Crossroads International Church Dr. Rick Griffith

7 March 2015 Message 5 of 12

NLT 40 Minutes

**Better than Melchizedek**

Title

***Hebrews 7***

**Topic:** Mediators

**Subject:** Why can no one but Jesus represent us before God?

**Complement:** Jesus is our perfect representative before God.

**Purpose:** The listeners will trust Christ as their ultimate representative before God.

# Introduction

### Interest: We all are used to the idea of a representative who acts on behalf of a superior.

Represent-ative

#### On committees we appoint certain individuals to represent subgroups.

Committee

#### When we need help, we can call a representative of a company on the phone.

Phone

#### In politics we have representatives for geographic districts and political parties.

House of Reps

#### We need representatives for many reasons—lack of time to go everywhere ourselves, lack of expertise, etc.

Man

### Need: Can you appear before a holy God on your own behalf?

• Before God?

#### The level of blasphemy evident in our day is amazing.

ATHEIST

##### The atheists have been embolden to publicly state things that no one dared to do even ten years ago.

Stupid

##### They ridicule Jesus and the cross in images on the Internet that is appalling and inappropriate to show you.

##### They slander Christians in an incredibly distasteful way.

##### They lack any fear that they will appear before a holy God.

#### But are you, in your weak and sinful state, ready to face the perfect Ruler of the universe? I dare say that you need a representative to act on your behalf.

Ready to Meet God?

### Subject: Why can no one but Jesus represent us before God?

Subject

### Background: We have been studying the NT Letter to the Hebrews.

Man at Cave

#### The background to this letter is interesting…

Backgrd

Unknown

#### Little is known about the author, recipients, origin and destination.

#### One thing is clear—these people needed to press on in their faith in Christ rather than return to Judaism.

Press On

#### The readers of the letter were very familiar with the idea of representatives between them and God. In fact, their belief in angels was quite strong.

Angels

### Preview: Today we will study the highest representative in Judaism, then how Jesus was higher than him.

Preview  
• Highest  
• Jesus

### Text: Hebrews 7 shows us this great man…

• Heb 7

(The highest representative of God in the OT was Melchizedek.)

Title

# I. Melchizedek was greater than both Abraham and Levi (7:1-10).

MI

[This Jerusalem king was so high that Abraham and Levi honored him.]

3

2

1

## Let’s answer some key questions about verses 1-3.

3 Questions

### Where was Salem (7:1)?

Where Salem?

#### Westcott says that in Jerome’s time (4th cent. AD) it was near Scythopolis in the northern Jordan rift (Leon Morris, *EBC*, 62).

• Scyth

#### The LXX of Genesis 33:18 seems to identify Salem as Shechem up in northern Israel (ibid.).

• Shechem

#### But the best evidence identifies Salem with Jerusalem:

• Jerusalem

Who Melch?

• Parallel to Jesus

• Adonai-zedek

##### Psalm 76:2 has Salem parallel to Zion, or Jerusalem: “His tent is in Salem, his dwelling place in Zion” (NIV).

• Ps 76:2

##### A later king of Jerusalem was named Adonai-zedek (Josh. 10:1), “a fact lending support to the idea that compounds with *–zedek* were a Jebusite dynastic title” (Homer A. Kent, *The Epistles to the Hebrews*, 124).

##### Viewing Salem as Jerusalem best draws the parallel between Melchizedek and Jesus, as the first was a type of the second.

### Who was Melchizedek (7:1-3)? There are three basic views:

#### Many see Melchizedek as only a man—though a godly one at that.

Man

##### Some believe this only means he was human but that the OT just never mentions his geneaology—not that there wasn’t a geneaology in the first place (F. F. Bruce, 133-42; Lane, WBC, 1:165; Paul Tanner notes, 18.3; Swindoll, *Hebrews Vol. 1*, 63).

##### However, verse 3 also says that his life never began or ended: “having neither beginning of days nor end of life.” Such couldn’t be said of any human being—unless this is simply saying that no one knew when he was born or died.

