

Notes on the Greek New Testament
Week 165 – Hebrews 6:9-7:17

Day 821: Hebrews 6:9-12

Verse 9

Πεπείσμεθα δὲ περὶ ὑμῶν, ἀγαπητοί, τὰ κρείσσονα καὶ ἐχόμενα σωτηρίας, εἰ καὶ οὕτως λαλοῦμεν·

πεπείσμεθα Verb, perf pass indic, 1 pl
πειθω persuade; perf act & pass trust,
rely on, have confidence, be confident

Cf. 2 Cor 7:4. "The great principle which gives rise to this confidence is the absolute sovereignty of the God of grace and the indefectibility of his work in the lives of men." Hughes.

ἀγαπητός, η, ον beloved

The only occurrence of this word in this epistle.

κρείπτων and κρείσσων, ον gen ονος
better

σωτηρία, ας f salvation

ἐχόμενα σωτηρίας 'Things that belong to salvation'. "The presence of those things in the readers' lives was a token of the presence of salvation too, since they were so clearly and inevitably bound up with salvation." Bruce

οὕτως thus, in this way

λαλεω speak, talk

Verse 10

οὐ γὰρ ἄδικος ὁ θεὸς ἐπιλαθέσθαι τοῦ ἔργου ὑμῶν καὶ τῆς ἀγάπης ἧς ἐνεδείξασθε εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ, διακονήσαντες τοῖς ἁγίοις καὶ διακονοῦντες.

ἄδικος, ον unjust

ἐπιλαθέσθαι Verb, aor midd dep infin

ἐπιλανθανομαι forget, neglect,
overlook

Does not suggest meritorious works that demand divine recompense but a life that demonstrates the genuineness of the work of God's grace and will therefore be owned by God.

ἐνεδείξασθε Verb, aor midd indic, 2 pl

ἐνδεικνυμαι show

ὄνομα, τος n name

"The love shown to their fellow Christians ... is *for his sake*, or, more literally, it is love shown 'to his name.' This implies that their coming to the assistance of their brethren is evidence of their willingness to identify themselves with the stigma attaching to the name of Jesus, and thus of the genuineness of their love for him." Hughes.

διακονήσαντες Verb, aor act ptc, m nom pl

διακονεω serve, care for

οἱ ἅγιοι God's people

The present participle is added to underline that this is not just past conduct but is continuing.

Cf. also 10:32ff for things which the readers had suffered for the 'name'

Verse 11

ἐπιθυμοῦμεν δὲ ἕκαστον ὑμῶν τὴν αὐτὴν ἐνδείκνυσθαι σπουδὴν πρὸς τὴν πληροφορίαν τῆς ἐλπίδος ἄχρι τέλους,

ἐπιθυμεω long for, desire, lust after

A strong verb expressing passionate longing or an 'earnest wish' Phillips.

ἕκαστος, η, ον each, every

He is not happy for any of them to bein to fall away – the expression of a pastor's heart.

σπουδη, ης f earnestness, eagerness,
zeal

πληροφορία, ας f full assurance,
conviction

Westcott says that πληροφορία means fullness and "it seems better to understand it here of the full development of hope rather than the full assurance of hope (1 Thess. 1:5)."

ἐλπις, ιδος f hope, ground of hope

"The invitation to faith is not an invitation to inactivity but to the perseverance of pilgrimage, for Christ is not only the source but also the goal of our salvation, the end as well as the beginning. Faith indeed rests upon the alpha, but it also displays itself as hope directed towards the omega (cf. Rev 22:13)." Hughes.

ἄχρι prep with gen until, as far as

τέλος, ος n end, conclusion

Verse 12

ἵνα μὴ νωθροὶ γένησθε, μιμηταὶ δὲ τῶν
διὰ πίστεως καὶ μακροθυμίας
κληρονομοῦντων τὰς ἐπαγγελίας.

νωθρος, α, ον **lazy, sluggish**
γένησθε Verb, aor midd depo subj, 2 pl
γίνομαι

μιμητης, ου m **imitator**
πιστις, εως f **faith, trust, belief**
μακροθυμια, ας f **longsuffering, patience**

"Faith' is the essential principle through which the blessing is gained and 'long-suffering' marks the circumstance under which faith has to be maintained." Westcott.

Westcott says that μακροθυμια is to be distinguished from ὑπομονη in that ὑπομονη is patience in the face of trial while μακροθυμια "expresses the trial of unfulfilled desire."

