

“The Supremacy of Christ’s Priesthood (Part 1)” – Hebrews 7:4-10

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[What follows is the transcript of a sermon. It was originally intended to be heard, not read, so the tone is more conversational than academic. It has only been loosely edited, so forgive any grammatical, syntactical, or spelling errors. If you have questions please contact Southern Oaks Baptist Church through their official website, www.welovethegospel.com]

Take your Bible and meet me in Hebrews 7...

The title of our series through the book of Hebrews is “G.O.A.T.” because, on the one hand, it anticipates a sacrifice that will be explored at the heart of this book and, on the other hand, in modern idiom “G.O.A.T.” is an acronym for the “greatest of all time.” The book of Hebrews was written to show that Jesus is the greatest of all time in every way imaginable. He is superior to every lofty comparison we can conjure up. And so far the book has systematically be beating into us the theme of Christ’s superiority lest we wander away toward any inferior substitutes.

“In chapters 1 and 2 he showed Christ’s supremacy to the angels, through whom the old covenant was given; in chapter 3 he moved on to Christ’s supremacy over Moses, and in chapter 4 to his supremacy over Joshua. Now in chapter 7 he advances his main argument: the supremacy of Christ’s priesthood over the earlier priesthood of Aaron and the Levites.”¹

This is one of the most exciting sections in the book in my estimation, but it’s theologically dense. Don’t forget, it wasn’t all that long ago in Hebrews when the author said to his audience,

“About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. ¹² For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, ¹³ for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. ¹⁴ But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.” (Hebrews 5:11-14)

What is the “*this*” he has much to say about? What is the “*solid food*” he’s referring to? It’s the meat of this teaching on Christ’s priesthood and its relationship to a mysterious figure from the Old Testament named Melchizedek. And it’s not for the faint of heart. It would be much easier for me to stand before you this morning with a simple and chipper sermonette. But, as the saying goes, sermonettes make Christianettes. So I’m not going to use our time to give you my opinions or five clever steps to achieve your best life now. I’m going to use our time to tell you that Christ is the Great High Priest you need because that’s what the text teaches us. You don’t need pop-psychology application and self-help advice that masquerades in our day as biblical preaching simply because it is seasoned with a few out of context Bible verses to prop up the preacher’s own wisdom. You need God’s Word. You need to hear what He has said, what He has revealed, what He offers. You don’t need my wisdom. You need His. And so do I.

So let’s look at the text. This is easily a chapter we could spend weeks on, but today we’ll simply try to get our heads around the main point the author is making, namely, that the priesthood of Jesus Christ is superior to the Levitical priesthood that was tied to the Old Covenant. Many of the ideas that are introduced today will be considered in greater detail later in the book and we will dedicate more attention to them as the author does. But today let’s just marvel at the superiority of Christ’s priesthood. I’ll beginning reading in

verse 1. Follow along as I read. The most important thing I will say to you today, I am about to say. This is God's Word...

“For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him,² and to him Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything. He is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then he is also king of Salem, that is, king of peace.³ He is without father or mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God he continues a priest forever.⁴ See how great this man was to whom Abraham the patriarch gave a tenth of the spoils!⁵ And those descendants of Levi who receive the priestly office have a commandment in the law to take tithes from the people, that is, from their brothers, though these also are descended from Abraham.⁶ But this man who does not have his descent from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises.⁷ It is beyond dispute that the inferior is blessed by the superior.⁸ In the one case tithes are received by mortal men, but in the other case, by one of whom it is testified that he lives.⁹ One might even say that Levi himself, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham,¹⁰ for he was still in the loins of his ancestor when Melchizedek met him. (Hebrews 7:1-10)

Now then, last week we looked at Genesis 14 and the first three verses of Hebrews 7. We familiarized ourselves with the story of Melchizedek, a mysterious figure that shows up out of nowhere in the story of Abraham and then vanishes as abruptly as he entered. All that we really know is that his name means “king of righteousness” and he is described as both “king of Salem” (which means peace) and “priest of God Most High.” Nothing is said of his origins or the end of his life, which is unusual for believers in the book of Genesis, a book known for its stress on genealogies. In his brief appearance in the Old Testament narrative, he approaches Abraham, brings him bread and wine, blesses him, and receives from Abraham an unsolicited tenth of his stuff. Then, poof, he's gone.