#### Some view Melchizedek as Jesus Himself (J. B McCaul, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* [1871], 75, 80; cited by Bruce, 137, n. 20).

##### Jesus himself before his birth in Bethlehem sometimes took the form of a man temporarily as “the angel of the Lord” in other passages as a theophany (the preincarnate Christ).

##### The problem with this view is that verse 3 says that Melchizedek was “made *like* the Son of God.” This distinguishes him from being Jesus himself.

7:3

##### However, even the key OT text on the “son of man,” or Messiah, says that he is “*like* a son of man” (Dan. 7:13; cf. Mark 8:31; John 1:51).

#### I think the attributes in verses 1-3 suggest that Melchizedek was likely an angel.

Angel

Title

7:3

Jesus

Dan. 7:13

##### Angelic status would not elevate Melchizedek to Christ's level of stature as we earlier saw in Hebrews 1.

Better than Angels

##### Melchizedek “made *like* the Son of God” would make sense if he was like Jesus but not actually the same stature as Christ.

7:3

##### The author also would not be comparing an OT and NT Christ.

##### The Qumran Community saw Melchizedek as an angel. This would support the angelic view if this epistle addressed believers from Qumran tempted to return to the community.

Hodges Quote

Qumran Angel

##### “It seems more natural that the author meant that Melchizedek belonged to an order in which there was no end to the priesthood of those engaged in it. (He later said in 7:8 that Melchizedek ‘is declared to be living.’) If this is correct, Melchizedek may have been an angelic being who reigned for a time at Salem (i.e., Jerusalem). If so, the statement that he was ‘without beginning of days’ would not mean that he was eternal, but simply that he had a pretemporal origin. Nor would this concept of Melchizedek as an angel elevate him to the same level as God’s Son, since the author painstakingly asserted the Son’s superiority to the angels (1:5-14). There is indeed evidence that, at Qumran, Melchizedek was regarded as an angelic personage. If this is the case in Hebrews, then the Son of God is the High Priest in an order in which Melchizedek is simply a priest” (Zane Hodges, “Hebrews,” in *BKC*, 2:798).

##### This sounds convincing, but one problem is that it might seem strange that Christ has the highest position of an angelic order. He is more than an angel!

Lord Melchized

Gen 14

• King

• Priest

#### Therefore, each of these views has its strengths and weaknesses, but perhaps the angel view is best. In any case, the point is that while Melchizedek is high, Jesus is even higher in this order.

### How could Melchizedek be both a king and a priest (7:1)?

#### As king, he became the actual king of the city of Salem, which later became Jerusalem.

#### As priest, he acted as a mediator between Abraham and God. He was higher than Abraham but lower than God.

#### Christ is priest, prophet and king (explain). So how can Jesus be both king and priest (an even prophet)? Only he is good enough not to allow such power to go to his head. He will use this power not for his own benefit, but to crush the enemies who seek to destroy humanity in their thirst for absolute, unquestioned power.

PP&K  
(animated)

## Melchizedek had such superior qualities that he must have been an angel (7:1-3).

7:1a

### Melchizedek served as king of Salem, or ancient Jerusalem (7:1a).

7:1b

### Melchizedek was priest of God Most High (7:1b).

7:1c

### Melchizedek had such high stature that he blessed Abraham (7:1c).

### Melchizedek received tithes from Abraham (7:2a).

7:2

### Melchizedek’s name and title of righteousness and peace point to the Messiah (7:2b).

7:3

### Melchizedek is timeless (7:3).

#### He was not born to a father or mother (7:3a).

#### He had no human ancestors (7:3b).

#### He was never born, nor did he ever die (7:3c).

#### His priesthood is eternal like that Jesus (7:3d).

Superior Diagram

## Melchizedek was greater than both Abraham and Levi (7:4-10).

### Both tithed to him (7:4-6a).

7:4-6a

### Melchizedek blessed both of them (7:6b-7).

7:6b-7

### Levi also paid Melchizedek tithes through Abraham (7:8-10).

7:8-10

(Why can no one but Jesus represent us before God? How is it that he is better than both Melchizedek or Levitical priests?)

