

Heb 6:15

15 And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. 16 For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all dispute.

When God says He's going to do something, He will do it!

The two words used in verse 15,

- "patiently endured" are from the same Greek word "makrothuméeœ."

It means "long suffering as opposed to hasty anger or punishment."

Abraham waited patiently to receive the promise,

- 25 years to be exact.

We've all heard the term, "Patience is a Virtue."

That is essentially saying that you're willing to wait calmly,

- you'll endure thru hardships
- or remain steadfast without frustration.

James 1:2-4

2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

James wrote this during a time of intense persecution, hardships and poverty.

- Yet, he tells them to count it all joy.

When our faith is tested, it should produce patience.

Why did God count Abraham as righteous?

- It was because of Abraham's faith
- by displaying his confidence in God's word and character.

Heb 6:16-18

16 For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all dispute. 17 Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, 18 that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us.

There was a time when people agreed upon something

- and they'd shake hands.

There was also a time when people would appear in court

- and were required to swear on the bible,

People took that seriously. Today, people are given the option

- of swearing on a bible or not swearing on it.

There are some things God cannot do, lying is one of them.

- Another is when He makes an oath,
- He doesn't change His mind.

Mal 3:6, "For I am the Lord, I do not change;"

Now, God had already promised to bless Abraham and his descendants.

- He confirmed it by an oath.

God's plan of salvation is confirmed, and He won't change it.

The oath was made for the descendants of Abraham by faith.

Rom 4:16

16 Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all.

God didn't give the oath so people would believe Him,

- but because He can't lie
- His word is true.

Heb 6:18

18 that by two immutable things (not capable of change or susceptible to change), in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us.

Two things which cannot be changed,

- His promise and His oath.

Story of Balak and Balaam, see Num 22 & 23.

The Israelites were traveling toward the promise land

- after defeating two kings, Sihon and Og.

Num 22:6

6 Therefore please come at once, curse this people for me, for they are too mighty for me. Perhaps I shall be able to defeat them and drive them out of the land, for I know that he whom you bless is blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed."

Num 23:19

19 "God is not a man, that He should lie,
Nor a son of man, that He should repent.
Has He said, and will He not do?
Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?

God cannot be bribed as Balak tried to bribe Baalam,

- nor can He be persuaded
- or changed like people can be changed.

God's promises are not negotiable.

The second thing which cannot be changed is God's oath.

Our refuge is the hope we have in Jesus to secure our salvation.

19 This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, 20 where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

We have the assurance of salvation and eternal life thru Christ.

And much like an anchor holds a ship in its place during a storm,

- we are firmly planted
- and held in place by Christ.

The hope we have anchored to our soul is both sure and steadfast.

Several times in scripture God is referred to as our rock,

- meaning, He is what holds us steady.

Deut 32:4

4 He is the Rock, His work is perfect;
For all His ways are justice,
A God of truth and without injustice;
Righteous and upright is He.

Ps 18:2

2 The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer;
My God, my strength, in whom I will trust;
My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

Ps 62:2

2 He only is my rock and my salvation;
He is my defense;
I shall not be greatly moved.

Paul called Jesus the “Spiritual Rock” in 1 Cor 10.

Jesus said the wise person is the one who builds his house on the rock.

Jesus is also called the cornerstone.

God has made it so easy for mankind to reach Him.

When the author speaks of the Presence behind the veil, he’s referring to

- The inner sanctuary which was an inner room
- in the Jewish temple or tabernacle
- where the Jews believed God dwelled.

And once a year the high priest would enter this room

- to make atonement for the sins of the people
- in the presence of God.

Our hope is fixed on God Himself.

Heb 6:20

20 where the forerunner (Jesus) has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

Melchizedek is a mysterious person.

- We’ll see that Melchizedek was both a priest and a king.

In the days before Moses,

- before the law, the head of the family was a priest,
- he’s the one that offered sacrifices for the family.

Example: Adam’s descendants

- Cain and Abel in Gen 4.

