

Last year, a group of 30 people gathered at an estate in Toronto Canada.

- They sipped brain-boosting drinks laced with lion's mane mushrooms.
- They participated in a breathwork session.
- And they soaked up the electro-magnetic pulses of the BioCharger, which seemingly looks like a giant blender and sounds like a bionic mosquito.

This was the launch of the Longevity House, a private club that promises its members a long life, free from chronic illnesses and cognitive decline. That is, as long as they pay the life-time membership fee of \$100,000.

But if you are interested, you need to be quick as 23 of the 30 places are already taken!

This is just one of the many ways that people today are pouring huge amounts of money into life-extension innovations. For example,

- Paypal founder Peter Thiel pledged \$3.5 million to the Methuselah Foundation, a non-profit that has vowed to make 90 the new 50 by 2030.
- And former Google Ventures CEO Bill Maris launched Calico a project focused on dramatically extending human life, increasing lifespans by as much as 100 years.

But no matter how much money that people throw at this, our problem remains. Whatever club we are members of, however much we rely on science or science fiction, the mortality rate for humans has stubbornly remained at 100%! Everybody dies.

And this means, that whenever we rely on someone to help us through life, in the back of our minds we always know that they won't be there for us forever. One day, they will be taken from us.

That's the case with everyone – partners, parents, friends, political or religious leaders. Everyone that is - apart from one. There is someone who invites us to trust in him and depend on him, not just for today, but for ever. That's because he has already conquered death.

And so we can rely on him completely because as our next passage in the book of Hebrews tells us, he has a better priesthood.

Hebrews 7:11-28: "If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the law was given to the people), why was there still need for another priest to come—one in the order of Melchizedek, not in the order of Aaron? <sup>12</sup>For when there is a change of the priesthood, there must also be a change of the law. <sup>13</sup>He of whom these things are said belonged to a different tribe, and no-one from that tribe has ever served at the altar. <sup>14</sup>For it is clear that our Lord descended from Judah, and in regard to that tribe Moses said nothing about priests. <sup>15</sup>And what we have said is even more clear if another priest like Melchizedek appears, <sup>16</sup>one who has become a priest not on the basis of a regulation as to his ancestry but on the basis of the power of an indestructible life. <sup>17</sup>For it is declared:

"You are a priest for ever,  
in the order of Melchizedek."

<sup>18</sup>The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless <sup>19</sup>(for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God.

<sup>20</sup>And it was not without an oath! Others became priests without any oath, <sup>21</sup>but he became a priest with an oath when God said to him:

"The Lord has sworn  
and will not change his mind:  
'You are a priest for ever.' "

<sup>22</sup>Because of this oath, Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.

<sup>23</sup>Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; <sup>24</sup>but because Jesus lives for ever, he has a permanent priesthood. <sup>25</sup>Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.

<sup>26</sup>Such a high priest meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens.

<sup>27</sup>Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself. <sup>28</sup>For the law appoints as high priests men who are weak; but the oath, which came after the law, appointed the Son, who has been made perfect for ever."

## 1. A New Way

Last week we were introduced to the mysterious Melchizedek. We saw that he was a historical figure from the time of Abraham – he blessed Abraham when he met him on the way back from Abraham’s rescue mission of his nephew Lot. And then “Abraham gave him a tenth of the plunder.” Hebrews 7:4

And we saw that this was significant because it showed that Melchizedek was greater than Abraham, and greater than the priests that came from Levi, Abraham’s great grandson.

And that’s important, because if Jesus, “has become a high priests for ever, in the order of Melchizedek.” Hebrews 5:20, then his ministry and his role is also great and better than the Levitical priest within Judaism. And so why would the original readers of this letter be tempted to give up following Jesus and go back to the Judaism they had come from.

But in our passage for this morning, the author pushes further into this truth to show in a deeper way why the priesthood of Jesus is better. And his first reason is that through Christ, we have a new way to God!

