



**BELIEVERS CHAPEL**

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Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Genesis 14:17 – 20 Psalm 110:1 – 7

“Melchizedek and Jesus Christ, part 2”

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we give Thee thanks, again, for the ministry of the word of God to us by the work of the Holy Spirit. We thank Thee for the gift of him who does interpret the word of God for us, and we thank Thee for the other blessings of life that come from his presence; all the products of the saving ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, his sufferings, his atoning work. We thank Thee, Lord, for the Scriptures which have been preserved for us, by Thy mighty providential power. We thank Thee that we're able to carry the Bible around with us, the word of God, that we are able to read it today, having blessings and benefits that Israel did not have and the early Church did not have, but Thou hast marvelously blessed us with the Scriptures. Give us, Lord, a deeper appreciation of them and a greater devotion to their teaching. We thank Thee for each one present here this evening and we ask Thy blessing upon them, upon their family, and upon their Christian lives. Supply their needs and, especially, supply our spiritual needs. We ask, Lord, that Thou will be with us in the study of the Scriptures this evening.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] Now, we are looking at the figure of Melchizedek, and I'm spending a little extra time on it, and will do it tonight, because, I think, it's so important for us to

grasp what the author of the epistle has grasped, at least, part of what he has grasped because it, obviously, has meant a lot for him. And, it has meant a lot to me. I know that it will mean a lot to any of us who enter into precisely what he is talking about; the possession of a great High Priest, after the order of Melchizedek.

An, this evening, I'd like to devote almost all of our time to Psalm 110 but I'd like to read again, chapter 7, verse 1 through verse 3 of Hebrews. And then we'll turn back to the place from which the author got his great thought and revelation concerning the High Priesthood of Christ.

“For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated “king of righteousness,” and then also king of Salem, meaning “king of peace,” without father, without mother, without genealogy, [That's the key phrase, “without genealogy,” because the Aaronic priests had to have a genealogy. This man is obviously coming from a different order.] without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually.”

Now, I'd like for you to turn back to Psalm 110. We'll spend our time this evening, primarily, on Psalm 110, because this is the source of the author's doctrine concerning Melchizedek, and our Lord's High Priesthood.

Now, last week, if you'll remember, we looked at Genesis, chapter 14, and the meeting of Melchizedek with Abraham, the historical appearance of Melchizedek, but now in Psalm 110, after hundreds of years, David's time, David, guided by the Holy Spirit reflecting upon Genesis chapter 14, no doubt, and what that signified has referred to Melchizedek again.

“The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.’ The Lord shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of Your enemies! Your people shall be volunteers In the day of Your power; In the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning, You have the dew of Your youth. The Lord has sworn and will not relent, [Or repent] ‘You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.’ The Lord is at Your right hand; He shall execute kings in the day of His wrath. He shall judge among the nations, He shall fill the places with dead bodies, He shall execute the heads of many countries. He shall drink of the brook by the wayside; therefore He shall lift up the head.”

“Melchizedek and Jesus Christ,” the relationship of Jesus Christ to Melchizedek is, as I mentioned last time, our author’s unique and characteristic thought. So far as I know, no other person hit upon the truth that this author has hit upon, and it has marked him out as different from others who have been used by God to give us biblical thinking.

Now, outside of the Bible, there are some references to Melchizedek, others also had toyed with the significance of Melchizedek, but so far as the Bible, itself, is concerned and, especially, the Epistle to the Hebrews, this is the author’s unique and characteristic thought.

Why? Why is this so significant for him? Now, of course, I must speculate just a little bit and I want to speculate along these lines; I know I’m not giving anything that is false. But, nevertheless, I want to speculate and suggest to you that the author’s concept of spiritual life arises from this and is also the means by which he thinks Melchizedek is so important. To the author, spirituality is not simply forgiveness of sins. I think, in our Christian church today, and particularly in an evangelical church, the idea of Christianity is by Christianity you have the forgiveness of your sins. And, if you have the forgiveness of your sins, if you are to use a biblical term and a very important term, if you are saved, everything else has been largely settled. And the rest of your life is to attend the meetings

of the church and, if you have an opportunity every now and then, to speak to somebody about the Lord, well, then, of course, take advantage of it. But the idea of spiritual maturity and advancing to the kind of spiritual life in which you live, day by day, in the sense of the presence of God; that's largely omitted in our Christian evangelical world today.

