**Greater Than All - wk 7 – The Mystery Man**

**Ever make assumptions about something, then find out you’re wrong? Hindsight is 20/20. Things seem clear when we look back in our life and w/ God. Using the OT we have a challenge & warning.**

**The primary arch in Hebrews is don’t give up but grow up and move forward in your faith! Last week the writer challenged us to mature.**

**Today one of the oddest parts of the Bible - revolves around a mystery person Abraham came across while in promise land**

**It is long. Has potential to be really interesting or really boring. I’ll do my best to bring it to life. This meat…**

**Hebrews 6:13 When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for him to swear by, he swore by himself, (God promised Abe in his own name) 14 saying, “I will surely bless you and give you many descendants.” 15 And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised. (The wait)**

**Old Abe promised a son from God - a family that would bless/ change the world! Abe’s faith was in that promise from God. He held onto it - waited, endured, & received the promised son.**

**16 People swear by someone greater than themselves, and the oath confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument. (oath= vow to someone who holds you to it, binding. Court, “so help me God” Covenant of marriage before friends) 17 Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs (believers) of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. (No one is greater than God, so he vowed / oath to himself – a forever promise)**

**\*\* God is immutable – “Unchanging nature of his purpose”**

**Keeps his word - not flaky and shacky. Does not change mind.**

**18 God did this so that, by two unchangeable things (God’s promises and God’s word) in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be greatly encouraged. (We have hope & encourage - a supernatural confidence and assurance.)**

**\*\* There are things God can not do! Cannot contradict his nature (attributes), can’t lie, break his word, sin, tempt, die.**

**19 We have this hope (because God can not lie) as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It (Jesus the anchor) enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, 20 where our forerunner, Jesus, (Jesus the forerunner) has entered on our behalf. (He goes before the Father ahead of us.)**

**Imagine a priest who enters the temple for the people. Jesus is described as perfect priest. Why go back to the practice team?**

**6:20b He (Jesus) has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek. (Jesus the High priest - first introduced in Heb 2 and again in 5 – mentions Mel - like a good writer that draws out important characters in a good mystery)**

**The Mystery Man - Who is Mystery Mel?**

**Is he a local pagan king, symbolic allegory, descendant of Shem, a Jewish addition, Angel Michael, or divine figure? Why bring him up?**

**Background – Jewish believers struggled w/ Jesus not being a Levite.**

**Moses led the Hebrews (family of Abe, Isaac, and Jacob) out of Egypt. Aaron is appointed 1st priest (from the family of Levi). Aarons family (Levites) were to be the family of priests who would go before God for the people in the tabernacle and later the temple. (Leviticus is manual)**

**Problem- Jesus was not a Levi, therefore can’t be a high priest They were hung up on something they did not understand and ready to leave. What are you hung up on? Creation, miracles, suffering… You’re trying to figure it all out before you believe.**

**Hebrews dismantles this by pointing to Mel (Jews believed, God revealed)**

**Hebrews 7:1 This Melchizedek was king of Salem (area of Jerusalem before it was Israel) and priest of God Most High. (A king and priest of the LORD) He met Abraham returning from the defeat of the kings and blessed him, 2 and Abraham gave him a tenth of everything. (Mel was the OG)**

**Gen 14 - Lot (Abe’s nephew) is living in Sodom and Gomorrah when a war broke out w/neighboring kings (4 kings beat 5). Lot and family are abducted by the kings. A man escaped and told Abraham. Abe w/ 318 men went in pursuit. Attacked at night - and won! On the way home - he passed through the valley next to Salem (Jerusalem). The King of Salem came out to bless him - that is Melchizedek. (Gen 14:17-20) The part with Mel is only 4 verses.**

**This was long before Moses – before the priestly order. Mel is the first recorded king of Jerusalem and first priest of the LORD in the Bible.**

**King David later prophesied that the Messiah will be “a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek.” (Psalm 110) \*\* Jesus favorite Psalm 14X**

**The writer of Hebrews is referencing both of these scriptures.**

**2 Abraham gave him a tenth of everything. (spoils) (Gen 14:20)**

**Why would he do that? This was the first tithe offering. He saw Mel in a divine role, in the position of God. Shows superiority.**

**2b First, the name Melchizedek means “king of righteousness”; then also, “king of Salem” means “king of peace.” 3 Without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, resembling the Son of God, he remains a priest forever. (You can see why he is such a mystery.)**

* **King of righteousness – an attribute of God (El = God)**
* **King of peace – an attribute of God**
* **Eternal - Without a beginning or end – an attribute of God**
* **Son of God - Not a ghost or apparition, in bodily form**
* **Eternal priest – His roll and work will never end.**