What we focused on last week was the fact that Bible is one unified story that has the Gospel and, therefore, Jesus Christ as its center. The same Holy Spirit who inspired the Old Testament inspired the New Testament, so it should not surprise us that the Old Testament is filled with pictures (or “types” as they're sometimes called) that foreshadow Christ's person and work. Melchizedek is one such picture. The writer of Hebrews thus compares Melchizedek with Jesus because “comparison is an economical way of describing a person, and in the sketch of Melchizedek we see the outlines of the Messiah.”² So we explored how the author mines the story in Genesis for theological significance that helps us understand how Melchizedek prefigures Jesus in both what is said and what is left unsaid.

So we considered how the name of Melchizedek was a picture of Jesus, the King of Righteousness *par excellence*. We explored how Melchizedek was unique in that he filled two offices—the offices of priest and king—that were always kept separate in Israel until the day of Jesus would reveal Himself to be our Priest-King in the New Covenant. We considered how the actions of Melchizedek, offering up bread and wine to Abraham as he blessed him, call to mind Christ's sacrifice on the cross to bring us every spiritual blessing, which we remembered when we shared bread and wine in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper last Sunday. In short, the statements about Melchizedek in the Old Testament, as few as they may be, point us to Jesus Christ.

Yet it's not just the statements that point to Christ. The writer of Hebrews sees the silences about Melchizedek also as pointing to Jesus. Nothing is said of the origin and end of Melchizedek and thus nothing is said of the origin and end of his priesthood. The author of Hebrews sees this as a shadow of the Son of God, who is without beginning and end and whose priesthood is administered on our behalf forever. So what was true *literarily* of Melchizedek (no beginning or end mentioned) is true *literally* of the Son of God (no beginning or end in actuality). So both the inspired statements and silences in Genesis 14 about Melchizedek prepare us for the arrival and ministry of Jesus Christ.

Having legitimized the comparison between Melchizedek and Jesus in the first few verses, the writer of Hebrews uses the rest of chapter 7 to show how the connection with Melchizedek demonstrates that the New Covenant priesthood (embodied in Christ) is superior to the Old Covenant priesthood (embodied in countless Levitical priests). “The two OT passages in which Melchizedek appears, Genesis 14:17-20 and Psalm 110:4, are enlisted to demonstrate that this priestly order is superior to that of Israel’s priestly tribe, the Levites, and the priestly family of Aaron and his descendants.”³ In the first half of the Hebrews 7, the author uses Genesis 14 to show that the inferiority of the Jewish priesthood was anticipated even before it existed. Then, through Psalm 110, he exposes some of the ways its inferiority of Jewish priesthood has been confirmed again and again since its inception. Both arguments serve to show us that Christ’s priesthood is superior and should have been expected by the Jewish people. “He wants the Hebrews to see that the Old Testament itself showed that the Levitical priesthood was always meant to give way to something greater.”⁴ That’s Hebrews 7 in a nutshell—the need for Christ’s priesthood is both anticipated and demonstrated.

So with the remainder of our time we will consider phase one of that argument via Genesis 14. Then next Sunday, Lord willing, we will explore the rest of the chapter and how Psalm 110 factors into the equation. To that end, let’s think through how...

The Inferiority of the Levitical Priesthood Was Anticipated *Before* Its Existence

Abraham was the “progenitor and patriarch of Israel.”⁵ He and Moses were the most highly esteemed figures of Israel’s past. But in some ways Abraham was even more important than Moses because without Him there would be no Israel and without Israel there would be no Moses. Abraham was the father of the nation and the father of the faith. He was the ultimate “*patriarch*” as he is called in verse 4.⁶

Furthermore, Abraham was great because he was the one “*who had the promises*” (7:7). This no doubt refers to the promises that God made to Abraham in Genesis 12.