For this author, that would not have stood very high in his thinking. To him, access to God is the important thing. We become worshipers of him. We're able to use the typical term, we're able to enter into the temple and worship him.

Now, how did this come about, to him? Well, we said last time, access to God is first of all, by the covenant, the New Covenant, he speaks of the New Covenant, later on in several places and the promises that are part of that New Covenant. That's important. There is a covenant; the covenant is important. It is God, in a sense, making himself the author of covenantal promises that he guarantees will belong to those who belong to him.

So the promises of the covenant is fundamental, but of course, for the covenant to be applicable to us, available to us, some provision must be made for our sin. And so, he, too, like the Apostle Paul, using Levitical Terminology in the background, speaks of sacrifice and redemption. So access to God by the sacrifice and redemption, by the divine covenants and it's promises, but that's not all, because the Christian life begins at a moment in time when we become Christians, when we are saved, when we receive the benefits of the atoning work. But the Christian life is to be continually lived thereafter.

How does one live thereafter? Well, according to our author, it's fundamental and absolutely essential that there continue to be priestly mediation between us and the Lord God in heaven or between the Lord God in heaven and us. So, those three things make up access to God. Covenant with promises, sacrifice and the redemption involved in it, mediation, by the great High Priest. This is so important. When we get into chapter 7 and start talking about the details of the ministry of the High Priest that, I think, will

become clear to you. And it'll become clear to you why it's necessary for you to have an eternal High Priest; one who ever lives to make intercession for us.

Why is it necessary? Well, our author will talk about that later on but at least we can say this that covenant, sacrifice, and priesthood are fundamental to his main aim to bring the people, to whom he writes, into the enjoyment of access to God.

Priest, as we pointed out last time, is the mediator. Our Lord, of course, is the one who offered the sacrifice; and, also, the risen High Priest who lives to secure the blessings for those that belong to him. He's the bridge-builder. He's the pontifex. And he's the true Pontifex Maximus; not the Pope, because he is the greatest bridge-builder. He is the mediator.

I made reference last time to the rebellion of Korah because it illustrates a point that I think is important enough to mention again. You may remember the rebellion that Korah and Dathan and Abiram engaged in, had to do with the right of Moses and Aaron to be the mediators between the Children of Israel and the Lord God, and specifically, Aaron with the priesthood. Dathan, Abiram, and particularly Korah seems to have been the leader, Korah asked Moses why is it necessary? I'll put it in my words. Why is it necessary for God to deal with us through you and Aaron? As a matter of fact, he went on to say, “You're taking too much upon you. And we, too, should be part of the mediation process.”

Moses was so upset over that because he realized that this was something that was extremely important to the Lord God in heaven. And so the moment that Korah expressed himself, he was very much upset. When he heard it, he fell on his face; he spoke to Korah and all of his company saying, “Tomorrow morning, the Lord will show who is his and who is holy and will cause him to come near to him. That one whom he chooses he will cause to come near to him.” And maybe you know the story. I referred to it last time. The story was, of course, essentially, that Moses with God standing behind him, arranged a little test, of who had right to approach God. And as a result of the test,

it became plain that God was true to his word and that Moses and Aaron were those who were his representatives and the relationship to the children of Israel. And, finally, the Lord created a new thing. The earth opened up its mouth, swallowed up two hundred and fifty people, with Korah, Dathan and Abiram, and made it very, very plain that the priesthood belonged to Aaron and the right to be the prophetic mediator belonged to Moses, as a result of it.

Now, I made application of that in this sense; because in the Christian church, the history of the Christian church is that from time to time, people in the Christian church object to the oneness of the way of salvation. It's not uncommon at all for individuals within the church of Jesus Christ to question the oneness of the way of salvation. They question such things as the necessity of the Trinity. Would like to suggest that it's perfectly all right for us to think of God as a Unitarian God and not a Trinitarian God. But the Scriptures make it plain by illustration after illustration and Korah's rebellion certainly makes it plain that when God speaks in his word that there is a specific way in which men should approach him, we must remember that he fulfills his word. And he surely did that in that instance. And in the case of the priesthood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, there is no other way, no other mediation, by which we may go to inherit the blessings of Christian life except through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Now, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews in drawing up this magnificent picture of the priesthood of Christ, after the order of Melchizedek, found in one verse of the Old Testament, the source of his thought. That one verse is found in Psalm 110 in verse 4.

