

“No Get out of Jail Free Card”

Hebrews 7:1-28

Pastor Bob Singer
09/07/2025

One of the most interesting stories in the Bible is about a man called Melchizedek. His story is found in Genesis 14:18-20, and he is mentioned once there. Abram and Lot have separated due to the size of their flocks. Lot got caught up in a battle and was taken captive along with his household and possessions. So, Abram mounted a rescue party and freed him. As Abram returned, the King of Sodom and Melchizedek met him.

Under the Mosaic Law priests had to be descendants of Aaron, who himself was a descendant of Levi. Jesus was a descendant of Judah. Under the Mosaic Law Jesus could never have been a priest. But God had a different way for Jesus to be a priest.

Hebrews 7:1 Remember that Abraham was still Abram at this point. God didn't call him Abraham until Genesis 17. But the author of Hebrews was just referring to him as Abraham for ease.

Hebrews 7:2 “Melchizedek” literally means “King of Righteousness.” “Salem” comes from the word “shalom” meaning peace. “Salem” was the city we now know as Jerusalem (Psalm 76:1-2). And Melchizedek was its king.

Hebrews 7:3 Now Melchizedek was in every way human, just like us. He was born and he died. But his birth and death are not recorded in the Bible. So, the author of Hebrews took liberty with this to illustrate the permanent nature of Christ's priesthood. He wrote that Melchizedek, by virtue of his permanent life, continues as a priest forever. Jesus, being a priest after the order of Melchizedek (Psalm 110:4) also continues as a priest forever. In this way Melchizedek resembled Jesus.

Hebrews 7:4 The spoils are the goods captured in a battle.

Hebrews 7:5-8 The future descendants of Levi who were priests, received tithes from their Jewish kin. But Melchizedek received tithes from Abraham. The most important ancestor of the Jewish people! This made Melchizedek the superior. Abraham was the inferior.

Hebrews 7:9-10 Levi, a descendant of Isaac and Jacob, would eventually be a great-grandson who Abraham hadn't even imagined yet. This is what the author of Hebrews meant when he wrote that Levi was still in the loins of Abraham.

Hebrews 7:11-12 This was a logical question for the author of Hebrews. Perfection was not attainable through anything the Levitical priests, or the Mosaic Law, could do for the people. For Jesus to be a priest after the order of Melchizedek, there had to be a change from the Mosaic Law to allow this.

Hebrews 7:13-14 Melchizedek was not descended from one of the twelve tribes of Israel.

Hebrews 7:15-16 Since Jesus has an indestructible life (no beginning and no end) he could be a priest after the order of Melchizedek. And this meant that he could be both our priest and our king.

Hebrews 7:17-19 The former commandment... the Mosaic Law... must be set aside in this case. The best effort by people to be perfectly obedient to the Mosaic Law made no one perfect. This thought is behind Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:48). The Jews all knew this to be true. But a better hope is now introduced... salvation by faith in Jesus.

Hebrews 7:20-22 The Levitical priests become priests without any oath by God. Last Sunday we spoke about the oath God made to Abraham in Genesis 22:15-18, and this oath that God made to Jesus in Psalm 110:4. Jesus was made a priest after the order of Melchizedek with an oath by God!

Hebrews 7:23-25 All Levitical priests die. But Jesus, our priest, never dies. He continues forever. "To the uttermost" means "completely, forever, for all time, fully."

Hebrews 7:26-27 Jesus is without sin (Hebrews 4:14). The Levitical high priests had to offer sacrifices for their own sins, and those of the people, perpetually. And Jesus offered himself up once for all on the cross for us. *Stop here for a moment and think about the Roman Catholic mass. In Roman Catholic theology, Christ is sacrificed again in every mass. That theology does not fit this verse!*

Hebrews 7:28 Jesus was not just like the men who served as Levitical priests. Jesus was the Father's only begotten Son.

So, why did the author of Hebrews write this chapter? We have two sections of our Bible, the Old Testament and the New Testament. But now God has made a new covenant (or testament) with us through Jesus Christ. The author of Hebrews was saying that the Mosaic Law, has things it said that are now obsolete. It is an old covenant that is going away. Look at what the Apostle Paul would write in Philippians 3:4-9.

What should we do with the OT then? Ignore it??? Remember that the first Bible of the 1st century church was the Old Testament. The New Testament hadn't been finished yet. The Apostles filled in with Christian theology until the New Testament was finished. So, why should we study the Old Testament? It teaches us about the character of God. It teaches us about the character of man. It teaches us about Christ. It teaches us about ethics and morality. It teaches us wisdom. These and other things are the same now as they were in the Old Testament. What is *not* required by any of the New Testament writers is that we need to be perfect in our behavior to be saved. Jesus Christ is our permanent high priest according to the order of Melchizedek. It is only He who can provide us with a perfect standing before God.

By the way... this does not give us a "get out of jail free" card for sin today. The author will end this book with two chapters urging his readers to live righteously now, because they have been called to this. Look at what the Apostle Paul would write in Romans 14:10-12 and 2 Corinthians 5:10. These verses do *not* mean that we are in danger of losing our salvation. We are saved by faith alone (Romans 1:16-17). However, being saved by faith never meant that we can sin with abandon and get away with it. We don't get a "Get out of Jail Free" card when we sin as Christians. We will still answer to God.

The gospel of salvation by grace through faith in Christ is the New Covenant that God has made with man. I think of Peter's words in Acts 4:12. This is the gospel we preach today!