

Genesis 14:18-24—Melchizedek: The Eternal Priestly Order

Memory Verses

Genesis 12:1-3, 7 NKJV—*The unconditional promises given to Abraham*

Now the Lord had said to Abram: “Get out of your country, from your family and from your father’s house, to a land that I will show you. ² **I will** make you a great nation; **I will** bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. ³ **I will** bless those who bless you, and **I will** curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

⁷ Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, “To your descendants **I will** give this land.”

Outline (Genesis 14:18-24)

1. Abraham meets and is blessed by Melchizedek (vs 18-20)
2. Abram overcomes his covetous ways by first giving to God (vs 21-24)
3. A new, eternal, and better priesthood—the order of Melchizedek
4. Application: The role and responsibilities of believers as a royal priesthood

Genesis 14:18-24 NKJV

Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. ¹⁹ And he blessed him and said: “Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; ²⁰ and blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand.”

And he [Abraham] gave him a tithe of all.

²¹ Now the king of Sodom said to Abram, “Give me the persons, and take the goods for yourself.”

²² But Abram said to the king of Sodom, “I have raised my hand to the LORD, God Most High, the Possessor of heaven and earth, ²³ that I will take nothing, from a thread to a sandal strap, and that I will not take anything that is yours, lest you should say, ‘I have made Abram rich’—²⁴ except only what the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men who went with me: Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion.”

1. Abraham meets and is blessed by Melchizedek

Genesis 14:18-20 NKJV

Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. ¹⁹ And he blessed him and said: “Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; ²⁰ and blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand.”

And he [Abraham] gave him a tithe of all.

Who is Melchizedek?

v 18 **Then Melchizedek:** Who is this mysterious Melchizedek? Where did he come from? How did Abram come to know him? How did he come to be a priest and worshipper of the true God? The Bible gives no other information here in Genesis. But we will find out more when we go through other Scriptures later on.

v 18 **King of Salem:** **Salem** is an early name for Jerusalem. Salam means peace. So Melchizedek is the “king of peace” or “prince of peace”.

v 18 **He was the priest of God Most High:** As well as being a king, Melchizedek is also a priest. This is unique in Scripture. In just about every other national authority structure, the power is shared; you could be a priest having spiritual authority, or you could be a king having civil authority, but you could not be both. This is because absolute power corrupts absolutely. A normal human being can't handle this kind of power because of the prideful tendencies of their sinful human nature. Because of this, in the nation of Israel, God made it so that the kings came from the tribe of Judah, while the priests came from the tribe of Levi. Thus no one person could be both king and priest. But here, Melchizedek, as a type of Christ, is both king and priest.

God Most High

v 18 **God Most High:** **God Most High** is “El Elyon”, which means “Highest God” or “Supreme Being”. God is the Highest Power. There is no one greater. We should serve no one less.

The first recorded communion service?

v 18 **Brought out bread and wine:** When Melchizedek met Abram he served him bread and wine. Being a priest of the Most High God, there is a strong possibility that they were served in a manner that would remind Abram of the future Redeeming Sacrifice that God had promised to send, similar to the bread and wine of the Passover and what Jesus did with the bread and wine at the last supper.

The function or role of a priest

vs 19-20 **And he [Melchizedek] blessed him [Abram] and said: “Blessed be Abram... And blessed be God Most High:** This is the function of a priest; they minister to, and connect with, both God and man. They act as a mediator whose job it is to reconnect or reconcile two estranged parties.

Ultimately there is only one mediator or high priest, Christ Himself: Christ is the ultimate mediator, our “High Priest”, because He is both fully God and fully man. Notice in the verses from 1 Timothy below that **God** is **our Saviour**: Jesus is the only Saviour—therefore, Jesus is God. But when Jesus came to earth to be born as a man, He added a human nature to His deity. Therefore, since the incarnation, Jesus is both God and man—**“the Man Christ Jesus”**.

