Melchizedek and Jesus Christ

Melchizedek, the mysterious Old Testament figure, is illuminated by the New Testament to be a type of Christ, who occupying the office of king and priest eternally, ultimately points away from himself to Christ who is the true King and the great High Priest. The whole of this discussion orbits around three passages from the Bible, two from the Old Testament in Genesis 14:18-21 and Psalm 110:4, and one from the New in Hebrews chapters 7. The OT passages present a very mysterious figure, who is later explained more fully in the NT as pointing to the necessity of Christ's superior office. And so this is a study in the person of Melchizedek and his role in the history of redemption in connection to the person of Christ, as presented by the NT. We take a brief look at the many ideas and debates concerning the personhood of this mysterious figure. There will also be studies into the account in Genesis 14:18-20, as well as Psalm 110:4. And we will end with a study in Hebrews 7, and its argument for the significance of Melchizedek in his connection with Jesus Christ.

Melchizedek has been the subject of a long history of careful study, which have yielded a variety of thoughts on his personhood. For the purpose of this study, the term “personhood” is defined as physical background information such as home town, native religion, and family ties, and this is where our study of Melchizedek begins. The first point of interest is in his home town, Salem. Some scholars believe Melchizedek to actually be the local ruler over a pagan city-state. This conjecture is from the phrase “El Elyon” which can be understood as to mean that Melchizedek was a priest of a Canaanite deity named El-Elyon or an understanding of his name to mean “Sedek is my king”.

Eerdman's Bible Dictionary defines “El Elyon” as a ancient pre-Israelite Canaanite creator deity which

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1 From here on out, New Testament will be designated NT and Old Testament will be designated OT. Hebrews deals with this outside of chapter 7, but for our discussion chapter 7 will be the focus.


3 Ibid., 44
was subsequently adopted by Israelite Judaism as an epithet for the Hebrew deity. Not all scholars agree on this point, however. Aalders notes that Melchizedek, instead of being a pagan idol worshipper, was one of the few who preserved the traces of true worship of God, carrying on the “tradition from the time of Paradise”. Turning now to the city of Salem itself, some postulate, based on the Samaritan Pentateuch rendering of Genesis 33:18, that Salem is not Jerusalem but it is actually a city in the Shechem region. This view, also, is not shared by all. Mistaken ideas about Melchizedek are not just limited to modern times, however. Even the patristic fathers were vulnerable to erroneous ideas about the mysterious figure. Melchizedek was thought to be the Spirit hovering over the waters at creation in Genesis 1:2, the Word in John 1:2, the Father, or even “the shadow of God”. Other groups like the Qumran community attributed Melchizedek as a heavenly being who was associated with divine judgment, a day of atonement, an exalted role placing him over the assembly of heavenly kings. Still others conclude that Melchizedek is a heavenly being, possibly an angel with even an association with a militaristic archangel Michael. It is important to note that the birth of the church and the growth of the Christian faith did not extinguish Jewish OT scholarship. Rather there is a wealth of Rabbinic OT teachings that have been preserved. These teachings were picked up and passed on in the Middle Ages by the likes of Nicholas of Lyra and Hugh of St. Cher. These scholars, in


6 Eric Mason, 44-45

7 Bruce McNair, “Luther, Calvin and the Exegetical Tradition of Melchizedek.” Review and Expositor 101 (2004): 748-749. Calvin believed that Salem later came to be known as Jerusalem

8 T. K. Thomas, 406

9 Ibid.

10 Eric Mason, 61
agreement with the Rabbinic traditions, thought that Melchizedek is actually Shem, the son of Noah and Salem is Jerusalem. Even Martin Luther agreed with this view\(^\text{11}\). Calvin however responded by refuting the idea that Melchizedek is Shem, but accepted the idea that Salem is related to Jerusalem\(^\text{12}\).