**(Spurgeon) - We see but little of him, yet we see nothing little in him.**

**Does Mel sound like anyone you know? Jesus**

**\*\* Melchizedek a possible Christophany (A Christ appearance)**

**They happen throughout the OT - God temporarily showing himself to creation in a physical form. Abe made a covenant w/ Jesus himself.**

**Mel is either a real person who is a type of Jesus, or a Christophany.**

**Remember they are thinking of going back to their old faith without Jesus – to go back to temple worship with priests and sacrifices. The writer says, Jesus is greater the great Mel!**

**7:4 Just think how great he (Mel) was: Even the patriarch Abraham gave him a tenth of the plunder! (Offering of worship) 5 Now (2000 yrs later) the law requires the descendants of Levi who become priests to collect a tenth from the people - that is, from their fellow Israelites - even though they also are descended from Abraham.**

**Israel gives a tithe to the priesthood as a requirement of Moses. But Abraham voluntarily gave tithes to Mel. This makes Abraham’s giving to Melchizedek greater than Israel’s.**

**6 This man, (Mel) however, did not trace his descent from Levi, yet he collected a tenth from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. 7 And without doubt the lesser (Abe) is blessed by the greater. (Mel) 8 In the one case, the tenth is collected by people who die; (their current priest) but in the other case, by him who is declared to be living. (Mel) 9 One might even say that Levi, who collects the tenth, paid the tenth (to Mel) through Abraham, 10 because when Melchizedek met Abraham, Levi was still in the body of his ancestor. (Had not been born yet – but was in his genes)**

**Everybody got that??? They understood this, they were Hebrews (Jewish) we are not, so it requires some explaining.**

**Mel was not a Levite – Abraham (and in a way all Levites) honored Mel as the greater high priest – though not a Levite.**

**11 If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood - and indeed the law (commands of Moses) given to the people established that priesthood - why was there still need for another priest to come, one in the order of Melchizedek, not in the order of Aaron? (Refencing David in Ps 110 – Aaron the first appointed priest of Moses – David said a great one was coming)**

**Abraham, Moses, Aaron, the Levites, and David Honored Mel – and Mel is a glimpse of the Messiah, Jesus!**

**12 For when the priesthood is changed, the law must be changed also. (David spoke of a Messiah that would bring a new order and way of doing things – a necessary change – this is it!!) 13 He (Mel) of whom these things are said belonged to a different tribe, and no one from that tribe has ever served at the altar. 14 For it is clear that our Lord descended from Judah, (Jesus born from the family of King David – Judah) and in regard to that tribe (Judah) Moses said nothing about priests. (Because that was given to the Levites)**

**Point is - Jesus does not need to be a Levite! Jesus is greater and fulfills their work – DON’T GO BACK – to that old way!**

**7:15 And what we have said is even more clear if another priest like Melchizedek appears, 16 one who has become a priest not on the basis of a regulation as to his ancestry (family of appointed priests - Levites) but on the basis of the power of an indestructible life. (Endless life) 17 For it is declared: “You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.” (Psalm 110:4)**

**7:18 The former regulation (earthly priests) is set aside because it was weak and useless 19 (for the law made nothing perfect), (OT only shows us our problem of sin and need for God – no permanent help – it says we have a problem) and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God. (Jesus the better hope! Better than religion, works, and rules!)**

**7:20 And it was not without an oath! (Full circle back the beginning – the oath and promise of God – God cannot lie!) Others became priests without any oath, 21 but he became a priest with an oath when God said to him: “The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: ‘You are a priest forever.’” (Psalm 110:4 – God promised Abe and David) 22 Because of this oath, Jesus has become the guarantor of a better covenant. (Jesus is a better covenant! He guarantees it)**

**What is a covenant? A testament agreement between 2 parties.**

**The Bible in a nutshell – We are created to walk with and enjoy God – and to follow his word and will. When we don’t that is sin. We are not good at following God’s will – but we are great at sin. Sin separates us from God and brings judgement and spiritual death.**

**Old Covenant – The law - sacrifice a healthy innocent animal for the guilty (God himself did the first when he covered Adam and Eve – Gen 2) That innocent animal (ie. lambs) as a type receives the justice & judgement of God. Priests acting as a temp mediator would make sacrifices for us. Atonement, covering. But was only temp because we keep sinning.**

**New Covenant – Jesus God in the flesh offers himself (a better perfect innocent sacrifice) as payment for our sins (the cross). Jesus is the lamb, forever priest, and mediator - once and for all time – better New Covenant.**

