

How great the Saviour is!

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[0:00] Well, good morning everybody and welcome to this pre-recorded service for 28th February 2021! The Calvary Church here in Brighton. A very, very warm welcome to you if you're a regular visitor, a member of the congregation, member of the church, or if you're just dropping in at random.

For those dropping in at random, let me just say the usual introduction. We are a small-ish independent Baptist church, Bible teaching Baptist church here in the UK on the south coast seaside town of Brighton. Back a year ago, we were 70 to 80 people meeting on a Sunday morning, people from many nations and many backgrounds brought together by the grace of God, the blood of Jesus, and the working of the Holy Spirit. So here we still are, meeting by Zoom and YouTube all these months. Further on, we have had one opportunity to meet together in person, and we're very, very much hoping that as lockdown eases, that we'll be able to get back together again. That doesn't seem to be just yet. Let me put on the screen the plan for this morning.

There it is. Welcome and introduction is me. I don't think I said who I was, actually. I'm Philip Wells. I'm serving the church here as pastor elder and have done for many years. I shall be leading and bringing God's word to us in a little while. So there's the plan up on the screen.

We're in the middle of a series in the letter to the Hebrews in the New Testament of the Bible. It's a very interesting book, and I hope you will stay tuned to hear more about that. In the passage that we're looking at, it has the wording, just think how great such and such. And so I've chosen that wording as part of the cue for the different songs we're going to sing. The splendour of the King, how great is our God, is what we're going to sing in a moment. But before we sing it, let's pray. Living God, we approach you together this morning, even though we are separated physically. We ask that we might genuinely and really meet together with you. You've said, draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. And may this be found in our experience to be genuinely true through the cross and intercession of Jesus Christ and the precious ministry of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

[3:00] Amen. How great is our God. That's what we're going to sing. If you're interested in the number, it's one, two, five, seven, but the words will come up on the screen. Thanks. Let's pray. rejoice rejoice his voice how great is our God sing with me how great is our God and all will see how great how great is our God and age to age he stands and time is in his hands beginning and the end beginning and the end the God heath free in one but the spirit's son the lion and the lamb the lion and the lamb how great is our God sing with me how great is our God and all will see how great how great is our God name above all names worthy of our praise my heart will sing how great is our God name above all names name above all names worthy of our praise my heart will sing how great is our God sing with me how great is our God and all will see how great how great is our God now we're going to pray i looked and i heard the voice of many angels numbering thousands upon thousands and ten thousand times ten thousand they encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders and in a loud voice they said worthy is the lamb who was slain to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise then i heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea and all that is in them saying to him who sits on the throne and to the lamb be praise and honor and glory and power forever and ever and the four living creatures said amen and the elders fell down

and worshiped

and lord god we want to join in the heavenly worship which surrounds the throne of god we honor the almighty father from whom all things come the creator of heaven and earth the mighty one the fountain of all being we say you are worthy our lord and god to receive glory and honor and power for you created all things and by your will they were created and have their being and we honor the lamb upon the throne jesus christ who once was slain but now is alive forevermore and is seated at the right hand of the majesty on high we too say worthy is the lamb who was slain to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise and we join our praises in heavenly places to father son and holy spirit and have mercy upon us here we're simultaneously risen with christ and ascended with him in heavenly realms but also here on earth in wherever we are many of us here in brighton in england and we pray that you will enable us to live our lives here on earth as citizens of heaven help us not to be dragged down by all that goes on around us by all the issues and problems but to have at least an eye looking up and something of our hearts set on heavenly things where christ is at the right hand of god please don't let us be borne down by the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches and all the other things that can distract us and bring us down but help us to be elevated elevated into the presence of god as we meet together for jesus sake amen as you can see from the screen we're going to now have a reading and the reading comes from a month or more ago which is the original story of Abraham meeting this guy with the funny name Melchizedek the story is of Abraham over there in that middle eastern land having been attacked by invading kings from the powerful east and chasing after them to get his nephew back lot and scoring an amazing victory and then on his return back home having chased the kings and overtaken them he returns back home and is greeted by the rather rude king of Sodom whom Abraham refuses and the kindness of Melchizedek king of Salem whose blessing and fellowship Abraham accepts in a rather wonderful way so without further ado let's ask Rosemary to read this again for us

