

**Doctrine Article**

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**Christ as High Priest**

**by David Sielaff, February 2009**

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**Most Christian teaching acknowledges that Jesus was (and is!) a Prophet, Priest, and King.****[1](http://www.askelm.com/doctrine/d090201.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn1) However, few seem to understand the implications of what those titles mean. This article focuses on the role of Jesus Christ as high priest. Christ was not from the tribe of Levi, the tribe designated by God to serve. From Levi the family of Aaron was chosen to serve as priests at the Tabernacle. Jesus was from the tribe of Judah. So, how was He designated to be high priest? Why is He high priest? What does He do as high priest on our behalf? This article will explain. To understand Christ’s role as high priest it is important to know where to find the answers. The Book of Hebrews is the source for most of them. First, we need to examine basic background information from the Old Testament and the Gospels to help us understand “Christ as High Priest.”**

***What Is a Priest?***

**“A priest is one who is duly authorized to minister in sacred things, particularly to offer sacrifices at the altar, and who acts as mediator between men and God.”**

**• “*Priest*,” ISBE** **[2](http://www.askelm.com/doctrine/d090201.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn2)**

The Levites were the tribe of Israel designated by God to serve the other tribes. They had specific functions to perform, some of which were:

**“And that you may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean; And that you may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which YHWH has spoken unto them by the hand of Moses.”**

***• Leviticus 10:10–11***

The Levites were selected to teach Israel the Law of God given through Moses. From the tribe of Levi, God selected the family of Aaron to serve in the Tabernacle (and later in the Temple) to perform the ritual sacrifices and other duties in the Law of Moses at designated times and places (Exodus 28:1; Numbers 28:1–2). **[3](http://www.askelm.com/doctrine/d090201.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn3)**

A priest therefore serves the people, performing ritual acts and religious rites on their behalf to a deity, most often within a sanctified site or temple of some kind. The Levitical priests of Israel had four characteristics; a priest was (1) chosen of God, (2) the property of God, (3) holy to God, and (4) he offered gifts to God, and received gifts from God in return. **[4](http://www.askelm.com/doctrine/d090201.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn4)** At the top of the hierarchy of the Levitical-Aaronic priesthood was the high priest of Israel who was chosen to that position.

**“For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way** [those who are straying];**for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity. And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. And no man takes this**[priestly] **honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.”**

***• Hebrews 5:1–4***

***Messiah as High Priest?***

In the time of Christ there was an expectation in some quarters that the coming Messiah, besides being a prophet and a king, would also be an anointed priest. As Christians, we know that the Messiah is a priest because it is openly stated to be so in the Book of Hebrews. Direct evidence of the priestly aspect of the Messiah outside of Hebrews has been somewhat lacking in the past, but now that may be changing.

Evidence for an expected priestly Messiah has been enhanced in a short paper presented at the November 2008 meeting of the Society for Biblical Literature by Brant Pitre titled “Jesus and the Messianic Priesthood.” It was from a chapter from his forthcoming book, *Jesus and the Last Supper: Judaism and the Origin of the Eucharist*. His paper consisted of quotes from scholarly, biblical, and Jewish sources, including several Dead Sea Scrolls references. They show that expectations of a Messianic priesthood were more developed than was previously supposed. Pitre also gave some new information on how Jesus fulfilled those expectations by His actions during His ministry. Some sources and concepts I use will be ones that Pitre brought forth.

It is clear from the Gospels that Jesus did not perform any ritual duties as a priest at the Jerusalem Temple. He was not a Levitical priest. His priestly service and example were recognized only after His resurrection and came through His life and ministry. His true ritual service as a priest was performed in heaven one time only (Romans 6:10; Hebrews 7:27, 9:12, 10:9–10). His physical priestly service was demonstrated by:

* His sinless life,
* His signs and miracles,
* His fulfillment of prophecies,
* His righteousness,
* His being the living sacrifice, **“the Lamb of God,”**
* His resurrection from the dead, and
* His ritual application of His own **“blood of the Lamb”** on the altar in heaven. **[5](http://www.askelm.com/doctrine/d090201.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn5)**

Many of Christ’s deeds in hindsight were in fact priestly acts — but without regard to the Levitical priesthood or its rituals. It was for another priesthood that He acted, the priesthood **“after the order of Melchizedec.”**

Without doubt Christ Jesus is a priest, and He is a priest at this moment. In fact, He is a “high priest,” a title that ideally should be translated “Chief Priest.” While Jesus was not called a high priest in the New Testament until the Book of Hebrews was written about 61 AD, there were indications in the Gospels that demonstrated His status as the priestly Messiah. For example, when He was on trial before the Sanhedrin the high priest asked Him a direct question, Jesus answered by quoting a significant Scripture passage:

**“Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, ‘Are you the Christ**[the Messiah]**, the Son of the Blessed?’ And Jesus said, ‘I am’: and you shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.’**

**… the high priest rent his clothes, and said, ‘What need we any further witnesses? You have heard the blasphemy: what think you? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death.”**

**• *Mark 14:61–64
(cf. Matthew 26:63–66; Luke 22:66–71)***

Why did the high priest react that way? What upset him and the other members of the Sanhedrin? First of all they were threatened by His popularity with the people. And they were upset because Jesus made a clear scriptural reference obvious to everyone present at the trial. They reacted so strongly that the high priest cried “blasphemy” and they all voted to put Him to death. **[6](http://www.askelm.com/doctrine/d090201.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn6)** Jesus quoted a portion of Psalm 110 which talks about one individual who is both a king and a high priest. Oscar Cullmann explains (via Pitre):