“The Lord has sworn and will not relent, You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek.”

The four others, in Genesis chapter 14, verse 20 through verse 24, make five verses in all in which the figure of Melchizedek appears. But what our author says about Genesis 14 in Hebrews chapter 7, had its source in Psalm 110, verse 4, because it's on the basis of the fact that the Lord Jesus is the priest after the order of Melchizedek, that he may go back to the historical account of Melchizedek and draw out things from it; to show why the writer of Psalm 110, David, was correct in the things that have to do with his priesthood.

So we want to look tonight at Psalm 110. First of all, I'd like for you to turn with me to Mark chapter 12, verse 35 through verse 37, because this will be important for two particular reasons. Mark chapter 12, verse 35 through verse 37.

Now, the Lord Jesus, this is the Day of Questions, the famous Day of Questions, and we read, after He has answered questions of the Pharisees, he turns and asks the Pharisees a question.

“Then Jesus answered and said, while He taught in the temple, ‘How is it that the scribes say that the Christ is the Son of David?’”

Is the Messiah the Son of David? That was the common teaching of Judaism. And so, “How is it,” he says, that the scribes say that the Christ is the Son of David? Well, I guess, at that point, they would have said, why are you questioning that? But, he goes on to say.

“For David himself said by the Holy Spirit.”

Now, that is important for two things. First of all, our Lord is the one who says that Psalm 110 was written by David. There's been a lot of debate over that in biblical,

scholarly surroundings, in their thinking. But here, our Lord says, that David spoke, and that he spoke by the Holy Spirit. So David, himself, said by the Holy Spirit.

“The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.’”

Therefore David himself calls Him ‘Lord’; how is He then his Son?” The scribes thought that the Messiah was David’s son, and that was it. But, our Lord, of course, would like for them to understand he is David’s son but he’s more than David’s son. And so he cites this. “For David himself said by the Holy Spirit,” David is the author of the Psalm. He speaks by the Holy Spirit. Those are the two important things. And he said, “The Lord said to my Lord,” well, that would have to be the Messiah? Wouldn’t it? “Sit a My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.” Therefore David himself called him ‘Lord. The Messiah he calls Lord. How is he then his Son? Well, the answer, of course, is, he’s son and he’s also Lord. He’s both. He wants them to understand that.

Now, let’s look at the first three verses of Psalm 110. This is, as you can see, a divine oracle of sovereignty. “The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.’” This is an enthronement psalm but it’s the enthronement of the Son of God Psalm. And it’s clear from what is said here, that in this psalm there is accorded to David’s Lord, the assumption of permanent dignity, so unusual that he must be divine. “The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.’” Now, in a moment, he will say, “You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.” So this is an eternal person, who sits at the right hand of Yahweh in heaven.

What is so important about this statement is that so much may be derived from it. Derek Kidner has written a little book, it’s in the Tyndale series, on the Psalms, two books actually, but one book that has Psalm 110 in it commenting on this statement, “Sit at My

right hand,” has made some very important points. “The authority and power conveyed and conferred by such an address is illustrated in the remaining verses of the psalm,” he points out, “but it will take the New Testament to do it justice.” Just think now about this, “Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.”

What does this say about the person of whom he’s talking? Well, in the first place, it says he’s not only greater than David; David did not sit at the right hand of the Lord God. David did not ascend into heaven. That’s specifically stated in Acts chapter 2, in the sermon that Peter preached. He did not ascend into heaven, David says. So if there is one who ascends into heaven, it surely is not David. It must be, of course, our Lord said. Furthermore, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, he says, “To what angel has He ever said, “Sit at My right hand?” So it isn’t David and it’s not angels. So the very fact that we read, “The Lord, Yahweh, said to my Lord, Adonai, those are two different words, “Sit at My right hand,” it’s evident that this is not a reference to David. It’s not a reference to angels, but it’s someone who is an eternal being, who sits at the right hand of the throne of God on High.

