# Sermon Notes

Speaker: Patrick Mead

1/26/25

The New Way of Christ – Hebrews 7-9

Hebrews 7:11-18

1. Before we look at our three chapters in Hebrews today, we need to review a story out of Genesis 14. There was a king who was over several smaller kingdoms. His name was Kedolaomer. He controlled the lesser kings for 12 years but in the 13th year, they joined forces against him. The next year, he met them in a series of battles and defeated them.

2. For some reason, four more of the lesser kings thought this would be a good time to rise up against Kedolaomer. Perhaps they thought he was tired, out of funds, or out of supplies. Two of those kings were the kings over Sodom and Gomorrah. They lost the battle and Kedolaomer and those allied with him seized everything they could from Sodom and Gomorrah, including men and women. Among those men was Lot, Abraham's nephew.

3. Abraham hears about this and gathers his men and allies, 318 in all. He launched a surprise attack at night and routed the four kings and freed their captives, returning their goods to them. (in 1971, tablets were found in NW Syria dating back before the time of Abraham. 20,000 tablets in all. Among them was one listing the four kings in Genesis 14, named in the same order as in our Bibles)

4. Then…something very strange happened on the way back home. In Genesis 14:18, a new player emerges out of nowhere. His name was Melchizidek and he is called "a priest of God Most High" (El Elyon). He brought bread and wine (shades of communion) and gave Abraham a blessing. Genesis 14:18-20.

5. The King of Sodom offers Abraham all of the goods taken from his city and asks only for the men and women to be returned. Abraham refuses to take anything and gives it all back, making provision for allied kings to take a share if they wish. Genesis 14:22-24.

6. And that is it. That is all we hear about this mysterious priest of God who appears out of nowhere, called the King of Salem which might have been a place name or might mean "king of peace." We hear nothing about him again until we get to the Book of Hebrews.

7. Last week, we ended with the last verse of chapter 6 and spoke of following Jesus even behind the curtain, wherever Jesus has gone on our behalf. The chapter ends with "He has become a high priest forever in the order of Melchizedek." But what does that mean? The writer of this sermon will explain it now.

8. Without any more information about the life, the calling, or the death of Melchizedek, he is said to live and serve forever. That doesn't mean that the ancients believed that he continued to live out there somewhere but that, without any information, his life and appearance seems mysterious and baffling to us.

9. Hebrews 7:1-11. Jesus came to us as our high priest but he didn't come from the expected line of priests. He wasn't a Levite. God had not established an order of priests and, yet, Abraham recognized him as greater than himself (and that was a huge thing to the Jews!) and accepted a blessing from him, even tithing to him.

10. Now listen to this: Hebrews 7:11-16. Wow. Any objections to Jesus's lack of familial qualifications now has to accept that God considered Melchizedek a priest before the law had been given, before the Levitical priesthood had been established. Jesus is a priest not because he had family heritage, education or bits of paper but because of his life, his indestructible life.

11. Psalm 110 foretold the coming of this new priest and it is quoted a few times in Hebrews. Here is one example: Hebrews 7:21-25.

12. Jesus is a high priest who will never shame or disappoint us. All earthly priests, pastors or ministers will disappoint us at one time or another. All of us have sins and failures in our lives. All of us require forgiveness. But Jesus lived a blameless life and is therefore our one and only high priest.

13. Jesus does not have to offer sacrifices for his sins or for ours, for he sacrificed himself once and that is enough. Now, in heaven, he reigns as our high priest. Hebrews 8:6-12.

14. In chapter 9, the writer of Hebrews reminds his listeners of all the regulations in worship that the Old Law required. He even pauses a moment in verse 5 to say “but we cannot discuss these things in detail now.” Why? It would take days!

15. He reminds them that they had to offer sacrifices in a precise and exact way…and then do it again and again because our faults remained. He now announces that a new order, a new priesthood has come which changes everything. Hebrews 9:9-10. How I wish that churches understood that the precise, external regulations they fight about are the very things laid aside by Christ, the elementary teachings that the writer tells us we must move past in chapter 6.

16. The tabernacle and temple were made to a series of specifications given by God. They were earthly representations of heavenly realities. Because sin does not exist in heaven, it was not to exist in the earthly models of heaven – the tabernacle and temple. Therefore, sin had to be repeatedly dealt with by cleansing with blood. After dealing with that fact in detail in chapter 9, the writer says this: Hebrews 9:23-28.

17. How does he accomplish all of this? We will go into detail next week, but remind yourself of Hebrews 9:23-28 in the week ahead. This is truly Good News.