**“When Jesus answers the high priest in Mark 14:62, he combines a reference to Daniel 7 with the reference to Psalm 110: ‘You will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven’ *‘Sitting at the right hand’ is inseparably connected with the thought of the priest-king after the order of Melchizedek.***

**Is it not significant that *Jesus applies to himself a saying about the eternal High Priest precisely when he stands before the Jewish high priest*and is questioned by him*concerning his claim to be the Messiah?*He says in effect that his messiahship is not that of an earthly messiah ... but that *he is the heavenly Son of Man and the heavenly High Priest.”***

**•*Oscar Cullmann,* Christology of the New Testament** **[7](http://www.askelm.com/doctrine/d090201.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn7)**

Just as Jesus acknowledged before Pilate (see footnote 1 above, John 18:36–37) that He was born to be a king, Jesus admitted before the high priest that He was indeed the expected Messiah, the Son of Man (“I am”), but He went further and indicated that He was a heavenly high priest by quoting Psalm 110. That being the case, in what way could Jesus have been a high priest? He could not have been a Levitical priest because He was not from the tribe of Levi:

**“For he of whom these things are spoken pertain to another tribe** [of Israel]**, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda** [Judah]**; of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood.”**

**• *Hebrews 7:13–14***

No one from the tribe of Judah had any claim to the priesthood in Israel within the Law of Moses.

***Jesus’ Citation of Psalm 110 in the Temple***

Earlier in his ministry during Passover Jesus was teaching in the Temple. He was near to King David’s Tomb which was south of where Jesus was teaching. Note what Jesus said:

**“And Jesus answered and said, while he taught in the temple,**

**’How say the scribes that Christ** [the Messiah] **is the Son of David? For David himself said by the Holy Ghost** [Spirit]**, The LORD said to my Lord, Sit you on my right hand,** **[8](http://www.askelm.com/doctrine/d090201.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn8)** **till I make your enemies your footstool.’ David therefore himself calls him Lord; and whence** [how] **is he then his son? And the common people heard him gladly.’”**

**• *Mark 12:35–37
(also Matthew 22:41–46 and Luke 20:41–44)***

Jesus cited a portion of Psalm 110, a Davidic psalm. It is a prophecy of a future King who would have rulership, a king who would also be a priest. The Jewish scribes called him the Son of David. King David was the original object of this prophetic Psalm, but in Jesus’ day there was an expectation by the scribes of a messianic Son of David who would totally fulfill this Psalm. Jesus said this prophecy applied to David who was the second “Lord” mentioned. The first “Lord” was understood to be the cryptic “Son of David.” (Yes, it is complex.)

Psalm 110 is 7 verses long, verses 1–4 are quoted here, substituting YHWH where it occurs in the Hebrew text:

**“A Psalm of David.**
**YHWH said unto my Lord**[Adonai]**, Sit you at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.**

**YHWH shall send the rod of your strength out of Zion: rule you in the midst of your enemies. Your people shall be willing in the day of your power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: you have the dew of your youth.**

**YHWH has sworn, and will not repent, You are a priest for ever** [for the age] **after the order of Melchizedek.”**

**• *Psalm 110:1–4 KJV***

The **“You”** in verse 4 is the second **“Lord,”** the Adonai of verse 1. But let us look at this Melchizedek that David is referring to:

**“And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king’s dale. And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest**[*cohen*] **of the most high God.”**

**• *Genesis 14:17–18***

Why does David in Psalm 110 refer to a priest **“after the order of Melchizedek”**? Melchizedek is mentioned one time only in Genesis 14:18 and nowhere else until Psalm 110. It is important to note that he was both the king and **“the priest of the most high”**for the city of Salem. Where was Salem? Salem was understood in Jewish tradition as being Jerusalem, as several Targums tell us **[9](http://www.askelm.com/doctrine/d090201.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn9)**:

**“And Malki-zedek, king of Yerushelem, brought forth bread and wine (chemar), and he was minister (meshamesh) before EL ILLAAH”**

**• *Targum Onkelos on the Pentateuch, Genesis 14:18***

The same thing is said in the *Targum Jerusalem* and the *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* for Genesis 14:18. A conclusive biblical identification of Salem comes from Psalm 76:2, a psalm of Asaph said to be written in the time of David: **“In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Zion.”** When Psalm 76 was written, David was still alive, the Temple had not yet been built, and the tabernacle of David held the Ark of the Covenant(2 Samuel 6:17; Amos 9:11). *The Psalm Targum* on Psalm 72:6 states: **“And his sanctuary has come to be in Jerusalem, and the dwelling of the house of his holy presence is in Zion.”**Salem is Jerusalem.

***Was King David a Priest?***

After Genesis 14:18, Melchizedek is not mentioned again in Scripture until King David refers to the priestly **“order of Melchizedek”** in Psalm 110:4, seemingly without any context. However, there is a context but it is unrecognized. From some time after Genesis 14:18 until King David, control of Jerusalem (Salem) was in the hands of Gentiles and not God’s people. When King David conquered Jerusalem, the city of Jebus, the stronghold of Zion, he named it the **“city of David”** (2 Samuel 5:7, 9). Salem, Zion, Jebus, and the City of David are all older names for the city of Jerusalem.

Now this is important: when he conquered and took possession of Jerusalem King David became **“the King of Salem”** just like Melchizedek. In addition, by virtue of becoming King of Salem, David also became a priest of the order of Melchizedek, just as Psalm 110:4 tells us. David wrote about that fact in Psalm 110 and he tells of God’s acknowledgement, approval, and promise.