Noah is another example. After the flood, he built an altar

- and offered burnt offerings to the Lord, Gen 8.

Abraham built altars and offered sacrifices,

- Genesis chapters 12, 13 and 22

When a priest’s tribe or clan became large enough,

- he became king of that tribe.

This person Melchizedek was both a priest and a king

- and Abraham met him on his return

- from defeating the kings down by the dead sea.

Heb 7:1-3

1 For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, 2 to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated "king of righteousness," and then also king of Salem, meaning "king of peace," 3 without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually.

Melchizedek is first mentioned in Gen 14:17-19

- after Lot moved to Sodom.

While he was in Sodom, a confederacy of kings on the east side of the dead sea

- fought against a confederacy of kings on the west side.

When we talk about kings, we can think of a mayor

- because a king was a person over a city

Well, the kings from the east won the battle and began taking people captive

- as well as loot, and Lot
- was one of the captives taken.

When Abraham heard about that, he took 318 men from his own household

- to rescue Lot.

He overtook by surprise the men down by the dead sea

- and we pick that up now in Genesis.

Gen 14:17-19

17 And the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley), after his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him.

18 Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. 19 And he (Melchizedek) blessed him (Abram) and said:

"Blessed be Abram of God Most High,
Possessor of heaven and earth;

20 And blessed be God Most High,
Who has delivered your enemies into your hand."

And he (Abram) gave him (Melchizedek) a tithe of all.

21 Now the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the persons, and take the goods for yourself."

Gen 14:22-23

22 But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have raised my hand to the Lord, God Most High, the Possessor of heaven and earth, 23 that I will take nothing, from a thread to a sandal strap, and that I will not take anything that is yours, lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich'-

The name "Melchizedek" is a compound name in Hebrew

- meaning "king-righteousness."

He was a king of Salem which later became known as Jerusalem.

Interestingly, the name "Yahweh Tsidkenu"

- a messianic name given by God in the book of Jeremiah,
- representing the character of the awaited Messiah means
- "The Lord Our Righteousness."

Interestingly, the order of the priesthood of this Melchizedek

- precedes all other priesthoods mentioned in the bible.
- He was before Aaron and Levi.

He was around in the time of Abraham

- which was more than 400 years before Moses.

Melchizedek is mentioned next in:

Ps 110:4

4 The Lord has sworn

And will not relent,

"You are a priest forever

According to the order of Melchizedek."

We saw in verse 20 of chapter 6 that Jesus is the forerunner,

- He went before us and established a way
- for us to have access to God.

The author is going to paint this imagery for us as Melchizedek

- and compares it to the priesthood
- then demonstrates that Jesus
- is in fact the one who fulfills the priest king
- with the power of eternal life.

That's where I believe the author is going with this.

There are so many thoughts as to who this person of Melchizedek is.

We can surmise from the scriptures three possibilities.

- One is that he can be a theophany
- or more specifically a Christophany
- which is a preincarnate appearance of Christ.

Some would say, that's exactly who Melchizedek was,

- based on the description
- of having no beginning,
- no end, no lineage,
- no genealogy associated with his name,
- that's a possibility.

The second possibility is that he is an individual, possibly Shem, Noah's son.

- That's what some Jewish and some early Christians believe.

The third possibility is that Melchizedek isn't really an individual

- as much as a title for an order
- and that there may be these descendants of people
- who were non-Levitical because that's from where
- the priesthood came as far as Moses was concerned
- and that's why the author would say
- that He's of the order of Melchizedek.

The fact is, we don't really know.

Heb 7:1

1 For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him,

So to celebrate Abraham's victory, Melchizedek produces two things, bread and wine.

We immediately see the imagery here.

- Jesus presented His body as the bread
- and then He lifted the cup of wine
- as a representation of the New Covenant.

And it's poured out for the forgiveness of sins.

Heb 7:2

2 to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated "king of righteousness," and then also king of Salem, meaning "king of peace,"

Now these two names, "king of righteousness" and "king of peace"

- are descriptions of Christ in other parts of scripture.