“Now the LORD said to Abram, ‘Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. ² And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’” (Genesis 12:1-3)

This is referred to as the “Abrahamic Covenant” and it’s one of the most important passages in the Bible. It shows that Abraham was promised land, descendants, and redemptive blessing. Ultimately the covenant is fulfilled in Christ, the One descendant of Abraham through whom all the nations of the earth would be blessed. This great Gospel hope was given to Abraham. What a blessing! Indeed, who was ever blessed more than Abraham in the Old Testament? He had the promises! He would be blessed! He would be the source of blessings! Who could possibly bless Abraham when he was the giver of blessings?⁷ Who could be great enough to extend blessing to this great man? Well, as it turns out, Melchizedek!⁸

The author of Hebrews wants us to see that, as great as Abraham was, he was not greater than Melchizedek. When Abraham, the great patriarch, humbly received a blessing from and paid a tithe to Melchizedek, he was in essence acknowledging Melchizedek’s greatness and superiority. He was affirming the legitimacy of his priesthood before God. Dennis Johnson explains it like this:

“In the exchange of tithe and blessing, both Abraham and Melchizedek acknowledged Melchizedek’s privileged position as priestly mediator between the patriarch and his divine Lord... To entrust the Lord’s tithe to a priest was to recognize the priest’s authority to intercede with

God on one's behalf. The tithe went from worshipers *through the priest* to God. A blessing pronounced in God's name enacted the priest's authority to confer God's grace on worshipers. Blessing thus proceeded from God *through the priest* to the worshipers."⁹

Let's consider these two matters—receiving a blessing and giving a tithe—and their significance.

Melchizedek Blessed Abraham (and by Extension Levi)

In receiving the blessing, Abraham was acknowledging and demonstrating his own inferiority to Melchizedek. And lest we miss the point, the writer of Hebrews makes it explicit in verse 7: "*It is beyond dispute that the inferior is blessed by the superior.*" Therefore, Melchizedek is Abraham's superior.¹⁰ That's a big statement! Why does the author stress this? Well, remember his main argument: he's trying to prove the superiority of Christ's priesthood. If he can show Melchizedek was greater than Levi and Aaron, then, it stands to reason, so was his priesthood. And since Melchizedek was greater than Abraham, the argument goes, "the priesthood represented by Melchizedek must be greater than the one to come from Abraham."¹¹ Does that make sense?

In blessing Abraham, Melchizedek was by extension blessing Abraham's offspring, which would include Levi and Aaron. Again, "*the inferior is blessed by the superior.*" So it follows that Melchizedek was greater than Levi and Aaron too. The author of Hebrews wants us to see Melchizedek's superiority to Abraham so that we will see that Melchizedek is also, by consequence, superior to Levi and Aaron. He wants us to see this because, as he's already stated three times, Christ was a priest "*after the order of Melchizedek*" (5:6, 10; 6:20). If then Melchizedek's priesthood was superior to the Jewish priesthood prescribed in the Law, then Jesus's priesthood is likewise superior. This would mean that Jesus is the greatest priest. That's why all this matters and that's where the author is going.

But, as I've said, it wasn't just Melchizedek's act of blessing Abraham that showed his superiority to the patriarch. It was also Abraham's response to that priest-king...

Abraham (and by Extension Levi) Tithed to Melchizedek

When Abraham received the blessing, he responded by giving a tithe (i.e., a tenth) to Melchizedek. "*See how great this man was to whom Abraham the patriarch gave a tenth of the spoils*" (7:4). Al Mohler comments that "Abram's tithe is one of the most unexpected and one of the most fascinating parts of the Old Testament." He reminds us,

"This is no small gift. Abram had just defeated a large number of kings and taken all of their possessions. One does not give a tithe to another without it being an obligation. Abram feels, as a matter of obligation to God Most High, that he should give this priest a tenth of everything he has obtained. This tithe would not have been a small tip but a large payment made by one of Israel's most important figures."¹²