Psalm 110 was also a messianic prophecy about a future individual who also was to be seated at God’s right hand, and would also be a priest **“after the order of Melchizedek.”**King and priest are the dual roles for the person who was the object of Psalm 110. King David, as king and priest, and the original object of Psalm 110, is buried at God’s right hand awaiting his resurrection from the dead. **[10](http://www.askelm.com/doctrine/d090201.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn10)** Christ also has a dual role as king and priest. He applied Psalm 110 to Himself (Mark 14:61–64, above).

At Pentecost the apostle Peter announced a fulfillment of Psalm 110 by reference to Jesus’ resurrection, but he indicated that David was still dead and he would have to wait on Jesus and His Second Coming for his fulfillment:

**“Therefore** [David] **being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he**[God] **would raise up Christ**[Messiah] **to sit on his** [David’s] **throne; He seeing this before spoke of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus has God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.**

**Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost** [Spirit]**, he has shed forth this, which you now see and hear** [the tongues of fire and miracle of the languages].**For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he says himself,**

**‘The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit you on my right hand, Until I make your foes your footstool’** [quoting Psalm 110]**.**

**Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ.”**

**• *Acts 2:30–36***

Peter rightly claimed that Psalm 110 directly applied to Jesus’ resurrection and to events at Pentecost. Peter summoned his strongest argument that Jesus Christ was resurrected from the dead. Peter said that Psalm 110 was fulfilled at that very moment with Jesus Christ (the Messiah) seated at the right hand of the Father. David was dead, buried and in his tomb, still waiting for his fulfillment. What David wrote in Psalm 110 did not apply at that time to him. David was (and still is) buried at the right hand of God south of where the holy of holies was located, above and west of the Gihon Springs in Jerusalem.

Notice that Peter did not quote verse 4 of Psalm 110. There was no mention of Christ being a priest **“after the order of Melchizedek,”** although Peter’s audience certainly knew that was part of Psalm 110.

The two-fold role of king and priest in Psalm 110 referred prophetically to the coming Messiah, but its original message was from God to David (postponed until Christ’s return). Remember, the word Messiah means “anointed” and David was a Messiah by virtue of his being the anointed king of Israel, and by right of conquest, he was the king of Salem. David therefore had three roles as a Prophet, a Priest, and a King — a complete “type” for the future Messiah on all points. Christ was and is today the priest-king antitype. Psalm 110 therefore has a two-fold application, first to David and then to the future Messiah Jesus Christ.

***Combined Kingship and Priesthood***

The concept of kingship and priesthood combined in one person was not a strange or foreign concept to the Jews of the 1st century, although they were uncertain and confused about whether the Messiah would be a single person holding several offices or several persons holding one office each. **[11](http://www.askelm.com/doctrine/d090201.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn11)**

Understand that most every ancient king of every pagan nation was also a priest to some local religious cult. In fact, for pagan religions that was the normal custom for royalty to be priests. Kings were often priests of more than one, indeed several, religious cults for their city or nation. This was certainly true for the Roman emperors up until the time of Constantine. Constantine’s nephew, Julian the Apostate, was the last Roman emperor to publicly act as a priest for several Roman cults in the 4th century AD.

Jewish rulers of the Hasmonean dynasty for decades in the 2nd and 1st centuries BC combined kingly and priestly rule in Jerusalem. According to the Jewish historian Josephus:

* John Hyrcanus (135–104 BC) **“was first made high priest, and afterward king...These Jews honored Hyrcanus as their high priest and king, as did all the Jewish nation that dwelt as far as the Euphrates”** (*Antiquities of the Jews*15:12, 15).
* **“And when Alexander** [103–76 BC] **had been both king and high priesttwenty-seven years, he died …”**(*Antiquities of the Jews* 20:242).
* Aristobulus II (67–63 BC) was sent to Rome **“… having been both king and high priest for three years and six months”** (*Antiquities of the Jews* 14:97).

So, historically there is no reason for King David not to be a priest, although with one limitation, he could never be a Levitical priest because he does not qualify. David was born into the tribe of Judah.

***King David’s Priestly Sons … Were Not Levites!***

If David was qualified as a priest in some manner by virtue of God’s oath and decree in Psalm 110, perhaps there is evidence that David was actually a priest? There is an interesting passage in 2 Samuel chapter 8 describing administrative appointments of men to assist David in governing Israel. David’s sons are given an intriguing title for their responsibilities. Read carefully, realizing that the generic word for “priest” is *cohen* in Hebrew:

**“And David reigned over all Israel; and David executed judgment and justice unto all his people.
    And Joab the son of Zeruiah was over the host;
    and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was recorder;
        And Zadok the son of Ahitub, and Ahimelech the son of
              Abiathar, were the priests** [*cohenim,* plural]**;
        and Seraiah was the scribe;
        And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over both the
              Cherethites and the Pelethites;
        and David’s sons were chief rulers** [*cohenim,* plural]**.”**

**• *2 Samuel 8:15–18***

The King James Version obscures the correct rendering in Hebrew: **“David’s sons were priests,”***cohenim,*although scholars have long recognized this fact. There are actually three other such administrative lists:

**“Four summaries, pertaining to the time of the United Kingdom, mention both Levitical high priests and, simultaneously, others who occupy a similarly designated office of *cohen* (2 Samuel 8:18; 2 Samuel 20:26; 1 Kings 4:5; 1 Chronicles 18:16–17). Zabud son of Nathan was ‘principal officer’ under Solomon (1 Kings 4:5, KJV). During the lapse between the earlier and later lists under David, the occupancy of this second type of *cohen* office shifts from David’s own sons (2 Samuel 8:18) to Ira the Jairite (2 Samuel 20:26).”**

