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Yeshua the Melchizedek Priest

7: 26-28

Yeshua the Melchizedek Priest DIG: Before they could offer sacrifices for the people, what did the Levitical priests have to do first? Why? What type of holiness is being emphasized in verse 26 with regard to Messiah? Why didn't Jesus need to offer up sacrifices for Himself? What did the breastplate and the ephod symbolize that Isra'el's high priest were to have? How is Yeshua different from those ancient Levitical high priest's?

REFLECT: Describe the lifestyle of some who is morally pure. What does it mean to you personally that Jesus Christ is your perfect high priest forever? How can the truths revealed in this study give you more confidence to draw near to God in any and every circumstance? What changes need to take place in your prayer life as a result?

Throughout the letter to the Jewish believers, no point receives as much attention as **Messiah's** priesthood. **Hebrews** is the only New Covenant book that actually calls **Him** our **Great High Priest**. More than forty percent of **Hebrews** deals with some aspect of **Yeshua's** intercessory ministry. In this context one figure from **Isra'el's** past capture the attention of the inspired writer - **Melchizedek, king of Salem and priest of God Most High (7:1)**. The name **Malki-tzedek** combines **Malki** (king) and **tzedek** (righteousness). The brief appearance of this person on the stage of **Genesis 14:18-20** would seem too insignificant to deserve the kind of extended attention found here. Yet **Melchizedek's** name and function provide rich, supportive insights for the believer.

Mankind needed a priest without spot or blemish, and God has provided such a One: This is the kind of Great High Priest (Hebrew: *Cohen Rosh Gadol*) **that meets our need - holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners and raised higher than the heavens (7:26)**. To prove that **Jesus** is spotless, the writer says five things.

Yeshua is holy: In the Dispensation of Torah, only **the high priest** could enter the

Most Holy Place on the day of Atonement (see the commentary on **Exodus Go - The Day of Atonement**). But because **his** holiness was not **his** own, each would have **to offer sacrifices for his own sins and then for the people's**. With this kind of temporary holiness, **the high priest** could enter the Most Holy Place just long enough to perform **his** annual duties.

In contrast to human priests, **Christ** is absolutely **holy**. **He** was born **holy** and not capable of sin. The Greek term for **holy** is usually *hagios*, which means *different, or separated for the purposes of God*. Although this is a very important term in the Bible, it is not the one used here. It's as if **the Ruach HaKodesh** wants to emphasize the **holiness** of **Messiah** so much that **He** pulls out a completely different term: *hosios*. Whereas *hagios* refers to **holiness** of service, *hosios* refers to **holiness** of character. But, as might be expected, our **Lord** is both *hagios* and *hosios*, that is, **holy** by virtue of **His** service, and **holy** by virtue of **His** nature, with **His** nature being emphasized in this particular passage.

Christ is **without guile**: This is the translation of *akakos*. *Kakos* is the Greek word for evil in the abstract sense. The Greek letter alpha prefixed makes the compound word mean, "not evil," that is, **without guile**, or *free from malice and deception*. The best example of someone with much **guile** in the TaNaKh was Laban (see the commentary on **Genesis Hg - Jacob Marries Leah and Rachel**), who had much *malice* and practiced much *deception*. Hence, the word **holy** points toward **God**, while the word **without guile** points toward mankind. **Yeshua** injured no one. **He** lived for others. **He** went about always doing good for others, including those who had done, or who **He** knew would do, **Him** harm. **He** healed . . . but **He** never hurt.

The Lord is **pure**: This word means that **He** was free from any moral or spiritual blemish. Though **Yeshua Messiah** lived in the world for thirty-three years, all the while being under siege from the Adversary and mingling with sinners, **He** never contracted one possible spot of defilement. Just as the rays of the sun can shine on the filthiest things here on earth without losing their radiance and beauty, so **Jesus** lived **His** life in the sinful, defiled world without losing the least of **His** purity. **He** moved through the world and remained untouched by any of its blemishes. **He** came into the most direct and personal contact with Satan, yet left as spotless as before they met. There was never a **priest** who was **pure** until **Jesus**.