1 Timothy 2:3-6 NKJV

For this is good and acceptable in the sight of **God our Saviour**, ⁴ who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁵ **For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus**, ⁶ who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

1 Timothy 2:2-6 NLT

This is good and pleases God our Saviour, ⁴ who wants everyone to be saved and to understand the truth. ⁵ For, there is one God and one Mediator who can reconcile God and humanity—the man Christ Jesus. ⁶ He gave His life to purchase freedom for everyone. This is the message God gave to the world at just the right time.

How Abram destroyed the idol of wealth in his life

v 19 **Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth:** Melchizedek reminds Abram of two things. Firstly, that he belongs to God—“**Abram of God Most High**”. Secondly, Melchizedek reminds Abram that God is the **Possessor of heaven and earth**. Why is this important? Since God owns everything, then so does Abraham.

Romans 8:16-17 AMP

The Spirit Himself [thus] testifies together with our own spirit, [assuring us] that we are children of God.

¹⁷ And if we are [His] children, then we are [His] heirs also: heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ [sharing His inheritance with Him]; only we must share His suffering if we are to share His glory.

Why did God give this message to Abram at this point in his life? Because all his life Abram has been struggling with covetousness. He grew up in Ur of the Chaldeans, a rich city, living a materialistic lifestyle. He was happy to live in sin (out of the will of God) in Egypt, as long as he was getting richer (remember that Abram chose to go to Egypt where he basically sold his wife to get richer). Then he and Lot were fighting over pastures, because they both wanted to see their own flocks increase in number.

But now things are changing for Abram. He was willing to let Lot have the first pick of the land, to select what he thought was the best part of the land of Canaan. This necessarily required Abram to have a loose hold on physical possessions, a sign that he now ruled his money, that Abram was no longer ruled by his money. Remember, money is a good slave, but a terrible master.

v 20 **And he [Abram] gave him [Melchizedek] a tithe of all:** Hebrews chapter 7 explains that Abram gave 10% of all the spoils of war to Melchizedek. This is Abram giving God the glory for the victory over a much stronger army.

And who is he giving it to? *God, Possessor of Heaven and Earth*. This is also freedom for Abram—the bondage to being a slave to money has been broken. Abram now recognises that since *everything* belongs to God, and because he is *of* God (or belongs to God), there is not point in chasing and coveting what is already his in God? This is a physical picture of a spiritual truth—in Christ we have all things (see also Romans 8:16-17).

Revelation 21:7 NKJV

He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.

Application: Recognising that God owns all things—How to defeat covetousness and stop wealth from being an idol

v 19 **Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth:** “**God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth**” is such an important title as it speaks so much truth into a world full of lies:

- *Who owns everything?* God does. He is the **Possessor of heaven and earth**.
- *Why does God own everything?* Because He made everything.
- *Why is this important?* Because this truth defeats the lie that gives rise to covetousness. I no longer think, “All this is mine, all mine. I earned all this. Now I need protect what is mine. I need to look after myself.”

Rather, I recognise the truth and begin to think “This belongs to God. Thankyou God for blessing me with so much. Since You have given so much to me, let me recognise this fact by giving some back to you, and using the rest to be a blessing to other people.”

John 1:3 NKJV

All things were made through Him [Jesus], and without Him nothing was made that was made.

John 1:3 AMP

All things were made and came into existence through Him; and without Him was not even one thing made that has come into being.

Psalms 33:6 NKJV

By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.

Ephesians 3:9 NKJV

...and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God [the Father] **who created all things through Jesus Christ**

Colossians 1:15-17 NLT

Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, ¹⁶ **for through Him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see**—such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ He existed before anything else, and He holds all creation together.

Hebrews 1:1-2 NLT

Long ago God spoke many times and in many ways to our ancestors through the prophets. ² And now in these final days, He has spoken to us through His Son. God promised everything to the Son as an inheritance, **and through the Son He created the universe.**

Psalms 50:10-12 NKJV

For every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. ¹¹ I know all the birds of the mountains, **and the wild beasts of the field are Mine.** ¹² “If I were hungry, I would not tell you; **for the world is Mine, and all its fullness.**

The world system tells us that we can own things, that things can be ours, that we can be in control. But the Bible says that everything belongs to God. *The ultimate reason for this is that, because God made everything, then He owns everything—it's that simple.* This is why God commands us to give to Him on a regular basis, to acknowledge that what we have is actually given to us as a gift from God.