F. F. Bruce argues that the idea of Melchizedek being an angel stems from a gnostic tradition\(^\text{13}\). He further explains that the author of Hebrews doesn't deny Melchizedek's humanity, so much as highlight the Scripture's silence for the purpose of his argument about the nature of Christ. Historically, Melchizedek is said to have come from a dynasty of priest-kings\(^\text{14}\). And so it must be understood that as great as Melchizedek is, his role must be bound within the parameters set forth in Scripture, lest the church continue to get lost in vain speculation over things that are not revealed. However Melchizedek does play a vital role in Scripture and in the history of revelation and this fact cannot be denied.

Melchizedek, the priest-king of Salem, is presented in history only briefly but he is nonetheless an important figure in the history of redemption, namely in his role as a type of Christ. Melchizedek must be understood as an office-type\(^\text{15}\). Chad Bird defines “office-type” as “one whose functions in an office correspond closely to or set the pattern for those carried out by one who fills the same office in a later period”. Bird lays out the close relationship between the type and ante-type. However, it must be clearly stated that the type does not equal ante-type, they are not the same\(^\text{16}\). Vos writes that just

\(^{11}\) Bruce McNair, 748-749

\(^{12}\) Ibid., 749. Calvin adds that Moses never mentions Shem's migration to the east. He considers that if Shem had moved into that area, then Abraham would have gone to see him. Also, Calvin doesn't accept that God would change Shem's well-known name into a relatively obscure name of Melchizedek, at least without some explanation.

\(^{13}\) F.F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*. Edited by Gordon D. Fee. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990), 159-160. Calvin strongly objects to these ideas, quoted by McNair, page 749.

\(^{14}\) Ibid., 160


\(^{16}\) Ibid., 42
because eternity is attached to him, Melchizedek cannot be the pre-incarnate Christ or any sort of
divine being\textsuperscript{17}. Hendriksen likewise makes the distinction between being \textit{like the Son} and \textit{being the Son}\textsuperscript{18}. Fred Horton argues that since Christ is superior to Melchizedek, it is Melchizedek who is in the
line of Christ, not the other way around\textsuperscript{19}. T. K. Thomas likens Melchizedek to John the Baptist in that
Melchizedek points to one that comes after him but is greater than he\textsuperscript{20}. There is a necessary need to
distinguish between \textit{likeness} and \textit{type}. This crucial distinction, however, does not mean that there is a
disconnect. As Calvin puts it, Melchizedek’s attributes are words that are usually ascribed to Christ\textsuperscript{21}.

Now of all the different Christ types presented in the OT, Melchizedek is unique in that he is both a
king and a priest. Especially in the Pentateuch, the only individual to come close is Moses, but he never
held an official office except for prophet, though he did act as a quasi-king and Psalm 99:6 later refers
to him as a priest\textsuperscript{22}. And so it is clear from the view of the OT Pentateuch that Melchizedek's identity
clearly points beyond the Levitical priesthood and Davidic dynasty to one who would occupy those two
office simultaneously and eternally\textsuperscript{23}. Matthew Henry sees Melchizedek's rule over Salem, which he
translates as “Peace” places Melchizedek therefore as king of peace. Therefore Melchizedek is seen as

\textsuperscript{17}Geerhardus Vos, \textit{The Teaching of the Epistle to the Hebrews}. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans
Publishing Company, 1956), 106. This comes from his understanding of Hebrews 7:3 which states first Melchizedek's
eternity but is followed by the statement “made \textit{like} the Son of God” thus showing difference, not equality.

\textsuperscript{18}Hendriksen, William, and Simon J. Kistemaker. “Hebrews” In \textit{New Testament Commentary: Thessalonians,

\textsuperscript{19}Eric Mason, 47. F. F. Bruce adds that Melchizedek is “made conformable to the Son of God” because Christ
already existed before Melchizedek's appearance in Genesis 14.

