



MOVING ON UP TO PERFECTION IN JESUS

✓ **BETTER HOPE**

✓ **BETTER EVERYTHING**

✓ **BETTER COVENANT**



***PERFECTION ... COMPLETION, ACCOMPLISHMENT, JOB WELL DONE**

WE HAVE SUCH A HIGH PRIEST, PART 2

1. Jesus Son of God is Superior and Different: Our high priest is priest neither by the commandment of the law nor by the genealogy of the Aaronic priesthood, 7:4-10.

- (Hebrews 7:4–10 LSB) **Now observe how great this man was TO WHOM ABRAHAM**, the patriarch, **GAVE A TENTH** of the spoils. 5 And those indeed of the sons of Levi, who receive the priest's office, have a commandment in the Law to collect a tenth from the people, that is, from their brothers, although these are descended from Abraham. 6 **But the one whose genealogy is not traced from them had collected a tenth from Abraham and blessed the one who had the promises.** 7 But without any dispute the lesser is blessed by the greater. 8 And in this case mortal men receive tithes, but in that case one receives them, of whom it is witnessed that he lives on. 9 And, so to speak, through Abraham even Levi, who received tithes, paid tithes, 10 for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.

- A. Melchizedek was a great man—a historical figure in Abraham's time.
- B. He blessed Abraham as he was on his way back after defeating the kings who had taken Lot captive.
- C. Abraham received the blessing and gave Melchizedek a tithe of the plunder.
- D. This demonstrates the superiority of Melchizedek over Abraham the patriarch of the Jews.
- E. And it further demonstrates the distinction between the Levitical priesthood and the priesthood of Melchizedek.
- F. Melchizedek as a type of Christ this gives further, scriptural proof to those in this Hebrew fellowship of Christ's superiority to Abraham and Levi.

2. God never intended the ministry of the Levitical priesthood to prepare and present the people of God as holy in the presence of God, 7:11-17.

- (Hebrews 7:11–17 LSB) **Now if perfection was through the Levitical priesthood** (for on the basis of it the people received the Law), **what further need was there for another priest to arise according to the order of**

Melchizedek, and not be designated according to the order of Aaron? 12 **For when the priesthood is changed**, of necessity there takes place a change of law also. 13 For the one concerning whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no one has officiated at the altar. 14 For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, a tribe with reference to which Moses spoke nothing concerning priests. 15 And this is clearer still, if another priest arises according to the likeness of Melchizedek, 16 who has become such **not according to a law of physical requirement, but according to the power of an indestructible life.** 17 For it is witnessed about Him, "YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK."

- (Hebrews 10:1 LSB) **For the Law**, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, **can never**, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, **make perfect those who draw near.**

Perfection ... The Greek word {τελειωσις} means a completing, a perfecting; fulfillment, accomplishment. It is the act of making something complete and without defect or blemish.

- A. The idea of perfection is that God will one day present his chosen ones before himself in holiness.
- B. The work of perfection—completing the task of holiness in the people of God—required a change in priesthood and a change in the law.
- C. The change was away from the Levitical priesthood that was dictated by the law to the superior priesthood according to the order of Melchizedek.
- D. God's completing work of perfection has always been God's ultimate goal—it was **never** God's plan for perfection to come through the ministry of the law and the Levitical priesthood.

- (Romans 8:3a LSB) **For what the Law could not do**, weak as it was through the flesh, **God did**: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin.

- E. The Son was called to do exactly what the law and the Levitical priesthood could never do—present his people as holy in the presence of Majesty on high.

- (Hebrews 12:22–24a NLT) No, **you have come to** Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to countless thousands of angels in a joyful gathering. 23 **You have come to** the assembly of God’s firstborn children, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God himself, who is the judge over all things. **You have come to the spirits of the righteous ones in heaven who have now been made perfect.** 24 **You have come to Jesus,** the one who mediates the new covenant between God and people.
- (Ephesians 5:25–27 LSB) ... **just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her,** 26 **so that He might sanctify her,** having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 **that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory,** having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing, **but that she would be holy and blameless.**

F. The work of perfection required a priest with the power of an indestructible life—a life which was beyond the bounds of the legal requirements and bodily descent of the OT Levitical order.

