

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Hebrews 7: 04-10

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the bible again. Today, we will continue reading Hebrews chapter 7, verses 04 to 10.

The author of Hebrews presents a revolutionary concept: Christ is a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. Although King David, over a thousand years earlier, was inspired by the Holy Spirit to prophesy this fact in Psalm 110:4, the apostles of the New Testament did not portray Christ's ministry from this perspective.

When a group of Hebrew believers faced increasing persecution, some began to retreat and return to Judaism. The author of Hebrews stepped forward, warning them that those who had partaken of the Holy Spirit, tasted the good word of God, and experienced the powers of the age to come, yet fell away, could not be restored to repentance. They would be like a field that received the rain of grace but produced thorns and briers, with their life's work ending in burning.

At the same time, the author introduced Christ as a priest according to the order of Melchizedek, far superior to the Aaronic priesthood held in Judaism. Yesterday, we read how the author used the historical account from Genesis 14, where Melchizedek held the dual identity of king and priest. He provided Abraham with bread and wine and blessed him, while Abraham, in turn, gave Melchizedek a tenth of all he had. Today's passage, from verses 4 to 10, builds upon that historical fact, further developing the argument so that the Hebrew believers could recognize that the priesthood according to the order of Melchizedek is far more honorable, glorious, and superior than that of Aaron.

Verse 4: "Now consider how great this man was, to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils."

Abraham was the first Hebrew, the forefather of all Hebrews. The Hebrews greatly respected their lineage, and they held their father of faith, Abraham, in the highest regard. Therefore, the author urges the Hebrew believers to reflect on this: their forefather Abraham took a tenth of the choicest spoils and offered it to Melchizedek—how great and honorable must this man be?

Dear brothers and sisters, Abraham offering the best tenth to Melchizedek teaches us three important lessons. First, Abraham showed deep respect for those who ministered to him. Likewise, we should be grateful and respectful to those who serve us in the church.

Second, Abraham offered a tenth of his possessions—the best—to God. We must recognize that everything we have comes from God. Offering a tenth acknowledges that we do not forget our source.

Third, Abraham's action became an example for his descendants. If you have been in the church for many years, you should consider whether you are leaving a good example for younger believers. The church needs continuity, and those who take on responsibilities must be mindful of their influence on the younger generation.

The author of Hebrews understood Abraham's significance to the Hebrew believers. That is why he used Abraham's offering of a tenth to Melchizedek as a starting point to illustrate Melchizedek's greatness.

Verse 5: "And indeed those who are of the sons of Levi, who receive the priesthood, have a commandment to receive tithes from the people according to the law, that is, from their brethren, though they have come from the loins of Abraham."

From the historical accounts in Genesis, we know that Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob had twelve sons, with Levi being the third. The name Levi

means "unite." Thus, Abraham was Levi's great-grandfather. Moses came from the tribe of Levi and was called to be the leader of the Israelites, leading them out of Egyptian slavery into the wilderness, where he established the tabernacle and received the Law. His brother Aaron became the patriarch of the priestly family.

During the golden calf incident in Exodus 32, the Levites stood with Moses, setting themselves apart for the Lord and executing judgment on those who did not repent. From that moment, the Levites were consecrated to serve God. In Numbers 18:6-7, God told Aaron: "Behold, I Myself have taken your brethren the Levites from among the children of Israel; they are a gift to you, given by the Lord, to do the work of the tabernacle of meeting. Therefore, you and your sons with you shall attend to your priesthood for everything at the altar and behind the veil, and you shall serve. I give your priesthood to you as a gift for service, but the outsider who comes near shall be put to death." Here, we see that God appointed the Levites to assist Aaron's family in handling the affairs of the tabernacle, while Aaron and his sons were to serve as priests, ministering at the altar and behind the veil.

Because the Levites served God full-time and had no inheritance of their own, God established this provision in Numbers 18:21: "Behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tithes in Israel as an inheritance in return for the work which they perform, the work of the tabernacle of meeting." According to the Mosaic Law, the Levites collected a tenth from the people because they no longer worked for their livelihood but were occupied with the matters of God's tabernacle. The people were to offer a tenth of their earnings to the Levites, and the Levites, in turn, had to take a tenth of what they received and offer it to the priestly family of Aaron. Numbers 18:28 states: "Thus you shall also offer a heave offering to the Lord from all your tithes which you receive from the children of Israel, and you shall give the Lord's heave offering from it to Aaron the priest."

With this background, let us return to verse 5. The Levites, as descendants of Levi, were commanded by God to collect a tenth from the Israelites. This commandment was part of the Mosaic Law. The Levites took tithes from the Israelites, even though the Israelites were their brothers—both being descendants of Abraham. The term "loins" is translated from the Greek word referring to the reproductive organ,

meaning that both the Levites and the rest of the Israelites were Abraham's descendants and thus brothers. However, because the Levites received the priesthood, they were authorized by the Mosaic Law to collect tithes from their fellow Israelites. Furthermore, the Levites had to give a tenth of what they received to Aaron's priestly family, demonstrating the honor and superiority of the priesthood.