\textsuperscript{20}T. K. Thomas, “Melchizedek, King, and Priest”, 404

\textsuperscript{21}John Calvin, “Commentary on Hebrews” Christian Classics Ethereal Library,
http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom44.xiii.i.html (accessed July 5, 2010)

\textsuperscript{22}Chad Bird, \textit{Melchizedekian Theology}, 47

\textsuperscript{23}Bruce McNair, 754-755. This is inferred from Chrysostom argument.
a type of Christ, fulfilled when the true Prince of Peace came. Calvin, for his part, counts five
different attributes to Christ that is said of Melchizedek in Hebrews 7. The first is in Melchizedek's
name which he translates to “king of righteousness”. Quoting Zechariah 2:10, he successfully argues
that this is a title of Christ. The second is Melchizedek's city, Salem, which Calvin understands as
“kingdom of peace”. The third is the unrecorded genealogy of Melchizedek, which is designed to point
readers to see the uncreated and perpetual nature of Christ. The forth is the superiority of Christ and
His priesthood over against that of the Levities. The last is that the great Abraham received blessing
from Melchizedek. Chrysostom agrees with Calvin's typology on Melchizedek, but a bit more
simplified. It's interesting to note that some Jewish scholars do not agree with Hebrews 7's assessment
of Melchizedek as being greater than the Levitical priesthood, but rather Melchizedek is seen as the the
precursor to the Levitical priesthood. To this, Justin Martyr counters with the argument that
Melchizedek is a priest of the uncircumcised and blesses both the circumcised and those who are not.
Indeed, Melchizedek is certainly set forth as being superior to Aaron and the Levitical priesthood.
Ceslas Spicq gives four reasons for Melchizedek's superiority: first, Melchizedek received the tithe,
second he blessed Abraham, third Melchizedek was the priestly type who did not die, and lastly he
received tribute from the ancestor of the Levites. Furthermore, apart from simply his personhood,
some scholars bring attention to Melchizedek's offer of bread and wine to Abraham and his men.\(^{32}\) Clement of Alexandria was the first to propose the idea that the bread and wine Melchizedek prepared for Abraham was in some way a type of communion.\(^{33}\) Though this was an idea that was not followed by all, significant leaders such as Jerome and Augustine ascribed to this view.\(^{34}\) This view which had dominated throughout the Middle Ages, came under attack by the Reformation, especially under Luther and Calvin.\(^{35}\) Luther argues that Jerome's mistranslation gave “force to an analogy of a priestly sacrifice” when there is no such thing to be found in the original Hebrew.\(^{36}\) Luther's German Bible actually splits the verse into two sentences so as to denote Luther's view that Melchizedek's role as king and priest are separate.\(^{37}\) Calvin, for his part, also disagrees with Jerome and agrees with Luther.\(^{38}\) He also adds that Hebrews 7 deals with all the connecting points between Christ and Melchizedek and yet there is no mention of the bread and wine.\(^{39}\) Still others simply comment on the incredible similarity though they caution before making a definitive statement like Jerome.\(^{40}\) And so it is with certainty that Melchizedek can be declared a type of Christ, conformed to Him, as Christ is before Melchizedek in

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32 Genesis 14:18

33 Bruce McNair, 750

34 Ibid. Chrysostom was one of the significant leaders who did not adhere to this view. The adherence of Jerome led to the popularity of this view in the Middle Ages through his Vulgate. Jerome translated Genesis 14:18 to say that Melchizedek had prepared the wine and bread because he was a priest. Another notable advocate of this view was Martin Luther. But by 1535 he was adamant that Jerome was wrong in his translation.

35 Ibid., 750-751

36 Ibid., 751

37 Ibid., 752


39 Ibid., 753 “For Calvin, Christ in His death fulfilled the office of Priest once for all and those who institute other sacrifices for sins dishonor Christ.”

