

Some Traditions Are Not Worth Keeping

Hebrews 7:1-3

Recently I researched why people are set in their ways and found this quote from an octogenarian: *I'm used to things the way they are. I'm happy and comfortable, so just leave it all alone for me.* Traditionalism in churches, when some fight any change, is a sign that the Holy Spirit is absent. Hebrews 7 is a critical chapter in understanding the book of Hebrews. We are introduced to a king/priest from Jerusalem named Melchizedek who lived in Abraham's time (est.1800 B.C.). Hebrews 7 shows the early Jewish Christians the superiority of faith in Christ over our traditions. *"Now the main point in what has been said [in Hebrews 7] is this: We have such a high priest who has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens"* (Heb. 8:1).

1. Hebrews is written for early *Jewish* (Hebrew) believers in Jesus Christ.

All they knew were the Hebrew festivals, the Hebrew Temple, the Hebrew customs of Law.

2. These Christians followed the customs of the Law of Moses (Acts 20:21).

They didn't cease being Hebrew. They observed the festivals, kept the law, and worshipped.

3. Many of these Christians were being persecuted for their faith in Christ as the Messiah.

By A.D. 64 the Jewish leaders turned against these believers. *"Renounce your faith in Jesus the Messiah or be stoned!"* Some Hebrew Christians were beginning to abandon the faith.

The apostles also knew Christ had prophesied the end of Jewish Temple worship (Matt. 24).

The writer of Hebrews shows the superiority of faith in Christ and New Covenant worship!

This would be like everything you knew about church, your pastor, the style of worship, and all that makes you comfortable and happy about going to church being utterly and totally destroyed. *Melchizedek is a type of your perpetual priest Jesus Christ. Melchizedek gives glimpses of Christ.* Melchizedek was a real man, not an angel. He was a king and priest of Salem (Jerusalem). Little else is known about him, but he comes from Jerusalem to meet Abraham in Genesis 14:18-20. In whatever relationship Melchizedek is to Abraham, we find Christ in relationship to all believers.

I. Christ's name means "righteousness" and Christ's kingdom brings peace (v. 2).

Jesus is both our priest and our king. His actions (*entering into the veil* 6:19) bring to us peace with God (Rom. 8). Wherever Christ reigns among people there is peace among men.

II. Christ brings to us His bread and wine, which is our life and our joy (Gen. 14:18).

The custom of bringing bread and wine in the days of Abraham was a loving act, bringing strength to the weak and wounded. Jesus gives to us His flesh and blood for life and joy.

III. Christ evokes from us a response of gratitude for His character, position and work.

"To whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth of all the spoils" (v. 2). There was no law that required Abraham to give to Melchizedek. Abraham gave in gratitude of heart.

IV. Christ is a priest unto God for us by Divine right and not human genealogy.

For Hebrews to accept the impending end of the Levitical priesthood (A.D. 70) and the abolishment of Hebrew law, they had to know Melchizedek was superior to Aaron's family. In the Old Covenant one was a priest because of lineage back to Aaron and the tribe of Levi. Melchizedek was neither, nor is Christ. Jesus is "the lion from the tribe of Judah" (Rev. 5:5).

V. Christ is a priest for you perpetually in the Tabernacle not made with human hands.

Christ atones and forgives. He intercedes and sustains. Christ is my anchor of hope in the soul.