**• *“Priesthood,” 959b,
Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament***

In 2 Samuel 8:17 Zadok and Ahimelech were properly called *cohenim* or priests in the usual sense; both were of priestly families from the tribe of Levi. David’s sons in verse 18 were also called by the same term, *cohenim,*yet they are from the tribe of Judah. **[12](http://www.askelm.com/doctrine/d090201.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn12)** The phrase is clear and should be translated: “David’s sons were priests” which is completely different from the King James translation of “chief rulers.” **[13](http://www.askelm.com/doctrine/d090201.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn13)** The parallel passage in 1 Chronicles chapter 18 gives the same information except the order is changed, and so is the job title of David’s sons:

**“So David reigned over all Israel, and executed judgment and justice among all his people.
     And Joab the son of Zeruiah was over the host;
     and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud, recorder.
     And Zadok the son of Ahitub, and Abimelech the son of
          Abiathar, were the priests;
     and Shavsha was scribe;
     And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the Cherethites
          and the Pelethites; and
     the sons of David were chief** [*rishon*] **about the king.”**

**• *1 Chronicles 18:14–17***

Comparing the relevant parallel passages portions:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **2 Samuel 8:18** | **1 Chronicles 18:17** |
| **“And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over both the Cherethites and the Pelethites;****“And David’s sons were priests** [*cohenim,*plural].” | **“And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the Cherethites and the Pelethites;****“and the sons of David were chief** [*rishon,*first at hand] **about the king.”** |

Note also that the sons were not identified. Which sons of David? Consider for a moment that rather than there being a problem, that both titles are correct and reflect the different roles that the sons of David held when viewed from the perspectives of different writers. This would mean that David’s sons were indeed priests (*cohenim*) as well as close chief advisors to David. If King David himself was a priest **“after the order of Melchizedek,”**then it would be understandable for David as king to delegate his sons and others to perform priestly functions for the Melchizedek priesthood, whatever they might be.

What could those rituals and duties have been? Look at the first occurrence of “priest” in the Bible to see what that priest did. Look at Genesis 14:18: **“Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest** [*cohen*] **of the most high God.”** We may infer that one of his priestly duties had to do with bread and wine. Bread and wine help create a celebratory communal meal that Melchizedek provided to Abram and the king of Sodom after their victory. While the bread and the wine was served, notice what Melchizedek did:

**“And he** [Melchizedek] **blessed him, and said, ‘Blessed be Abram of the most high God** [El]**, possessor of heaven and earth: And blessed be the most high God** [El]**, which has delivered your enemies into your hand.’”**

**• *Genesis 14:19–20***

Does the bread, the wine, and a blessing in celebration bring anything to mind? Indeed, it is similar in some ways with the Lord’s Supper in Matthew 26:26–29; Mark 14:22–25; and Luke 22:15–20 which has a blessing, bread, and wine. The difference is that the Lord’s Supper was a solemn and not a celebratory occasion (1 Corinthians 11:23–34). Brant Pitre believes that Jesus was performing the Lord’s Supper as a Melchizedek priest, blessing the bread and the wine and His disciples before His crucifixion, but looking forward to His resurrection and enthronement. Pitre may very well be correct.

***Other Non-Levitical Priests***

There are other non-Levites who are put forth as being priests. During Solomon’s reign a friend of the king is listed as a priest [*cohen*]:

**“And Azariah the son of Nathan was over the officers** [*natsab,* not *cohen*]**: and Zabud the son of Nathan was principal officer** [*cohen*]**, and the king’s friend.”**

**• *1 Kings 4:5***

Zabud was likely the son of Nathan the prophet. Nathan supervised Solomon’s education (2 Samuel 12:25) and had a prominent role in Solomon’s ascension to the throne of Israel after David’s death, anointing Solomon as King (1 Kings chapter 1). Nathan and his son Zabud are from the tribe of Judah, not Levi, yet Zabud is listed as a priest, a *cohen.* **[14](http://www.askelm.com/doctrine/d090201.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn14)**

There is one more non-Levitical priest or *cohen.* As mentioned above in the “Priesthood” *Theological Wordbook*quotation, 2 Samuel chapter 20 gives another list of administrative leaders under King David, similar in form to those in 2 Samuel 8:18 and 1 Chronicles 18:17 above.

**“Now Joab was over all the host of Israel:
     and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the Cherethites
          and over the Pelethites:
     And Adoram was over the tribute:
     and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was recorder:
     And Sheva was scribe:
     and Zadok and Abiathar were the priests**[*cohenim,*plural]**:
     And Ira also the Jairite was a chief ruler**[*cohen*]**about David.”**

**• *2 Samuel 20:23–26***

This Ira was said to be a *cohen,* a priest. He is not mentioned anywhere else in Scripture; the only thing known about him is that he was a Jairite. This may refer to an ancestor from the tribe of Manasseh (Numbers 32:41), or it may refer to the town where he lived (Joshua 13:30). Whether Jairite is an ancestral or a geographical term, there is no indication that Ira was a Levite.

To sum up, the word *cohen* in Hebrew is rendered in the King James Version some 700+ times as “priest.” Pagan priests are called *cohenim.*According to the law of Moses, the priests of Israel could only come from the tribe of Levi. Yet there are three instances when non-Levites are termed “priests,” 2 Samuel 8:18, 2 Samuel 20:26, and 1 Kings 4:5.

Most commentaries briefly take note of the seemingly out of place “priests” particularly in 2 Samuel 8:18, but they most always accept the parallel reading of 1 Chronicles 18:17 and go on to the next verse. Those who consider the matter simply state that “priests” is an odd rendering, but that *cohen* and *cohenim* in those few instances simply mean administrative officials and not “priests” with religious ritual functions.