G. The Son became our perfect high priest so that he could bring us to perfection.

- (Hebrews 2:17 LSB) Therefore, He had to be made like His brothers in all things, **so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest** in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.
- (Hebrews 2:10 LSB) **For it was fitting for Him,** for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, **to perfect the author of their salvation** through sufferings.
- (Hebrews 5:9–10 LSB) **And having been made perfect,** He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation, 10 being designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

3. God swore the Son into the office as priest forever to guarantee the better covenant that would bring us to perfection, 7:18-22.

- (Hebrews 7:18–22 LSB) **For, on the one hand,** there is a setting aside of a former commandment **because of its weakness and**

uselessness 19 **(for the Law made nothing perfect),** and on the other hand there is a bringing in of **a better hope, through which we draw near to God.** 20 And inasmuch as it was not without an oath 21 (for they indeed became priests without an oath, but He with an oath through the One who said to Him, “THE LORD HAS SWORN AND WILL NOT CHANGE HIS MIND, ‘YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER’”); 22 so much more **Jesus also has become the guarantee of a better covenant.**

A. The ministry of the Levitical priesthood was set aside because of its weakness and uselessness in bringing God’s people to perfection.

- The Law never made anything perfect.
- The ministry of the former commandment cannot do what it was never intended to do.
- Works of the law will never bring about God’s perfect result in his people.

- (Romans 3:20 ESV) **For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight,** since through the law comes knowledge of sin.
- (Romans 3:28 LSB) For we maintain that **a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.**
- (Galatians 2:16 LSB) Nevertheless knowing that **a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Jesus Christ,** even we have believed in Christ Jesus, **so that we may be justified** by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.
- (Galatians 3:10 ESV) **For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse;** for it is written, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.”

B. Jesus brings in a better hope and has become the guarantee of a better covenant.

C. The bringing in of a better hope set aside the former commandment—the placeholder, pointer.

- (Hebrews 6:17 LSB) In the same way God, **desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, guaranteed it with an oath.**

D. The law—including the instruction for the Levitical priesthood—was good but was never intended to

perfect us through salvation and thus bring us into the holiness and glory of God.

- (Romans 7:12 LSB) So, **the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.**

4. The former priests came and went but Jesus continues forever, 7:23-28.

- (Hebrews 7:23–25 LSB) And the former priests, on the one hand, existed in greater numbers **because they were prevented by death from continuing,** 24 **but Jesus, on the other hand, because He continues forever, holds His priesthood permanently.** 25 **Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.**

A. The former priests of the Levitical priesthood stopped serving because they died (or reached the age of 50).

B. In contrast Jesus continues forever.

C. **Save forever** is better translated **save completely.**

D. Jesus is able to save completely those who (*continue to*) draw near to God through him.

E. He always lives to make intercession for us.

"I have prayed for you," he said to Simon Peter at the Last Supper, "that your faith may not fail; and when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers" (Luke 22:32). If it be asked what form his heavenly intercession takes, what better answer can be given than that he still does for his people at the right hand of God what he did for Peter on earth?

It is important to emphasize this, for the character of our Lord's intercession has at times been grotesquely misrepresented in popular Christian thought. **He is not to be thought of as** "an orante [*one who is praying or pleading*], standing ever before the Father with outstretched arms, like the figures in the mosaics of the catacombs, and with strong crying and tears pleading our cause in the presence of a reluctant God; **but as a throned Priest-King, asking what he will from a Father who always hears and grants his request.**" [H.B. Swete] [Bruce, F. F. (1990). *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Rev. ed., pp. 174-175). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.]

5. Jesus Son of God is the main point—he is the only one who fits our need for such a high priest.

- (Hebrews 7:26–8:2 LSB) **For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest,** holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and **exalted above the heavens;** 27 who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the sins of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. 28 For the Law appoints men as high priests who are weak, but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, appoints a Son, who has been made perfect forever. 1 **Now the main point in what is being said is this: we have such a high priest,** who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, 2 a minister in the holy places and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man.

A. Jesus as our high priest was fitting for us—Jesus is God's perfect plan to save us forever.

B. He has the perfect character and standing.

i. He is holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners.

ii. He is exalted above the heavens.

- (Ephesians 1:20–21 LSB) Which He worked in Christ, by raising Him from the dead and seating Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 **far above all rule and authority and power and dominion,** and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

iii. He made one sacrifice once for all when he offered himself.

- (Hebrews 10:14 LSB) **For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.**

iv. He is the Son who has been made perfect forever.

v. The main point is the Son is just the high priest we need—*fitting for us*—who would complete the work of our perfection and sit down at the right hand of Majesty.

vi. The Son of God, our Priest/King, is our minister in the holy places.