Genesis chapter 14 at this time Amraphel king of Shinar Ariok king of Elasar Kedoleoma king of Elam and Tidal king of Goyim went to war against Berah king of Sodom Beresha king of Gomorrah Shinab king of Admar Shemiba king of Zeboyim and the king of Belah that is Zor all these latter kings joined forces in the valley of Sidim the Salt Sea for twelve years they had been subject to Kedoleoma but in the thirteenth year they rebelled in the fourteenth year Kedoleoma and the kings allied with him went out and defeated the Rephaites in Ashtaroth-Carneim the Zuzites in Ham the Emities in Shavay-Kiriiothayim and the Horites in the hill country of Seir as far as El Paran near the desert then they turned back and went to Enmishpat that is Kedesh and they conquered the whole territory of the Amalekites as well as the Amorites who were living in Hazazon Tamar then the king of Sodom the king of Gomorrah the king of Admar the king of Zeboyim and the king of Belah that is Zor marched out and drew up their battle lines in the valley of Sidim against Kedoleoma king of Elam

Tidal king of Goyim Amraphel king of Shinar and Ariok king of Elasar four kings against five now the valley of Sidim was full of tar-pits and when the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled some of the men fell into them and the rest fled to the hills the four kings seized all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their food then they went away they also carried off Abram's nephew Lot and his possessions since he was living in Sodom one who had escaped came and reported this to Abram the Hebrew now Abram was living near the great trees of Mamre the Amorite a brother of Eshcol and Anna all of whom were allied with Abram when Abram heard that his relative had been taken captive he called out the 318 trained men born in his household and went in pursuit as far as Dan during the night Abram divided his men to attack them and he routed them pursuing them as far as Hobar north of Damascus he recovered all the goods and brought back his relative Lot and his possessions together with the women and the other people after Abram returned from defeating Codolioma and the kings allied with him the king of Sodom came out to meet him in the valley of Shaveh that is the king's valley then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine he was priest of God most high and he blessed Abram saying blessed be Abram by God most high creator of heaven and earth and blessed be God most high who delivered your enemies into your hand then Abram gave him a tenth of everything the king of Sodom said to Abram give me the people and keep the goods for yourself but Abram said to the king of Sodom i have raised my hand to the lord god most high creator of heaven and earth and have taken an oath that i will accept nothing belonging to you not even a thread or the thong of a sandal so that you will never be able to say i

made Abram rich i will accept nothing but what my men have eaten and the share that belongs to the men who went with me to Anna Eshcol and Mamre let them have their share this is the word of the lord consider how great he is and let's consider how great God is and how great his salvation is and how great his son is as we sing to God be the glory great things he has done so loved he the world that he gave us his son who yielded his life and atonement for sin and opened the life gate that all may go in so we're going to sing song song 676 to God be the glory to God be the glory to God be the glory great things he has done so loved he the glory great things he has done so loved he the world that he gave us his son who yielded his life and atonement for sin and opened the life gate that all may go in so we're going to sing song so loved he the glory great things he has done so loved he the world that he gave us his son who yielded his life and atonement for sin and opened the life gate that all may go in so we're going to sing song praise the lord praise the lord praise the lord let the earth hear his voice praise the lord praise the lord let the earth hear his voice praise the lord praise the lord let the earth hear his voice praise the lord praise the lord let the earth hear his voice praise the lord praise the lord let the earth hear his voice praise the lord praise the lord let the earth hear his voice praise the lord praise the lord let the earth hear his voice praise the lord praise the lord let the earth hear his voice praise the lord praise the lord let the earth hear his voice praise the lord of the earth and the earth hear his voice praise the lord of the earth and the earth hear his voice praise the lord of the earth and the earth hear his voice of the earth and the earth hear his voice of the earth and the earth