Furthermore, God exalted Him as emphatically as man rejected him. In Acts chapter 5 in verse 30, he says, “Jesus, whom you killed, God exalted at His right hand.” And so in the Book of Acts, again, Peter speaking there uses this particular passage to point out that this refers to our Lord Jesus Christ. It is as savior and intercessor that he reigns, because Paul says, you remember, in Romans chapter 8 in verse 34, that Christ is at the right hand of God and he intercedes for us. So the one who intercedes, the priest who intercedes, is the one at the right hand of the throne of God, Paul says. You see how the whole of the New Testament relies upon this great statement.

Then, he also says here in Psalm 110, “Sit at My right hand.” Now, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews will make it very plain that sitting, in the sense of priestly activity, and this person is a priest, sitting indicates what? Come on? Louder? Finished work! Finished work! Where did the idea of “sitting” come from? From Psalm 110, verse

1. The finished work! “Sit at My right hand.” Priests never sat. He will later say that in chapter 10; I don’t want to belabor the point now, because that will mean we won’t be able to belabor it later on. [Laughter] But, “sit” so the reference is to the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Every priest stands daily; but Christ sat down. That’s the point.

Then he says, “Until I make Your enemies Your footstool.” In other words, he will sit, but there is something else that is to take place after that. “Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.” So the enemies are going to be made the stool, the footstool, of his feet.

So you can see, from this one little statement, “The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.’” We have the whole teaching of the New Testament concerning the exalted glory of our great priest-king, the Lord Jesus Christ. It’s astonishing! Astonishing that so much is derived from this.

I used to tell theological students that the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews wrote the 28 verses of the 7<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews because of five verses in the Old Testament; and he drew it all out by meditation. So far as we know, he did not receive any special revelation; he was guided by the Holy Spirit as all the writers of Scripture are, but he pondered Psalm 110 and he pondered Melchizedek in verse 4, in the statement made about him there, and went back to the Book of Genesis. And, a thousand years before David spoke, and put it all together and has give us twenty-eight marvelous verses, in Hebrews chapter 7, drawn out by meditation upon the revelation of the word of God. What an incentive to you, as a Christian, to sit down having the presence of the Holy Spirit as your teacher to ponder and reflect upon the word of God. Just think what you may come to understand and, perhaps, some of your friends, if you spend some time in the word of God, reflecting upon it.

Now, there is something else I think I can say about this verse. He says, “The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.’” What does this say about the person who assumes this permanent dignity? Well, let me

suggest to you that it says this that the person has had personal contact with some people who are now his enemies? Isn't that true? He says, “Sit there till I make Your enemies Your footstool.” So from this we may gather that the person who is to sit at God's right hand is one who has had personal contact with people who have become His enemies. That's what it says. So if he is a person who has had personal contact with his enemies, there must have been some relationship between them. Should there not? Come on? Yes, of course. He's made enemies because he's visited them. So we can say, also, I think, at the time of the oracle, he was with them. He was with those enemies. Because he says, “The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit,’” he's not sitting now. Sit is the command given to the Son by the Father. “Sit at My right hand,” which indicates he was not sitting. He has come and met people who've become his enemies, and while he was there, he's been called up to sit at the right hand of the Majesty on High. It's all right there, isn't it? Just reflect on it a bit.

So have you thought about a verse like that? “Sit at My right hand.” You have enemies. Come up, sit there, I'm going to make your enemies the footstool of your feet. What a magnificent thing that is. This is the statement of the session of the King. If this is the divine oracle of sovereignty, this is the King's session.

When I was in the insurance business and I used to, I hate to tell you my mistakes. I'm sure you think that I rarely ever misspelled a word, but I still remember, every time I think about the word “session” spelled S-E-S-S-I-O-N; the theological session. I was in the insurance business and we frequently dealt with re-insurance in which we would cede the passages, seed amounts of insurance, to re-insurance companies. And the term was cession. And I can remember writing on one of my papers cession, our Lord's cession, our Lord's C-E-double S-I-O-N. And some thoughtful professor that I had, I've forgot who, corrected me. This is the Lord's session, his seating, his being seated at the right hand of the Father.