κληρονομεω **receive, gain possession of, inherit**

"The participle is a strict present. Believers even now enter on their inheritance (4:3), and with them the saints of old time enjoy the fulfilment of that for which they looked (12:22ff)." Westcott

ἐπαγγελια, ας f **promise**

Day 822: Hebrews 6:13-20**Verse 13**

Τῷ γὰρ Ἀβραάμ ἐπαγγειλάμενος ὁ θεός,
ἐπεὶ κατ' οὐδενὸς εἶχεν μείζονος ὁμοῖα,
ᾧμοσεν καθ' ἑαυτοῦ,

"The example of Abraham establishes two things, the certainty of the hope which rests on a promise of God, and the need for patience in order to receive its fulfilment." Westcott.

Abraham is the great example of faith in the promises of God (see Matt 3:9; Lk 3:8; Gal 3:6; Rom 4:3, 18, 20f.; James 2:21f.).

ἐπαγγειλάμενος Verb, aor midd dep ptc, m
nom s ἐπαγγελλομαι **promise**

ἐπεὶ **since, because**

οὐδεις, οὐδεμια, οὐδεν **no one, nothing**

εἶχεν Verb, imperf act indic, 3 s ἔχω

μειζων, ον and μειζοτερος, α, ον (comp
of μεγας) **greater**

ὁμοῖα Verb, aor act infin ὀμνῶ and
ὀμνυμι **swear, vow, make an oath**

Westcott suggests that the promise was first given and then later confirmed with an oath (see Gen 12:3,7; 13:14; 15:5ff; 17:5ff compared with Gen 22:16ff). He adds that the oath indicated that there would be delay in fulfilment but that also fulfilment was certain.

ᾧμοσεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s ὀμνῶ
ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον **him/her/itself**

Verse 14

λέγων, Εἰ μὴν εὐλογῶν εὐλογήσω σε καὶ
πληθύνων πληθυνῶ σε·

The reference is to Gen 22:17 which is preceded by God's swearing by himself in v.16.

μην intensive particle **indeed, surely**
εὐλογεω **bless**

This construction reflects the Hebrew infinitive absolute with the finite verb which expresses certainty "I will most certainly bless you."

σε Pronoun, acc s συ

πληθυνω **increase, multiply**

"It is of particular interest that the occasion was the offering up by Abraham of Isaac, the son of the promise, in obedience to the command of God. The patriarch's trust in the integrity of God and his promise could not have been put to a more severe test, for the fulfilment of the covenant which God had made with him depended on the life and the line of Isaac, and the instruction to slay his son had the appearance of the failure of the divine word (cf. Gen 12:2f.; 13:15f.; 15:5f., 18; 17:7, 9, 15, 19, 21; 18:18f.; 21:12). Abraham's confidence in that word and its fulfilment was so firm, however, that he obeyed without question the command to offer up his son Isaac, convinced, as our author points out in 11:19 below, that God would, if need be, raise him up from the dead and thus vindicate the trustworthiness of the promise." Hughes.
The oath let Abraham know that just as his son had been spared, so surely would God fulfil all of the promises he had made to him.

Verse 15

καὶ οὕτως μακροθυμήσας ἐπέτυχεν τῆς
ἐπαγγελίας.

οὕτως and οὕτω **thus, in this way**
μακροθυμεω **be patient, wait patiently**

ἐπέτυχεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s

ἐπιτυχανω **obtain, receive**

ἐπαγγελια, ας f **promise, what is promised**

Abraham received the immediate promise of a son but did not see the full promise of 'the seed' in whom all the nations of the world are blessed.

Concerning the *obtaining* of the promise, Hughes writes, "This the majority of the people of Israel, the nation descended from Abraham through Isaac, failed to do because of the hardness of their hearts; and this the Hebrew Christians to whom this latter is addressed are also in danger of failing to do, unless they imitate the faith and persistence of Abraham."

Verse 16

ἄνθρωποι γὰρ κατὰ τοῦ μείζονος ὀμνύουσιν, καὶ πάσης αὐτοῖς ἀντιλογίας πέρασ εἰς βεβαίωσιν ὁ ὄρκος·

μειζων, ον see v.13
ἀντιλογία, ας f argument, dispute
περας, ατος n end, boundary, conclusion
βεβαιωσις, εως f confirmation,
establishing firmly
ὄρκος, ου m oath, vow

περας εἰς βεβαίωσιν ὁ ὄρκος 'the oath is final for confirmation'. Montifiore comments "An oath has a double function. Positively it adds moral and legal force to a statement (for who would dare to call God as a false witness?). Negatively, it ends controversy among men by introducing the testimony of God."