1 Corinthians 4:7b NLT

What do you have that God hasn't given you? And if everything you have is from God, why boast as though it were not a gift?

In ancient Israel, there was a system of laws whereby the nation gave to support the priests and the work of God. But the main reason that God wanted them to give was to remind them that everything they had was a gift to them from God, and they needed to remember that, and learn to be grateful.

When we in the church today give back to God with the right motive, we remind ourselves that everything we have is a gift from God, and therefore belongs to Him. This is the only way to break the sinful tendency to be greedy and either hoard things for ourselves, or spend everything on ourselves. Again, God wants us to give regularly to Him so that we will remember that it doesn't belong to us, and so that we will not be controlled by our wealth, whether it be little or much. Remember, the amount we give doesn't matter—it's our attitude towards it that matters the most. And the more grateful we are towards God, then the more we will want to give—"Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!" (2 Corinthians 9:15 NKJV). God gave us Himself, shouldn't we be grateful?

Mark 12:41-44 NLT

Jesus sat down near the collection box in the Temple and watched as the crowds dropped in their money. Many rich people put in large amounts. ⁴² Then a poor widow came and dropped in two small coins.

⁴³ Jesus called his disciples to Him and said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has given more than all the others who are making contributions. ⁴⁴ For they gave a tiny part of their surplus, but she, poor as she is, has given everything she had to live on."

2 Corinthians 8:1-5 NLT

Now I want you to know, dear brothers and sisters, what God in his kindness has done through the churches in Macedonia. ² They are being tested by many troubles, and they are very poor. But they are also filled with abundant joy, which has overflowed in rich generosity.

³ For I can testify that they gave not only what they could afford, but far more. And they did it of their own free will. ⁴ They begged us again and again for the privilege of sharing in the gift for the believers in Jerusalem. ⁵ They even did more than we had hoped, for their first action was to give themselves to the Lord and *then* to us, just as God wanted them to do.

2 Corinthians 9:6-7 NLT

Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. ⁷ You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. "For God loves a person who gives cheerfully."

Consider: When we give to the church, we are not really giving to the church, but rather to God. It's God's church, and it's God's money that is used for the work of God's kingdom. God doesn't need the money, He doesn't need us. But God wants us to be free from the sin of idolising our wealth, whether little or much, so we will not be a slave to money. *Remember that God wants us to be willing to give generously and regularly for our own sakes, not His.*

The secret to giving generously and cheerfully is to, like Abram did, first recognise that God is the Possessor of heaven and earth, that all things belong to Him, and so we are only giving back to God a portion of what He first gave us. When motivated by this truth, our giving is not a burden, but rather a sign of heartfelt appreciation of what God has first given us, of course including Himself.

2. Abram overcomes his covetous ways (because he first gave to God)

Genesis 14:21-24 NKJV

²¹ Now the king of Sodom said to Abram, “Give me the persons, and take the goods for yourself.”

²² But Abram said to the king of Sodom, “I have raised my hand to the LORD, God Most High, the Possessor of heaven and earth, ²³ that I will take nothing, from a thread to a sandal strap, and that I will not take anything that is yours, lest you should say, ‘I have made Abram rich’—²⁴ except only what the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men who went with me: Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion.”

In this exchange between Abram and the king of Sodom, Abram is again tempted to increase his wealth by worldly ways and by worldly means. But how does Abram resist this temptation? Because he has now learned that God is “**God Most High, the Possessor of heaven and earth**”.

v 21 **Now the king of Sodom said to Abram, “Give me the persons, and take the goods for yourself.”**: Abram here again (like he did with Lot) refuses to take what is rightfully his. He won the battle, therefore the spoils of the war legitimately belonged to Him (from a human perspective). However, this was being offered to him by an evil and worldly man, the king of Sodom. And Abram didn’t want the king of Sodom to be able to boast, saying, “**I made Abram rich**”. Abram didn’t want to become indebted to, or reliant on, or influenced by this wicked worldly man. Abram wanted to remain free from worldly influence, and only receive what God wanted to give him.