# II. As High Priest, Jesus is better than Melchizedek or Levitical priests (7:11-28).

MP

[As the top priest, Christ is better than any priest of Melchizedek or Aaron.]

## God replaced the weak order of Levi with the indestructible order of Melchizedek (7:11-19).

7:11

### The priesthood of Levi could never bring perfection (7:11).

MI

MPI

7:26-28

Subj.

### The weak order of Levi was based on heredity (7:12-19).

7:12-19  
(4 slides)

## God recognized Jesus as priest by oath whereas other priests do not obtain office with an oath (7:20-22). The chart sums this up…

7:20-22  
(2 slides)

## Jesus is a permanent priest (as He is the eternal Savior and intercessor) while other priests all die in office (7:23-25).

Chart

7:23-25

## Jesus is the perfect High Priest who died for our sins once while other priests had to repeatedly offer sacrifices for their own sins (7:26-28).

(So why can no one but Jesus represent us before God?)

# Conclusion

### Jesus is our perfect representative before God (MI).

### Why can no one but Jesus represent us before God (MP)?

#### Melchizedek was greater than both Abraham and Levi (7:1-10).

#### As High Priest, Jesus is better than Melchizedek or Levitical priests (7:11-28).

MPII

### Christ is superior to Melchizedek.

Superior

#### A curtain used to stand in the tabernacle.

Curtain

#### But this curtain was torn at the death Christ’s death.

Torn

### Implications of Christ’s High Priesthood (explain)

Implications  
(2 slides)

### Who do you trust as your ultimate representative before God?

Black

#### Don’t rely on any human or angelic mediator.

#### Trust Christ as your ultimate representative before God.

### Prayer

# Preliminary Questions

**Verses Questions**

# Context: What did the author record just prior to this passage?

### The third warning in Hebrews cautioned the readers that they could actually die from a return to their Jewish roots (6:4-8).

### The author then followed this with his confidence that they would remain in the faith (6:9-20).

# Purpose: Why is this passage in the Bible?

### The Aaronic high priest was the highest office in Israel, so to say that Jesus was of a higher order that Aaron was to claim his superiority over Judaism.

### The point is to convince the readers not to abandon their faith in Christ and exchange it for something inferior.

# Background: What historical context helps us understand this passage?

### Melchizedek came out of Jerusalem in Genesis 14 to bless Abraham for rescuing Lot from his captors.

### The Qumran Community believed Melchizedek to be an angel.

# Questions

### Where was Salem (7:1)?

#### Westcott says that in Jerome’s time (4th cent. AD) it was near Scythopolis in the northern Jordan rift (Leon Morris, *EBC*, 62).

#### The LXX of Genesis 33:18 seems to identify Salem as Shechem up in northern Israel (ibid.).

#### But the best evidence identifies Salem with Jerusalem:

##### Psalm 76:2 has Salem parallel to Zion, or Jerusalem: “His tent is in Salem, his dwelling place in Zion” (NIV).

##### A later king of Jerusalem was named Adonai-zedek (Josh. 10:1), “a fact lending support to the idea that compounds with *–zedek* were a Jebusite dynastic title” (Homer A. Kent, *The Epistles to the Hebrews*, 124).

##### Viewing Salem as Jerusalem best draws the parallel between Melchizedek and Jesus, as the first was a type of the second.

### Who was Melchizedek (7:1-3)? There are three basic views:

#### Many see Melchizedek as only a man—though a godly one at that.

##### Some believe this only means he was human but that the OT just never mentions his geneaology—not that there wasn’t a geneaology in the first place (F. F. Bruce, 133-42; Lane, WBC, 1:165; Paul Tanner notes, 18.3; Swindoll, *Hebrews Vol. 1*, 63).