Verse 17

ἐν ᾧ περισσώτερον βουλόμενος ὁ θεὸς ἐπιδείξει τοῖς κληρονόμοις τῆς ἐπαγγελίας τὸ ἀμετάθετον τῆς βουλῆς αὐτοῦ ἐμεσίτευσεν ὄρκω,

περισσώτερον adv. more, more clearly
βουλομαι want, desire, wish

Westcott says that βουλομαι is to be distinguished from θελω in that the first indicates purpose with respect to something while the latter "the feeling in respect of the person himself."

ἐπιδείξει Verb, aor act infin ἐπιδεικνυμι
show, point out
κληρονομος, ου m heir, one who
receives what is promised (by God)

The promise was not for Abraham alone but for him and his heirs – including Christians (11:39) – heirs with him of the promise.

ἀμεταθετος, ον unchangeable; το α.
unchangeableness
βουλη, ης f purpose, plan, decision
μεσιτευω interpose; confirm, guarantee

The only occurrence of this verb in the NT.

Verse 18

ἵνα διὰ δύο πραγμάτων ἀμεταθέτων, ἐν οἷς ἀδύνατον ψεύσασθαι [τὸν] θεόν, ἰσχυρὰν παράκλησιν ἔχωμεν οἱ καταφυγόντες κρατῆσαι τῆς προκειμένης ἐλπίδος·

δυο gen & acc δυο dat δυοιν two
πραγμα, τος n matter, thing

The two things are:

- i) the promise itself which, being a promise from "God who cannot lie," is certain in itself;
- ii) the oath by which the promise is confirmed.

ἀμεταθετος, ον v.17
ἀδυνατος, ον impossible
ψεύσασθαι Verb, aor midd dep infin
ψευδομαι lie, speak untruth, deceive

The anarthrous use of θεος here shows that the reference is to the divine nature rather than person (so Westcott, Montifiore).

ἰσχυρος, α, ον strong, powerful
παρακλησις, εως f encouragement

The oath was added not to make the promise more certain but to strengthen faith in the certainty of the promise.

καταφυγόντες Verb, aor act ptc, m nom pl
καταφυγω flee, flee for safety

May be an allusion to the 'cities of refuge' in the Old Testament. Montifiore says, "The city of God is the one true city of refuge."

κρατω hold, hold fast, sieze
προκειμαι be set before, lie before
ἐλπις, ιδος f hope

Hope rests in the promises and the promises have their focus in Christ – as the following verses make plain. So it is to Christ that Christian believers have fled for refuge.

Verse 19

ἦν ὡς ἄγκυραν ἔχομεν τῆς ψυχῆς, ἀσφαλῆ τε καὶ βεβαίαν καὶ εἰσερχομένην εἰς τὸ ἐσωτερον τοῦ καταπετάσματος,

ἄγκυρα, ας f anchor
ψυχη, ης f self, inmost being, life, 'soul'
ἀσφαλῆς, ες safe, sure
βεβαιος, α, ον reliable, firm, effective

"The stability of hope is twofold. It is undisturbed by outward influences (ἀσφαλῆς), and it is firm in its inherent character (βεβαία)." Westcott

εἰσερχομαι enter, go in, come in
ἐσωτερος, α, ον i) adj inner; ii) prep with
gen behind, inside
καταπετασμα, τος n curtain

Our hope is Christ (cf. 1 Tim 1:1), whose present state is our certain destiny – the force of 'forerunner', v.20. He is 'the hope of glory' (Col 1:27).

Hughes quotes Herveus who says, "In the case of sailors, the sands in which the anchor is fixed and holds are hidden and invisible, and yet the sailors are secure, although they cannot see how the arms of the anchor are held. So also we, placed as we are amid the waves of this world, do not see the heavenly realities, and yet we are so joined to them through hope that we cannot be moved by any onset of fear."

Verse 20

ὅπου πρόδρομος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν εἰσηλθεν Ἰησοῦς, κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ ἀρχιερεὺς γενόμενος εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.

ὅπου adv. where

προδρομος, ου m forerunner

ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν 'on our behalf'. Cf Jn 14:2.

Westcott highlights the new aspect of Christ's work, "The High-priest entered the Holy of Holies on behalf of the people, but they never followed him. Christ enters heaven as the forerunner of believers."

The word προσδρομος was used of the men or troops which were sent out to explore before the advance of an army.

εἰσηλθεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s
εἰσερχομαι

τάξις, εως f order, division

ἀρχιερεὺς, εως m high priest

γενόμενος Verb, aor ptc, m nom s γινομαι
αἰῶν, αἰωνος m eternity

Day 823: Hebrews 7:1-3

Hebrews 7

The theme of the distinctive High Priesthood of Jesus is picked up again with the reference to Melchizedek at the end of the previous chapter and leads into resumption of the argument suspended at 5:11.