So what Abraham did was a big deal. In light of this, and in a brilliant display of Old Testament logic, the writer of Hebrews says, in verses 9 and 10, "*One might even say that Levi himself, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, for he was still in the loins of his ancestor when Melchizedek met him.*" We might think that Levi, the great-grandson of Abraham, wasn't even alive or present when Melchizedek and Abraham crossed paths. That's true. But the writer of Hebrews is saying that, in a sense, Levi was there. How so? He was "*in the loins of his ancestor*" Abraham (7:10).¹³ In biblical thinking an ancestor was

thought of as containing within himself all of his future descendants. So we could summarize that argument here like this:

“Abraham’s paying a tenth to Melchizedek has implications for the Levitical priesthood, for the Levites ‘through Abraham’ paid a tenth to Melchizedek. And if they paid Melchizedek a tenth, then Melchizedek’s priesthood is superior to the Levitical one...The lesser (Levi) paid a tenth to the greater (Melchizedek).”¹⁴

Inasmuch as Melchizedek’s priesthood is a picture of Christ’s priesthood, then the readers are meant to conclude that Genesis 14 confirms the superiority of Christ’s priesthood over and against that of Levi and Aaron. The reason the writer is stressing this to his audience is because his audience is being tempted to turn away from the Great High Priest, Jesus, and go back to the Levitical priests of Judaism. So theology here is for a very pastoral purpose. He doesn’t want his readers to fall away and forsake Jesus. That’s the message of this text.

Now that kind of argument—that Levi paid Melchizedek through his ancestor Abraham—seems strange to us in the west.¹⁵ We understand the biology of it, but we are far too individualistic to like the idea that the actions of another—for good or for ill—could be representative of us and therefore bring consequences upon us (though I’m sure we wouldn’t object too much to inherited blessings, would we?). But as foreign as that idea is to our ears, we must remember that those “to whom the book is addressed, steeped as they were in Jewish thought, would have been familiar with this kind of reasoning and very much persuaded by it.”¹⁶ Their sense of identity was much more corporate than is yours or mine. So the argument here is a strong one from the perspective of the original audience.

But it is important for modern readers to understand the line of reasoning that the writer of Hebrews employs here not simply because it helps us understand this passage, but also because it helps us understand the Gospel. The idea in play here is sometimes referred to as “covenantal representation” or “federal headship.” My guess is that most of you have never heard those terms. They would have been much more familiar to Christians of previous generations though.

Interestingly, I was talking with pastor Derek yesterday and he told me that he was first exposed to the concept of “federal headship” through Christian hip-hop. There are at least two different songs by a rapper (and pastor) named Shai Linne that touch on this idea. I won’t rap for you (because you ain’t ready for that!), but let me read you an example. In a song called, “Theology Q&A” and it’s exactly what its name suggests, a series of questions and answers. By the way [commercial], if a person memorized and understood the content of his “Atonement Q&A” and “Theology Q&A” songs, I’m convinced that they would understand Christianity and the Gospel better than 99% of Americans. I don’t think that’s an exaggeration. Even if you don’t like hip-hop, there’s no denying that it can pack a lot of content in a small space and memorable verse. That can be good or bad, of course, which is why I’m thankful for many Christians artists that have leveraged this musical genre to disciple people in the truth. Derek would tell you that Christian rap was important part of his discipleship early on. Ask him about it sometime. Even if you don’t like rap, you will walk away from the conversation praising God for how God can use it. [End of commercial]. Here’s the second half of the first verse of “Theology Q&A”:

*“Why did He make us? He made us for His pleasure
To glorify His name and enjoy Him forever
What happened? Though God made Adam and Eve perfect
Deceived by the serpent, they then received curses
How did that affect us? It left us for dead
Because Adam represented us as our federal head
Our federal head? It means we’re born sinners as well*

And apart from God's grace we're all headed for hell
What's the good news? The good news is seen in God's plan
To elect a people to be redeemed by the Lamb!

That's straight Pauline theology right there. Listen to what Paul told the Corinthians...