For example, in Psalm 72 the Messiah is characterized by His righteous reign.

In Isaiah 9:6 the Messiah is presented as the “Prince of Peace.”

And in Isaiah 32 we see that the effect of righteousness is peace.

Heb 7:3

3 without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually.

In terms of imagery, this does not say he was made to be The Son of God,

- but he was made like the Son of God

Example: Shadrach, Meshak and Abednego were thrown into the fiery furnace

- and Nebuchadnezzar sees a fourth who looks like the Son of God.

He recognized something divine about the fourth individual.

Now we’re told that this Melchizedek is without father, without mother, without genealogy,

This does not mean that Melchizedek was necessarily anything

- other than a man.

By omitting his birthright or his ancestry

- could be more to emphasize the imagery
- of foreshadowing of the Messiah.

We can get into long discussions of who Melchizedek was,

- but I don’t think the author
- was trying to distract us.

I think he was simply trying to emphasize who Jesus is.

Now, the Levitical priesthood as contrasted to this

- was strictly tied to a genealogy.

In Neh 7 before they were allowed to minister or participate in ministry in the temple

- they had to prove their ancestry.

They had to prove they were from the line of Levi

- and more specifically as

- a high priest from the line of Aaron.

Some came along saying, we know were from the lineage

- we just don't have our records,
- therefore, they were excluded
- from priestly service until a priest
- could be brought with the
- Urim and the Thummim
- which were sacred lots
- used to discern the will of God.

When the temple was destroyed in 70AD

- and the Jews were dispersed,
- their genealogical records were destroyed.

So the vast majority of Jews today

- have no idea of which tribe they came from,
- but God knows.

Heb 7:4

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

When the author says to “consider,” it literally means “to look at with discernment”

- much like a spectator would look.

I believe the author is saying by way of a command

- to consider how great this Melchizedek is.

So he's making a comparison between Melchizedek as this imagery

- and Abraham who is going to pay a tithe to Melchizedek
- and then of course Christ and those who will believe in Him.

So there's a comparison that is taking place.

- And what he sets forth is this,
- that the lesser is always blessed by the greater.

And as we see here, the lesser is making an offering to the greater.

- Ultimately, the author will point out
- that Christ is greater even than Melchizedek.

Romans 12 says we are to offer ourselves as a living sacrifice.

Heb 7:5-6

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; 6 but he whose genealogy is not derived from them (tribe of Levi) received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises.

So he looks back at the Levites and says,

- the Levites had this authority from God if you will,
- those of the priesthood,

that they were to receive tithes

- from the people and a portion of the tithes
- they received were given to the greater part
- of the tribe of Levi, those coming out of
- the line of Aaron that would serve as high priest.

They were to pay the tenth up to them,

- and yet they're saying, wait,
- if the people are to pay the Levites,
- how is it the Levites were paying tithes
- thru Abraham up to Melchizedek,
- except that Melchizedek was greater,
- greater than Abraham, greater than the Levites.

Then he's like, now look over here, there's Christ.

- He is to receive tithes from us,

Heb 7:7

7 Now beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better.

The Greek word for our English word "contradiction" is "antilogia" meaning "no word is against it."

In other words, nobody can offer an argument

- that is going to persuade us otherwise.

Heb 7:8

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

Mortal men in the tribe of Levi receive tithes from the people.

Now there are two thing going on here,

- he's talking about Melchizedek
- but the imagery he's painting is looking to Christ.

Heb 7:9-10

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

This is his point, when Abraham met Melchizedek, Levi wasn't even born.

Because after Abraham came Isaac and then Jacob and Jacob had 12 sons.

- One of them was Levi and he formed a tribe,
- the tribe of Levi.

Levi's great grandfather (Abraham) paid tithes to Melchizedek.

So the author is showing that the Melchizedek priesthood

- was honored in a sense by the Levites
- because Levi's great grandfather (Abraham) paid tithes
- to the great high priest Melchizedek.

All of this to say that Melchizedek is superior to Levi.