##### However, verse 3 also says that his life never began or ended: “having neither beginning of days nor end of life.” Such couldn’t be said of any human being—unless this is simply saying that no one knew when he was born or died.

#### Some view Melchizedek as Jesus Himself (J. B McCaul, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* [1871], 75, 80; cited by Bruce, 137, n. 20).

##### Jesus himself before his birth in Bethlehem sometimes took the form of a man temporarily as “the angel of the Lord” in other passages as a theophany (the preincarnate Christ).

##### The problem with this view is that verse 3 says that Melchizedek was “made *like* the Son of God.” This distinguishes him from being Jesus himself.

##### However, even the key OT text on the “son of man,” or Messiah, says that he is “*like* a son of man” (Dan. 7:13; cf. Mark 8:31; John 1:51).

#### I think the attributes in verses 1-3 suggest that Melchizedek was likely an angel.

##### Angelic status would not elevate Melchizedek to Christ's level of stature as we earlier saw in Hebrews 1.

##### Melchizedek “made *like* the Son of God” would make sense if he was like

##### The author also would not be comparing an OT and NT Christ.

##### The Qumran Community saw Melchizedek as an angel. This would support the angelic view if this epistle addressed believers from Qumran tempted to return to the community.

##### “It seems more natural that the author meant that Melchizedek belonged to an order in which there was no end to the priesthood of those engaged in it. (He later said in 7:8 that Melchizedek ‘is declared to be living.’) If this is correct, Melchizedek may have been an angelic being who reigned for a time at Salem (i.e., Jerusalem). If so, the statement that he was ‘without beginning of days’ would not mean that he was eternal, but simply that he had a pretemporal origin. Nor would this concept of Melchizedek as an angel elevate him to the same level as God’s Son, since the author painstakingly asserted the Son’s superiority to the angels (1:5-14). There is indeed evidence that, at Qumran, Melchizedek was regarded as an angelic personage. If this is the case in Hebrews, then the Son of God is the High Priest in an order in which Melchizedek is simply a priest” (Zane Hodges, “Hebrews,” in *BKC*, 2:798).

##### This sounds convincing, but one problem is that it might seem strange that Christ has the highest position of an angelic order. He is more than an angel!

#### Therefore, each of these views has its strengths and weaknesses, but perhaps the angel view is best. In any case, the point is that while Melchizedek is high, Jesus is even higher in this order.

### How could Melchizedek be both a king and a priest (7:1)?

#### As king, he became the actual king of the city of Salem, which later became Jerusalem.

#### As priest, he acted as a mediator between Abraham and God. He was higher than Abraham but lower than God.

### What does it mean that Melchizedek was "without father or mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, he abides a priest perpetually" (7:3)?

#### Some believe this only means that the OT never mentions his geneaology—not that there wasn’t a geneaology in the first place. However, the text also says that his life never began or ended! This couldn’t be said of any human being.

# Tentative Subject/Complement Statements

Text

# Possible Illustrations

### We have balance of powers in many political structures that force countries to have differing people make laws (legislature), interpret laws (judiciary), and enforce laws (executive branch). This is due to the corrupt nature of man. As Lord Acton said, “Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.”

### So how can Jesus be both king and priest (an even prophet)? Only he is good enough not to allow such power to go to his head. He will use this power not for his own benefit, but to crush the enemies who seek to destroy humanity in their thirst for absolute, unquestioned power.

# Possible Applications

### Since Christ is absolute sovereign to whom all will give an account, we are wise to grant him control now.

**Better than Melchizedek**

***Hebrews 7***

**Exegetical Outline (Steps 2-3)**

# *Exegetical Idea*: The reason Jesus is better than Melchizedek is because he is High Priest of that angelic order that was *superior to Abraham and the Levitical order* (Ch. 7).