The solution to the matter of non-Levitical priests is that they were not priests “of Israel,” but were *cohenim* of the Melchizedek priesthood that functioned outside of Mosaic ritual law, constituting a separate priestly system outside of the Law of Moses. That priesthood was personal, responsible not to the nation, but to the king alone. It was limited only to whoever would be the single king combining the aspects of Melchizedek (meaning “king of righteousness”) and the King of Salem (meaning “king of peace”). These non-Levitical priests operated on behalf of the king (David’s sons and Ira for King David, and Zabud on for Solomon) who were the source of the priestly authority. David’s sons, Ira, and Zabud had no priestly authority of themselves. Their authority was transitory, derivative, according to the whim of their sovereign.

Therefore, the priestly authority only came down to David’s heir, the one who became the King of Salem, which was Solomon (whose name means “peace”) or to Ira or to Zabud. The authority originated with Melchizedek, went through David, through Solomon, finally to Christ, in whom the identification is the strongest and ultimately intended.

In the Book of Hebrews we find that this is indeed the case regarding Christ. There certainly was a priesthood **“after the order of Melchizedek”** in Jerusalem during the reign of David and probably Solomon. There is nothing to indicate that it continued beyond that time until Christ. We just do not know. Once the Temple was constructed by Solomon and the Levitical priesthood began its regular operations as set forth by King David and the prophet Nathan, perhaps a secondary non-Levitical Melchizedek priesthood was no longer needed or mentioned.

***The Branch as King and Priest***

Much later in the kingdom of Judah Jeremiah gave a prophecy about a King, a descendant of David called **“a righteous Branch”** (Remember as you read these passages that the name or title “Melchizedek” is comprised of *melch*-*tzedek* which means “king of righteousness”):

**“Behold, the days come, says YHWH, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS** [or “YHWH is righteousness”]**.”**

***• Jeremiah 23:5–6***

**“In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The LORD our righteousness.”**

***• Jeremiah 33:15–16***

Still later Zechariah prophesies about a “branch” whose rule would be as king and as priest:

**“Then take silver and gold, and make crowns, and set them upon the head of Joshua** [= Jesus, “YHWH saves”] **the son of Josedech** [“YHWH isrighteous”]**, the high priest; Thus speaks YHWH of hosts, saying, ‘Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and** [1] **he shall grow up out**[literally “branch out”] **of his place, and**[2] **he shall build the temple of YHWH: Even**

[3] **he shall build the temple of YHWH; and**
[4] **he shall bear the glory, and**
[5] [he] **shall sit and rule upon his throne; and**
[6] **he shall be a priest upon his throne: and**

**the counsel of peace shall be between them both** [both thrones]**.”**

***• Zechariah 6:12–13***

This passage tells of a man called **“the Branch”** who sits and rules from a throne. While he rules as king at the same time He shall also sit upon the throne as a priest. Christ fulfills both these Branch prophecies as the antitype, and particularly the Zechariah 6:12–13 passage. He fulfills some at His first coming when He grew up and when He built the Temple of His body. Later He will perform the last tasks. In other words, the tasks [1] **“he shall grow up out of his place”** and [2] **“he shall build the temple”** were fulfilled when Jesus was on earth. The four last tasks, [3] through [6], are at present time preparing in heaven. They will be fulfilled in a final way on earth during Christ’s 1,000 years reign.

***Jesus and the Temple of His Body***

As I mentioned earlier Jesus did not perform any physical priestly functions on earth relative to the physical Temple of God. He was, after all, not a Levitical priest. His priesthood was from another source, **“after the order of Melchizedek.”** In fact, He did not need to be a Levitical priest because His own body was a Temple of God in a sense more important and real than any physical Tabernacle of the past, or Temple of stone and wood that existed in Jesus’ day. Every physical action that Jesus did in life was performed with relation to “the Temple of His body”:

**“And the Jews’ Passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers’ money, and overthrew the tables; And said unto them that sold doves, ‘Take these things hence; make not my Father’s house an house of merchandise.’ And his disciples remembered that it was written, ‘The zeal of your house has eaten me up.’**

**Then answered the Jews and said unto him, ‘What sign show you to us, seeing that you do these things?’ Jesus answered and said unto them, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.’ Then said the Jews, ‘Forty and six years was this temple in building, and will you rear it up in three days?’**

**But he spoke of the temple of his body. When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.”**

***• John 2:13–22***

How was it possible for Jesus Christ’s body to be a Temple of God? It was possible because God’s Holy Spirit was resident within Him, and God’s Spirit in Him was unlimited:

**“For he whom God has sent speaks the words of God: for God gives not the Spirit by measure unto him. The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into his hand. He that believes on the Son has everlasting life …”**

***• John 3:34–36***

God’s Holy Spirit is so energetic, so powerful, and so life-giving, that it makes Christ’s resurrected body still to be considered a Temple of God. Christ’s resurrection from the dead was a literal rebuilding of that Temple into a new body of flesh and bone, without blood, comprised of spirit.

Your body is also a temple: **“What? know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost** [Spirit] **which is in you, which you have of God, and you are not your own?”** (1 Corinthians 6:19). In spite of what you may think, you do not own your body. As Paul said, it is **“not your own.”** You are part of Christ’s body (Romans 12:2-5; 1 Corinthians 12:12, 27; Ephesians 1:22–23, 5:30; Colossians 1:18). The future New Jerusalem is described by the apostle John: **“And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it”** (Revelation 21:22). This will occur in the near future to us.

After His resurrection Jesus explained to his apostles all the prophecies from the Old Testament that were fulfilled (Luke 24:44–48 and Acts 1:3). Over time the apostles came to understand that the physical rituals were no longer necessary. As long as the Temple existed the Jewish Christians could continue to observe those rituals (which they did do), but the rituals were not imposed on Gentile believers (Acts 15:28–29). All Temple rituals ceased in 70 AD with the destruction of the Temple.