Now, what would you think would follow the session of our Lord? Well, most of us who have studied the bible, at all, know that the great event that lies in the future is the Second Coming. Is it not? The Coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ. Well, notice the second verse, the king's returned to reign.

“The Lord shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of Your enemies!”

So Jehovah's man, who sits at the right hand of the Majesty on High, is given universal dominion, beginning at Jerusalem. So in other words, the universal dominion will have its beginning at Jerusalem and spread to the whole of the earth. Well, in one of the psalms just preceding this one, in Psalm 72 also a Messianic Psalm, as you know, we read, “He shall have dominion also, from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth.” This same person. “Yes, all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him.” So the King shall sit at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty on High, he will return, and when he returns he will return and reign in the midst of those enemies. Then, he talks about the subjects that a king has. Anybody who sits upon a throne has people who are subject to him and here his subjects are described. “Your people shall be volunteers.” The Hebrew word really means “a free will offering.” “Your people shall be free will offerings,” essentially. So he's going to have willing people to follow him in the victories that he accomplishes when he comes back to the earth. The description of all of this is given in the Book of Revelation. We don't have time to talk about it. But in Revelation chapter 17, we have the description of the lamb fighting against the beast. And who would ever expect a lamb to overcome a wild beast, representative, of course, of the anti-Christ. But according to chapter 17, about verse 14, it's the lamb who overcomes the beast because the lamb is the eternal Son. And so “Your

people shall be volunteers in the day of Your power; in the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning, you have the dew of Your youth.”

Not long ago, I was speaking here in the Chapel, and this afternoon I spent fifteen minutes, at least, trying to remember when, in what message, I made reference to this. And it has escaped me. But I made reference to the fact that one of the characteristics of the Israeli Army is the fact that Israeli commanders in the Israeli Army never say, “Forward,” as they attack. They never say, “Forward.” They always say, “Follow me!” Now, what would you expect to happen in the Israeli Army when the statistics of those who lost their lives was tallied up? What would you expect to see? You would expect to see that the officers suffered a great deal. Those are the facts. Twenty-five percent of the casualties, in one of those campaigns, I’ve forgotten whether it was sixty-seven or earlier, twenty-five percent were officers. And the reason, of course, that they carried on as they do, is because it’s expressive of how much the officers are required to and do care for their soldiers. So it’s “Follow me.” Not, “Forward, you fellows, you go first and I’ll be back behind you.” But, “Follow me!” It’s almost like our Lord here, who says, “Your people,” the Scriptures say, “Your people shall be volunteers in the day of Your power; In the beauties of holiness, You have the dew of Your youth.”

Mr. Spurgeon has a wonderful thing on “willing.” I know I referred to this. I don’t remember whether it was with you, in this audience, or not, but it was some time, not long ago. It may have been in the series on Divine Purpose. But I made reference to a statement that Mr. Spurgeon makes. In fact, the section that he makes, on this statement that God’s people are willing people. He makes reference to Adam Clark, who has written a commentary on the Bible. And, Adam Clark is an Arminian. And he says, “This verse has been,” Spurgeon says Adam Clark says, “This verse has been woefully perverted. It’s been supposed to point out the irresistible operation of the grace of God on the souls of the elect, thereby, making them willing to receive Christ as their savior.” Hallelujah, Mr. Clark. But, he just doesn’t believe that.

