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The Superiority of the Messiah to the Levitical Priesthood **4:14 to 10:18**

After his parenthetical warning on the danger of a hardened heart to unbelieving Jews (**to see link click [As](#) - Today, If You Hear His Voice, Do Not Harden Your Hearts**), and after having shown that **Messiah** is better than the first pillar of Judaism, **the angels (1:4 to 2:18)**, and better than the second pillar of Judaism, **Moshe (3:1-6)**, the writer now demonstrates that **Jesus Christ** is better than the third pillar of Judaism of his day, **the Levitical Priesthood**.



Here begins the longest single expository passage in **Hebrews**. Its very length suggests its importance. Its theme is the core theme of the book. The real resource of the struggling Messianic community, in the midst of their pressures, is **the high priesthood of Messiah**. They must realize the greatness of that **priesthood**, its superiority to **the Levitical priesthood**, and the perfect access they had to it on the basis of **Yeshua's** death.¹¹⁶

Twice earlier, the author mentioned in passing that **Yeshua** is a **High Priest**. The first time was in **2:17: This is why He had to become like His brothers and sisters in every respect - so that He might become a merciful and faithful High Priest in the service of God, making atonement for the sins of the people (2:17 CJB)**. The second time was in **3:1: Always think about Yeshua, whom we acknowledge publically as God's Apostle and High Priest of our confession (3:1)**.

Now we will deal with this aspect exclusively. The author will prove **the priesthood of Jesus** is superior to **the Levitical priesthood** by the use of five contrasts: **Messiah** has a better position than **Aaron - 4:14-16 (Av)**; **Messiah** is a better **High Priest** than **Aaron - 5:1 to 7:28 (Aw)**; the new **priesthood** is based on a better Covenant - **8:1-13 (Bm)**; the new **priesthood** functions in a better **Sanctuary - 9:1-10 (Bq)**, and **the new priesthood** is based on a better **Sacrifice - 9:11 to 10:18 (Bu)**.¹¹⁷

The essential idea of a **priest** is that of a **mediator** between **God** and mankind. In our fallen state we are sinners (**Romans 3:23**), guilty before **Ha'Shem**, and alienated from **Him**. We have no right to approach **the LORD**, nor do we have the ability, or even the desire, to approach **Him**. Instead, we want to flee from **ADONAI** and to have nothing to do with **Him**. We are, therefore, helpless until someone acts as our representative. **The Rabbis teach that the three pockets in the Afikoman ceremony during Pesach represent Ha'Shem, the priests, and the people - the priests representing the mediators between God and His people.** But we know that **Yeshua** is our **Great High Priest** - our only **Mediator**.

In ancient Isra'el **the priests** performed three primary duties. They ministered in the Sanctuary before **YHVH**; they taught the people the Torah; and they inquired for the people concerning the divine will. Under the Dispensation of the Torah (see the commentary on **Exodus Da - The Dispensation of the Torah**), **the priest** was only a shadow of **the great High Priest** that was to come. With the coming of **Christ** this office was fulfilled in **Him**.

The Bible teaches that **there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus (First Timothy 2:5)**. However, the Roman Catholic church teaches that there are many mediators: the priests, Mary, a host of saints, and the angels, and Rome teaches that it is entirely proper to pray to them. All Roman Catholics must accept this teaching under pain of mortal sin, which can lead to damnation, or excommunication. The decree states, "The priest is the man of **God**, and the minister of **God**; whoever hears him hears **God**. The priest forgives sins as **God**. It is clear that their function is such that no one is greater. Therefore, the priests are not only called angels, but also **God**, holding as they do the power and authority of the immortal **God**." There is probably no other doctrine revealed in the Bible that the Roman Church has so obviously turned upside down as that of their corrupted priesthood. Romanism put the priest between the believer and the knowledge of **God** as revealed in the Scriptures, and makes him the sole interpreter of truth. It puts him between the confession of sins and the forgiveness of sins.

There is one main passage in the Bible that deals with **the priesthood** of all believers: **You**

also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ . . . But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light (First Peter 2:5-9). As believers, we are not mere spectators of our faith who may or may not engage in it as we choose, but **priests**, and therefore obligated individually to make the message of salvation known to others around us. Because of this privileged closeness with **God**, no other earthly mediator, as seen in the Catholic Church, is necessary.

With the coming of **Messiah**, and the accomplishment of redemption through **His** death and resurrection, the entire Levitical system in the Torah became obsolete and passed away in its entirety. It is very telling that the Roman Church retains their contaminated priesthood while discarding the other elements of **the Levitical** sacrificial system. First century had no priests, either within the Messianic Community or Gentile believers. Nowhere in the B'rit Chadashah does it describe such a leader (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Ex - On This Rock I Will Build My Church**). **The Jewish priesthood** was changed (see **Bh - The Former Priesthood Has Changed**), and we are told that **Jesus Christ** is now our **High Priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek (7:17)**. Consequently, Catholic priests are merely an invention of the Roman Church and a creation of its imagination.¹¹⁸

Just as Paul encouraged those of his day to choose **Yeshua** as their **High Priest** rather than an earthly priest - so let us choose **Messiah** as our **High Priest**, rather than any human. Praise **God** that He sent **Christ** as: our perfect **High Priest (4:14-16)**, our mediator (**First Timothy 2:5**) who ransomed us from our sins (**Matthew 20:28, Mark 10:45, First Timothy 2:6, Hebrews 9:15**) and opened the way for us to approach **ADONAI's** throne of grace. How awesome to have such a Great and Mighty **High Priest!**