The symbolic act of cleansing the Temple by Jesus, along with His actions at the Last Supper, were designed to replace the Temple as the symbolic focus of Judaism. His identification of His body as the Temple of God combined with the ritual of the bread and the wine at the Last Supper constitute to some scholars a priestly initiation ritual.

**“The Temple Action**[the cleansing of the Temple]**and the Last Supper, taken together, indicated that Jesus was in effect intending to replace the Temple, as the symbolic focus of Judaism, with his own newly instituted quasi-cultic meal.”**

***• N.T. Wright, Jesus and the Victory of God*****[15](http://www.askelm.com/doctrine/d090201.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn15)**

Jewish scholar Jacob Neusner agrees:

**“**[T]**he overturning of the moneychangers’ tables represents an act of rejection of the most important rite of the Israelite cult, the daily whole-offering, and, therefore, a statement that there is a means of atonement other than the daily whole offering, which is now null. *Then what was to take the place of the daily whole-offering? It was to be the rite of the Eucharist: table for table, whole offering for whole offering.*”**

***• Jacob Neusner, “Money-Changers in the Temple”*****[16](http://www.askelm.com/doctrine/d090201.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn16)**

Indeed, Brant Pitre shows that the pattern of several of Jesus’ interactions with His disciples in His ministry correspond to what YHWH did at Mount Sinai in ways that cannot be coincidental. In Exodus 24:1–11, for example, people are grouped into specifically numbered group sets. Similarly numbered group sets of people appear in the Gospels:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Priestly Hierarchy of Mount Sinai, Exodus 24:1–11, pre-Levitical** | **Jesus and His Disciples (in the Gospels)** |
|  Moses**1**  The high priest, Aaron**3**  Aaron, Nadab, Abihu **12**  Twelve Pillars / “Young Men” of the Twelve Tribes**70**  Elders of Israel | Jesus**1**  Peter, chief of the Apostles**3**  Peter, James, and John (all at Transfiguration and each is renamed)**12**  Twelve apostles of the Twelve Tribes**70**  Appointed and sent out (to preach and perform exorcisms) |

Pitre’s conclusion at the end of his SBL paper was that Jesus performed the Last Supper under His authority as a Melchizedek priest, not as a Levitical priest. Hence, Jesus used the bread and the wine in the Gospels as Melchizedek did, as a thank offering.

***The Book of Hebrews***

Only in the Book of Hebrews is the nature of Christ’s status as high priest set out in detail. **[17](http://www.askelm.com/doctrine/d090201.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn17)** The title “Christ” (meaning “anointed” or Messiah) is connected with the status of high priest explicitly in Hebrews 2:17, 3:1, 4:14, 5:5, 10, 6:20, 7:26, 8:1, 3, 9:11, 25, 10:21 and 13:11–12. Other terms such as “Son of Man” and “Son of God” are used in Hebrews to refer to Christ Jesus in an all inclusive manner. In fact Son of Man and Son of God have the same meaning in the Book of Hebrews and appear to be used interchangeably. Elsewhere in the New Testament the idea of Jesus being a high priest is never denied, but there is no direct statement about it. In the Book of Hebrews that changes dramatically. There, Jesus is the Son of God, the high priest:

**“Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”**

***• Hebrews 4:14–16***

This is the function of a high priest, to approach God, advocate for the people, and in the case of Jesus, to help us obtain mercy and grace when we need it most. Christ also mediates by representing His righteousness to God as our righteousness.

As Professor Buchanan notes, the structure of Hebrews is that of an extended commentary on Psalm 110 (with occasional diversions), from the beginning in chapter 1 through to the end of chapter 12. **[18](http://www.askelm.com/doctrine/d090201.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn18)** Psalm 110 is quoted or clearly alluded to 12 times, often elaborating on the text.

***Hebrews Chapters 1 and 2***

The author of Hebrews in the first two chapters corrects the mistaken understandings that his audience has about the relationship of God and His Son to angels. Then He discusses the Son as high priest:

**“For verily he** [the Son] **took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved**[was necessary for] **him to be made like unto his brethren, that he** [the Son] **might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself has suffered being tempted, he is able to succor** [relieve] **them that are tempted.**

**Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; Who was faithful to him** [God the Father] **that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house. For this man** [Jesus] **was counted worthy of more glory than Moses ...”**

***• Hebrews 2:16–3:3***

In his book, *Essentials of New Testament Doctrine,* **[19](http://www.askelm.com/doctrine/d090201.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn19)** chapter 31, beginning with the second paragraph, Dr. Martin identifies who this individual named Melchizedek was. He does so by examining Psalm 110:1: **“A Psalm of David. The LORD** [YHWH] **said unto my Lord** [Adonai]**, ‘Sit you at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.”**

This other “Lord” was a member of the divine hierarchy reckoned as being of the order or rank of Melchizedek. Paul in Hebrews said this Melchizedek was likened (in matters of genealogical records) to be the **“Son of God”** in heaven because there was no earthly record of Him having any human descent (Hebrews 7:3). Being placed in the category of a **“Son of God”** shows that Melchizedek (the King of Righteousness and Peace) was not an angel. Indeed, He was so powerful that David said He sat on the right hand of YHVH in heaven (Psalm 110:1) which throughout Hebrews (1:3, 8:1, 10:12, 12:2) as well as in Mark 16:19; Colossians 3:1; and 1 Peter 3:22 is a position reserved for Christ Jesus.

