

Hebrews 7:15-17 Commentary

[PREVIOUS](#)

[NEXT](#)

CLICK VERSE

To go directly to that verse

[Hebrews 7:1](#)
[Hebrews 7:2](#)
[Hebrews 7:3](#)
[Hebrews 7:4](#)
[Hebrews 7:5](#)
[Hebrews 7:6](#)
[Hebrews 7:7](#)
[Hebrews 7:8](#)
[Hebrews 7:9](#)
[Hebrews 7:10](#)
[Hebrews 7:11](#)
[Hebrews 7:12](#)
[Hebrews 7:13](#)
[Hebrews 7:14](#)
[Hebrews 7:15](#)
[Hebrews 7:16](#)
[Hebrews 7:17](#)
[Hebrews 7:18](#)
[Hebrews 7:19](#)
[Hebrews 7:20](#)
[Hebrews 7:21](#)
[Hebrews 7:22](#)
[Hebrews 7:23](#)
[Hebrews 7:24](#)
[Hebrews 7:25](#)
[Hebrews 7:26](#)
[Hebrews 7:27](#)
[Hebrews 7:28](#)

CONSIDER JESUS OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST

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The Epistle to the Hebrews

INSTRUCTION Hebrews 1-10:18					EXHORTATION Hebrews 10:19-13:25
Superior Person of Christ Hebrews 1:1-4:13	Superior Priest in Christ Hebrews 4:14-10:18				Superior Life In Christ Hebrews 10:19-13:25
BETTER THAN PERSON Hebrews 1:1-4:13	BETTER PRIESTHOOD Heb 4:14-7:28	BETTER COVENANT Heb 8:1-13	BETTER SACRIFICE Heb 9:1-10:18		BETTER LIFE
MAJESTY OF CHRIST	MINISTRY OF CHRIST				MINISTERS FOR CHRIST

DOCTRINE	DUTY
DATE WRITTEN: ca. 64-68AD	

See [ESV Study Bible "Introduction to Hebrews"](#)
(See also [MacArthur's Introduction to Hebrews](#))

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Hebrews 7:15 And this is **clearer still, if another priest arises according** to the **likeness** of **Melchizedek**, ([NASB: Lockman](#))

Greek: [kai perissoteron eti katadelon estin](#), (3SPA) [ei kata ten homoioteta Melchisedek anistatai](#) (3SPMI) [hiereus heteros](#).

Amplified: And this becomes more plainly evident when another Priest arises Who bears the likeness of Melchizedek, ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

KJV: And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest,

NLT: The change in God's law is even more evident from the fact that a different priest, who is like Melchizedek, has now come. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Wuest: And it is yet far more obvious that after the likeness of Melchisedec there arises a different kind of priest.

Young's Literal: And it is yet more abundantly most evident, if according to the similitude of Melchisedek there doth arise another priest,

AND THIS IS CLEARER STILL IF ANOTHER PRIEST ARISES ACCORDING TO THE LIKENESS OF MELCHIZEKEK: [kai perissoteron eti katadelon estin](#), (3SPA) [ei kata ten homoioteta Melchisedek anistatai](#) (3SPMI) [hiereus heteros](#):

- Heb 7:,11,17-21; Ps 110:4

Clearer still is more literally "more abundantly evident." (Therefore this should not be difficult to discern).

Clearer (2612)(**katadelos** from **katá** = an intensive + **delos** = manifest) means thoroughly evident, far more evident, quite manifest, exceedingly evident.

Wuest - The statement of the writer here does not refer to that which is declared to be **prodelon** "evident" in Heb 7:14, namely, that Messiah sprang out of Judah, but to the general proposition which the writer is putting forth in the context, to the effect that the Levitical priesthood did not measure up to the purpose for which a priesthood is instituted, namely, to offer a sacrifice that would pay for sin and make a way for sinful man to be saved. The writer says that it is perfectly obvious that after the likeness of Melchizedec a different kind of a priest should arise. ([Hebrews Commentary online](#))

Another priest (hiereus) - another of a different order. In Christ we do not have another priest just like those who ministered in the Tabernacle and the Temple. He is **heteros**, of a completely different kind and order. Under the Old Covenant there were many priests, and they were all **allos** (of the same kind and order). Under the New there is but one Priest, and He is **heteros** (see Heb 7:13).

