

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 ιερωσύνης
If G3303 therefore G3767 perfection G5050 by G1223 the Levitical G3020 priest G2420

ἥν οὐ λαὸς γὰρ ἐπ' αὐτῇ νενομοθέτητο, τίς ξτι
were G3588 the people G2992 (for G1063 under G1909 it G846 received the law G3549 what G5101 further G2089

χρεία κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ ἔτερον
need after G3588 the order G5010 of Melchisedec G3198 was there that another G2087

ἀνίστασθαι ιερέα καὶ οὐ κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Ααρὼν
should rise priest and not after G3588 the order G5010 of Aaron 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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