### a) The Old Way was Weak

“If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the law was given to the people), why was there still need for another priest to come—one in the order of Melchizedek, not in the order of Aaron?” Hebrews 7:11

The Levitical priesthood was established by the Law that was given to Moses on Mount Sinai. It was that law that regulated who could become priests, where they served and what they had to do in order to represent the people before God.

And that priesthood was a great gift to Israel. It allowed them to experience God’s presence and receive God’s help to some extent. But there was a problem with it. As good as it was, it could never bring them to perfection. It couldn’t give them the complete and secure relationship with God that they needed.

The writer proved this by the fact that God declared, through the messianic prophecy of Psalm 110:4: “You are a priest for ever, in the order of Melchizedek.”

God established a new priesthood, because the old one, in the order of Aaron was imperfect. “The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless <sup>19</sup> (for the law made nothing perfect).” Hebrews 7:18-19

This is the clear message of the Bible. The Old Testament religious system, with its rules and regulations, its priests, tabernacle and animal sacrifices, could never make anyone perfect in God’s sight and so could never secure a relationship with him.

As we’ll see later, this was in part because the sacrifices were insufficient to pay for sins. But it was also because of our inability to overcome our sinful nature. So nobody managed to keep the law perfectly. And as a result, “No-one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.” Romans 3:20

None of us can get right with God through our efforts, our religious activities, our keeping of the rules, our attempt to live a good life. And so the law doesn’t bring us into a perfect relationship with God. Instead, it shows us how far short of God’s standard we have fallen.

### b) The New Way is Wonderful

But through Christ, God brought in a new way. Jesus was not part of that old Levitical priesthood. He could never be, because Jesus was not a descendant of Levi. “Our Lord descended from Judah, and in regard to that tribe Moses said nothing about priests.” Hebrews 7:14.

And so Jesus is not part of that Old Covenant system. He was not appointed high priest by that Old Mosaic Law. And so his way to God is not weak and useless like the law. Instead, through him, “a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God.” Hebrews 7:19

Jesus’ ministry for us has opened up a new way by which we can be declared right with God. A new way through which we can be adopted as God’s children. A new way through which we can draw near to God. “We have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain.” Hebrews 10:19–20

The original readers of Hebrews were tempted to go back to the old Levitical priesthood. And today, many people are still

tempted to look to other mediators to bring them to God. They are trusting in priests or saints or prophets or idols, angel readers, mediums, spiritual advisors, hoping that they can provide a way to God. And we're told that this is ok because in the end all roads lead to God.

But in Christ we have a better way, because in Christ we have the only way to God. This is what Jesus said, ["I am the way and the truth and the life. No-one comes to the Father except through me."](#) John 14:6

## 2. A Guaranteed Relationship

But some people might argue that if God could set aside the Levitical priesthood of the Mosaic Law, to replace it with Jesus, then what is to stop him from doing the same with Jesus in the future?

And in fact, that is what some religions, like Islam, have claimed. They say that Jesus was a great prophet, but God has brought something new— a new mediator, a new prophet, a new way to God.

But the writer of Hebrews says that will never happen because of God's oath. ["Others became priests without any oath."](#) Hebrews 7:20 The descendants of Aaron became priests simply because of their genealogy.

### a) By An Oath

But with Jesus, ["He became a priest with an oath when God said to him:](#)

["The Lord has sworn](#)

[and will not change his mind:](#)

['You are a priest for ever.' "](#) Hebrews 7:21

As we saw a couple of weeks ago, God swears by an oath because he knows that we struggle to take him at his word. So his oath encourages us to have absolute confidence that God will do what he has said.

So God has promised that Jesus will be our priest for ever. And he has guaranteed it with an oath. So he will not change his mind. He will not go back on his word. He will not bring in something new again.

Just as the writer declared in his introduction to this letter that Jesus is God's final word to this world, so Jesus is God's final solution to the problem of our sin and our separation from him.