Christ is called a priest in the **likeness** of Melchizedek. **Likeness** answers to **made like** (Heb 7:3) and emphasizes the personal resemblance to Melchizedec.

Arises (450)(**anistemi** from **ana** = up, again + **histemi** = stand, to cause to stand) means literally to get up, to stand up, to stand again, to cause to rise (thus "to raise"), to stand or be erect (Acts 9:41). It is used metaphorically of rising to position of pre-eminence or power, e.g., Christ as a Prophet (Acts 3:22, 7:37), and here of course as a Priest. Note **anistemi** is in the **middle voice** = Greek middle voice is reflexive. The phrase, then, could be translated, "another priest arises by Himself." In Acts 2:32, Luke uses **anistemi** specifically to refer to Jesus' resurrection, so in a sense this is could be **asubtle play on words** as Heb 7:16 goes on to

describe Christ's indestructible life!

Likeness (3665)(**homoiootes**) the state of being similar to something but not being identical to it. It means **correspondence**, but **not identity**. This supports that Melchizedek was not a Christophany. Christ became a priest Who in all ways was similar to Melchizedek but not identical. The same word is used only twice in the Septuagint and is found in Ge1:11,12 where **homoiootes** describes the similarity of the seed to the original plant yet not being identical with it. (Ge1:11 fruit trees bearing fruit **after their kind**, Ge1:12 vegetation, plants yielding seed **after their kind**).

Christ was a priest, not on the basis of descent and law, but by virtue of the power within Him which was that of inherent and indestructible life (cf Jn 1:4).

Henry Morris - Neither was Christ descended genetically from Melchizedec, though He was spiritually of the same priestly order. Melchizedec had no physical descendants (Hebrews 7:3) or parents, for He was a priest forever. The Lord Jesus was after that similitude, actually the same personage as Melchisedec.

Spurgeon - He is the Son of the Highest, as other priests were not. They were men that had infirmity, but He is sinless: they lived and died, and so were changed, but "your throne, O God, is forever and ever" (Ps 45:6). They were ordained to be types and emblems, serving for the time of Israel's infancy, but He came as the "I am," the substance of the whole. They were mere men and nothing more, but Jesus counted it not robbery to be equal with God, though for our sakes He assumed our nature.

Hebrews 7:16 who has become such not on the basis of a law of physical requirement, but according to the power of an indestructible life. (**NASB: Lockman**)

Greek: os ou kata nomon entoles sarkines gegonen (3SRAI) alla kata dunamin zoes akatalutou.

Amplified: Who has been constituted a Priest, not on the basis of a bodily legal requirement [an externally imposed command concerning His physical ancestry], but on the basis of the power of an endless and indestructible Life. (**Amplified Bible - Lockman**)

KJV: Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.

NLT: He became a priest, not by meeting the old requirement of belonging to the tribe of Levi, but by the power of a life that cannot be destroyed. (**NLT - Tyndale House**)

Wuest: Who was constituted (a priest), not according to the norm of a fleshen commandment, but according to the power of an indissoluble life.

Young's Literal: who came not according to the law of a fleshly command, but according to the power of an endless life,

WHO HAS BECOME SUCH NOT ON THE BASIS OF A LAW OF PHYSICAL REQUIREMENT BUT ACCORDING TO THE POWER OF AN INDESTRUCTIBLE LIFE: os ou kata nomon entoles sarkikes gegonen (3SRAI) os ou kata nomon entoles sarkikes gegonen (3SRAI) alla kata dunamin zoes akatalutou:

- Heb 9:9,10; 10:1; Galatians 4:3,9; Colossians 2:14,20)(Heb 7:3,17,21,24,25,28; Revelation 1:18

Wuest - The Levitical priests were constituted such by a law of a carnal commandment. The High Priest after the order of Melchizedec was constituted a high priest according to the power of an endless life. Here we have two most important statements that present an important contrast. (**Hebrews Commentary**)

Law in this context means "norm" or "standard."