There are many today, who for the sake of temporary financial gain, have become slaves to say or do what others want them to. Many voices who once proclaimed truth have now become propaganda outlets—they have sold themselves out and can now only speak what their handlers want them to say. For example, billions from Qatar and China has bought many in government, educational institutions, talk show hosts, and YouTubers. The effect is devastating—truth fails, and a generation is deceived.

v 23 **Lest you should say, “I have made Abram rich”**: “Abram refused the spoil because he would not allow anyone say that a man had made Abram rich. Abram demanded all of the credit for his success and wealth go to God and God alone.

When we are willing to pursue human measures of success, using man-centred wisdom and methods, if success does come, how can we really say that God gave the success? It is much better to follow God’s wisdom so that when success comes He gets the glory, and it is evident to everyone that it was His work.” (David Guzik)

Again, how did Abram overcome his tendency to be greedy and covetous, to make wealth his idol? He first gave to God, recognising that it all belonged to God anyway. He had just given to God (via Melchizedek) 10% of all the spoils of war. Abram was giving back to God what was already His. Abram was recognising that everything he had was a gift from God, and was to be used for God, not for himself. This is why giving to God is so important; it frees us from the trap of greed and covetousness. How much we give to God is not so important. What is important is that we give regularly, generously, and cheerfully.

v 24 **Let them take their portion**: Abram’s Amorite friends and allies in this war deserved their wages—they had risked their lives to rescue the people of the plain. They probably weren’t believers, and so Abram’s principles didn’t apply to them.

3. A new, eternal, priesthood—the order of Melchizedek

v 18 **Then Melchizedek:** Who is this mysterious Melchizedek? What have we learnt so far about him from these three verses?

- A. Melchizedek's name means "king of righteousness". Christ is our righteousness (see 1 Corinthians 1:30)
- B. He was king of Salem (an early name for Jerusalem). Salam means peace. So Melchizedek is the king or prince of peace (see Isaiah 9:6).
- C. He was a priest of God Most High
- D. He is therefore the only person who is both a king and a priest, just like Jesus is and will be during His Millennial reign on the earth.
- E. Melchizedek brought out bread and wine—we could say that this was the very first recorded communion service.
- F. Melchizedek blesses Abram. Scripturally, it is always the greater who blesses the lesser (see Hebrews 7:4-10), which makes Melchizedek greater or more important than Abram or any of his descendants.

What we will see as we go through some Scriptures now is that Melchizedek is most likely a Christophany, a preincarnate appearance of Jesus Himself. If not, then he is at least, at the very minimum, a type of Christ, a physical picture of a spiritual truth.

Jesus will rule from Jerusalem as king, and will also be a priest in the order of Melchizedek

Psalm 110:1-4 NKJV

The LORD [God the Father] said to my [king David's] Lord [Jesus, the Messiah], "Sit in the place of honour at My right hand until I humble Your enemies, making them a footstool under Your feet." ² The LORD will extend Your powerful kingdom from Jerusalem; You will rule over Your enemies. ³ When You go to war, Your people will serve You willingly. You are arrayed in holy garments, and Your strength will be renewed each day like the morning dew.

⁴ The LORD [God the Father] has taken an oath and will not break His vow: "You [Jesus, the Messiah] are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek."

In these verses, God reveals to king David how, in the future, Jesus would rule from Jerusalem during the 1,000 year Millennial reign. Specifically, in verses one through three, God the Father describes Jesus's will rule as king. Then, in verse 4, God the Father appoints Jesus as a priest in the order of Melchizedek. This makes Jesus both king and priest. We will now see why a different priestly order is needed to replace the Levitical priesthood.

The levitical priesthood—a shadow or physical picture of a spiritual truth (Jesus as our high priest)

Hebrews chapters 5 through 9 explains this very important concept. Let's survey some of these verses and see why we need a new priesthood, why the levitical priesthood just isn't good enough. The verses are in bold, and the explanations in italics.

