

HEBREWS: REPLACING MAN'S RITUALISM WITH CHRIST
"Part XI: Replacing Ritualistic Priesthoods With Christ's Heavenly One"
(Hebrews 6:20-7:28)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Does a minister in a church have more of an "in" with God than the believer in the pew? Is he the "go-between" who connects God with the laity? Consider the following:

(1) Years ago, when the Church Board and I were questioning a married couple who had applied for church membership, we were pleased to announce that they had qualified to be members.

Much am I supposed to put in the offering box every month?!"

I immediately guessed that this lady had belonged to a church where the minister dictated the family's offering burden. Accordingly, I replied, "I cannot tell you how much to give, nor can I tell anyone else how much to give. That is between you and God, not you and me!"

You can be straight with me -- how much am I supposed to **give** -- I want to know?!"

I replied again, "I don't view the offering boxes as contributions to Don Shell's salary, but to God! In fact, that's why I also contribute to those boxes! It's really between you and God as to what you give!"

The lady was taken aback by this, and from that time on I began to do my little speech in the service about giving in the pine boxes!

Roman Catholicism, p. 51) Accordingly, when her former priest had dictated what she was to give, she gave it, period!

Well, IS the Church's minister on a stage closer to God than the man in the pew, or not?! Nepaug Church seems to counter such an idea, and IF so, WHY?!

(We turn to the sermon "Need" section . . .)

Need: "I was taught that a minister stands closer to God in position than we who sit in the pew -- that my sins and hopes have to be directed through the minister to God for me to get anywhere! This order doesn't seem to be used at Nepaug Church - - WHY not?!"

- I. **The author of Hebrews recalled that Jesus Christ is an High Priest after the order of a man named Melchisedec, Hebrews 6:20.**
- II. **Following that announcement, this author declared that this order is spiritual and vastly upstages all other ritual earthly priesthoods:**
 - A. The author noted all Jewish priests were subject to Christ's priesthood:
 1. Abraham, the first patriarch of the entire Jewish race, submitted to Melchisedec in paying him tithes following Abraham's defeat of the kings of the plain in Genesis 14:17-20, Heb. 7:1-2.
 2. Well, since Abraham was the father of all Jews, including those of Jacob's son, Levi from whom came the entire Jewish priesthood, every Jewish priest was subject to Melchisedec, Heb. 7:4-11:
 - a. Abraham was the recipient of Melchisedec's priestly blessing upon paying tithes of his war spoils to Melchisedec, Heb. 7:4-6.
 - b. In the Ancient Near East, the one who blesses is always superior to the one who is blessed by him, Hebrews 7:7.
 - c. Also, the sons of any patriarch adopt the station and calling of the father so that Levi, Jacob's son in the seed of Abraham, accordingly submitted in Abraham to Melchisedec, Heb. 7:9-10.
 - d. **Thus, all the priests of Israel were subject to Melchisedec, meaning they are subject to CHRIST'S priesthood!**
 - B. The author noted the Jewish priesthood was replaced by Christ's:
 1. Had the Levitical priesthood reached perfection, there would not have been a need for another priesthood, Heb. 7:11. However, Scripture predicts in Psalm 110:4, in the Jewish Old Testament itself, the rise of an eternal Melchisedekan priesthood, indicating the replacement of the Levitical priesthood, 7:12-19.
 2. Also, this establishment of an eternal priesthood even nullified the legal system of the Levitical priesthood, Heb. 7:20-22.
 - C. **Most critically, the establishment of the eternal priesthood under the risen Lord Jesus nullifies all mortal human ritual priesthoods, whether they be the Old Testament one or any other priesthood:**

1. **The author of Hebrews noted that the** Levitical priests were mortals who died, and that necessitated the induction of many priests to keep the priesthood going as older men died, 7:23.
2. However, JESUS continues FOREVER in His RISEN state in an ETERNAL Melchisedekan priesthood, meaning He has an unchangeable and hence vastly superior priesthood, 7:24.
3. **In this way, Jesus ALWAYS, COMPLETELY, FULLY saves those who come to Him unlike ALL OTHER human priests:**
 - a. **Jesus exists ALWAYS since, unlike ALL OTHER human priests,** He is without sin and undefiled, Heb. 7:26a,b.
 - b. **He can save COMPLETELY unlike ALL OTHER human priests, for He is higher than the heavens,** Heb. 7:26c.
 - c. **He can save FULLY unlike ALL OTHER human priests, for He does not have to offer repeated sacrifices for his own sins and then for the sins of others, for He has ONCE-FOR-ALL offered up His own blood,** Heb. 7:27-28.

Application: *To find forgiveness and gain full peace with God, INSTEAD of using ANY mortal priest of ANY earthly order, church or organization, (1) believe in Jesus Christ, the Great High Priest of God to find forgiveness of sins, John 3:16. (2) As a believer, INSTEAD of using ANY mortal priest of ANY earthly order, church or organization, CONFESS to GOD through CHRIST ALONE our sins in the PRIVACY of PERSONAL prayer, 1 John 1:9 with Hebrews 4:16. (3) Then we bring our worship and adoration to God through CHRIST ALONE apart from any mortal priest in ANY earthly order, church or organization, Hebrews 13:15. [Note: This does not mean we are not to attend Church to praise God, for Hebrews 10:25 tells us to gather together. However, our praise is to go DIRECTLY to GOD without the minister's intermediary involvement!] (4) From now on, we no longer view the Church MINISTER as a PRIEST over other Christians; rather, we view him as a FELLOW BROTHER in CHRIST who has been called of God to LEAD the Church in exalting ONLY the Great High Priest, JESUS CHRIST!*

Lesson: *The Melchisedekan priesthood of Jesus Christ REPLACES not only the Jewish Levitical priesthood, but, by way of application, ALL other mortal, ritualistic priesthoods! Thus, we do not subject ourselves to any other mortal man to go before God on our behalf, but we go DIRECTLY to God through JESUS CHRIST as our SOLE High Priest!*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the sermon lesson . . .)

Scripture and the testimony of those who have risen from a human, ritualistic priesthood to live under Christ's heavenly priesthood encourage us today:

I Was A Priest, p. 183, 204 as cited in Boettner, Roman Catholicism, p. 74).

(2) Scripture addresses these issues as well (as follows):

(a) 1 Corinthians 7:23: "Ye were bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men."

Against a **hierarchy** in Church leaders, commanding the elders: "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof . . . **neither** as being **lords** over God's heritage [the congregation], but being examples to the flock."

The heavenly priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ supersedes all human, earthly, ritualistic priesthoods. Thus, we are not bound to any of the priesthoods of men, but go to God directly through Jesus Christ, Our Savior and only High Priest!

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