

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

Hebrews 7:15-22

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 15 to 22.

The author of Hebrews first presents that the priesthood must be changed from the order of Aaron to the order of Melchizedek. Then, he uses a method of contrast to prove that the priesthood according to the order of Melchizedek is far superior to that of Aaron. Yesterday, we already read that a priest according to the order of Melchizedek must possess both the identity of a king and a priest, and therefore must come from the tribe of Judah rather than the tribe of Levi. Today, we will continue reading the next two contrasts: being established "according to the power of an endless life" versus "according to the law of a fleshly commandment", and being established with an oath versus not established with an oath.

Verse 15: "And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest."

Christ, as the High Priest, is far superior to the priesthood of Aaron. Christ is the descendant of David, from the tribe of Judah, possessing both the identity of a king and a priest; He is the High Priest whom God has raised up according to the likeness of Melchizedek. The English translation uses "likeness" instead of "order" to emphasize the outward expression of the ministry's essence, rather than merely its classification.

Verse 16: "Who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life."

Aaron's priestly office was established according to the law and had to come from the family of Aaron within the tribe of Levi; therefore, it was according to the law of a fleshly commandment. Fleshly refers to hereditary lineage, and commandment refers to the law. From Aaron onward, Aaron was the first high priest, and his sons were priests. In every generation among Aaron's descendants, there was always one who served as high priest, and the next high priest would be chosen from among the descendants of the current high priest.

If a high priest was unfit, God would intervene. For example, in the time of Samuel, the high priest Eli did not restrain his sons from committing evil. In 1 Samuel 3:13, God said, "For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knows, because his sons made themselves vile, and he did not restrain them." (NKJV) God's judgment upon Eli's house was not fulfilled until the time of King Solomon.

Before Solomon became king, Abiathar, a descendant of Eli, participated in the rebellion of Adonijah, the fourth prince. After Solomon was anointed king, he removed Abiathar from the priesthood. This is recorded in 1 Kings 2:27, "So Solomon removed Abiathar from being priest to the Lord, that he might fulfill the word of the Lord which He spoke concerning the house of Eli at Shiloh." (NKJV) After Abiathar retired and returned home, Solomon appointed Zadok as the high priest in his place. This is recorded in 1 Kings 2:35, "The king put Benaiah the son of Jehoiada in his place over the army, and the king put Zadok the priest in the place of Abiathar."

Here, we see that a high priest established according to the law of a fleshly commandment, in the order of Aaron, was subject to human weakness, limitations, and even replacement. Although this was still within God's will, God's eternal will was that, in the fullness of time, He would raise up another High Priest, one who was established according to the power of an endless life.

The Chinese Union Version translates “endless”, and its original meaning is indestructible, meaning incapable of being destroyed. Since it is indestructible, it also means it can continue forever, so translating it as endless is not incorrect.

The law of a fleshly commandment corresponds to the power of an endless life. The fleshly is weak, limited, temporary, and prone to failure; whereas endless life is strong, infinite, eternal, and ever-fresh. Commandments are written ordinances that are rigid and inflexible, while power surpasses all limitations, is full of provision, and enables people to fulfill God’s will.

Here, it is clearly stated that Christ is the High Priest according to the power of an endless life. He sustains us, supplies us, and helps our spiritual lives grow with His eternal life, so that we may live a life aligned with God’s will. This High Priest enables God’s children to live a heavenly life.

Verse 17: “For He testifies: ‘You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.’”

This is a quotation from Psalm 110:4, where God Himself testifies about Jesus Christ. Psalm 110 was written by King David under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. At that time, the priesthood in the order of Aaron had already been passed down for nearly 500 years. If Aaron’s priesthood could bring perfection, why would God, through King David of the tribe of Judah, prophesy 1,000 years in advance that another priest would arise—not according to the order of Aaron, but according to the order of Melchizedek—and that He would be a priest forever? This shows that God intended to raise up Jesus Christ from the tribe of Judah—one who would hold both the kingly authority and the eternal high priesthood.

Verse 18: “For on the one hand there is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness.”

The former commandment—the word commandment in English translations can also be rendered as ordinance. The same Greek word appears in Matthew 22:36, where a lawyer tested Jesus by asking, “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?” (NKJV). Here, the commandment refers to God’s law given to man.

The Aaronic priesthood was established by God as a commandment for Israel. In a narrow sense, this verse refers specifically to the weakness and ineffectiveness of the Aaronic priesthood. The sacrifices of bulls and goats could only cover sins but could not take away sins. Furthermore, the priests themselves lacked the power to help people attain perfection. Therefore, the Aaronic priesthood was weak and unprofitable.

