

**A CONFIDENT FAITH FOR CONTROVERSIAL TIMES**

12. "When In Doubt Check The Credentials!"

**Scripture:** Hebrews 7:1 - 19.

**Theme:** 'Jesus Christ qualifies to mediate between sinful man and a holy God because of his credentials.'

**Introduction**

The landscape of the United States of America has changed dramatically in the past twenty five years. When many of us were growing up, we came to believe that our country was a "Christian Nation." More recent studies of trends have concluded that the United States is "the most religiously diverse nation in the world." The Immigration Act of 1965 eliminated the quotas linking immigration to national origins. Since then, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, Sikhs, Zoroastrians and now varieties of Jews and Catholics have arrived from every part of the globe. This fact has radically altered the religious make up of the USA. Members of the world's religions live no longer on the other side of the World, but in our neighborhoods; Hindu children go to school with Jews, Catholics and Protestants. Muslim, Buddhist and Sikhs work side-by-side with Christians, Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses.

What does all this mean to us as devoted followers of Jesus Christ? First, of all we need to be aware of it and, instead of reacting negatively out of fear and insecurity, we need to view it as God calling all of us to be His missionaries and ambassadors. Also this means our children are going to come home with questions about Mohammed or Buddha and asking their Christian parents, "Why do we think we are the right and true religion?"

In our diverse culture, we do want our children to know about the origins and practices of other religious faiths. But even more so, we need to not only teach them what we believe as Christians, but also why we choose to place our faith in Jesus and why we trust the message of the Bible as God inspired.

Rather than presenting a free for all or a smorgasbord of religious beliefs we help our children and maturing Christians understand that all paths do not lead to God. We need to offer the person and work of Jesus as God's only way to a right relationship with Himself, not because some exclusive claim to truth, but, because He's the only one who qualifies to be God's Mediator. If the true issue is forgiveness and not goodness, then we must help others check Jesus' credentials.

I. **Who Was Melchizedek** (Heb 7:1 – 3.)

1. Why did the writer hesitate to give his readers further details about Jesus being of the priestly order of Melchizedek? (5:10 – 12.)
  
2. From this scripture what do we know about Melchizedek? (7:1 – 3.)
  - Read Genesis 19:17 – 20 and Psalm 110:4. What more do you learn about him?
  
3. How was Melchizedek associated with Abraham and how did Abraham regard him? (7:2.)
  - What do the receiving of the tithe and the blessing signal about Melchizedek? (Gen. 14:17 – 20.)
  
4. Remembering that Jesus is compared to Melchizedek, what is significant about the meaning of his name and the name of the place of his reign?
  - What comparison is drawn between Jesus and Melchizedek? (7:3.)
  
  - What is significant about the title "King of Salem?"

II. **Why Was His Priesthood Superior?** (Heb. 7:4 – 10.)

1. What does the writer point to that proves the greatness of Melchizedek (7:4.)

- How did the Mosaic Law ensure that the Levitical Priesthood was provided for? (7:5; Numbers 3:40 – 51; 18:21 - 24.)
  - Why was it unusual for Melchizedek to receive a tithe from Abraham? (7:6.)
2. What did the fact that Melchizedek blessed Abraham say about him? (7:7.)
  3. What does the author seek to prove in comparing Melchizedek with the Levitical Priesthood? (7:8 – 10.)
    - Why is it important for all believers in Christ to know that Jesus meets all the biblical requirements of being a high priest forever?

### III. What Made The Levitical Priesthood Inadequate? (Heb. 7:11 – 19.)

1. Why was it necessary for a new priest from the order of Melchizedek to come along and replace the order of Aaron? (7:11.)
  - Why was the levitical priesthood necessary under the law? (5:1 – 3.)
2. What does a new priesthood require? (7:12 – 13.)
  - What prophecy is given that this was going to happen? (Jeremiah 31:31 – 34.)

- How did Jesus bring this about?  
(Gal. 4:4; Matt. 5:17 – 19; Gal. 4:19 – 21, 24.)
3. On what basis did Jesus qualify to become Priest? (7:14 -16.)
- What does the change in priesthood reveal about the way a man now has access to God?
4. To whom does verse 17 refer? (Ps. 110:4.)
5. To what two great conclusions does the author arrive in verses 18 and 19?
- What has been cancelled? What has been introduced? Why?

### **Application**

1. Why is it important for you to be assured that Jesus meets God's qualifications as a mediator?
2. Why is it important for you to tithe or give to the Lord? What are you saying by it?