Hebrews 5:1-10 NLT

Every high priest is a man chosen to represent other people in their dealings with God. He presents their gifts to God and offers sacrifices for their sins. ² And he is able to deal gently with ignorant and wayward people because he himself is subject to the same weaknesses. ³ That is why he must offer sacrifices for his own sins as well as theirs.

⁴ And no one can become a high priest simply because he wants such an honour. He must be called by God for this work, just as Aaron was. ⁵ That is why Christ did not honour Himself by assuming He could become High Priest. No, He was chosen by God [the Father], who said to Him, “You are My Son. Today I have become Your Father.”

⁶ And in another passage God said to Him, “You are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek.”

⁷ While Jesus was here on earth, He offered prayers and pleadings, with a loud cry and tears, to the One who could rescue Him from death. And God heard His prayers because of His deep reverence for God. ⁸ Even though Jesus was God’s Son, He learned obedience from the things He suffered. ⁹ In this way, God qualified Him as a perfect High Priest, and He became the source of eternal salvation for all those who obey Him. ¹⁰ And God designated Him to be a High Priest in the order of Melchizedek.

Jesus is qualified to be our High Priest because He knows what it is like to learn obedience through suffering and trials. He was chosen by God the Father for this essential role, to be a priest in the order of Melchizedek. Jesus is also the source of eternal salvation for those who choose to obey Him.

Hebrews 6:16-20 NLT

Now when people take an oath, they call on someone greater than themselves to hold them to it. And without any question that oath is binding. ¹⁷ God also bound Himself with an oath, so that those who received the promise could be perfectly sure that He would never change His mind. ¹⁸ So God has given both His promise and His oath. These two things are unchangeable because it is impossible for God to lie. Therefore, we who have fled to Him for refuge can have great confidence as we hold to the hope that lies before us. ¹⁹ This hope is a strong and trustworthy anchor for our souls. It leads us through the curtain into God’s inner sanctuary. ²⁰ Jesus has already gone in there for us. He has become our eternal High Priest in the order of Melchizedek.

Jesus is the fulfilment of the promise that God made long ago. Jesus, as our priest in the order of Melchizedek, is our only hope of salvation. Jesus is the only One who can bring us through the veil of separation into the presence of God. The levitical high priest was only allowed to enter the Holy of Holies once a year, but Jesus dwells there forever. Jesus has become our eternal High Priest in the order of Melchizedek.

7:3 Made like the Son of God: Melchizedek was made like the Son of God. It really isn’t that Jesus has Melchizedek’s kind of priesthood. Instead, Melchizedek has Jesus’ kind of priesthood.

Hebrews 7:1-28 NKJV

This Melchizedek was king of the city of Salem and also a priest of God Most High.

Jesus is both king and priest

When Abraham was returning home after winning a great battle against the kings, Melchizedek met him and blessed him. ² Then Abraham took a tenth of all he had captured in battle and gave it to Melchizedek. The name Melchizedek means “king of justice [righteousness],” and king of Salem means “king of peace.”

Jesus is both the prince of peace, as well as the king of Righteousness.

³ There is no record of his father or mother or any of his ancestors—no beginning or end to his life. He remains a priest forever, resembling the Son of God.

*This is why many think that Melchizedek was Christ Himself. Even if he wasn't Christ Himself, he was still **resembling the Son of God**—either way, Melchizedek in Genesis 14 is a physical picture of a spiritual reality, the reality that Jesus is both our King and eternal High Priest.*

⁴ Consider then how great this Melchizedek was. Even Abraham, the great patriarch of Israel, recognised this by giving him a tenth of what he had taken in battle. ⁵ Now the law of Moses required that the priests, who are descendants of Levi, must collect a tithe from the rest of the people of Israel, who are also descendants of Abraham. ⁶ But Melchizedek, who was not a descendant of Levi, collected a tenth from Abraham. And Melchizedek placed a blessing upon Abraham, the one who had already received the promises of God. ⁷ And without question, the person who has the power to give a blessing is greater than the one who is blessed.

Melchizedek is greater than Abram, and therefore the levitical priests, because Melchizedek blessed Abram, and it is the greater who blesses the lessor.