"For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive." (1 Corinthians 15:21-22)

To the Romans, he wrote,

"Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned... For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. ¹⁹ For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. ²⁰ Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, ²¹ so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 5:12, 17-21)

That's "federal headship" or "covenantal representation." In the worlds of philosophy and theology those terms essentially mean that "descendants are considered to have participated in their ancestors' actions,"¹⁷ particularly when there is a shared covenant involved. In fact, the word "federal" comes from a Latin word, *foedus*, which means "covenant."¹⁸ So a "federal head" is some individual "who, through a covenant relationship, represents or stands for someone else."¹⁹ So in Paul's theology, our "federal head" is either the first Adam or the second Adam, Jesus Christ. We are either "in Adam" or "in Christ."

This is an idea that is much easier for those with an eastern worldview to grasp, then it is for us here in the west. But there are some points of contact in our society. Let me offer a few examples I picked up from Tim Keller. In a trade union there are representatives who negotiate on behalf of the union members. So your representative in the collective bargaining agreement is your "federal head." He or she is there to represent you and your colleagues in the negotiations. So that's an example. Another example would be in legal contracts that grant "power of a attorney" to another individual. When we give a person "power of attorney" we are voluntarily granting them authority to represent us in legal matters, to serve as our "federal head." Let me give you a third example. This week we have the opportunity to exercise the incredible privilege of voting in the midterm elections (if you didn't already early vote). What are we doing when we cast our ballots? We are indicating who we want to represent us in the local, state, or national government. The result of the election grants power to these elected representatives we put in office through our vote. They represent us.

"A national leader (or the legislature) can declare war. Even in the vast majority of the world's democracies, this power to declare war does not belong to the people. People do not vote popularly on whether to declare war. There are good reasons for this: such a decision could not be made fast enough, and sufficient information could not be distributed for an intelligent decision. So we allow and expect our representatives [to] act for us—and the consequences of their actions come to us. If our federal representatives declare war on a country, we can't say: 'Well, I'm not at war with this country!' Yes, you are! If your representatives declare war, you have declared war. If they make peace, you are at peace."²⁰

These are all examples related to “federal headship.” However, these are all examples of “federal headship” from a western point of view, in which we as individuals get some sort of say in who is our representative head. But in the Bible, that’s not necessarily how it works. And there’s the rub for westerners. Keller explains it like this:

“In the east today (and around the world in former times), it is considered legitimate for some people to have this relationship to you, either by birth or by assignment. In the western world, we only recognize the legitimacy of such a person if we voluntarily choose to be in that relationship. . . . When it comes to Romans 5:12–21 [or 1 Corinthians 15, etc.], the rub for westerners is two-fold. First, we dislike the very idea of someone standing in for us. We say: *It’s not fair that I should be judged for what someone else did! I should have had a chance in the Garden of Eden myself!* And second, even if we grant that federal headship sometimes is legitimate, we dislike the lack of a choice of our federal head. What immediately strikes us as unfair is that we did not elect Adam as our representative. We had no say in it. If we are going to give someone ‘power of attorney’ or ‘power of collective bargaining,’ we want to be able to choose someone just like us, someone who would share all our views and perspectives, but who would be highly gifted and able to represent us well.

But if we are thinking of it this way, we are on the verge of understanding how God did it! First, no one could choose a representative for you as well as God could. We must not think we could have made a more intelligent selection than God! And second, God did not simply choose Adam, he *created* Adam to be our representative. He was perfectly created and designed to act exactly as you, personally, as an individual, would have acted in the same situation. You cannot say: *I would have done a better job*, because that would be to claim that you could have been a better representative than God created, or chosen a better representative than God chose. No—God gave us the right, fair federal head in Adam. And so we are guilty in Adam because we actually sinned in him.”²¹

That’s the exact same logic we see in Hebrews 7. The Levites paid a tithe to Melchizedek. How? Because their patriarchal “head,” Abraham, paid a tithe to Melchizedek. They acted in him. Similarly, mankind’s “head,” Adam, rebelled against God in sin and incurred the sentence of death. In him, we too have sinned and incurred the sentence of death. We inherit both his sin nature and sentence. If we recoil from that idea, it has more to do with our individualistic culture than it does with reality.