people rejoice come to the Father through Jesus the Son give him the glory great things he has done O perfect redemption the purchase of blood to every believer the promise of God the vilest offender who truly believes that moment from Jesus the pardon receives praise the Lord praise the Lord let the earth hear his voice praise the Lord praise the Lord let the people rejoice come to the Father through Jesus the Son give him the glory great things he has done great things he has taught us great things he has done and great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son and purer and higher and greater will be our wonder our worship when Jesus we see praise the Lord praise the Lord let the earth hear his voice praise the Lord praise the Lord let the people rejoice come to the Father through Jesus the Son the Son give him the glory great things he has done praise the Lord praise the Lord praise the Lord let the earth hear his voice praise the Lord praise the Lord let the people rejoice rejoice come to the Father through Jesus the Son come to the Father through Jesus come to the Father through Jesus the Son give him the glory great things he has done praise the Lord praise the Lord praise the Lord let the earth hear his voice praise the Lord praise the Lord let the people rejoice come to the Lord now for a brief time of prayer let's bow our heads well bow our heads

[20:24] sufficiently so you can see the screen if you need to and we will we will say together the Lord's Prayer we'll say this out loud together Our Father in Heaven hallowed be your name your kingdom come your will be done on earth as it is in heaven give us today our daily bread and forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil for yours is the kingdom the power and the glory forever and ever Amen and Lord under those headings hear all the prayers that we have upon our hearts may your name truly be hallowed in our lives and in the lives of people around us there's so many people who don't hallow your name and think it's holy and great and we pray you'd change that situation may your kingdom come where we are living people don't by and large acknowledge your kingship but we pray that your kingship and your reign would advance and your will be done on earth as it is in heaven we thank you Lord for every good thing you give us day by day even our daily bread and please continue to make us grateful and continue to provide for us we thank you for the forgiveness of our sins through the blood of Jesus Christ and pray that we will have generosity and grace in our own hearts to those who sin against us as we invariably find people rub us up the wrong way or get the wrong end of the stick or are malicious towards us even but help us to be forgiving people and lead us not into temptation we live in a world of many pressures and we ask that we would not yield to them but rather live

Christ-like lives and deliver us from the power of all that is evil for yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever and again we say Amen

The passage we're going to think about is in Hebrews chapter 7 and you will see very straightforwardly the link between this and the reading that we had before and Corinne is kindly reading this for us so well done Corinne and let's hear from Hebrews chapter 7 verses 1 through to 10 Hebrews 7, 1 to 10 This Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of God most high he met Abraham returning from his defeat of the kings and blessed him and Abraham gave him a tenth of everything first the name Melchizedek means king of righteousness and then also king of Salem means king of peace without father or mother without beginning of days or end of life resembling the son of God just think how great he was even the patriarch Abraham gave him a tenth of the plunder Now the law requires who have become priests to collect a tenth from the people that is, from their fellow Israelites even though they are also descended from Abraham this man however did not trace his descent from Levi yet he collected a tenth from Abraham who had the promises and without doubt the lesser is blessed by the greater in the one case the tenth is collected by people who die but in the other case by him who is declared to be living one might even say that Levi who collects the tenth paid the tenth through Abraham because when Melchizedek met Abraham Levi was still in the body of his ancestor the reading the reading said just think how great he was referring first of all to Melchizedek but then referring on to Jesus and Jesus truly is great and it is the greatest privilege to know him who is not simply a figure in history but the key and centre of all of history and the key and centre of all of creation and the key and centre of all of creation and the key and centre of all the future of the world in fact he is the one through whom everything was made and to whom everything will come the one through whom everything was made and to whom everything will come.

And that is the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Saviour. So that's the theme of every true Christian.

And we'll sing this song, Jesus is the name we honour.

Jesus is the name we praise. One, two, one, two, three, four. Jesus is the name we honour.

[25:44] Jesus is the name we praise. Majestic name above all other names. The highest heaven and earth proclaim that Jesus is our God.

We will glorify. We will lift Him high. We will give Him honour and praise.

We will glorify. We will lift Him high. We will give Him honour and praise.

Jesus is the name we worship. Jesus is the name we trust.

He is the King above all other kings. Let all creation stand and sing that Jesus is our God.

[26:50] Lord, we will glorify. We will lift Him high. We will give Him honour and praise.

We will glorify. We will lift Him high. We will give Him honour and praise.

Jesus is the Father's splendour. Jesus is the Father's joy.

He will return to reign in majesty. And every eye at last shall see that Jesus is our God.