Chapter 7 begins with a summary of the Genesis account concerning Melchizedek (vv.1-3) leading into an extended argument (vv.4-28) concerning the superiority of this priestly order. In the middle of this argument (vv. 12-19), there is a digression on the subject of how Jesus can be a priest since he is not of Levitical descent.

Verse 1

Οὗτος γὰρ ὁ Μελχισέδεκ, βασιλεὺς Σαλήμ, ἱερεὺς τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου, ὁ συναντήσας Ἀβραάμ ὑποστρέφοντι ἀπὸ τῆς κοπῆς τῶν βασιλέων καὶ εὐλογήσας αὐτόν,

βασιλεὺς, εως m king

ἱερεὺς, εως m priest

ὑψιστος, η, ον highest, most high

Cf. Gen 14:18.

συνανταω meet, happen

ὑποστρεφω return, turn back

κοπη, ης f slaughter, defeat

εὐλογεω speak well of, bless

"By the act of blessing, Melchizedek at once assumed the position of a superior. And Abraham on his part freely acknowledged Melchizedek's implied claim to superiority." Westcott

Verse 2

ὧ καὶ δεκάτην ἀπὸ πάντων ἐμέρισεν Ἀβραάμ, πρῶτον μὲν ἐρμηνεύομενος βασιλεὺς δικαιοσύνης ἔπειτα δὲ καὶ βασιλεὺς Σαλήμ, ὃ ἐστὶν βασιλεὺς εἰρήνης.

δεκατη, ης f a tenth part, tithe

μεριζω divide, assign, apportion

πρωτον adv. first, in the first place

ἐρμηνεω interpret; pass. mean, be translated

δικαιοσυνη, ης f righteousness

ἔπειτα then, afterwards

εἰρηνη, ης f peace

"The meanings of the two names Melchizedek and Salem have been introduced to prove that righteousness and peace are combined in the Melchizedekian order of priesthood (cf. Is 9:6f). These qualities found fulfilment in Christ (1 John 2:1; Eph 2:14)." Montifiore. "In Christ we see the appearance of the expected everlasting king promised to David's line under whom righteousness flourishes and peace abounds (Ps 72:7; cf. Ps 97:2; 98:3,9); he is 'the Prince of Peace,' of the increase of whose government and peace there shall be no end (Isa 9:6f.); he is the long-awaited king who will speak peace to the nations (Zech 9:9f.), and 'the righteous Branch,' whose name is 'The Lord our Righteousness' and who administers justice in his glorious reign (Jer 23:5f.; 33:15f.). As king he is just, and as priest he justifies all who trust in his atoning sacrifice (Rom 3:26; 5:8f)." Hughes.

Verse 3

ἀπάτωρ, ἀμήτωρ, ἀγενεαλόγητος, μήτε ἀρχὴν ἡμερῶν μήτε ζωῆς τέλος ἔχων, ἀφωμοιωμένος δὲ τῷ υἱῷ τοῦ θεοῦ, μένει ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸ διηνεκές.

ἀπατωρ, ορος without (record of) a father
ἀμητωρ, ορος without (record of) a mother

ἀγενεαλογητος, ον without (record of) lineage

μητε and not; μητε ... μητε neither ... nor

ἀρχη, ης f beginning

ζωη, ης f life

τελος, ους n end

ἀφωμοιωμένος Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom
s ἀφομοιω be like, resemble

μενω remain, stay, abide

διηνεκης, ες continuous; εἰς το δ. for all time; continually, perpetually

Montefiore says that the writer of Hebrews uses the Alexandrian principle, common in Philo, that "what is unmentioned in the Bible is presumed not to exist." Bruce takes a more balanced view stating that the author would have acknowledged that Melchizedek was *historically* a man who belonged to a dynasty of priest-kings. However, what was important was the *record* concerning Melchizedek in Scripture. Scripture, by what it includes and what it omits makes Melchizedek a fitting type of Christ.

Neither of these comments, however, does justice to Psalm 110. It is the Old Testament itself which links the Messiah with everlasting priesthood, after the order of Melchizedek.

Day 824: Hebrews 7:4-10**Verses 4-10**

Four arguments are provided for the superiority of Melchizedek:

- i. Abraham paid tithes to him;
- ii. Melchizedek blessed Abraham
- iii. Melchizedek's priesthood, in contrast with that of Levi, is permanent;
- iv. Levi himself (in a manner of speaking) paid tithes to Melchizedek.

