

RELIGION VS. THE REALITY OF A RELATIONSHIP
SERIES: THE SUPREMACY OF JESUS

People often confuse religion as being the same as the reality of a relationship with Jesus.

The writer of Hebrews stresses through his letter that in Jesus we have a perfect High Priest.

Hebrews 5:9 (NLT) 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.

Three functions that describe the responsibility and ministry of a priest:

- (1) A priest is one who knows us exactly the way we are.
- (2) A priest is someone who loves us.
- (3) A priest is someone who can help us with the burdens we carry.

Today the writer of Hebrews identifies Jesus as the priest we all need in our lives.

Psalm 110:4 (NLT) The Lord has taken an oath and will not break his vow: "You are a priest forever in the line of Melchizedek."

Hebrews 7:1 - 3 (NLT) This Melchizedek was king of the city of Salem and also a priest of God Most High. When Abraham was returning home after winning a great battle against many kings, Melchizedek met him and blessed him. Then Abraham took a tenth of all he had won in the battle and gave it to Melchizedek. His name means 'king of justice.' He is also 'king of peace.' There is no record of his father or other or any of his ancestors---no beginning or end to his life. He remains a priest forever, resembling the Son of God.

Hebrews 7:11 (NLT) And finally, if the priesthood of Levi could have achieved God's purposes ---and it was that priesthood on which the law was based---why did God need to send a different priest from the line of Melchizedek, instead of from the line of Levi and Aaron?

God had to promise a Messiah to come and his priesthood would be greater than that which had failed to work.

Hebrews 7:16 (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.

The writer of Hebrews contrast the awesome power of an indestructible life with the puny authority derived from human ancestry

Hebrews 7:23 - 24 (NLT) Another difference is that there were many priests under the old system. When one priest died, another had to take his place. but Jesus remains a priest forever, his priesthood will never end.

Jesus ability to minister to us never fails.

Hebrews 7:26 - 28 (NLT) He is the kind of high priest we need because he is holy and blameless, unstained by sin. He has now been set apart from sinners, and he has been given the highest place of honor in heaven. He does not need to offer sacrifices every day like the other high priests. 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 sacrificed himself on the cross. Those who were high priests under the law of Moses were limited by human weakness. But after the law was given, God appointed his Son with an oath, and his Son has been made perfect forever.

The superiority of Jesus' priesthood is stated.

Hebrews 8:1 - 2 (NLT) Here is the main point: Our High Priest sat down in the place of highest honor in heaven, at God's right hand. There he ministers in the sacred tent, the true place of worship that was built by the Lord and not by human hands.

Jesus' ministry takes place in God's presence.

Hebrews 8:6, 7, 10, 12 (NLT) But our High Priest has been given a ministry that is far superior to the ministry of those who serve under the old laws, for he is the one who guarantees for us a better covenant with God, based on better promises. If the first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no need for a second covenant to replace it.....But this is the new covenant I will make with the people of Israel on that day, says the Lord: I will put my laws in their minds so they will understand them. I will be their God and they will be my people.....And I will forgive their wrongdoings, and I will never again remember their sins.

We no longer have to approach God by means of religion. We no longer have to deal with an imperfect system. We have available a superior way.

CONCLUSION:

God offers us in Jesus an effective High Priest, one who pleads our case in the very presence of the living God.

From Jesus we receive the energy and power to live as we ought to live.