⁸ The priests who collect tithes are men who die, so Melchizedek is greater than they are, because we are told that he lives on. ⁹ In addition, we might even say that these Levites—the ones who collect the tithe—paid a tithe to Melchizedek when their ancestor Abraham paid a tithe to him. ¹⁰ For although Levi wasn't born yet, the seed from which he came was in Abraham's body when Melchizedek collected the tithe from him.

The priest Melchizedek is greater than the levitical priests, because the levitical priests, through Abram, paid tithes to Melchizedek.

¹¹ So if the priesthood of Levi, on which the law was based, could have achieved the perfection God intended, why did God need to establish a different priesthood, with a priest in the order of Melchizedek instead of the order of Levi and Aaron?

¹² And if the priesthood is changed, the law must also be changed to permit it. ¹³ For the priest we are talking about belongs to a different tribe, whose members have never served at the altar as priests. ¹⁴ What I mean is, our Lord came from the tribe of Judah, and Moses never mentioned priests coming from that tribe.

¹⁵ This change has been made very clear since a different priest, who is like Melchizedek, has appeared. ¹⁶ Jesus became a priest, not by meeting the physical requirement of belonging to the tribe of Levi, ...

Jesus, our High Priest comes from the tribe of Judah, not Levi. For this to happen, there must be a new set of rules. The old rules are a part of the Old Covenant, and the new rules are a part of the New Covenant.

...but by the power of a life that cannot be destroyed. ¹⁷ And the psalmist pointed this out when he prophesied, “You are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek.”

Jesus is different from the Levitical priests because He lives forever—they all died.

¹⁸ Yes, the old requirement about the priesthood was set aside because it was weak and useless. ¹⁹ For the law never made anything perfect. But now we have confidence in a better hope, through which we draw near to God.

The levitical priests were useless, in the sense that the sacrifices they offered could not make anyone perfect; they could not forgive sins. This is why Jesus’s sacrifice is a better sacrifice—through Jesus’s sacrifice we have forgiveness of sins.

²⁰ This new system [New Covenant] was established with a solemn oath. Aaron’s descendants became priests without such an oath, ²¹ but there was an oath regarding Jesus. For God said to Him, “The LORD has taken an oath and will not break His vow: ‘You are a priest forever [according to the order of Melchizedek].’ ”

The high priests descended from Aaron were not established by a oath from God, but Jesus was.

²² Because of this oath, Jesus is the One who guarantees this better covenant with God.

²³ There were many priests under the old system, for death prevented them from remaining in office. ²⁴ But because Jesus lives forever, His priesthood lasts forever.

²⁵ Therefore He is able, once and forever, to save those who come to God through Him. He lives forever to intercede with God on their behalf.

The levitical priests all died, but Jesus, the priest in the order of Melchizedek, lives forever. Because of this, He is able to save anyone who chooses to come to God through Him. He also lives forever to intercede with God on our behalf. When satan accuses us, and when we stand in God’s court, Jesus is our defence lawyer. He says to the Father, “Yes they are guilty of that sin, but I have paid their fine in full.” The the Father then says, “Not guilty. You are free to go”.

²⁶ He is the kind of high priest we need because He is holy and blameless, unstained by sin. He has been set apart from sinners and has been given the highest place of honour in heaven. ²⁷ Unlike those other high priests, He does not need to offer sacrifices every day. They did this for their own sins first and then for the sins of the people. But Jesus did this once for all when He offered Himself as the sacrifice for the people’s sins. ²⁸ The law appointed high priests who were limited by human weakness. But after the law was given, God appointed His Son with an oath, and His Son has been made the perfect High Priest forever.

The sacrifices offered by the levitical priests were only animals, a picture or shadow of the ultimate sacrifice. Jesus, as the priest in the order of Melchizedek, offered a different sacrifice—Himself.

4. Application: The role and responsibilities of believers as a royal priesthood

We as believers also act as priests, authorised, commissioned, and sent by Christ Himself. Like Melchizedek and the Levitical priests, we also minister to, and connect with, both God and man. We also act as a mediator whose job it is to reconnect or reconcile two estranged parties—God and unrepentant mankind.