Lord, we will give Him our Lord. We will glorify. We will lift Him high. We will give Him honour and praise.

[27:52] We will glorify. We will lift Him high. We will give Him honour and praise.

guitar solo And having sung, we pray, Lord, help us so to hear your word, that we don't get distracted, we don't fall asleep, we don't lose concentration, but rather we are grasped by your word, and so grasped by your word that our very lives are changed and we start and continue to become different people. We pray that none of us would leave this time exactly the same as we were before.

Oh Lord, please be at work through your word and by your spirit. Amen. Amen. What's going to keep us from slipping back from the Christian life or slipping off the edge of the cliff?

Do you remember the picture? What's going to keep us? I don't know how long you've been going in the Christian life, or indeed if you've started on the Christian life, but if you've been going any amount of time, you'll begin to know the sin of your own heart and the capacity that you have to fall away and the absolute necessity of having help every day to keep walking in the right way, to keep with the Lord Jesus Christ and to make progress towards the heavenly city.

What will keep us from slipping back and slipping off? Well, might it be, for example, the disapproval of others? Yes, indeed. What would the church people say if they knew, or what would they think if they knew as I begin to slip back?

[30:20] Well, the disapproval of others. The community certainly has a good role to encourage one another, so much the more as you'd see the day approaching. Yep, indeed. But that won't do the whole job.

Personal disciplines. Well, we've been talking about reading, and that's absolutely excellent, absolutely vital. But if we begin to think, well, I'm able to do personal disciplines because I'm a stronger person, I'm a more determined person than these other weak, sloppy Christians. Out of my own strength and under my own steam, I can make sure I don't slip backwards. It's a little bit like Peter, isn't it? I will never deny you, Lord, even if the others do, I won't.

There's a pitfall that way, isn't there? To be sure, the Bible says, be strong. Be strong in the Lord, it says, and in his mighty power.

Strengthen the feeble knees and get up and get on. Yeah, there is that sort of strength, but that in itself won't keep us on the path. I think the writer to the Hebrews would say that the real thing that he wants to get at is to point us to Jesus Christ, to be constantly replenishing our sense of how great Jesus is, of who he is.

[31:38] That's why the writer says, fix your eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. That's why he says, keep coming to the throne of grace and getting help from him.

And that's why he says the point of what we're saying is this. We have such a high priest who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the majesty in heaven and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord and not by man.

So let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence. Well, this is what he says, that Jesus Christ is great and we are to look to him and be constantly impressed with his greatness and coming to him in all the capacities that he has and all that he offers us.

So today, let's think how great he is. I'm taking the cue from the words in chapter 7, verse 1, just think how great he was. And what I'd like to do is to this morning remind us of the plot, the melodic line, the things that we've traversed through our months in Hebrews.

And I'd like us just to look at the passage and I'd like to point out three ways in which Melchizedek helps us to see that Jesus is great. Just think how great he is.

[32:57] So we'll do a backtrack. We'll look at the passage and I'd like to think of three ways in which Melchizedek helps us to see how great Jesus is. And they are tithes and blessing and forever, if you want to know ahead.

And perhaps you can spot them as we go through. So let's just remind ourselves, the context of this letter is to people who've known about Jesus Christ and who have previously stood as Christians. But now, under renewed pressure of whatever sort it was, we're beginning to lose the plot and beginning to drift away. A bit of a warning to us, isn't it? And to drift in the eyes of the writers of the Hebrews is really to forget how surpassingly brilliant Jesus is.

And therefore, to go back to something, well, to go back to the Jewish system with the Torah, the law of Moses, to go back to the Jewish system, perhaps in that period of time, would be to put yourself under state protection.

So you might be very well tempted to do that. To go back to a system where there were visible human priests, as written in the law of Moses, the Levitical priests from the tribe of Levi, hence the word Levitical.

[34:16] And there's a little picture of one. Of animal sacrifices in the temple and temple worship, so long as the temple was still standing. And the justification might well be, well, it's in the Bible.

So what's the harm of going back to that? It's a lot safer. And the writer of the Hebrews says that is really a wrong turning to take. Going back to the law of Moses, which has many limitations, has many blessings, has many limitations, and it won't save us.

