

Hebrews 7:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?

Analysis

A devastating question: 'If perfection were through the Levitical priesthood...what further need was there for another priest to arise?' The word 'perfection' (Greek 'teleiōsis') means completion/maturity, particularly in relationship with God. The Levitical priesthood couldn't perfect because it couldn't finally deal with sin (10:1-4). The emergence of another priesthood (Psalm 110:4) proves the first was insufficient. This demolishes any claim that old covenant mechanisms can save.

Historical Context

Psalm 110:4, a royal psalm attributed to David, predicted a future priest-king after Melchizedek's order. This prophecy indicated even in David's time that the Levitical priesthood wouldn't be permanent or sufficient.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. Why couldn't the Levitical priesthood 'perfect' worshipers, and how does Christ's priesthood accomplish what it could not?
2. How does this verse challenge any religious system that relies on human mediators or repeated sacrifices?

Interlinear Text

Εἰ	μὲν	οὖν	τελείωσις	διὰ	τῆς	Λευιτικῆς	ἱερωσύνης	
If	G3303	therefore	perfection	by	G3588	the Levitical	priesthood	
G1487		G3767	G5050	G1223		G3020	G2420	
ἦν	ὁ	λαὸς	γὰρ	ἐπ'	αὐτῇ	νενομοθέτητο,	τίς	ἔτι
were	G3588	the people	(for	under	it	received the law	what	further
G2258		G2992	G1063	G1909	G846	G3549	G5101	G2089
χρεία	κατὰ	τὴν	τάξιν	Μελχισέδεκ	ἕτερον			
need	after	G3588	the order	of Melchisedec	was there that another			
G5532	G2596		G5010	G3198	G2087			
ἀνίστασθαι	ἱερέα	καὶ	οὐ	κατὰ	τὴν	τάξιν	Ἀαρὼν	
should rise	priest	and	not	after	G3588	the order	of Aaron	
G450	G2409	G2532	G3756	G2596		G5010	G2	
λέγεσθαι								
be called								
G3004								

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 8:7 (Parallel theme): For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.

Galatians 2:21 (Word): I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

Hebrews 5:6 (Parallel theme): As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

Hebrews 7:21 (Parallel theme): (For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:)

Hebrews 7:15 (Resurrection): And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest,

Galatians 4:9 (Parallel theme): But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?

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