Jesus is **set apart from sinners**: He was entirely different than anyone else. Obviously, **He** was not **separated from sinners** in the sense of never coming into any contact with **them** or mingling with them. **His** parents (yes, even Mary), **His**

brothers and sisters, **His** apostles – all the people **He** encountered were all **sinful**. Yet **He** ate with them, traveled with them, worked with them, and worshiped with them. But **His** nature was totally separate, totally different, from theirs – and from ours. For this, of course, we could not be more grateful, for otherwise **He** could not have been our **Savior**.

Messiah is raised higher than the heavens: He is exalted because of all the other attributes listed above. Because **He** is **holy, without guile, pure and set apart from sinners, He is raised higher than the heavens.**¹⁹⁰

Mankind needed a sufficient sacrifice, not an insufficient one: All the **Levitical priests** were sinful, and they had **to offer sacrifices** for **themselves** before **they** could offer them for other **people**. Not so our **Great High Priest**. **Unlike the other high priests** (Hebrew: *cohanim g'dolim*), **He does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for His own sins, and then for the sins of the people** because **He** is sinless. **He** is a priest without spot or blemish, **sacrificed for their sins once for when He offered Himself on the cross (7:27)**. While **His** own death was a priestly act, **He** was not a **priest** at the time of **His** death for it was **God the Father** who offered **Him** up. **Yet it was Ha'Shem's will to crush Him and cause Him to suffer, and though YHVH makes His life an offering for in, He will see His offspring and prolong His days, and the will of God will prosper in His hand (Isaiah 53:10)**. **Jesus** did not become the **Great High Priest** until the Ascension (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Mr - The Ascension of Jesus**), and that is why **His priesthood** is continuous. **The Levitical priesthood** could only function with many **priests**, and it was replaced because it was insufficient. However, **the sacrifice of Yeshua** was once-and-for-all when **He** offered **Himself** up. It was a sufficient sacrifice.¹⁹¹

The contrast between the weakness of the Levitical priesthood and the strength of Messiah's priesthood: The writer concludes with a contrast between **weakness** and **strength**. **The weakness is the Levitical priesthood**. It was officiated by **men** who were common **people**. **The system** existed under the Torah and was therefore temporary. Those earthly **priests** had both physical and moral **weakness, for the Torah appoints as cohanim g'dolim men who have weakness**. **But**, in contrast to **the Levitical priests, the priesthood of Messiah** was sworn by **an oath**. **God said to Him, "ADONAI has sworn and will not change His mind, 'You are a cohen forever' (Hebrews 7:20-21 CJB quoting Psalm 110:4 CJB)."** It **after the Torah** because **Psalm 110:4** was **written after Torah** had already been given. Instead of being based upon **the weakness** of

men, the priesthood of Jesus has been made perfect forever (7:28). The priesthood of Jesus is based on the sinlessness of the Priest, while the Levitical priesthood was carried out through sinful men.

When he officiated, **the Levitical high priest** wore an ephod (see the commentary on **Exodus Fz - Make the Ephod of Gold, Blue, Purple and Scarlet Yarn**), an elaborate robe on which were **two onyx stones. The names of the twelve sons of Isra'el, in the order of their birth**, were engraved on each stone - **six names on one stone and the remaining six on the other**. Attached to the ephod by gold chains was a breastplate (**Exodus Ga - Fashion a Breastpiece for Making Decisions**), on which were twelve more precious stones representing the twelve tribes. Consequently, whenever **he** went into the presence of **God, he** carried with **him** all the tribes of **Isra'el. The Levitical high priest** symbolically bore the children of **Isra'el** to **YHVH** on **his** heart (**his** affections) and on **his** shoulders (**his** strength). This represented what **the priesthood** was meant to be: first, a heart for **the people**, and secondly, the strength to bring them to **ADONAI**. Many of these **high priests**, no doubt, had a heart for **the people**. But none of them was able to bring **the people** to **God. They** could not even bring themselves to **Him!**

Our **High Priest** has no such **weakness. He** carries our names on **His** heart and on **His** shoulders. But **He** needs no ephod or breastplate as symbols, for **He** has true affection and true salvation. **He** perfectly loves us and **He** can perfectly save us. **He is able (7:25).**¹⁹²