The point he makes is we have a great high priest. That's who we have, and let's not let go of him. And I suppose this applies to us if we, under pressure or temptation or distraction or boredom or weariness, think that we've got anything more important than Jesus in our lives.

Our sins are certainly not to be favoured over Jesus. We're to let go of them and cling to him. But do you know, even the good things in our lives are not more important than Jesus.

Whatever cultural background or place you are in life, education, it's not more important than Jesus. Our children are not more important than Jesus.

[35:34] Our grandchildren are not more important than Jesus. Having a boyfriend or a girlfriend in your life is not more important than having Jesus.

Having financial security and health security is not more important than Jesus. Our families, we thank God for our families, but they are not the saviour.

They are not to be worshipped. They are not to be put above him. It's a serious call to put Jesus in the place that he ought to have in our lives.

So, that's the context of it. We thought about, at the beginning, the sun. To which of the angels did God ever say, sit at my right hand? The angels are part of the Moses system.

And the writer says the sun is far greater. There's a clear blue water between what the angels are and who the sun is. So, we shouldn't drift away, he says, chapter 2, verse 1.

[36:42] He says Jesus is fully human. It's not angels that he helps, but the seed of Abraham. The human, it's us he helps. He reaches down to help. So, fix your thoughts on Jesus the sun, chapter 3, verse 1.

He is the sun over the house, where Moses was the servant in the house. Nothing wrong with being a servant, but the vast difference between the servant and the son.

And then we thought about the rest. Press forward to the rest. What does it say? Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.

Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts, but press on towards the rest. And that put us in the picture of being like the people crossing the desert, who mustn't stumble and fall out of mistrust or disobedience, but press ahead in faith and following the command of the Lord.

Make every effort. Since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you should be found to have fallen short of it.

[37:55] Make every effort to enter that rest. We thought about that. And we began to think about the great high priest in chapter 4, verse 14. We have a great high priest, and he comes on to that subject.

Let us approach the throne of grace with confidence through Jesus, the Son of God, who can sympathize with our weaknesses and give us grace to help in time of need.

And then we got on to the subject of priests. Priests connect people with God. In the Moses system, there's a whole plethora of priests.

They're descended from Aaron and particularly the tribe of Levi. And there are specific criteria in terms of your genealogy for being one of those priests.

And there's one. He's between God and people. And what a vital place he stays. He occupies there. And the writer in chapter 5, verse 10, wants to get on to the subject of the priest, the high priest in the order of Melchizedek.

[39:00] And he doesn't quite get going on that because he stops off him and says, well, I've got a lot to say. But the problem is you don't have a taste for things like this, and you surely will ought to.

So don't drift and become lazy, he says in chapter 6. And then he gets back on to the subject, which we looked at last week, of the oath to Abraham, which there's the oath of an upraised hand.

May I be, may curses fall on me if I don't do, as I have said in this matter, underlining the statement of God. A promise to Abraham on oath and a promise of a future priest-king in the style of Melchizedek.

I have sworn on oath and will not change my mind. You are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek. So we're just getting into this subject now, which brings us to chapter 7. So we did a quick whiz through where we got to, and now we're in chapter 7.

So in chapter 7, just think how great he is. Well, how great is he? And see, as God helps us, what Melchizedek can teach us about the greatness of the Christ.

[40:16] So in chapter 7, we go back to the Genesis 14 story, and it was read to us, but in brief. Abraham returns in victory.

This is a real historical event, a real battle, and he comes back south. He meets other real flesh and blood historical figures.

Oh, there's Abraham. Probably didn't look like that, did he? And he meets Melchizedek, who probably didn't look like that, a priest who brings out bread and wine. And according to chapter 7, this Melchizedek was king of Salem, priest of God, most high.

He met Abraham returning from the defeat of the kings and blessed him. Abraham gave him a tenth of everything. Well, there's various things that are said in that sentence.

He gave him a tenth of everything. And Abraham gave him, sorry. First, his name means king of righteousness, then also king of Salem, which means king of peace. Without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, like the Son of God, he remains a priest forever.

[41:26] It's a long sentence. And it really says, this Melchizedek, da-da-da-da-da, remains a priest forever. That's the sentence. This Melchizedek, okay, all the other things, end of the sentence, remains a priest forever.

