

## The Priest from Judah Hebrews 7:11-19

This paragraph further develops the last paragraph and advances an equally effective argument for the superiority of priesthood of Christ over that of Aaron. The writer is attempting to hem in these believers, who are contemplating a return to Judaism. He wants to cut off the road behind them and spur them onward to what's provided in Christ.

His point is as clear as it is cogent. The mere fact that after the establishment of the Levitical priesthood the Holy Spirit spoke of a perpetual priest would be raised up, not from the Levitical line, but from another altogether- conclusively proves two things:

- That the priesthood of Aaron was not sufficient to accomplish the ultimate purpose of God.
- That is obviously inferior to the priesthood that would one day supplant it.

This is precisely what the writer argues in **V. 11**. In the process of making this point the writer certain questions have to be answered.

1. **Precisely what is meant by perfection? V. 11.**  
The sense is, 'if the Levitical priesthood was able to accomplish what it was designed for....' What was it unable to accomplish?
  - a. **A variety of things have been suggested.**  
Some think 'perfection' refers to expiation, others, to the appeasing of the conscience and bestowing of experiential peace, some to

holiness, transformation and true and everlasting enjoyment of God.

- b. **Which is it?** It is probably all of them. The great end of priesthood was to bring us to God in a way that made us objects of His favor, made us eternally happy and holy in a way that was in line with His law and harmonized with His nature.

That the Aaronic priesthood could not accomplish this could be easily demonstrated by simply considering it- and the writer will do this later on. The writers point is to say that if the Levitical Priesthood was sufficient to accomplish this God would never have revealed the coming of another. The Messiah would not have even needed to be a priest. And if so He would've certainly been one of the line and lineage of Aaron.

2. **Why is 'law' mentioned in this context<sup>1</sup>? Vv. 11-12.** What does it mean? Well it cannot mean what it seems to mean! It would not be true; in fact the reverse would be true! It is meant to heighten the tension. *"For at the time the people received a law with respect to the priesthood."* God intentionally put in place the limits that conflict with **Cf. Exod. 40:12-16; Ps. 110** .

Why mention this? He's out to prove that the person spoken of in **Ps. 110** cannot possibly be of the Levitical order. It cannot possibly be

---

<sup>1</sup> There is no article. It is "law" or "a law"

interpreted in any way that leaves the entire institution intact!

a. **In principle it appears a weak argument.** In earthly things sometimes we can make changes in an arrangement without abrogating the thing as a whole. **Illustr.** Our constitution has amendments. One administration sets aside the policies of another....

b. **In reality his point is powerful.** The Levitical priesthood could not be altered in this way. It was so interwoven with the OT economy that to set it aside was tantamount to a change in the entire economy. **Illustr.** America decided to cease to be a democratic republic.

3. **How is the point made? Vv. 13-14.** He makes His case in three stages.

a. **V. 13. The person spoken of in Ps. 110 cannot possibly be considered a part of the Levitical order.** Why? Because the person spoken of there is the Messiah and that He comes from Judah is incontrovertible. **Cf. Isa. 9:6-7.**

b. **V. 14. It is equally obvious that Jesus, who fulfills this prophecy, is not from the tribe of Levi- but from Judah. Cf. Matt. 1:1-2.** In other words, according to prophecy Jesus is a Priest, He isn't from Levi; therefore the Levitical priesthood is obviously abrogated. Therefore His priesthood is superior.

c. **Vv. 15-17. The superiority is 'even more evident' in the words of the oath uttered over the two priesthods.** How so?

i. **One was ratified by a legal requirement.** The Levitical priesthood dealt with external perishable things and was defined by natural descent, qualifications defined by conformity to certain rituals.

ii. **One was ratified by the power of an indestructible life.** The person set forth in Ps. 110 is not mortal but divine, eternal, spiritual. His priesthood is not merely external but living effectual, after an everlasting decree by God.

4. **The conclusion drawn?** In Christ it is evident that the Levitical Priesthood has been abrogated and with good reason: it was weak and ultimately useless. We have a better hope through which we actually effectually draw near to God.