**Jesus fulfills, continues, and completes the old Covenant – he guarantees it. He is better!**

**23 Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; (they die and pass on the job) 24 but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. (Jesus is the last priest!) 25 Therefore he is able to save completely (uttermost) those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.**

**OT - diagnoses the problem we are sinners // prognosis – death // treats symptoms – priesthood // Follow-up – the commandments**

**no permanent results. / NT - Then here comes Jesus – prescription – the Cross // Complete spiritual healing! – cured the only true cure**

**25 …He is able to save (to the uttermost) those who come to God thru him**

**Billy Sunday preached that God took him from the gutter-post (gutter drunk) to the uttermost! Saved completely!**

**Jesus is the only prescription for sin.**

**7:26 Such a high priest truly meets our need - one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. (great declarations of Jesus!) 27 Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. (Heb 4 - he is sinless) He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself.**

**Jesus offered self *willingly* - not forced, compelled, dragged!**

**28 For the law appoints as high priest’s men in all their weakness; but the oath, which came after the law, (the promise given in Gen 14 and Ps 110 – by God) appointed the Son, (Jesus) who has been made perfect forever.**

**What do we do with all this??? We first need to understand…**

**\*\*\* For them this meant**

**Stop looking for something greater or going back to something older. Jesus is greater and meets your need for a remedy with God.**

**Jesus is the better, forever, true, permanent, perfect, glorious and perfectly qualified priest. He finished the work once and for all! This was the plan! Why go back to a broken system???**

**To this day many Jewish people reject Jesus as the Messiah. Jewish people w/out Jesus are in need of salvation like anyone**

**\*\*\* For us it means – it’s the same.**

**Stop looking for something greater or going back to something older. Jesus is greater and meets your need for a remedy with God.**

**Mystery Mans Reminders**

1. **Don’t be discouraged, because God’s promises are reliable.**

**Heb 6:17 God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs (us) of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. (covenant) 18 …it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be greatly encouraged. 19 We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. 19 We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.**

**Jesus is that oath – the blood oath – a guarantee of total absolute reliability. His word / promises are true – no lies!!**

**Like an anchor. You don’t need an anchor in calm seas.**

1. **Generosity and giving are an act of devotion and worship.**

**7:1 This Melchizedek (king of righteousness) was king of Salem (King of peace) and priest of God Most High. He met Abraham returning from the defeat of the kings and blessed him, 2 and Abraham gave him a tenth of everything.**

**Abe had the spoils of life and war - and he honored God by giving the tithe. Tithe means = first and best tenth.**

**\*\* It represents Christ who is the first and the best offering.**

**This was incredibly important in the bible for Two Reasons:**

**It’s an act of worship - and - an act of provision. When we give, we are providing for the work of the kingdom and worshiping!**

1. **Religion will never be enough**

**We can try to follow every word in the Bible (like them) try our best to do the requirements, but it will never be enough. We can’t! (The writer calls these things - in 7:18 weak and useless)**

**Going to church, volunteering, giving, reading bible, living a good life – simply cannot save you. “I need to get back in church” - no, you need Jesus. God gives these as tools to help us – but they are not enough!**

1. **Jesus is more than enough!!**

**27 He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself.**

**“Once and for all” - doing away with all other religions and efforts. That means all other ways are false. John 14:6**

**There is no other hope other than Jesus!**

**We have incredible descriptions of Jesus in this chapter!**

**Jesus our promise // Jesus our only hope // Jesus our anchor**

**Jesus our forerunner // Jesus our Mediator // Jesus our high priest**

**Jesus is the King of righteousness // Jesus is the King of peace**

**Jesus is eternal God // Jesus is the Son of God**

**Jesus is the indestructible life // Jesus is the better hope**

**Jesus is the better covenant // Jesus is the guarantee of hope**

**Jesus is our permanent infinite priest // Jesus is Holy**

**Jesus is blameless // Jesus is pure // Jesus is sinless // Jesus is exalted!**

**After reading Hebrews if you still are unsure who Jesus is – you may never know.**

**Jesus is the one you’re looking for! They were looking to priests, pastors, and people. Rules and systems. Order and tradition and experiences.**

**Jesus is the one they were looking for! He is who you are looking for! The search is over! The Work is done!**

**It is hard for some to imagine the work is done. That we don’t have a part other than faith. So, we try to prove our worth, that is religion.**

**2 things separate Jesus Christ from other world religions.**

1. **God can be known – he is personal and he cares!**
2. **Jesus finished all the is needed to know God – grace!**

**Heb 7:25 Therefore he is able to save completely (to the uttermost) those who come to God through him…**

**It is one thing to come to church and another to come to God.**