

Jesus, the New Covenant High Priest is Better Than Aaron, the Old Covenant High Priest

Hebrews 4:14 to 10:18, John Hepp, Jr.

Introduction: Some advantages of having Jesus as high priest, 4:14-16:

- He has gone through the heavens to reach God's very throne.
- He is a man ("Jesus") who will inherit everything ("Son of God").
- He can sympathize with us because He was tempted like us.
- He has made God's throne our source of mercy and grace.
- He has given us constant access to that throne, even when in need.

I. Jesus is better than Aaron in His person, 5:1—7:28

A. Like Aaron, He has fulfilled the requirements for high priest, 5:1-10

1. A high priest must be selected by God from among men, 5:1-4
2. Messiah Jesus was selected (5-6) and perfected (7-10), 5:5-10

The Danger of Degeneration 5:11—6:20

The Hebrews are difficult to teach because they are sluggish, showing little progress in their knowledge of Messiah. If they return to the old covenant (ABC's, milk, foundation), refusing the light they have seen, they will lose all hope. Instead, they should press on to maturity, confident that God is being faithful to His oath to bless and multiply Abraham.

B. Like Melchizedek, He is a better high priest than Aaron, 7:1-28

1. Melchizedek was greater than Aaron, 7:1-10
 - a. Melchizedek's (1) relation to Abraham and (2) perpetual priesthood, 7:1-3
 - b. Because he was superior to Abraham, Melchizedek was superior to the Levitical priesthood embodied in Abraham, 7:4-10
2. Advantages of another priest like Melchizedek, 7:11-25
 - a. Changing the priesthood involves changing to a law that enables us to draw near to God, 7:11-19
 - b. God's oath making Jesus priest guarantees that the new covenant is better than the old one, 7:20-22
 - c. An eternal priest can secure complete salvation, 7:23-25
3. Summary of this section (Jesus' priestly person) and bridge to the next section (Jesus' priestly work), 7:26-28. Our high priest
 - is above the heavens [on God's throne]
 - has offered one sacrifice for sins
 - is God's Son, perfected forever

- II. Jesus is better than Aaron in His work, 8:1—10:18
 - A. He ministers in a better place, 8:1-5
 - In heaven, the true sanctuary, of which Aaron's earthly sanctuary was only a copy and shadow
 - B. He mediates a better covenant, 8:6-13
 - The new covenant, in which God writes His laws on hearts (not on stones) and achieves a permanent relationship because He forgives sins
 - C. He has offered a better sacrifice, 9:1—10:18
 - 1. Old covenant sacrifices could not give access to God, 9:1-10
 - 2. Messiah's sacrifice is better, 9:11—10:18, because
 - a. It gives access to God, 9:11-14
 - It cleanses the conscience, not just the flesh.
 - b. It inaugurates the new covenant, 9:15-24
 - By cleansing persons guilty under the first covenant, it enables them to inherit the promises.
 - It even cleanses heavenly things (thus preparing them to take part in the eternal kingdom).
 - c. It is made only once, 9:25-28
 - d. By cleansing the conscience, it accomplishes God's will, 10:1-18
 - (1) Old covenant sacrifices could only remind of sins and point forward to better sacrifices. If they had actually cleansed people, they would have ceased on their own (10:1-4).
 - (2) Messiah accepted a body not in order to perpetuate the making of sacrifices but to accomplish God's will (10:5-10).
 - (3) By offering His body once for all, He made all of God's chosen ones perfect (that is, acceptable, 10:11-14).
 - (4) This complete cleansing under the new covenant makes further sin offerings unnecessary (10:15-18).

By this point the book has proved that Jesus is better than the key persons under the old covenant: the angels, Moses, and Aaron. From here on, the book exhorts us to live with persevering faith (10:19—13:17) and concludes in a personal way (13:18-25).