40 Matthew Henry, “Commentary on Genesis”. Matthew Henry states that Melchizedek had set out the bread and wine for Abraham as a “suitable refreshment” and simply remarks at the remarkable nature by which Christ uses the same objects as “memorials” of his body and blood, i.e. communion.
existence, status, and power. And though Melchizedek is a type of Christ, his offer of bread and wine to Abraham cannot be forcibly attached to the sacrament of Communion, which is an error that leads to many more theological fallacies.\(^{41}\)

It is prudent at this point, having gone through the general discussions concerning the personhood of Melchizedek and his connection with Christ, to transition now into a more exegetical perspective so as to glean from the pages of Scriptures truths that cannot be shaken by doubtful discussions or worn by time. The three main texts, as noted before, will be Genesis 14:18-20, Psalm 110:4, and Hebrews 7.\(^{42}\) And so our focus now turns to Genesis 14.

Genesis 14:18-20 records the only time in Scripture Melchizedek makes an appearance. And though it was very brief, this short scene contains great depth of spiritual truths. Starting with verse 18, we read: “And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High”. Now much has already been said about Melchizedek's office as a king and priest already, but it is prudent to see clearly what Scripture has to say. Calvin, in agreement with Luther, presents that the two offices must be understood separately. Hence, Melchizedek is seen as bringing forth bread and wine to show hospitality as the king of Salem. This action is from his office of royalty. Then he blesses Abraham with a benediction. This action is from his priestly office.\(^{43}\) We need not be tempted to read more into this act than the text allows. Matthew Henry puts it simply when he comments that Melchizedek merely prepared the food for Abraham's weary men.\(^{44}\) This act of hospitality, however,

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\(^{41}\) Bruce McNair, 752-753. Calvin argues that Catholics cannot use Melchizedek in Mass unless they deny transubstantiation because there is nothing in the Genesis text about Christ's sacrifice. Luther says that this view of the Catholic church actually goes against what Hebrews 7 says and reinstates the Levitical order and rejects Christ. Calvin sees it as dishonor to Christ to set up whole “other sacrifice for sins” because Christ had fulfilled the office of priest once for all.

\(^{42}\) All references to Scripture, unless noted, will be using the New American Standard Bible.

\(^{43}\) John Calvin, Commentaries... on Genesis., 387

\(^{44}\) Matthew Henry, Commentary on Genesis.
cannot be mistakenly connected with communion, as noted above. This is due to the fact that the bread and wine can be understood in terms of priestly consecration, the context in Genesis 14 does not allow such and understanding.\footnote{F. F. Bruce, \textit{The Epistle to the Hebrews}. (Edited by Gordon D. Fee. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990), 157-158}

Melchizedek, as God's representative king-priest blessed Abraham in Genesis 14:19-20.\footnote{William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker. \textit{"Hebrews"}, 184}

Scripture says: “He blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." He gave him a tenth of all."\footnote{Genesis 14:19-20, NASB} Melchizedek here blesses one who is inferior to him, the great Abraham\footnote{William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker. \textit{"Hebrews"}, 187. On this point there is unanimous agreement. So it is possible to list here a long and exhaustive list of sources who all same thing. But alas, in the interest of space and time, this book was picked here as the representative.}. Again, Calvin reminds that this act of blessing is tied to the priesthood of Melchizedek, not necessarily to his royalty\footnote{John Calvin, \textit{Commentaries... ...on Genesis}, 391}. Melchizedek's blessing is indeed priestly in its mediatorial function. As Matthew Henry puts it, “Melchizedek blessed Abram from God. He blessed God from Abram”\footnote{Matthew Henry, \textit{Genesis}}. Calvin sees in this blessing confirmation and ratification of grace covenant with Abraham\footnote{Ibid., 391. The first mention of Abrahamic covenant is found in Genesis 12:2-3, 13:14-17.}. The blessing of Melchizedek upon Abraham recognizes Abraham as set apart by God for a holy purpose, and simultaneously God is set apart and above all other false gods\footnote{Ibid., 392}. This blessing also serves to remind Abraham that the victory is not of himself, but it is of God\footnote{Ibid.}. And from that perspective, it is fitting that Abraham give a tithe to
Melchizedek, who was acting “as God's mouthpiece” and therefore Abraham's offering is a logical response to this reminder of divine favor\(^54\). This allows Abraham to confidently refute the king of Sodom's offer because he has been reminded of the unshakable nature of God's covenant, that it is indeed God who will uphold and provide for Abraham, not any man including Abraham himself\(^55\). Now it is with confusion that some have understood this passage as saying that Melchizedek had paid a tithe to Abraham\(^56\). This is refuted by the fact that Hebrews 7:9 says that Levi paid a tithe to Melchizedek through Abraham\(^57\). And Abraham gave gladly as reflected in the Hebrew idiom, which says “Abraham gave him a tenth of the top of the heap”\(^58\). Furthermore, Calvin explains this passage to say that Abraham's giving of the tithe was to show honor to Melchizedek, who was recognized as a priest of God Most High\(^59\). And based on verses 23 and 24, Calvin suggests that the tithe Abraham gave to Melchizedek was not actually from the spoils of the war but actually his own belongings\(^60\). After this short passage, as mysteriously as he appeared, Melchizedek disappears in the narrative of Genesis. None, including the writer of Hebrews, would deny that Melchizedek was a mortal man and was in fact a part of a dynasty of priest kings in Salem\(^61\). But the man, the individual named Melchizedek exits from the stage of Genesis, only to reappear again much later in Psalm 110:4.