So just looking at that, Abraham gives him a tithe. I think I've got some dollars for him to give. He's the king of, Melech means king, Zedek means righteousness.

He's the king of righteousness and he's the king of Salem. Salem translated here as peace, like shalom. So there's his city, Jerusalem, with two flags, righteousness and peace, R and P.

And the thing that the writer of the Hebrews is going to pick up on is there is no indication whatsoever of his parentage. He is not, it says, no father without father.

No indication of his mother. No mother without genealogy. No genealogy without beginning. No one tells us how he got there. And without end of life, no one tells us what happened to him afterwards.

[42:40] So this is Melchizedek as he's presented. And at the end of the sentence, he remains a priest forever. Now, let's have a little think about this.

That word like is actually a little bit, you could expand on that. So he's made like to the son of God. Melchizedek is made like the son of God.

What does that mean? Well, the writer is reflecting on a history of historical events. He's not making up a fantasy.

He's made like to the son of God. In other words, this figure is not the pre-incarnate Jesus. He's not a magical figure or a supernatural figure in that sense.

He isn't the pre-incarnate Jesus. He's like him. He's like him. Like, as in a pattern. And sometimes Bible people like to use this word type from the Greek typos, meaning pattern.

[43:48] So you could just say pattern, couldn't you? Now, let me try and give you a way of thinking of this. Way back when I went to primary school and even secondary school, these are in the days before printing, before laser printers and inkjet printers.

And if the geography teacher wanted us to have a map, for example, a map of Africa, the geography teacher would go to the store cupboard and produce something which looked like a paint roller, about this big, with a roller on it, an interchangeable roller, and a handle which fitted over the roller.

And what the geography teacher would do would take a big pad of ink, take this roller, roll it in the ink, and then get us to line up with our exercise books.

And each of us would have this roller rolled out onto our exercise books to produce a map. Like, if it was the Africa roller, we'd get a map, a map of Africa in our book saying, oh, that's Africa.

And it isn't actually Africa, is it? It is like Africa. I mean, Africa is not seven and a half inches long.

That would be a mistake to say, to deduce from that picture that Africa was seven and a half inches long.

[45:09] And the middle of Africa is not the same colour as the exercise book paper, which is probably white with blue lines. And Africa, no matter how hard you look, does not actually have a black line all the way round it.

Nevertheless, there is a real correspondence between that and Africa. For example, in the shape of it, where the map sticks out to the left, Africa sticks out to the west.

And so on. So it really is like Africa. It isn't Africa, but it's like it. And in the same sort of way, Melchizedek points us to something bigger or to someone bigger than himself.

He is like the Son of God. Same way that the map is like Africa. Africa is much bigger, much more exciting, much more colourful. But it is like it. Not everything about Melchizedek is in view in this. He's not like in every single way. But some things he is like. And that's where we're going to go now. So he is like in the following way. He's made like to the Son of God.

[46:21] And the things that we're to look for are that he's like the Son of God insofar as he is the priest and the king. He is a priest king.

And it's those things that are where we're to look for the likeness. So it is now significant in regard to Melchizedek being a priest king.

What do we need to know about his father? Answer. Nothing. It's irrelevant. His father is irrelevant to this matter of being a priest king. In the matter of him being a priest king, what do we need to know then about his mother?

Answer. Nothing. Who is his mother? It's irrelevant to this. And what do we need to know about his ancestry? Well, in regard to him being a priest king, as he's presented here, the pattern that's presented is that's irrelevant.

We're told nothing because there is no important thing to be told. It doesn't matter. And how do we know about his induction?

[47:27] Well, we're not told about that. That's irrelevant too. And what are we told about his successor? And when he dies, that's irrelevant too. As regards him being priest king, made like the son of God in this respect.

All those things are irrelevant. And importantly so, as the writer here says. And contrast that please with the Levitical priests that the readers would have been tempted to go back to.

There's the Levitical priest. With the Levitical priest, genealogy is everything. You must say who your father was.

You must have a record of who your mother was. You must take that back all the way through the family tree. All the way back. Otherwise, you're completely disqualified. And you see, there's the important difference.