Yet that reality sounds horrible, does it not? It’s biblical. But it’s horrible news. And yet, with a little thought and the benefit of divine revelation, this idea of “federal headship” can actually prove to be good news for us. How so? I’m glad you asked.

“Because if Adam’s disobedience is our disobedience then, if there were an obedient man, a perfect second Adam, he would be able to be our federal head. He could represent us before the heavenly throne, and through him we could have the life that in Adam or left to ourselves we could never enjoy. It is wonderful news that God deals with us through a federal head—because [as Romans 5:14 tells us] Adam . . . was a pattern [i.e. a type] of the one to come’ (v 14c). It is because humanity is corporate, under a federal head, that we . . . ‘through our Lord Jesus Christ . . . have now received reconciliation’ (v 11). Federal headship means we can have a peace with God that the western individualism we are soaked in can never offer.”²²

Amen, someone? You may not like the idea of Adam’s headship as Paul describes it, but it is precisely that idea that paves the way for Christ’s headship for sinners like us. He can represent us before God through faith. And there’s no greater news than that!

So the same logic at work in Hebrews 7 to help us understand that Jesus is a better priest than any Levite could ever be also helps us understand the Gospel. Hopefully you can see why this archaic sounding idea of

“federal headship” is good news for us and, in the words of James Montgomery Boice, is “proof of God’s grace,” for while the failure of Adam has brought terrible results, this idea of having a “head” represent us is “the only way it would later be possible for God to save us once we had sinned.”²³ Jesus acted on our behalf. He’s our representative. He lived the life we should have lived in our place. He died the death we deserved to die in our place. He rose from the dead in victory so that all who would believe in Him, turning from sin and trusting in Him alone for their salvation, could be brought to His place. “Jesus represented us so completely on the cross that it could be said that we have died with Him.”²⁴ So Paul says to the Colossians, “*you [Christians] have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God*” (Col. 3:3). And to the Romans, “*Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him*” (Rom. 6:8). He’s our representative. Levi, in Abraham, paid tithes to Melchizedek. We, in Christ, died and are raised. This is the Gospel. In Adam, you die. But in Christ, you can live. So trust in Him. He is your only hope in life and death. And all God’s people said? Amen!

Next week, Lord willing, we will pick up on what these verses in Hebrews 7 teach us about the permanence, performance, and pertinence of Christ’s priesthood and why these ideas are really good news for us. We will consider at great length one of my favorite verses in the Bible. So we should meet up again next week. How’s that sound? Invite a friend. Or an enemy...

Let’s pray...

¹ Richard D. Phillips, *Hebrews* (REC; Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2006), 236.

² *Ibid.*, 229.

³ Dennis E. Johnson, “Hebrews” in *Hebrews-Revelation* (ESVEC; Wheaton: Crossway, 2018), 94.

⁴ R. Albert Mohler, *Exalting Jesus in Hebrews* (CCE; Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2017), 102.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 103.

⁵ Thomas R. Schreiner, *Commentary on Hebrews* (BTCP; Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2015), 211.

⁶ “*Patriarch* denotes the highest level of honor in Jewish life. Men like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are considered some of Israel’s most significant patriarchs. They were the foundation of Israel’s identity. These patriarchs are recognized as figures through whom God acted in salvation history in order to set the stage for what he

accomplished in Christ. Abraham is almost never specifically referred to as a patriarch, but he is in this passage because the writer of Hebrews is trying to emphasize his main point. By attaching this title of respect to Abraham, the author demonstrates the superiority of Melchizedek, even when compared to Abraham, the great patriarch. In other words, even Abraham, the great patriarch, pales in comparison to Melchizedek since he is the one that is blessed by this priest and is also the one who gives this priest a tenth of all his spoils.” Mohler, 102.

⁷ Ibid., 102-103.