# I. The stature of the great angel Melchizedek[[1]](#footnote-1) was greater than both Abraham and Levi (7:1-10).

## Melchizedek had such superior qualities that he must have been an angel (7:1-3).

### Melchizedek served as king of Salem, or ancient Jerusalem (7:1a).

### Melchizedek was priest of God Most High (7:1b).

### Melchizedek had such high stature that he blessed Abraham (7:1c).

### Melchizedek received tithes from Abraham (7:2a).

### Melchizedek’s name and title of righteousness and peace point to the Messiah (7:2b).

### Melchizedek is timeless (7:3).

#### He was not born to a father or mother (7:3a).

#### He had no human ancestors (7:3b).

#### He was never born, nor did he ever die (7:3c).

#### His priesthood is eternal like that Jesus (7:3d).

## Melchizedek was greater than both Abraham and Levi (7:4-10).

### Both tithed to him (7:4-6a).

### Melchizedek blessed both of them (7:6b-7).

### Levi also paid Melchizedek tithes through Abraham (7:8-10).

# II. The reason Jesus is better than Melchizedek or Levitical priests is because He is High Priest (7:11-28).

## God replaced the weak order of Levi with the indestructible order of Melchizedek (7:11-19).

### The priesthood of Levi could never bring perfection (7:11).

### The weak order of Levi was based on heredity (7:12-19).

## God recognized Jesus as priest by oath whereas other priests do not obtain office with an oath (7:20-22).

## Jesus is a permanent priest (as He is the eternal Savior and intercessor) while other priests all die in office (7:23-25).

## Jesus is the perfect High Priest who died for our sins once while other priests had to repeatedly offer sacrifices for their own sins (7:26-28).

**Purpose or Desired Listener Response (Step 4)**

The listeners will trust Christ as their ultimate representative before God.

**Homiletical Outline** (Cyclical inductive form)

# Introduction

### Interest: We all are used to the idea of a representative who acts on behalf of a superior.

### Need: Can you appear before a holy God on your own behalf?

#### The level of blasphemy evident in our day is amazing.

#### But are you, in your weak and sinful state, ready to face the perfect Ruler of the universe? I dare say that you need a representative to act on your behalf.

### Subject: Why can no one but Jesus represent us before God?

### Background: We have been studying the NT Letter to the Hebrews.

### Preview: Today we will study the highest representative in Judaism, then how Jesus was higher than him.

### Text: Hebrews 7 shows us this great man…

(The highest representative of God in the OT was Melchizedek.)

# I. Melchizedek was greater than both Abraham and Levi (7:1-10).

## Let’s answer some key questions about verses 1-3.

### Where was Salem (7:1)?

### Who was Melchizedek (7:1-3)? There are three basic views:

### How could Melchizedek be both a king and a priest (7:1)?

## Melchizedek had such superior qualities that he must have been an angel (7:1-3).

### Melchizedek served as king of Salem, or ancient Jerusalem (7:1a).

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### Melchizedek received tithes from Abraham (7:2a).

### Melchizedek’s name and title of righteousness and peace point to the Messiah (7:2b).

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#### He was not born to a father or mother (7:3a).

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#### His priesthood is eternal like that Jesus (7:3d).

## Melchizedek was greater than both Abraham and Levi (7:4-10).

### Both tithed to him (7:4-6a).

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### Levi also paid Melchizedek tithes through Abraham (7:8-10).

# II. As High Priest, Jesus is better than Melchizedek or Levitical priests (7:11-28).

## God replaced the weak order of Levi with the indestructible order of Melchizedek (7:11-19).

### The priesthood of Levi could never bring perfection (7:11).

### The weak order of Levi was based on heredity (7:12-19).

## God recognized Jesus as priest by oath whereas other priests do not obtain office with an oath (7:20-22).

## Jesus is a permanent priest (as He is the eternal Savior and intercessor) while other priests all die in office (7:23-25).

## Jesus is the perfect High Priest who died for our sins once while other priests had to repeatedly offer sacrifices for their own sins (7:26-28).

(So why can no one but Jesus represent us before God?)