The Levitical priest post is temporary. It's only so far as that priest lives. And when he dies, there is something in the system to produce a successor.

[48:33] And that's absolutely vital. And there's a sort of unbroken chain of priest upon priest upon priest upon priest in that Levitical system.

So this is how he is like the son of God. This is what we should be looking for in his likeness. So let's go now and say, how does this Melchizedek, this pattern, who points in his capacity as a priest king, who points to someone yet to come, how does he help us understand the greatness of Jesus? Well, let's have a go at this. So number one, see how great he was. Verse four, even the patriarch Abraham gave him a tithe of the plunder.

So we have Abraham giving a tithe. And in verse six, it says that this man, Melchizedek, didn't trace his descent from Levi.

He didn't have a genealogy, but he collected a tenth from Abraham. So it's said twice. Abraham gave him a tenth and Melchizedek collected a tenth.

[49:53] Now, these tithes denote genuine religious honour and devotion.

That's why Abraham gives the tithe, because Melchizedek is priest of God Most High. And Abraham shows his devotion and does it through Melchizedek.

And it is pointed out to us in verse four, even the patriarch Abraham gave him a tenth of the plunder. Let's stop on that word patriarch.

The patriarch, the patriarch, the patriarch, the patriarch. The patriarch bit is to do with father. But the arch bit means great, powerful top of the tree, if you like.

So that's which we get arch. Arch enemy is your worst enemy. And here's the patriarch, if you like. The biggest father of the nation.

[50:58] The top of the family. The head of the spiritual family. The father of the nation. The top of the tree of the faithful. And he gives respect and devotion and honour to this person who is greater.

And we are subservient to Abraham. He is our father if we follow in his footsteps. We are his children if we have faith.

And so this points us to someone greater, doesn't it? And the writer goes on to say, you could almost say, he says, where does he say this?

In verse nine, one might even say that Levi, who collects the tenth in the Moses system, there is a command for him to collect the tenth. In the Moses system.

But even Levi pays the tenth. So Levi receives respect in the Moses system. But he gives respect to someone greater. In the sense that, have I got a little family tree there descending from Abraham?

[52:06] And you follow that family tree. And if you're in the right part of that family tree, you can be a Levitical priest. And if Abraham is paying tithes to Melchizedek, then in that sense, one could almost say that Levi is paying tithes to Melchizedek.

The Levitical priests show respect to their superior. This priest is definitely greater than them. And if the Levitical priests were inferior to Melchizedek, and they're the priests in the Bible, how much less should we put trust in merely human priests?

So along with the Levitical priests, we could draw conclusions for all earthly priesthood systems.

And some churches are very big on priesthood systems, aren't they?

Roman Catholic Church, Greek Orthodox Church. And in some Protestant churches, the pastor is elevated to such a position as the Eamor, almost becomes a priest.

And if those earthly priests had a superior, how much more should we not be subservient to earthly priests, but the great high priest himself?

[53:24] So there's a thing about leaders, isn't there? Honor your leaders. As the writers of the Hebrews is going to say. But don't make them your saviour. Even in future ministry, the person whom we appoint, God willing and God helping us, will not be the church's saviour, but he'll be a servant who himself needs salvation, and through whom we trust God will work.

But he won't be the church's saviour. He'll be a servant. So second thing, how great he was. We thought about tithes, and now let's think about blessing.

And it says, which verse is it? Verse 6. This man, who didn't have a genealogy, yet he collected a tenth, and he blessed him who had the promises.

It's there in verse 6. So there's a blessing given to Abraham. And in verse 7, it says, without doubt, the lesser person is blessed by the greater.

So here's a mark. The person who has the blessing to spare is greater than the one who is in need of the blessing. And in this story, Abraham gets blessed by Melchizedek.

[54:41] And this is a remarkable thing, isn't it? You'd think, must be a mistake there. But no, it is actually what it says. That's actually what happened. Because you could say, if you go back to that period, in one sense, Abraham was the key figure in world history.

He was the hinge upon which every human destiny hung. Remember, it was said, it was said, if you bless him, you'll be blessed.

If you curse him, you'll be cursed. So your destiny hung on your relationship to Abraham. And here is someone even more important and superior to Abraham.