⁸ As Martin Luther once said, “Melchizedek presents Abraham to the entire world and declares that only with him, in his house and family, are the church, the kingdom of heaven, salvation, forgiveness of sins, and the divine blessing.” Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works*, vol. 2, *Lectures on Genesis Chapters 6-14*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan and Daniel E. Poellot (St. Louis: Concordia, 1960), 389.

⁹ Johnson, 98.

¹⁰ “The one who blesses is greater than the one receiving the blessing. Since Melchizedek blessed Abraham, he is greater than Abraham, The wording of Gen 14:19 is significant: ‘He [Melchizedek] blessed him and said: Abram is blessed by God Most High, creator of heaven and earth.’ Melchizedek as a priest mediated the blessing of ‘God Most High.’ His blessing had the imprimatur and the authority of heaven, of the maker of all things.” Schreiner, 212.

¹¹ Phillips, 228.

¹² Mohler, 102.

¹³ “Since the Levitical priests descend from Abraham and Melchizedek surpasses Abraham, the Melchizedekian priesthood must be superior to the Levitical priesthood.” Ibid.

¹⁴ Schreiner, 212-213. He also writes, “the priesthood was bequeathed to the sons of Levi. The Lord specially set them apart to serve and minister to him, and in particular the Aaronic priesthood derived from the Levites. The Lord instructed the Levites to collect a tithe from Israel. ‘Look, I have given the Levites every tenth in Israel as an inheritance in return for the work they do, the work of the tent of meeting’ (Num 18:21; cf. also Num 18:26; 2 Chr 31:4-5; Neh 10:37-38). The tenth collected by the Levites was from fellow Israelites, their brothers and sisters. Like the Levites the rest of Israel, which gave a tenth to the Levites, descended from Abraham. In turn the Levites were to give a tenth of what was collected to the Aaronic priests (cf. Num 3:5-9; 18:1-32; Neh 10:37-39)...Melchizedek, however, stands outside such boundaries, for he wasn’t an Israelite. He wasn’t a son of Abraham. His receiving a tithe from Abraham wasn’t comparable to the Levites receiving tithes from fellow Israelites. In the case of Melchizedek, there is a completely different category as one who stands outside of Israel.” Ibid., 211-212.

¹⁵ “Now we might think some parts of this argument are a bit strange, particularly the notion that Levi paid tithes to Melchizedek through his ancestor Abraham. But this kind of argumentation (principally seen in vv. 8-9) is not unprecedented in Jewish logic or in the Old Testament. In Deuteronomy 4 Moses is speaking to the children of Israel and essentially says, ‘You were there at Horeb when God spoke from the mountain and when I went up to the mountain and when I came down with two tablets.’ But the Israelites Moses is speaking to in Deuteronomy 4 were not the same Israelites who were at Horeb! So how were they there? They were there biologically, in the loins of their fathers. This kind of corporate identity is not natural to our thinking, but it is essential to the Old Testament. Thus, the author of Hebrews closes his argument by using the concept of corporate identity to illustrate that Levi was biologically present when Abraham encountered Melchizedek. This is precisely why one might even say that Levi, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham because he was in the loins of his ancestor Abraham when Melchizedek met him.” Mohler, 103.

¹⁶ Michael P. Andrus, “From Pablum to Porterhouse,” a sermon preached on January 10, 2010, and accessed at the following web address: <http://firstfreewichita.org/sermons/sermon/2010-01-17/-from-pablum-to-porterhouse>.

¹⁷ Johnson, 96-99.

¹⁸ So when we refer to the “federal government,” for example, in distinction from say our state government, we are referring to that central authority that we have formed a covenanted (or agreed) to be subordinate to is certain affairs. See the definition here: <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/us/dictionary/english/federal>.

¹⁹ Timothy Keller, *Romans 1-7 For You* (The Good Book Company, 2014), 126.

²⁰ Ibid., 126-127. The other examples were derived from this same source.

²¹ Ibid., 126-128.

²² Ibid., 129.

²³ See <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/our-first-federal-head/>.

²⁴ See Matt Slick’s article on “Federal Headship” at the following web address: <https://carm.org/federal-headship>.