The biblical records likened Melchizedek, in Paul’s view, to **“THE Son of God”** (not simply **“A Son of God”**). This title was afforded Him because Paul said there was no human account showing Melchizedek’s father or mother, or of Him having descent from a human, nor was there any death record of Him like humans normally have. Melchizedek was not like a normal human being born on this earth when Abraham met Him. Rather, He was a heavenly **“Son of God.”** In summation, Melchizedek is simply a name of Christ before His incarnation and again after His resurrection. It is the name Christ holds in His role of being a priest for the entire human race. But Christ was at first (and still is) the chief of the heavenly group of divine beings who make up the Family of God. He sat on the right hand side of YHVH because He was God’s firstborn Son (Colossians 1:15) of all the **“Sons of God”** in heaven.

The bottom line is this: You can go to every occurrence of Melchizedec in Hebrews 5:6, 10, 6:20, 7:1, 10-11, 15, 17, and 21, and insert “the Son” into the sentence. Performing such an exercise will greatly expand your understanding. Then read Mark 16:19; Colossians 3:1; and 1 Peter 3:22, and each verse relating to the resurrected Christ at the right hand of the Father: Matthew 22:44, 26:64; Mark 12:36, 14:62, 16:19; Luke 20:41–44, 22:69; Acts 2:33f, 5:31, 7:55-56; Romans 8:34; Ephesians 1:20; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 1:3, 13, 8:1, 10:12, 12:2; and 1 Peter 3:22. Each of these passages add nuance to what Hebrews says regarding Melchizedek and Psalm 110. **[20](http://www.askelm.com/doctrine/d090201.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn20)** You will gain immense knowledge about what happens around God’s throne, and the Father’s and Christ’s relationship to you.

**“Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”**

***• Hebrews 4:14–15***

**“And no man takes this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, ‘You are my Son, to day have I begotten you** [citing Psalm 2:7]**.’ As he said also in another place, ‘You are a priest for ever**[for the age] **after the order of Melchisedec’**[citing Psalm 110:4]**.”**

***• Hebrews 5:4–6***

Now look how Christ as high priest does not glorify himself, but His Father YHWH. He glorifies God by praying, supplicating, crying, even fearing, being obedient, suffering, obeying, and by being perfected (Hebrews 5:7–9). It is important to realize that Christ prayed and made supplications to His Father with crying and tears, not just at the Garden of Gethsemane, but **“in the days of his flesh.”** Jesus knew what was in store for Him. Yet He also knew that God was **“able to save him from death.”**

Notice that Jesus, the Son of God, our great high priest, is sympathetic to us in every way, even experiencing suffering and death as we do. Second, notice that he has **“compassion on the ignorant”** and those who are straying. This is a great comfort to us who wonder and grieve about unbelieving relatives and friends because He, as our high priest, has already made an offering for sin that is acceptable and pleasing to God. That offering was His own body and blood, Himself as the Lamb of God. In so doing He is honored, but God gets the glory. When Christ was in flesh on earth He suffered and cried because of the death He so greatly feared, as we all fear death. Death was His enemy, just as it is ours (1 Corinthians 15:26). His priesthood is **“after the order of Melchisedec.”**

Jesus did not become high priest of the Melchisedek order again until after His resurrection, not until He entered within the veil of the Tabernacle in heaven. That took place when He ascended to His Father (Hebrews 6:19–20). After He sprinkled the blood on the altar of the tabernacle in heaven, then He was formally seated at the right hand of the Father. Not until then did He become a priest **“after the order of Melchisedec.”** He **“for us entered,”** on our behalf.

Hebrews 7:1–10 is an extended discussion about Melchizedek, going beyond what is stated in Genesis 14:18 and discussing nuances and meanings of various aspects of his interactions. Think “Christ” when you read “Melchizedek.” In Genesis there is no hint of a priestly “order” of Melchizedek, there is just Melchizedek, the individual who interacts with Abraham, who when He became flesh through Mary was named Jesus. These passages should make excellent sense:

**“Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.”**

***• Hebrews 8:1–2***

**“For Christ** [Messiah] **is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: … but now once in the end of the world has he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. … Christ** [Messiah] **was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.”**

***• Hebrews 9:24–28***

**“But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.”**

***• Hebrews 10:12–14***

***Conclusion***

I began this article with three questions about Christ. Knowing who Melchizedek is gives us answers:

1.**How was He designated to be high priest?**Christ can be so designated because God called Him to be so (Hebrews 5:4–6).

2. **Why is He high priest?**Christ is high priest to glorify God, not Himself (Hebrews 5:5) whereby He is bringing many sons to glory (Hebrews 2:10).

3. **What does He do as high priest?**He has accomplished (past tense) His purpose as High Priest by being the Lamb of God, and by His resurrection and approach to the throne of God He has sprinkled His blood on the altar before God’s throne to cover our sins and as a result we have been made sinless. By His righteousness we are made righteous. He continues (present tense) to be a mediator between God and man, from our viewpoint he is **“the man Christ Jesus”** (1 Timothy 2:5–6). We are safe and our salvation is sure.

David Sielaff, February 2009

[1](http://www.askelm.com/doctrine/d090201.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftnref1) For Jesus as prophet see Matthew 13:57, 16:14, 21:11; Mark 6:4; Luke 7:16, 40, 9:19, 24:19; and John 4:44, 6:14–15. Several verses speak to the fact that Jesus is a King. A definitive passage is John 18:36–37 at His trial before Pontius Pilate:

**“Jesus answered, ‘My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.’ Pilate therefore said unto him, ‘Are you a king then?’ Jesus answered, ‘You say that I am a king. To this end was I born …’”**

   See also Dr. Martin’s article “Types of Messiah in the Old Testament” at[www.askelm.com/prophecy/p060601.htm](http://www.askelm.com/prophecy/p060601.htm).