Psalm 110:4 stands as a witness to the coming Messiah king who will also at the same time be

\(^{54}\) William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker. “Hebrews”, 189

\(^{55}\) Matthew Henry, Genesis.

\(^{56}\) F. F. Bruce, *Hebrews*, 162. Bruce lists Eupolemus and other Jewish writers.

\(^{57}\) John Calvin, *Commentaries... ...on Genesis*, 392

\(^{58}\) William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker. “Hebrews”, 187. They understand this idiom to mean that Abraham gave the best, reflecting his joyful heart.

\(^{59}\) John Calvin, *Commentaries... ...on Genesis*, 393

\(^{60}\) Ibid. Calvin also refutes the idea that Abraham paid annual tithes, but holds on to the idea that this was a one time act by Abraham.

\(^{61}\) F. F. Bruce, *Hebrews*, 160
an eternal priest. Some see Psalm 110 as among the small number of psalms which have no real references to the OT and only point forward to the coming Messiah\textsuperscript{62}. Some scholars place Psalm 110 securely within the family of royal psalms\textsuperscript{63}. Royal psalms are so defined based on their content, which is usually the Davidic monarchy, rather than any sort of structure. As such, Psalm 110 is also placed in the sub-category in its usage in the coronation\textsuperscript{64}. However, not all are in agreement with this view. Some argue, in agreement with Dillard and Longman, that Psalm 110 is purely Messianic\textsuperscript{65}. Still others see Psalm 110:4 as an isolated anomaly\textsuperscript{66}. Davis lists three reasons for his argument that Psalm 110 is not a royal psalm, which are: (1) no mortal king is ever described as sitting on God's right hand, (2) no earthly king filled the role of eternal priest, and (3) no earthly king is able to judge the nations\textsuperscript{67}. One of the most striking features of Psalm 110:4 is the mention of combining the office of king and priest. It is well known that the Law forbid the king to also assume the priesthood, at the risk of divine judgment\textsuperscript{68}. This leaves the reader in a difficult situation. Belcher gives the explanation that Psalm 110 is a direct prediction of the Messiah from the pen of David. Furthermore, he gives the possibility that David drew from the history of Genesis 14 account and Melchizedek's ties to Jerusalem to compose this psalm\textsuperscript{69}.

\textsuperscript{62} Raymond B. Dillard and Tremper Longman III, “Psalms” in An Introduction to the Old Testament, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1994), 233. The authors also list Psalms 2, 16, 22, and 69. They do admit that these psalms do have some sort of value in the OT context. Richard Belcher actually singles out Psalm 110 in its description of a “unique combination” of a priest king.