Law of physical requirement - Levitical priests had to be pure descendants of Aaron. The word physical has reference to the body. Indeed, the fitness for being ordained a Levitical priest was determined primarily by physical considerations (Lev 21:16-23). In fact, more than 100 physical blemishes could disqualify as Levite from the priesthood. Leviticus 8:1ff describes the ordination ceremony which was painstakingly external regarding how he was to be bathed, clothed, anointed with oil, and marked with blood. After his ordination he had to observe specified washings, anointings, and hair-cutting all of these things emphasizing the external aspects of a priest. In fact, there was not a single moral or spiritual qualification the prospective priest had to meet (Aaron would have failed miserably because his participation in making the golden calf idol in Exodus 32:1-5!).

Spurgeon - Our Lord sprang out of Judah, of which tribe nothing is said concerning the priesthood, that it might be clear that His priesthood is "not according to a law of physical requirement, but according to the power of an indestructible life." Yet he comes of Judah's royal tribe; for He is King. Further on we find our blessed Lord described as better than Aaron, while His blood is mentioned as speaking better things than that of Abel (Heb 12:24). And He is declared to be the surety of a better covenant, of which it is said that it is established upon better promises.

But - term of contrast

Power ([1411](#))(**dunamis**) refers especially to intrinsic power or inherent ability, the power or ability to carry out some function, the potential for functioning in some way.

Indestructible (179)(**akatálutos** from "a" = negates + **kataluo** = destroy, dissolve) means that which cannot be caused to cease, cannot be brought to an end, cannot be caused to finish and thus is indestructible, indissoluble. Lives of animals sacrificed by the priests ceased to exist, but when Jesus Christ sacrificed Himself as the Lamb of God, His life did not cease. **Akatálutos**, agrees fully with Jn 1:4. Christ's life has no derivation (no **Alpha**) and is interminable (no **Omega**) (Rev 1:8, 21:6, 22:13) The opposite is **kataluo** (our bodies as tents will be torn down (2Co 5:1) or the stones of Herod's temple (Mt 24:2).

Akatálutos means that our priest died a death that could not hold him—a death that was followed by resurrection! Therefore, to say that Jesus is high priest on the basis of **an indestructible life** is to say that he is high priest on the basis of the resurrection.

Wuest - In the case of the Levitical priest, no matter how ill-suited he was and reluctant to take the office, the law made him a priest because of his pedigree. He did what he did so far as official duties were concerned by reason of an outside compulsion. In the case of the High Priest after the order of Melchizedec, He performed His duties as High Priest, not by reason of the fact that any official necessity was laid upon Him, but by virtue of a power in His own nature compelling and enabling Him, the power of a life that even death could not dissolve, for He raised Himself from the dead. The life of the new priest is indissoluble or indestructible, not as eternally existing in the preincarnate Son, but as existing in Him incarnate and while fulfilling priestly duties. It is here that the term "indestructible" is applicable, for He died on the Cross as the High Priest offering atonement, but it was necessary for the continuance and completion of His priestly duties, that He raise Himself from the dead, thus manifesting the power and the nature of that indissoluble life that is His. ([Hebrews Commentary online](#))

Jesus was high priest in virtue of the energy of indissoluble life which dwelt in him, unlike the priests who die (Hebrews 7:8) and because of this Jesus Christ can do what Aaron could not do. He takes us into the presence of God and He anchors us there eternally. (Heb 6:19,20)

John White applies this truth about the indestructible life of Christ to the lives of individual believers writing in "The Fight" that

"Satan cannot hurt you until your task for Christ is completed. Until that time comes you are truly immortal. He may roar. He may threaten. But he is powerless. When your earthly task is completed (and it may be completed when you are young), it is possible that he may kill you. But you will achieve by your death as much and more than by your life. Satan is powerless to stop the advance of the gospel through your life. The brethren overcame Satan in three ways. They overcame him as the Accuser by the blood of the Lamb. They overcame him as the deceiving serpent by the word of their testimony. And they overcame him as the devouring dragon because they loved not their lives unto the death. Such people are invincible. Nothing can stop them, and nothing ever will. "

Hebrews 7:17 For it is **attested** of Him, "YOU ARE A **PRIEST FOREVER ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK**." ([NASB: Lockman](#))

Greek: [martureitai](#) (3SPPI) [gar hoti Su hiereus eis ton aiona kata ten](#) [taxin Melchisedek](#).