In a broader sense, this also points to the weakness and unprofitableness of the law itself. The law could reveal sin and condemn sin, but it could not remove sin or prevent people from sinning. The law was not God’s ultimate intention. As Romans 5:20 says, “Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more.” (NKJV) If there were no law, people would not have known what sin was. But once the law was given, sin was revealed, and the law placed people under the condemnation of sin.

It was not until the truth of justification by faith was revealed that salvation was fully made known. As Romans 3:25-26 states, “whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.” (NKJV)

Justification by faith is entirely based on the grace of Jesus Christ. Where sin increased, grace increased even more. Therefore, Hebrews 7:12 declares, “For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law.” (NKJV) As a result, the former commandment has been annulled.

Verse 19: “for the law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, there is the bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.”

The phrase “for the law made nothing perfect” clarifies the previous verse. Since the law was weak and unprofitable, it was annulled. The Chinese Union Version translates this as “一無所成” (accomplished nothing), which can be misleading. The original meaning is closer to “the law made nothing perfect”, or “the law was unable to bring anything to completion”, which is quite different from saying it accomplished nothing.

The law actually achieved three important purposes: Firstly, The law testifies about God – The law reflects the character of the Lawgiver. By looking at the law, people can see what kind of holiness and righteousness God requires; Secondly, the law reveals sin and brings judgment – It exposes wrongdoing and condemns those who violate it; Thirdly, the law serves as a tutor (guardian) – Before justification by faith was revealed, the law kept people under its authority, leading them to Christ.

Therefore, the law did serve a role, but it could not make anyone perfect. Its purpose was to lead people to Christ, the One who alone can bring perfection. That is why the next phrase speaks of “the bringing in of a better hope”. This hope is the salvation accomplished by Jesus Christ, through whom all believers receive forgiveness of sins by His blood and justification through His resurrection. Once justified, we can draw near to God with confidence.

In verses 15–19, the author of Hebrews clearly demonstrates that Christ was made a high priest by the power of an indestructible life—which far surpasses the Aaronic priesthood, which was based on a law of physical requirements. From verses 20–22, the author introduces a third major contrast.

Verses 20–21: “And inasmuch as He was not made priest without an oath (for they have become priests without an oath, but He with an oath by Him who said to Him: ‘The Lord has sworn and will not relent, You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek’),”

The Aaronic priesthood was established according to the law of Moses, requiring that all priests come from the Levitical line of Aaron. But Jesus was not from the tribe of Levi—He was from the tribe of Judah. This means His priesthood was not based on the law but on something greater: God's oath.

The phrase "He was not made priest without an oath" uses a double negative, emphasizing that Jesus was made priest by God's oath—which is a key distinction from the Aaronic priests. God never swore an oath when appointing priests under the Aaronic system. But for Jesus Christ, God did swear an oath, guaranteeing His eternal priesthood.

The author again quotes Psalm 110:4: "The Lord has sworn and will not relent, 'You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.'" When God speaks, it is firm and unchanging. But when God swears an oath, it is the highest form of guarantee. Since God swore an oath to establish Christ as the eternal high priest, this priesthood is absolutely authoritative, trustworthy, and unchangeable.

Verse 22: "By so much more Jesus has become a surety of a better covenant."

Since it was established by an oath, Jesus became the mediator of a better covenant. Compared to the old covenant, the new covenant is better, and it is guaranteed by Jesus. How did Jesus guarantee this better covenant? Because this new covenant was established by His own blood. He sacrificed His own life and bore the punishment that mankind deserved for their sins. On the cross, He shed His precious blood and established the new covenant with His blood, ensuring that everyone who believes in His name can have their sins forgiven and enter into the new covenant, receiving the ministry of Jesus Christ as the High Priest.

He provides bread and wine to every saint who comes before Him, helping them grow in life and becoming their glorious hope. Dear brothers and sisters, since we have such a heavenly High Priest, who was established by God's oath and appointed according to the power of an endless life, after the order of Melchizedek, and who supplies us daily with bread and wine, how blessed we truly are.

Let us pray together: Dear Lord Jesus, You not only shed Your precious blood on the cross to forgive our sins, but You also established the new covenant with Your blood and were appointed by God's oath as the mediator of the new covenant. Help me to receive the supply of life through daily Scripture reading, so that I may bear a good testimony in my life and glorify Your name. Bless my daily life. I pray in the holy name of the Lord Jesus Christ.