# Conclusion

### Jesus is our perfect representative before God (MI).

### Why can no one but Jesus represent us before God (MP)?

#### Melchizedek was greater than both Abraham and Levi (7:1-10).

#### As High Priest, Jesus is better than Melchizedek or Levitical priests (7:11-28).

### Implications of Christ’s High Priesthood

### Who do you trust as your ultimate representative before God?

#### Don’t rely on any human or angelic mediator.

#### Trust Christ as your ultimate representative before God.

### Prayer



**Rick Griffith**

7 March 2015

Message 5 of 12

**Better than Melchizedek**

***Hebrews 7***

# Introduction

### We all are used to the idea of a representative who acts on behalf of a superior.

### Can you appear before a holy God on your own behalf?

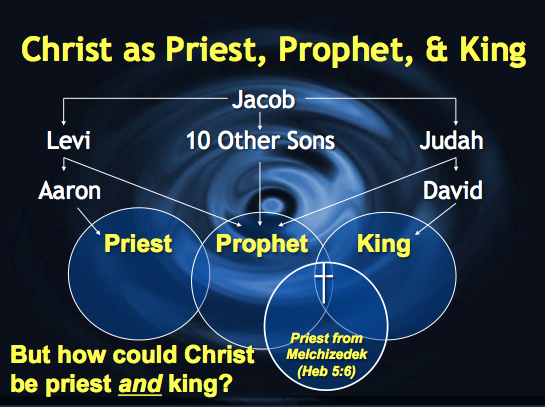
### Why can no one but Jesus \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ us before God?

# I. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ was greater than both Abraham and Levi (7:1-10).

## Let’s answer some key questions about verses 1-3.

### Where was Salem (7:1)?

### Who was Melchizedek (7:1-3)? There are three basic views:



### How could Melchizedek be both a king and a priest (7:1)?

## Melchizedek had such superior qualities that he must have been an angel (7:1-3).

### Melchizedek served as king of Salem, or ancient Jerusalem (7:1a).

### Melchizedek was priest of God Most High (7:1b).

### Melchizedek had such high stature that he blessed Abraham (7:1c).

### Melchizedek received tithes from Abraham (7:2a).

### Melchizedek’s name and title of righteousness and peace point to the Messiah (7:2b).

### Melchizedek is timeless (7:3).

## Melchizedek was greater than both Abraham and Levi (7:4-10).

### Both tithed to him (7:4-6a).

### Melchizedek blessed both of them (7:6b-7).

### Levi also paid Melchizedek tithes through Abraham (7:8-10).

# II. As \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, Jesus is better than Melchizedek or Levitical priests (7:11-28).

## God replaced the weak order of Levi with the indestructible order of Melchizedek (7:11-19).

## God recognized Jesus as priest by oath whereas other priests do not obtain office with an oath (7:20-22).

## Jesus is a permanent priest (as He is the eternal Savior and intercessor) while other priests all die in office (7:23-25).

## Jesus is the perfect High Priest who died for our sins once while other priests had to repeatedly offer sacrifices for their own sins (7:26-28).

# Conclusion

### Jesus is our \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ representative before God (MI).

### Implications of Christ’s High Priesthood

### Who do you trust as your ultimate representative before God?

**Thought Questions**

1. Read the passage aloud. Contrast the two priesthoods:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Levitical Priests** | **Jesus as High Priest** |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |

1. What implication of Christ’s high priesthood is most meaningful to you?

1. Melchizedek was "without father or mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, he abides a priest perpetually" (7:3). The nature of these attributes suggests that he could be either an angel or a theophany (the preincarnate Christ). Supporting the angelic interpretation is that this status would not elevate him to Christ's level of stature (cf. chs. 1–2) and he would not be comparing an OT and NT Christ. Both interpretations fit the context, but evidence of Melchizedek being regarded an angelic being in the Qumran Community may support the angelic view if this epistle was originally sent to believers tempted to return to the community. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)