\textsuperscript{64} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{66} Chad L. Bird, 47


\textsuperscript{69} Richard P. Belcher Jr., The Messiah and the Psalms, 148
Others see David using a typological method, whereby Melchizedek is used precisely because he is not a Davidic king or a Levitical priest\textsuperscript{70}. As important as the quoted words of God are in Psalm 110:4, equally important is the phrase that precede it: “The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind”. Calvin sees great weight in the fact that God swears, which is not a common practice, to make Christ the believers' eternal priest and king\textsuperscript{71}. This is the source of the believers' assurance in the acceptance of God. Finally, the scholar Delitzsch points out Zechariah 6:12-13 to understand Psalm 110 as being fulfilled in the “eschatological future”\textsuperscript{72}. This was the only way that we can say, “He [Christ] is God's Minister to us, and our Advocate with the Father, and so is the Mediator between God and man”\textsuperscript{73}. With both the Genesis 14 account and Psalm 110 available, the writer of Hebrews utilized them both under the direction of the Holy Spirit to connect Melchizedek to Christ. Some argue that Hebrews 7's conclusion on Christ via Melchizedek, the typological argument, the idea of a royal high priest and the eternal priesthood, was arrived through contemporary Jewish midrash methods in which “married” these themes to a “mystical prayer”\textsuperscript{74}. In a similar idea, Kobelski sees Hebrews using a traditional Melchizedek hymn. This stems from the fact that Kobelski latches Hebrews 7's presentation of Melchizedek, not to Genesis 14, but only to Psalm 110:4\textsuperscript{75}. However, Kobelski goes a bit further than Lefler in concluding that, based on Psalm 110:4, since Christ is eternal, Melchizedek is also eternal. This belief which was rampant in the Second Temple period, says Kobelski, is actually reflected in

\textsuperscript{70} Chad L. Bird, 47-48

\textsuperscript{71} John Calvin, Psalms.

\textsuperscript{72} Richard P. Belcher Jr., \textit{The Messiah and the Psalms}, 146. Zechariah 6:12-13 is an important passage which also speaks about the unification of the royal and priestly offices.


\textsuperscript{75} Eric F. Mason, 48
Hebrews 7. Kobelski wants to show that Hebrews drew from other extra-biblical sources, but at the same time denies the influence of certain sources such as the Dead Sea Scrolls. Others simply flat out reject all ideas about extra-biblical influences altogether. Drawing from all these views, it is acceptable to see that the writer of Hebrews, though aware of the Jewish traditions on Melchizedek did not necessarily use the extra-biblical material for his work, nor was there any need to do so. Now, in the above section on typology and study in Genesis 14, much of the exegetical work and commentary work covering Hebrews 7:1-10 have already been presented. As such, our study in Hebrews 7 will focus more intently on verses 11 through 28.

Continuing with his theme of the new order overtaking or even replacing the old order of things, the writer of Hebrews presents in chapter 7:11-28 to the superiority of the Melchizedek priesthood over that of the Levitical priesthood. Historically speaking, the Levitical priesthood had come to an end with the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 by Rome. In the same light, the “new order” began at Christ's death and continues on. F. F. Bruce argues that the Aaronic and Levitical priesthood was in fact not designed or competent to bring about the age of fulfillment. And so it was necessary for God Himself to change His Law because no one else was able to do so. This change, harkens back to Psalm

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76 Ibid.

77 Ibid. In particular is 11QMelchizedek scroll. To me this argument seems arbitrary. Kobelski wants to deny that DSS influenced Hebrews, all the while these other extra-biblical sources such as this supposed Melchizedek hymn are reflected in the text.

78 Ibid. This is the idea of Craig Koester.

79 Ibid., 49. I agree with Mason for the most part in his outlook on the influence on the writer of Hebrews.

80 William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker. “Hebrews”, 192

81 Ibid., 193. See also John Calvin, Hebrews. Calvin argues that Christ's priesthood starts with the incarnation, not the crucifixion.