We do not need anyone else. There is nobody better. As Paul wrote to Timothy: ["There is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all."](#) 1 Timothy 2:5–6

### b) By A Secure Covenant

And so, ["Because of this oath, Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant."](#)

Hebrews 7:22

We'll see the details of this new covenant that we have been brought into in the next chapter. But here we're told that, unlike the old covenant, this agreement with God that we have been brought into through Jesus is a secure one. That's because it is not based on what we do. Instead it is based solely on what Jesus has done.

He is the guarantee. And because his role in our lives has been made certain with God's oath, then today we can rejoice in our salvation because it will never be changed or dissolved.

That's why Paul could say that ["I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."](#) Romans 8:38–39

## 3. A Permanent Representative

God's oath guarantees our relationship with God. But it also declared that unlike the Levitical priests, Jesus has a permanent priesthood.

### a) Not Temporary

Aaron and his descendants could only serve as priests as long as they lived. So ["There have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office."](#) Hebrews 7:23

And that was a real problem, because there was no guarantee that the next generation of priests would be faithful to God.

That's what happened with Eli, the priest when Samuel was born. "He had led Israel for 40 years." 1 Samuel 4:18

But his sons were not like him. "Eli's sons were wicked men; they had no regard for the LORD." 1 Samuel 2:12. They abused their position and their people stealing their sacrifices and sleeping with the women who served at the entrance to the tabernacle.

A similar thing happened with the kings of Judah. Some would faithfully serve the Lord in their generation, only to be followed by their son who would completely mess everything up again.

#### b) But unchanging

But our hope is in an unchanging priest. "Because Jesus lives for ever, he has a permanent priesthood." Hebrews 7:24

He doesn't need a succession plan. He will not need a replacement. Nobody will have to take over from him. He is our high priest for ever.

And that means, "He is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them." Hebrews 7:25 Jesus doesn't offer us a temporary salvation. He doesn't reconcile us to God for a little while. The hope that he gives has no time limit.

We can be sure that Jesus will always be there in heaven for us. And his blood will always cleanse us from all sin. Paul wrote: "Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. <sup>34</sup> Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us." Romans 8:31–34

This is the security that we can have if we put our faith in Christ. He is able to save us completely, for all eternity.

#### 4. A Sufficient Sacrifice v26-28

And that is because his sacrifice is sufficient. We're going to see this in more detail in chapters 9 and 10, but the Levitical high priests had to "offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people." Hebrews 7:27

##### a) Imperfect Priests

That's because the priests themselves were not perfect and neither were their sacrifices. "It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins." Hebrews 10:4

So day after day, year after year, those priests performed the same rituals over and over again, and their people were never truly reconciled to God.

##### b) Our Perfect Saviour

But Jesus is different. He is "holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens." Hebrews 7:26

He is someone we can trust completely because even though he suffered when he was tempted and so he can sympathise with us in our weaknesses, he never sinned. He lived a perfect life of obedience and submission to his Father.

And so when he died on the cross, his life was a perfect sacrifice for our sins. "He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself." Hebrews 7:27

And that means if we come to him, then there is no other sacrifice needed. No other payment for our sins is required. No other judgement for us to fear. Jesus, "has been made perfect for ever." Hebrews 7:28

As we saw before, this doesn't mean that before the cross, he was imperfect. But it means that it was only after laying down his life that Jesus was able to rescue us. That he became our perfect Saviour.

It is because Jesus radically submitted to his Father's will and completed the work that he gave him to do, he can save all those who come to him. "Once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him." Hebrews 5:9

#### Conclusion

So why would we ever want to go anywhere else? Why would we want to put our faith in anyone else?

Because of his sacrificial death and glorious resurrection, Jesus has defeated death and so in him we have a better

priesthood.

- He has opened up a new and better way to God.
- He has guaranteed our intimate relationship with God.
- He has become our permanent representative before God.
- And his sacrifice for sins has made us righteous forever in the sight of God.

So let's fix our eyes on him. He is all that we need!

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