Amplified: For it is witnessed of Him, You are a Priest forever after the order (with the rank) of Melchizedek. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

KJV: For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

NLT: And the psalmist pointed this out when he said of Christ, "You are a priest forever in the line of Melchizedek." ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Young's Literal: for He doth testify--`Thou art a priest--to the age, according to the order of Melchisedek;'

FOR IT IS WITNESSED OF HIM THOU ART A PRIEST FOREVER ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK: marturei (3SPPI) gar hoti su iereus eis ton aiona kata ten taxin melchisedek:

- Heb 7:15,21; 5:6,10; 6:20; Ps 110:4)

For (gar) is another **term of explanation**.

Attested (witnessed) (3140) (**martureo** from **martus/martys** = witness, one who has information or knowledge of something & hence can bring to light or confirm something; English ~ martyr)) means to be a witness, to testify, to give evidence, to give testimony, to affirm that one has seen or heard or experienced something. To be well reported. It means to provide information about a person or an event concerning which the speaker has direct knowledge. **Martureo** in some context is used in the sense of making an important and solemn declaration. It can be used in the sense of confirmation or approval and so to affirm in a supportive manner.

Martureo is another key word in Hebrews, with 7/81 (almost 10% of the NT uses)

- **Hebrews 7:8** (note) - In this case mortal men receive tithes, but in that case one receives them, of whom it is **witnessed** that he lives on.
- **Hebrews 7:17** (note) - For it is **attested** of Him, "YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK."
- **Hebrews 10:15** (note) - And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us; for after saying,
- **Hebrews 11:2** (note) - For by it the men of old **gained approval**.
- **Hebrews 11:4** (note) - By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he **obtained the testimony** that he was righteous, God **testifying** about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks.
- **Hebrews 11:5** (note) - By faith Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death; AND HE WAS NOT FOUND BECAUSE GOD TOOK HIM UP; for he **obtained the witness** that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God.
- **Hebrews 11:39** (note) - And all these, **having gained approval** through their faith, did not receive what was promised

The writer quotes from **Psalms 110** - The LORD has sworn and will not change His mind, "Thou art a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek." (Ps 110:4) (**Comment:** Like Melchizedek, Christ combines the offices of priest and king. Note that **Ps 110:4** is quoted three times -- see notes Hebrews 6:20; Hebrews 7:17, Hebrews 7:21 -- and expounded upon in **Hebrews 7** which demonstrates the eternal priesthood of Christ)

Melchizedek had no genealogy to show He is like Christ. (Ge14:18-19 Heb7:15,21 5:6,10 6:20 Ps110:4)

Spurgeon on forever - Christ is never to be changed or superseded. He is a priest forever. As we read nothing of Melchizedek's having given up the priesthood, so depend upon it Christ never will lay down His office while there remains a single man to be saved. "Once a priest always a priest" is true of the Lord Jesus Christ, though true of nobody else. Once was He ordained, and none can put Him from His priesthood: as once the Father set Him upon the hill of Zion as King, and the kings of the earth cannot dash Him from His throne.

Spurgeon goes on to comment about **according to the order of Melchizedek** - This proves that the priests of the order of Levi were not sufficient: there was need of a still greater priesthood. This is the inspired testimony of David in Psalm 110, where he speaks of the Lord Jesus as his Lord, and salutes Him as king and priest. The Lord Jesus Christ was ordained to the priesthood, according to Psalm 110, in a manner distinct from all others. His ordination was unique, for neither Aaron, nor his sons, nor any of the priests of the tribe of Levi were ever ordained by an oath. Ceremonies most important, imposing, instructive, and impressive were performed, but there was no oath. God gave promises to the house of Levi, but He expressly stopped short of anything like an oath to them, not because His promise can be broken, but because that promise was conditional, and must not be confirmed by an oath, as though it constituted a perpetual engagement. But our Savior is made a priest by an oath. And it is written, as if to make it exceeding sure, that the Lord "has sworn and will not change his mind" (Psa 110:4); not because God ever can or does repent, or run back from His oath in any case, but for the confirmation of our faith in the immutability of His word it is expressly added, "He will not change his mind." By an oath that stands fast forevermore Christ is made a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.