
Words of Truth

Hebrews 7:13-17

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In this study, we return to the point that has already been made concerning Jesus being a priest after the order of Melchisedec. We have covered a lot about the priesthood of Christ. So, I will attempt to focus on the things we have not yet covered. What we will consider in this study is the following: *“For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec”* (Hebrews 7:13-17).

The priesthood that existed under the Law of Moses was from the tribe of Levi (Deuteronomy 17:9, Deuteronomy 18:1, Deuteronomy 21:5, Deuteronomy 24:8, Deuteronomy 31:9, and Hebrews 7:5). We studied already that perfection did not come through the Levitical priesthood (Hebrews 7:11). The penmen of this book brings about the fact that this priesthood, that is after the order of Melchisedec, is from another tribe. Therefore, the fact that Jesus is from the tribe of Juda [Judah] is brought into light.

Judah was the son of Jacob and Leah (Genesis 29:31-35). As Jacob neared the end of his life, he addressed his sons. Notice what he said about Judah: *“Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee. Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes: His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk”* (Genesis 49:8-12).

There is much in what you just read. The fact that the sceptre would stay with Judah is an awesome prophesy. While ten tribes of the descendants of Israel were done away with through Assyrian captivity because of their sins (II Kings 17:1-23), Judah remained (Isaiah 37:31-32). The kings of Judah sat upon the throne of David (Jeremiah 22:2). Jesus is not only a priest, but also a king sitting upon the throne of David (Luke 1:31-32 and Acts 2:22-36). That is all wonderful, but the prophesy goes beyond the throne of our Lord.

We read the word “Shiloh” used prophetically in Genesis 49:10. It is the only time the Hebrew word “שִׁלּוֹה” appears in the Scriptures. The word is defined as: “tranquil; Shiloh, an epithet of the Messiah: — Shiloh. He whose it is, that which belongs to him, tranquillity; meaning uncertain” (Strong’s # 7886). In addition to that definition, we have details in Scriptures that are helpful. Jesus is the only one from the tribe of Judah that represented a hope of gathering the people (John 12:27-32, II Thessalonians 2:1, and I John 2:1-2).

As you proceed through the Scriptures in consideration of Jesus and the prophesy that Jacob gave his son about Jesus, you find other interesting details. Jacob said that Judah was a lion’s whelp [cub]. From John’s heavenly vision, we read the following: *“And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation”* (Revelation 5:1-9).

It is wonderful to see the unfolding of this message from the days of Jacob forward. We know these things were not understood by those of old (I Peter 1:9-12). We need to be thankful that we can tie them together and have an understanding of things that would have been so easy to miss before the whole will of God was revealed. We can read and understand what was once a mystery (Ephesians 3:1-11).

What the Jewish Christians of the first century needed to grasp here was simple. The Levities were given the priesthood on a temporary basis. The priesthood of Christ was not tied to Levi. Jesus came forth from the tribe of Judah. You see this in the genealogical record where we read of Judas/Juda [Judah] in the genealogical record of Christ (Matthew 1:1-17 and Luke 3:23-38). The question of the permanency of this change is then answered.

“For ever” is the difference between the priesthood of Christ and that of Levi. There won’t be another priesthood. Jesus has an endless life (Hebrews 7:24-25 and Revelation 1:18). Therefore, His role as our priest will be unchanging as long as this world stands.