[2](http://www.askelm.com/doctrine/d090201.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftnref2) *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia,* 1914, 1st Edition, from Dr. Stanley Morris, IBT, 1997. Unabridged edition. (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1939 revised), article “Priest” (7031).

[3](http://www.askelm.com/doctrine/d090201.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftnref3) See Dr. Martin’s presentation “The Sacrificial System in Ancient Israel” at[www.askelm.com/doctrine/d950502.htm](http://www.askelm.com/doctrine/d950502.htm).

[4](http://www.askelm.com/doctrine/d090201.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftnref4) “Priest” in *Faussett Bible Dictionary,* Circa. 1888. Electronic edition by International Bible Translators (IBT), Inc., 1998.

[5](http://www.askelm.com/doctrine/d090201.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftnref5) In the Gospel of John the entire focus of is to present Jesus as the Lamb of God, as shown in Dr. Martin’s article “The Apostle John, the Lamb, and the Spirit” at<http://www.askelm.com/doctrine/d070701.htm>. As the priest He is performing the sacrifice; as the Lamb He is the object of the sacrifice. John’s presenting Jesus as the Lamb is very different from how the first three Gospels portray Him. (Both portrayals are correct.) The visions of John that make up the Book of Revelation often use the theme of Christ as the Lamb of God. Christ’s sacrifice was that He **“died for all”** (2 Corinthians 5:14). See 1 Peter 1:18–19 and the 27 references in the Book of Revelation to the Lamb (or “little lamb”) of God.

[6](http://www.askelm.com/doctrine/d090201.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftnref6) They condemned Him in spite of what Nicodemus said early in Jesus’ ministry, **“Rabbi,we know** (we, the religious rulers and teachers of Israel know) **that you are a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that you do, except God be with him”** (John 3:2). They had that knowledge, that understanding, yet they still thought Him guilty of death.

[7](http://www.askelm.com/doctrine/d090201.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftnref7) Quoted from Pitre’s paper “Jesus and the Messianic Priesthood,” Oscar Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament,*trans. S.C. Guthrie and C.A.M. Hall (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963), pp. 88–89. Italics Pitre’s, underlining mine.

[8](http://www.askelm.com/doctrine/d090201.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftnref8) The expression **“right hand”** can mean “south.” Brown, Driver, Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon (Unabridged),* 3962, p. 411: **“south, because when facing east the right hand is toward the south.”** See 1 Samuel 23:19, 24; Ezekiel 16:46; Psalms 89:13, 107:3, 9, and “The Location and Future Discovery of King David’s Tomb” at<http://www.askelm.com/temple/t061001.htm>.

[9](http://www.askelm.com/doctrine/d090201.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftnref9) A Targum is a set of Aramaic interpretive paraphrases of Old Testament texts.

[10](http://www.askelm.com/doctrine/d090201.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftnref10) See note 8. God faces east from His Temple in Jerusalem. David is buried just south of the southern wall at God’s right hand.

[11](http://www.askelm.com/doctrine/d090201.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftnref11) Again, see Dr. Martin’s “Types of Messiah in the Old Testament,” note 1 above.

[12](http://www.askelm.com/doctrine/d090201.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftnref12) It is interesting that we do not know which sons of David participated as priests. There were at least two. David’s son Absalom erected a pillar at the Kings Dale near Jerusalem (2 Samuel 18:18) which may reflect a mention of his priestly service, but uncertain. The Kings Dale is mentioned only one other time, in Genesis 14:18, the location where Melchizedek met Abram.

[13](http://www.askelm.com/doctrine/d090201.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftnref13) There are no Hebrew manuscript variants for any claim of textual ambiguity. The Greek LXX translates *cohenim* from the Hebrew into Greek as “chief rulers.”

[14](http://www.askelm.com/doctrine/d090201.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftnref14) After Israel separated from Judah, Jeroboam, first king of the ten tribes of Israel, appointed his own priests in the northern kingdom of Israel, none of whom were Levites (1 Kings 12:31):

**“And he made an house of high places, and made priests** [*cohen*] **of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi.”**

[15](http://www.askelm.com/doctrine/d090201.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftnref15) Pitre, citing N.T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*(Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), pp. 557–558

[16](http://www.askelm.com/doctrine/d090201.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftnref16) Pitre, citing Jacob Neusner, “Money-Changers in the Temple: The Mishnah’s Explanation” in *New Testament Studies* 35(1989): pp. 287–290.

[17](http://www.askelm.com/doctrine/d090201.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftnref17) See Dr. Martin’s article “The Book of Hebrews” at<http://www.askelm.com/doctrine/d040901.htm>. Several scholars classify Hebrews more like a homily or a sermon than an epistle, both because it does not have parts of a normal epistle and because of its internal structure. Prof. George Wesley Buchanan considers the Book of Hebrews to be:

**“… the finest literature in its class. It is the best commentary on Scripture; it is the best legal argument; it is the best midrash, or the best sermon every read.”**

    See Buchanan’s *The Book of Hebrews: Its Challenge from Zion* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2006), pp. 1–5. A midrash is a commentary on Scripture.

[18](http://www.askelm.com/doctrine/d090201.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftnref18) Buchanan, *Hebrews,* p. 157. Hebrews chapter 13 has a different subject altogether.

[19](http://www.askelm.com/doctrine/d090201.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftnref19) Portland, OR: ASK Publications, 2001/2004 available free online at<http://askelm.com/essentials/ess040.htm>.

[20](http://www.askelm.com/doctrine/d090201.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftnref20) See my article “Elohim and the Son of God, Part 2” at<http://www.askelm.com/doctrine/d071015.htm>.

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