82 F. F. Bruce, 165. He further argues that there would have been no need for another kind of priest. Calvin also makes a similar argument. See also Hendriksen and Kistemaker, “Hebrews”, 193. They argue that the Levitical priesthood was meant to be provisional.
110:4's mention of God's oath. The accomplishment of this oath, then was at the cross wherein “Christ
fulfilled the Law and made the Levitical priesthood obsolete.” But the problem remains, how is one
born from the tribe of Judah going to assume the priesthood? The fact that Christ was from the line of
Judah, and descendent of David was clearly known. And so, the importance of Melchizedek's
priesthood and its separation from the Levitical priesthood order comes in to play. And as David
established a physical kingdom, Christ established a superior spiritual kingdom. In a similar function,
as the Levitical priesthood established an earthly imperfect priesthood, Christ established a superior
and perfect heavenly priesthood. The superiority of Christ's eternal priesthood stands in contrast to the
Levitical priests, who though appointed for a time could nevertheless overcome their own mortality.

Now it is necessary to note that the author uses the term “priest” in comparison to Melchizedek, but He
is called “high priest” in comparison to Aaron. And so Christ, by the “inward power that characterizes
an endless life”, is priest forever, while the Levitical priests, including Aaron's family, served by the
privilege in the priesthood only through an outward law. Verses 18 and 19 presents a beautiful
contrast between the former and the glorious present. The “former regulation” is contrasted with “a
better hope”. The phrase “is set aside” is contrasted with “is introduced”. Lastly, the term “because it

83 William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker. “Hebrews”, 194
84 Ibid. There is a great point from Spicq which says that with Christ's incarnation, the priesthood was
“transformed and transferred”.
85 F. F. Bruce, 167
86 Chad L. Bird, 47-48
87 William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker. “Hebrews”, 195
88 F. F. Bruce, 169
89 Vos, Hebrews, 94. This point is necessary because it seems that in Hebrews 7, the author uses the two terms
interchangeably, when in fact that is not the case.
90 William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker. “Hebrews”, 196
was weak and useless” is contrasted with “by which we draw near”\(^91\). Further escalation is shown where Christ's priesthood via Melchizedek is promised through oath, whereas the Levitical priests had no such oath, but only Law\(^92\). What is the great blessing of confirming Christ's priesthood with an oath? In doing so, Christ becomes “the guarantee of a better covenant”\(^93\). And with Christ as the eternal and great High Priest, believers can now have access to a Savior, Mediator, a Way to the Father that is unhindered by any outside force and unshakable in its eternal power\(^94\). The final verses of Hebrews 7 serve as summaries of the author's arguments\(^95\). Especially the final verse, verse 28, holds another beautifully structured picture of contrast which, once more, holds Christ and the oath that confirmed His priesthood as superior to the priesthood established under the Law. The structure is given like this\(^96\):

For – but
the law appoints – the oath appointed
as high priests men – the Son
who are weak – who has been made perfect forever

Jesus Christ, the anchor of hope for all believers, is the great High Priest, the perfect Mediator who brings together in Himself man with God, stands as far superior not only to the Levitical priests, but also Abraham and even Melchizedek himself. Melchizedek, the mysterious figure is a great sign

\(^91\) Ibid., 197. This is a small yet beautiful visual model of this exegesis.
\(^92\) John Calvin, Hebrews. Calvin connects this oath in Psalm 110:4 with the Gospel and contrasts the glory of Christ against the inferiority of the earthly priests.
\(^93\) William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker. “Hebrews”, 201. See also F. F. Bruce, 171. Bruce brings to light the beauty of the Greek grammar employed here with all of the rising weight and emphasis landing on the final word of verse 22, Jesus.
\(^94\) F. F. Bruce, 173
\(^95\) William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker. “Hebrews”, 205
\(^96\) Ibid., 208
post pointing towards Christ, in whose likeness he is made. Centuries later, King David tells of a solemn oath confirmed by the Lord to bring forth One like Melchizedek, yet greater. Finally in Hebrews, there is given a great exposition on the great work achieved by Christ in His incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. Jesus is the Most High God, the utmost High Priest, upon whom all believers stake their hope.