“Well, my dear Adam Clark,” Mr. Spurgeon says. I like his spirit, you know, as he plunges in the knife, it is kind. “Well, my dear Adam Clark, we are extremely obliged to you for your remark, but at the same time, we think the text has not been woefully perverted. We believe that the text has been very properly used to show that God makes men willing. For, if we read our Bibles rightly, we understand that men, by nature, are not willing. For there is a text you are extremely fond of, which we do not think belongs to you, and which says, ‘Ye will not come unto me, that you might have life.’ And there is another text we should like to put you and your brethren in mind of. ‘No man can come unto me except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him.’ If you would remember that, we think, even though the text does not teach it, you might at least have some respect for the doctrine. But, it says, ‘God’s people shall be willing in the day of God’s power.’ And, from the fact that no man is willing by nature, we infer from this text that there must be a work of God’s grace, making men willing in the day of his power. We do not know whether you think that is fair logic. We think it is. We have been accused of having no logic and we’re not particularly sorry about that, for we would rather have what men call “dogmatism” than logic.” Now, what he means by “dogmatism” is just Holy Scripture on our side, citing Scripture. “It’s Christ’s to prove, it’s ours to preach. We leave argument to Christ, for us. We have only to affirm what we see in God’s word. God’s people are to be “willing” people. Who, we can tell, are the children, by the fact that they are willing.”

And, he went on to talk about how he preached to his congregation, often, and he says, “I tell you of salvation, I tell you of Hell, I tell you of the necessity of making decisions, and I look around and some I see are unwilling to come. And I have to conclude that either you, at the present time, are unwilling and the time is coming that you will become willing, by virtue of God’s working in your heart; or else, you are not of God’s elect people because God’s people are willing people.”

That's very simple. God's people are willing people. And “No man can come to Him, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him.” So God's people are willing people. If people are unwilling, they either don't belong to the company of the elect or their time of salvation has not yet come.

But then Mr. Spurgeon said this. He said, “If the will of man be purely free to do right or wrong, I conjure you, my friends, to answer this, if it be so, why do you not turn to God this very moment, without divine assistance? It's because you're not willing. And it needed a promise that God's people should be willing, in the day of his power. If it really is true, that we have absolute free will to turn to the Lord or not turn to the Lord, then why don't you come? Why don't you come? Because you're unwilling. “God's people,” he says, “shall be willing people.”

Characteristic of the people of God, from the beginning to the end of time is that by God's grace, by God's grace only, because no man can come apart from God's grace. God's people are characterized by the work of God the Holy Spirit upon their hearts and that's why the spirit of a person who has been truly converted is different, different! Deep down within his heart, there is a tremendous sense of gratitude for what God has done for him.

Don't you have that? Most of you in this audience, I know, are Christians. You have that! That's what God implanted in your heart. You didn't originate it. It's contrary to your nature as a fallen being. But by God's grace, you've been brought to become a willing person.

He says, “You have the dew of Your youth.” Mr. Spurgeon talks a lot about that, and I'm not going to have time to do it, but he makes some marvelous comments about the fact that our Lord is always young. I like that because I was thinking about it this after noon. Here I am, I go in the bathroom and I look at my face and I say, “Hmmm, you are not as pretty as you used to be. [Laughter] Those wrinkles around the eyes. The loss of hair, oh, I had such lovely hair.” [More laughter] When I was nineteen or twenty,

and other things, also, are going and it cannot be said of me, as it is said of our Lord, “You have the dew of Your youth,” and not only that, those failings that I see coming on, so often, I don’t remember some of the things that I have said. I’ve told the congregation here, years ago, that it would be all right for me to repeat illustrations. But if I ever repeated the illustration in the same sermon, [More laughter] then, then was the time to step down. I haven’t done that yet, but I wanted to avoid that. That would be the preeminent disgrace. Dr. S. Lewis Johnson, Jr. story of his life; he repeated an illustration twice in the same message. That would go down in the annals of preachers.

But it does illustrate something here, when we say that, “He has the dew,” as our author says, “You have the dew of Your youth.” Time doesn’t write wrinkles all over His brows. Time does not gray his hair. Time does not hinder his thinking. Time does not make him forget. He is always young, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, always possessed with the power that belongs to eternal deity.

Now, the 4<sup>th</sup> verse is the divine oath of priesthood. The Lord has sworn and will not relent, [or repent] ‘You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.’” Gazing on the vision of this warrior-king, in the first three verses, David now hears a word, confirmed by a divine oath. If there is anything stronger than the word of God, it’s the word of God supported by the oath of God. And that’s what this is. It’s God’s way of speaking of how sure and certain it is. “The Lord has sworn and will not relent.” He didn’t have to do that! If he just said, “You’re a priest forever,” that’s enough. God does not lie. But he supports it with an oath. “The Lord has sworn and will not relent.” Pay attention here, because the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews will make that point in chapter 7 of his epistle. “You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek.”