2 Corinthians 5:16-21 AMP

But all things are from God, Who through Jesus Christ reconciled us to Himself [received us into favour, brought us into harmony with Himself] and gave to us the ministry of reconciliation [that by word and deed we might aim to bring others into harmony with Him].

¹⁹ It was God [personally present] in Christ, reconciling and restoring the world to favour with Himself, not counting up and holding against [men] their trespasses [but cancelling them], and committing to us the message of reconciliation (of the restoration to favour).

²⁰ So we are Christ's ambassadors, God making His appeal as it were through us. We [as Christ's personal representatives] beg you for His sake to lay hold of the divine favour [now offered you] and be reconciled to God.

²¹ For our sake He made Christ [virtually] to be sin Who knew no sin, so that in and through Him we might become [endued with, viewed as being in, and examples of] the righteousness of God [what we ought to be, approved and acceptable and in right relationship with Him, by His goodness].

2 Corinthians 5:18-21 NKJV

Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹ that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

²⁰ Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. ²¹ For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Therefore, since we have this great privilege, we also have a great responsibility—as the song, “The Way of the Cross”, by Matt Redman goes, “If much is given, then much is required”. With privilege always comes responsibility. The CEO of the company earns the most money and gets the flashiest company car—but they also carry the most responsibility—if anything goes wrong, they are ultimately responsible for it. We are all like managers in God's spiritual kingdom. Every believer has been given this amazing privilege of being God's royal priests, representing Him before an ever watching world. And understandably, God has also given us much responsibility. We must take our calling seriously.

1 Peter 2:9-12 NKJV

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, **that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light;** ¹⁰ who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

¹¹ Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, ¹² having your conduct honourable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.

1 Peter 2:9-12 NLT

But you are not like that, for you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. **As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for He called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light.**

¹⁰ "Once you had no identity as a people; now you are God's people. Once you received no mercy; now you have received God's mercy." [this is what we have received]

¹¹ Dear friends, I warn you as "temporary residents and foreigners" to keep away from worldly desires that wage war against your very souls. ¹² Be careful to live properly among your unbelieving neighbours. Then even if they accuse you of doing wrong, they will see your honourable behavior, and they will give honour to God when He judges the world.

Remember, when our words, attitude, and behaviour is Christlike, then we bring honour to God. The world sees us, and, although they may not like or appreciate us, they will respect us. They will one day have to acknowledge that God sent them a faithful ambassador who truthfully spoke and lived the message given to them from God.

The opposite is also true. When our words, attitude, and behaviour is *not* Christlike, then we bring shame to God. The world scorns God because His messengers were not faithful to speak and live the message given to them by God—we misrepresent God.

For most people, who will never read the Bible for themselves, the Christian is the only "Bible" they will ever read. They will watch us, and by observing us, make a decision regarding what God is like. This is why our responsibility is so great—we represent God to the people. We are ambassadors of the King—we represent the King.

2 Corinthians 3:2-3 AMP

[No] you yourselves are our letter of recommendation (our credentials), written in your hearts, to be known (perceived, recognised) and read by everybody.

³ You show and make obvious that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, not written with ink but with [the] Spirit of [the] living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. [Exodus 24:12; 31:18; 32:15, 16; Jeremiah 31:33.]

Our lives are an open book which everyone reads—what are we revealing to others about God? Am I, by my attitude, words, and actions, drawing people to God by faithfully representing Him? Do people see Jesus in me? Or, am I pushing them away from God by living a selfish and compromising life? The key to this is to first minister to God before we minister to people. If we strengthen our love relationship with God first, then love for other people will come naturally—God will give us both the desire and power to do what pleases Him (see verses below). But if our love relationship with God is neglected or quenched by sin, then we will not be able to demonstrate God's love to others, and will therefore be misrepresenting God to them.

Philippians 2:12-13 NLT (Shine Brightly for Christ)

Dear friends, you always followed my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away, it is even more important. Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear. ¹³ For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.