As someone even more important than Abraham. And here Melchizedek points us forward to the greatness of Jesus. Just think how great he is.

The person who said, I am the key to your destiny. If you acknowledge me before men, I will acknowledge you before my father.

[55:48] In other words, if you say, yes, Jesus, I'm not ashamed of him. I'm his. Then on the last day, Jesus will say, I'm not ashamed of this guy.

He's mine. It would be a great thing to have said, wouldn't it? If you deny me before men or disown me, I will disown you before my father. The way that Jesus makes himself the absolute hinge of the personal destiny of each man and woman and boy and girl.

How great he is. And Melchizedek points us in that direction. And number three. How great. Melchizedek points us to the matter of forever.

The forever quality. And you remember I said the matter of eternity, if you like. You remember I said that that sentence, that sentence beginning in chapter seven, verse one, this Melchizedek remains a priest forever.

That's how he is depicted. And in fact, he was just an ordinary bloke and he would have died. But as he's depicted in terms of him as a type and a pattern, that's put to us that Genesis does not say he died.

[57:09] In terms of a type, he's a priest forever. We're never told he's stopped. In terms of a type, he remains a priest forever.

And he's made like the Son of God in this, because the Son of God is the forever priest king. And he points us to Jesus Christ, the eternal Son, the eternal priest, and the eternal king, the forever priest, the forever king.

And we pause to think the job of being a forever anything, a forever priest, a forever king, can only be done by a forever person.

And you see that the qualities of the work of Jesus Christ are undergirded by his quality as a person.

He does an eternal work because he is an eternal person. The greatness of Jesus Christ as our Saviour rests upon the hugeness and capacity of his eternal being and his eternal role as the Son.

[58:31] Think how great he is. Wouldn't it be awful to think that our eternal salvation rested on a non-eternal person? Somebody who was brought in, invented, and who could potentially be uninvented.

Systems of salvation like that of the Jehovah's Witnesses rest on the work of a created being. That's not a strong place to stand.

We have a firm foundation that reaches into the very Godhead, that reaches into eternity, that reaches below and beyond the confines of this created world into the uncreated Trinity.

And Melchizedek points us in the direction of this forever person. So that brings us to our conclusion. In order not to drift, we fix our eyes on Jesus.

And Melchizedek shows us the greatness of Jesus in these particular ways. He points us to one greater than Abraham.

[59:53] For Abraham was, I am, said Jesus. Abraham is our father in the faith. We follow him, but the object of our faith is Jesus Christ.

Melchizedek shows that he is greater than Abraham. Abraham, who in his day was the hinge of salvation, but somebody now who is greater. The one, if we acknowledge him, he will acknowledge us.

If we disown him, there's nowhere else to turn to. And through Melchizedek, we're pointed to a forever priest who is a forever priest because he himself is a forever person.

And that great person, Jesus Christ, is entirely worthy of our trust and our love and our praise and our worship and that we lay our lives entirely at his disposal.

All that I am and all that I have, Lord Jesus, I give it to you. Think how great he is.

[61:12] Amen. Just think how great he was. Lord, I lift your name on high. Lord, I love to sing your praises.

That's the song we're going to close with and number 314, words will come up on the screen. Lord, I lift your name on high. Lord, I lift your name on high.

Lord, I love to sing your praises. I'm so glad you're in my life.

I'm so glad you came to save us. You came from heaven to earth To show the way From the earth to the cross I get to pay From the cross to the grave From the grave to the sky Lord, I lift your name on high.

Lord, I lift your name on high. Lord, I love to sing your praises.

[62:54] I'm so glad you're in my life I'm so glad you came to save us You came from heaven to earth To show the way From the earth to the cross My debt to pay From the cross to the grave From the grave to the sky Lord, I lift your name on high.

And having heard God's word Read the scriptures Prayed and sung his praises We will close with a prayer And then we're finished.

May the God of peace Who through the blood Of the eternal covenant Brought back from the dead
Our Lord Jesus That great shepherd of the sheep Equip you with everything good For doing his will
And may he work in us What is pleasing to him Through Jesus Christ To whom be glory forever and
ever Amen Amen May he answer that prayer In a great measure So thank you for joining us And
hope to see you soon It's goodbye from me now Bye bye