Incidentally, this is the first clear evidence that David’s Lord, the Messiah, is not only a king, but also a priest. This is the first clear evidence of that. And that’s the ground of the statements made in chapter 7 of Hebrews. “After the order of Melchizedek.” That is his priesthood, is a priesthood that rules from Salem and offers

bread and wine. We saw that last week. It's a priesthood of the finished work of atonement. And I'm not going to expound this because this will come up in chapter 7, when we begin to expound it verse by verse. The Lord has sworn the pledge, the divine oath, after the order of Melchizedek and then you are a priest forever.

One might ask the question, when, historically, do you think David was given this revelation, that the Messiah would be a priest according to the order of Melchizedek. We don't really know specifically, but we do know this about David. I think I commented on that when we were expounding 1 and 2 Samuel and the life of David, and we came to the part where David took Salem or Jerusalem. And then that became, of course, the home and the headquarters of David. It, perhaps, is that, at that time, at which David came to his understanding of the fact that the Messiah would be after the order of Melchizedek. Why?

Well, because Melchizedek, remember, was the priest of God Most High, he was Melchizedek, king of righteousness, and his home was Salem or Jerusalem. And when David took Jerusalem that was the Jebusite stronghold, the priesthood, evidently, that went with Jerusalem was descended from Melchizedek. And, perhaps, David thinking as he obviously thought a lot, as he meditated on spiritual things, thought of himself then, by the Holy Spirit's guidance, as inheriting not only Jerusalem as the city where God would put his name, but also the priesthood that was identified with it, which was Melchizedek's priesthood.

Isn't that interesting? David conquered the city and, in conquering the city, gains the priesthood, the priesthood after Melchizedek, because that was the priesthood that was manifested or carried out there. Isn't that striking?

If you just study the Bible, it really helps to understand it. So one might ask the question, when then did David come to the understanding? Well, when David took Jerusalem. Why was he interested in priesthood at all? Well, perhaps, also, it's connected, to some extent, the fact of David's great sin. And when he thought of his

great sin, his sin of adultery with Bathsheba, especially, David with the tender heart that David had. Look at the Psalms and you'll see what kind of person David was. God said he was a “man after My own heart.” Not in his adultery, but in the tenderness of his heart and in the other characteristics that marked him. “Man after My own heart.” Don't you know, as he expresses it in Psalm 51, for one year the fact that he had fallen from the position that he'd had previously, so disturbed that man that he wrote that magnificent story of how he felt.

And I would imagine that there would have come into his mind, “O that I had a priest, who could give me the kind of forgiveness that I feel that I need.” So it may have been that reflecting upon his great sin, the thoughts of priesthood came into his mind, and then reflecting upon the fact that they had conquered Jerusalem, which was Melchizedek's stronghold. He, therefore, inherits the Melchizedekian priesthood.

Now, the last three verses, we're not going to talk much about them because they are not too important for Hebrews. But what is reflected here is the divinely wrought victory of the great High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek. A king-priest; the one who is to rule in the midst of his enemies, the one who is to sit at the right hand of God, until he makes his enemies the footstool of his feet, and then, here in verse 5 through verse 7, there's a description of the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of the victory that God will work through him.

You'll notice, incidentally, that after each of the two oracles, verse 1 and verse 4, there is a reflection on the details. In verse 1, the reflection on the details in verse 2; and then the second oracle of verse 4 and then reflection on the details of verse 5 through verse 7. So these words that follow the oracles are words that explain in more detail what's taking place.

Some years ago I was studying a part of the Bible in which it seemed very plain that what the author was doing, an illustration would be, our Lord's Olivet Discourse, because there certain general things are stated and then the details are filled in, in the

passage that follows, and I was thinking about that, and there are other passages in the Old Testament that would fit that as well. And I was spending the summer in Hendersonville, North Carolina, about two months, I was spending up there. We had visitors from some friends and with them came a well-known Southern painter, Glasscock Reynolds, who was a friend of the friends of mine. And he came with then and I thought, well, now, here is my opportunity to ask a professional a question because I had read somewhere that it was very common for a painter to sketch out a painting, of course, to begin with and then he would gradually fill in the details in the picture.

