found only here in the Greek New Testament and is placed at the end of the clause in Greek for emphasis: ‘according to the power of life indestructible.’”<sup>1</sup>

### B. Meaning

#### 1. Negative form of a word meaning “tear down, destroy”

##### a. Jesus on the destruction of the temple

Mt 24.2 And He said to them, “Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here will be left upon another, which will not be **torn down**.”

Mk 13.2 And Jesus said to him, “Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left upon another which will not be **torn down**.”

Lk 21.6 “As for these things which you are looking at, the days will come in which there will not be left one stone upon another which will not be **torn down**.”

##### b. Metaphorically of death

2 Cor 5.1 ¶ For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

##### c. Non-physical metaphor: bring an end to something, destroy

Mt 5.17 ¶ “Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.

Rm 14.20 Do not tear down the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are clean, but they are evil for the man who eats and gives offense.

<sup>1</sup> David Allen, *Hebrews*, The New American Commentary 35 (Nashville, Tenn: B & H Publ. Group, 2010), 424.

## 2. “Destroy” used in the charge against Jesus

Mt 26.61 and said, “This man stated, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God and to rebuild it in three days.’”

Mk 15.29 Those passing by were hurling abuse at Him, wagging their heads, and saying, “Ha! You who *are going to* destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days,

Mk 14.58 “We heard Him say, ‘I will destroy this temple made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands.’”

## 3. The truth to the charge: Jn 2.19-21 [early in his ministry]

Jn 2.19-21 Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”<sup>20</sup> The Jews then said, “It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?”<sup>21</sup> But He was speaking of the temple of His body.

- a. Note: prophecy given *early* in the Lord’s ministry
- b. The Jews attempted to use it to make it as some kind of blasphemy against the physical temple
- c. Yet these same Jews set a guard on Jesus’ tomb because they knew the meaning of the Lord’s prophecy [they knew he meant resurrection]

## C. The meaning of the Lord’s prophecy

1. The human life of Jesus suffered destruction – it came to an end
2. The indestructible life of Jesus continued by the Spirit (“another [temple] made without hands”)

“The power of life that the resurrection conferred upon Jesus demonstrated that his priesthood is not limited by the temporal, transitory character of the old priesthood based on physical descent; it is undergirded by a power that overcame mortality and corruption, and consequently is beyond the reach of mortality and corruption (Grundmann, *TDNT* 2:305).”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> William L. Lane, *Hebrews 1-8* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1991), 184.

“The life of Christ was not endless or eternal only. It was essentially ‘indissoluble’ (ἀκατάλυτος). Although the form of its manifestation was changed and in the earthly sense He died, yet His life endured unchanged even through earthly dissolution. He died and yet He offered Himself as living in death by the eternal Spirit (c. 9:14). Comp. John 11:26; 19:34.”<sup>3</sup>

### III. The proof of a life-giving priest

#### A. The text of Hebrews 7: Psalm 110.4

Heb 7.17 For it is attested *of Him*, “YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK.”

Ps 110.4 The LORD has sworn and will not change His mind, “You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek.”

1. Attested = “witnessed”
2. The Psalmists text cited as proof of his argument: In Jesus we have a change in the priesthood
  - a. We now have a priesthood outside of Aaron
  - b. We now have an eternal priest

#### B. The author’s paraphrase of his text

1. Notice the word “according to the **order** of Melchizedek” — τάξις, kind, type (Heb 7.17)
2. Instead of “order” he uses the word “likeness” (Heb 7.15)
  - a. *Likeness* does not mean Jesus is *identical* to Melchizedek
  - b. *Likeness* means Jesus shares the *characteristic* of Melchizedek

“The promise was fulfilled in Christ who *is* actually what Melchizedek *was* symbolically, an eternal priest who exercises his priestly prerogatives in a nonlegal, universal ministration.”<sup>4</sup>  
Nonlegal = “non-OT Law”

<sup>3</sup> Brooke Foss Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 3rd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1903), 187.

<sup>4</sup> Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 183.

3. Notice also the term “another priest” = another of a different kind (from Aaron)
4. Finally, notice the “if” – a conditional statement
  - a. If another priest arises like Melchizedek
  - b. Then the old priesthood of Aaron is forever changed
- C. The power of this other priest
  1. The author says that when another priest rises up, his point is much more clear (about the replacement of Aaron)
  2. Lit. word order of v. 15

This is much more clear since [if] according to the likeness of Melchizedek arises another priest
  3. This other priest arises on the basis of an indestructible life
  4. The priest of the indestructible life is always able to give his own life to those who come to God through him
- D. The danger men face when they pull away from him
  1. Those Hebrew Christians who thought to seek safety in Judaism
    - a. They pull away from the one eternal priest who gives life
    - b. They turn to the ministrations of a priesthood that was already done away: there is no access to God through them
    - c. They turn to a temple made with hands (of stone) that in a few short years would be torn down, every stone from another

To turn away from him with the indestructible life is to turn into the wilderness
  2. Those present Christians who grow dissatisfied with church, dissatisfied with Christ, who seek some other way in this life
    - a. There is no life if you turn there
    - b. There is only a lifetime of wandering
  3. Those who hear the message of the life-giving Christ and simply refuse to hear it
    - a. They are dead and dying in their sins
    - b. There is no hope on the path they walk
    - c. Their destiny is destruction

**Conclusion:**

**Proposition:** We need a mediator who can really give us eternal life.

The Lord Jesus really can give you eternal life. Our only hope is in him. Our walk is in him.

So often I see people stumbling along in their Christian lives. They will say they have tried following the Lord, but they really haven't.

- They have little joy
- Or they have a problem, and they think they can't solve it
- They start looking elsewhere for solutions

The only solution is in Christ. The only joy is in Christ. The only hope is in Christ.