Verse 6: "But he whose genealogy is not derived from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises."

However, Melchizedek comes from a different lineage. He is not someone within Abraham's genealogy, nor does he need to offer a tenth to the Levites as the Israelites do. On the contrary, it was their forefather Abraham who offered a tenth to Melchizedek. The reason for this is that Melchizedek is the priest of the Most High God. Clearly, this priestly qualification is more honorable than that of the Aaronic priesthood, which exists under Abraham's lineage. Moreover, the first recorded instance of tithing in the Bible is Abraham giving a tenth to Melchizedek. Here, we see that the author encourages the Hebrew believers to break free from traditional Jewish thinking. For thousands of years, they had firmly held onto the priestly system established by God through Aaron, but this mindset restricted them from fully recognizing Jesus Christ. As a result, they diminished the significance of Jesus Christ.

Dear brothers and sisters, this is also a reminder for New Testament believers. We often rely on our limited understanding—shaped by culture, tradition, experiences, or even theological systems—to know Jesus Christ, but this is insufficient. If we do so, we will severely underestimate Christ's power, honor, and glory. Instead, we should remove all limitations and approach Christ with an unveiled face, receiving His light and revelation. Then, we will behold a glorious Savior who far surpasses our understanding.

Not only did Melchizedek receive a tenth from Abraham, but he also blessed Abraham, who had received God's promises. God had promised Abraham that his

descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore, and that his offspring would inherit the promised land. Abraham was already immensely blessed, yet Melchizedek was still able to bestow a blessing upon him. Moreover, he did so in the name of the Most High God, the Possessor of heaven and earth—something truly extraordinary.

Verse 7: “Now beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better.”

In the Bible, it is almost always the greater who blesses the lesser. For example, Isaac blessed Jacob, and Jacob blessed his twelve sons—it is always the one with the greater position blessing the one with the lesser. This is an undeniable principle. Now, Melchizedek blessing Abraham shows that Melchizedek’s position was higher than Abraham’s.

Verse 8: “Here mortal men receive tithes, but there he receives them, of whom it is witnessed that he lives.”

The ones who collect the tithe here refer to the priests from Aaron’s family, who, according to the Mosaic Law, received a tenth from the people of Israel. However, these priests were mortal men, which means they were subject to death, and their priesthood had to be passed down from generation to generation.

The phrase “mortal men” is plural, referring to the many priests who served throughout history. However, the one who receives tithes there is mentioned in the singular—only one. He does not need a successor because He is the eternal High Priest who lives forever. The One who fulfills this eternal priesthood according to the order of Melchizedek is Jesus Christ. The testimony regarding Him likely refers to Psalm 110:4, where God Himself bears witness that Christ is the eternal High Priest: “The Lord has sworn and will not relent, ‘You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.’”

Verses 9 -10: “Even Levi, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, so to speak, for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.”

The author builds upon the fact that Abraham gave a tenth to Melchizedek to make an even greater point. Under the Mosaic Law, Levi collected a tenth from the Israelites, but he himself (through Abraham) had already paid a tenth to Melchizedek. Since Melchizedek met Abraham before Levi was born, Levi was still in Abraham’s body (or loins) at that time. In other words, Levi—through Abraham—gave tithes to Melchizedek. This concept is commonly found in the Bible.

Because human life is short, our perspective of time is very limited. People tend to focus only on the generations they can directly interact with, usually looking two generations up and two generations down. That is why there is a common Chinese saying: “Wealth does not last beyond three generations.” It means that a person’s influence rarely extends to the third generation. However, the Bible is God’s Word, and God is eternal. He is completely outside the limitations of time.

God views humanity as a group. When Adam sinned, Paul writes in Romans 5:12: “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.” Because Adam sinned, all people sinned, for all were in Adam’s loins. When God came to provide salvation, He sent His only begotten Son to the earth to die on the cross for the sins of humanity. When one man died, all were included in Jesus' death. And after three days, when Christ rose from the dead, all were made alive in Christ.

We must learn to adopt God’s perspective on time from the Bible. If we can view the events of time from eternity, it becomes much easier to see the true nature of things. I hope we can continually learn to view the events around us from the eternal perspective, as this will help us understand God's will for our lives.

The author of Hebrews encourages the Hebrew saints to break free from their fixed traditional views, for Jesus Christ is a Priest according to the order of Melchizedek. This office is far more honorable and transcendent than the priesthood of Aaron. I hope we can also break free from our traditional thinking and, according to the Bible’s description, come to know our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Let us pray together: Lord, thank You. You are our great High Priest today, sitting in the heavenly sanctuary according to the order of Melchizedek. This glorious and honorable office intercedes for us on one hand, and on the other, supplies our daily needs with bread and wine. Help us to always lift our eyes to the mountains, knowing that our help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth. This help comes through our heavenly High Priest, who supplies us according to our needs at any moment. Our Lord has opened a new and living way for us, and we can approach the throne of grace with boldness to receive mercy and grace in time of need. Bless my life today, in Jesus' name I pray. Amen.