And so, I asked Mr. Reynolds that very question and he said, “Yes, that’s precisely what you do. That’s precisely what I do, at least, and in the first session that I meet with anyone to paint a portrait, I establish,” these are his words; I thought they were so significant, I wrote them down afterwards, “I establish the fundamental structure, and then in the sittings that follow, fill in the details.”

Well, that’s very much like this, you know. We have these two oracles, but then the verses right after them fill in the details. Those verses establish a structure. But now, just very quickly, verse 5, the Psalmist describes the defeat of the enemies of the Messianic King. “The Lord is at Your right hand; He shall execute kings in the day of His wrath.” In other words, in short powerful pen strokes, he sets for the order of future events; the defeat of Gentile world power. “The Lord at Your right hand shall execute kings in the day of His wrath.” And then in the 6<sup>th</sup>, the demonic leader of those kings, “He shall judge among the nations, He shall fill the places with dead bodies, He shall execute the head.” You know, I didn’t look that up this afternoon. I was going by my memory, but my recollection is, that is singular. So I just want to be sure that I have it right. If I were Rush Limbaugh, I wouldn’t have to do this. I would just say, “Of course, I am right.” So this is verse 5. “He shall smite them in His wrath,” and then, let’s see, in verse 6, and this is *grosb* which means “head.” Singular. So it’s not “heads” it’s head, the

reference being to the head, the great head of the last days, the anti-Christ. So “He shall execute the head of many countries,” the world-wide ruling Anti-Christ.

In other words, our Lord is a greater military leader than any of the great military leaders of the present day. Greater than Moshe Dayan, who distinguished himself in Israel’s war with their enemies and made an indelible impression upon us older folks by going on the field with the black patch over one eye; where everybody was recommending that all of our generals put patches on their right eye, when Israel won that great victory, almost miraculously. Or Norman Schwarzkopf, there is a greater general than General Schwarzkopf.

And, finally, in verse 7, a reference is made to the diligence and colorful detail of the Messiah, pursuing his enemies like Gideon, because Judges chapter 7, verses 5 and 6, is the figure that lies behind it. “He shall drink of the brook by the wayside; Therefore He shall lift up the head.”

So this great Melchizedek is our priest and king; he offers bread and wine of unlimited salvation to all, he will serve us forever. And he not only is our priest, but he is a king-priest, and he shall ultimately overcome the enemies of the Lord God and establish his kingdom in the earth.

Ruben Archer Torrey was a very well-known Bible teacher and preacher of the earlier part of this century of which we are a part. And Mr. Torrey lived, I think, until about the middle of the century. But he once made a statement that has stuck with me. He said, “The God of the future is greater than the God of the past.” What an interesting statement! My first thought is to say, “This fellow never took any Systematic Theology.” The God of the future is greater than the God of the past. Aren’t we told in the Bible that he’s the same; yesterday, today and forever? Well, Mr. Torrey had been to theological seminary. He knew that. What he was talking about was this. That the resources of the God who has been expending those resources, down through the years, is such that he

has far greater resources than he ever has spent to this present moment. In that sense, the God of the future is greater than the God of the past.

Although he has expended these marvelous resources of mercy and grace to countless people, down since Adam in the Garden of Eden, he still has even more mercy, grace and loving kindness to expend today. In that sense, in that sense only, the God of the future is greater than the God of the past. If you have not come to understand that, it's our prayer, of course, and the prayer of many of the people in this congregation, if not all of them, that we all experience some of the grace and mercy that our great God dispenses, our great High Priest, after the order of Melchizedek.

Next week, we'll look at chapter 7 in more detail.

Let's bow together in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we praise Thee and thank Thee for the greatness of the Son of God. We thank Thee for the fact that he is a king-priest, a mediator, and at the same time, with all of the power of the eternal godhead, to save all who come unto him. Lord, by Thy grace, enable us to experience the fullness of his salvation, not simply the forgiveness of our sins, but the personal presence of a living Savior within our hearts, throughout the days of our lives. O God, work to that end, to glorify Thy name through us, through each one of us.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.