

# The Book of Hebrews

מְאֹנְשׁ מִנְמָה דָא מִנְהָת אַקְלָא  
צְמַאַלְלָא נְתַחְצְרָה דְרַחְסָנָה סָקָה  
אַחֲרַ פְּקָלָא תְּסִנְ סְרְבָּאַלְלָה  
רַרְתָּא סָקָה תְּאַקְסָנָה דְמַמָּצָה  
תְּאַתְּפָלָשָׁה נְתַרְדְּנָה הַרְפָּרָה נְרַלְדָה  
תְּאַגְּשָׁה רַלְדָה מְלַלְצָה סָסָה תְּלָשָׁה



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# Outline of Hebrews

## “Jesus is Better”

- I. Jesus Is Better Than the OT Prophets (1:1-4)
- II. Jesus Is Better Than the Angels (1:5-2:18)
- III. Jesus Is Better Than Moses (3:1-4:13)
- IV. Jesus’ Priesthood Is Better Than the Levitical Priesthood (4:14-10:18)**

# Outline of Hebrews

## IV. Jesus' Priesthood Is Better Than the Levitical Priesthood (4:14-10:18)

- A. Jesus Is a Compassionate But Sinless High Priest (4:14-16)
- B. Jesus Was Appointed By God to Be Our High Priest (5:1-10)
- C. Jesus Is Better – Don't Apostatize (5:11-6:20)
- D. Jesus Is a Priest After the Order of Melchizedek (7:1-28)
- E. The New Covenant Mediated By Jesus Is Better than the Old Covenant (8:1-13)
- F. Jesus' Sacrifice Is Better Than the Temple Sacrifices (9:1-10:18)

# Outline of Hebrews

## D. Jesus Is a Priest After the Order of Melchizedek (7:1-28)

1. Melchizedek Is Superior to Levi (7:1-10)
2. The Obsolescence of the Levitical Priesthood and Mosaic Law (7:11-16)
3. The Stunning Announcement of Psalm 110 and Its Implications (7:17-22)
4. Reflecting on the Implications of the Previous Sections (7:23-28)

# Reflecting on the Implications (7:23-28)

<sup>23</sup> *The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office,* <sup>24</sup> *but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever.* <sup>25</sup> *Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.* <sup>26</sup> *For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens.* <sup>27</sup> *He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself.* <sup>28</sup> *For the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.*

<sup>23</sup> *The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office*

- “*The former priests* [the Levitical priests] *were many in number because they were prevented by death from continuing in office...*”
- The author has already alluded to this idea earlier in the letter – the Levitical priesthood is an *inferior* priesthood because (first of all) the Levitical priests (like all human beings) are “*mortal*”. (Heb 7:8)
- There were *scores* of priests throughout Old Testament history, but *no* Levitical priest lasted more than a generation – each and every one *eventually died*.

<sup>24</sup> *but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever.*

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- “*...but he [Jesus] holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever.*”
- As we have already seen:
  - This was modeled, first of all, by Melchizedek in Gen 14, where there is no mention of his death.
  - It was *also* declared to be true by the LORD (Yahweh) in an oracular messianic psalm a thousand years *before* Christ, when he says: “*You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek.*”

<sup>25</sup> *Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.*

- In verse 25 we see a ***pastoral*** implication of what the author has just noted: “*Consequently, [Jesus] is able to save to the **uttermost** those who draw near to God through him...*”
- Not only has Jesus offered the one perfect sacrifice that doesn’t have to be repeated (this comes up again in chapters 9 and 10 as we’ll see), but he is an ***enduring*** priest and so he is able to save ***completely***.
- He doesn’t continue for a while in his priestly duties and then eventually die so that he has to pass on his duties to the next generation of priests.
- No, Jesus is a high priest who is ***fully able to meet our need.***

<sup>26</sup> *For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens.*

- The superiority of Jesus' priesthood is evident from his ***qualifications***.
- He is a “*fitting*” high priest – one that matches what humans need since he is a sinless.
- The author uses a number of terms to describe Jesus' virtues.
- He is “*holy*” – always living righteously in a way that pleases God.
- He is “*innocent*” and devoted to what is good.
- He is “*unstained*” by sin. The same word is used for the sexual purity demanded in marriage (Heb 13:4).
- Jesus was also “*separated from sinners*” in that he was without sin, and was “*exalted above the heavens*” as we saw described last week when we looked at Psalm 110.

<sup>27</sup> *He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself.*

- Because Jesus was **without sin**, “**he has no need**” to offer a sacrifice “**first for his own sins and then for those of the people**”.
- Jesus atoned for sin “**once for all when he offered up himself**.”
- Jesus sinlessness stands in **sharp contrast** to all other human beings. **Their** sin requires “**daily**” sacrifices.
- Once again, the fallibility of the Levitical priests becomes evident. The author has already emphasized their **mortality**: they all die (7:23). But **here** he reminds us of their **sins**.
- Despite the reputation and holiness of the Levitical high priests, they were required to offer sacrifices for their own sin (Lev 9:7; 16:6). Then they were to offer sacrifices for the sins of the people (Lev 16:15)

<sup>27</sup> *He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself.*

- Jesus as a high priest is ***different***.
- As the sinless one he didn't ***need*** to offer a sacrifice for his ***own*** sins.
- Furthermore, a new sacrifice wasn't required ***every day***.
- Instead, Jesus offered himself as a sacrifice "***once for all***."
- His sacrifice ***definitively and finally*** dealt with sin, and therefore ***no further sacrifices were needed***, showing that sin had been ***truly cleansed*** through the sacrifice of Christ.
- The priests did not offer themselves but ***animals***. Jesus secured forgiveness "***when he offered up himself***."
- And so, ***unlike*** the priests, Jesus was both the ***priest and the victim*** offered in sacrifice.

<sup>28</sup> *For the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.*

- “*For the law...*” That is, the Mosaic law, the law covenant. “*...appoints men in their weakness as high priests...*”
- They sin, and then they die. They sin, and then they die. They sin, and then they die.
- “*...but the word of the oath...*” The oath of Psalm 110. “*...which came later than the law...*”
- Notice that salvation-historical understanding. It came *after* the law. That’s why it takes *precedence* over the law and renders it *obsolete*: It came *after* the law.

<sup>28</sup> *For the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.*

- “*the word of the oath... appoints a Son...*” The son **par excellence**. So David was a son, but **this** is the son par excellence.
- “*...who has been made perfect...*” That is, perfect in his priestly function. “*...forever.*”
- That is why you and I, knowing something of the sinfulness of sin in our own lives, the way it comes back and sneaks up on us again and again and again, can go to bed and sleep at night.