Verse 4

Θεωρεῖτε δὲ πηλίκος οὗτος ᾧ [καὶ] δεκάτην Ἀβραάμ ἔδωκεν ἐκ τῶν ἀκροθινίων ὁ πατριάρχης.

θεωρω see, observe, notice

πηλικος, η, ον how large, how great

δεκατη, ης f see v.2

ἔδωκεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s διδομι

ἀκροθινον, ου n spoils, plunder

πατριαρχης, ου m patriarch (one of the noted ancestors of the Jewish nation)

The definite article and the position of πατριαρχης in the sentence provide emphatic force. "The author draws his readers' attention to the remarkable consideration that Abraham, eminent patriarch though he was, gave Melchizedek a tithe of the spoils and was blessed by him." Hughes.

Verse 5

καὶ οἱ μὲν ἐκ τῶν υἱῶν Λευὶ τὴν ἱερατείαν λαμβάνοντες ἐντολὴν ἔχουσιν ἀποδεκατοῦν τὸν λαὸν κατὰ τὸν νόμον, τοῦτ' ἔστιν τοὺς ἀδελφούς αὐτῶν, καίπερ ἔξεληλυθότας ἐκ τῆς ὀσφύος Ἀβραάμ·

ἱερατεια, ας f priestly office

This word occurs in the NT only here and in Luke 1:9. Westcott states that it differs from ἱερωσυνη (7:11,12,24) in that "it expresses the actual service of the priest and not the office of priesthood. The tithes were given to the 'children of Levi' 'for their service' (Num 18:21)."

ἐντολη, ης f command, order, instruction

ἀποδεκατω give a tenth, tithe, exact tithes from

λαος, ου m people, a people

νομος, ου m law

καίπερ though, although

ἔξεληλυθότας Verb, perf act ptc, m acc pl
ἔξερχομαι

ὀσφους, υος f waist, reproductive organs

Verse 6

ὁ δὲ μὴ γενεαλογούμενος ἔξ αὐτῶν δεδεκάτωκεν Ἀβραάμ, καὶ τὸν ἔχοντα τὰς ἐπαγγελίας εὐλόγηκεν.

γενεαλογεομαι descend from

δεκατω collect tithes

ἐπαγγελια, ας f promise, what is promised

εὐλόγηκεν Verb, perf act indic, 3 s

εὐλογεω see v.1

Westcott says of the perfect tenses in this verse, "The fact is regarded as permanent in its abiding consequences. It stands written in Scripture as having a present force." Westcott goes on to list the use of the perfect tense in Hebrews and its significance.

Verse 7

χωρὶς δὲ πάσης ἀντιλογίας τὸ ἔλαττον ὑπὸ τοῦ κρείττονος εὐλογεῖται.

χωρις without, apart from

ἀντιλογία, ας f argument, dispute
 ἔλαττον Adjective, nom/acc n s (variant
 spelling) ἔλασσων, ον (comp of μικρός)
 lesser, inferior
 κρείττων and κρείσσω, ον gen ονος
 better; greater, superior

It is remarkable that God had promised Abraham that in him and his seed, all nations of the world would be blessed, and yet Melchizedek blessed Abraham!

Verse 8

καὶ ὧδε μὲν δεκάτας ἀποθνήσκοντες
 ἄνθρωποι λαμβάνουσιν, ἐκεῖ δὲ
 μαρτυρούμενος ὅτι ζῆ.

ὧδε adv here

δεκατη, ης f see v.2

ἀποθνήσκω die, face death, be mortal

Levitical priests were mortal but
 Melchizedekian priests immortal (Ps 110:4).

ἐκεῖ there, in that place, to that place
 μαρτυρεω bear witness, testify
 ζῆ Verb, pres act indic, 3s ζω live, be
 alive

Of the phrase 'that he lives' Bruce says that it is true "of Melchizedek in the sense that we never read of him otherwise than as a living man; of Christ absolutely – in the sense that, having died once for all and risen from the dead, he is alive for evermore (see vv 16, 23-25 and cf. Rev 1:18; Rom 6:9)."

Verse 9

καὶ ὡς ἔπος εἶπεν, δι• Ἀβραάμ καὶ Λευὶ ὁ
 δεκάτας λαμβάνων δεδεκάτωται,

ἔπος, ους n word; ὡς ἔπος εἶπεν so to
 speak

"This classical phrase does not occur elsewhere in the NT." Westcott

δεδεκάτωται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s
 δεκατω collect tithes; pass. pay
 tithes

Verse 10

ἔτι γὰρ ἐν τῇ ὄσφύϊ τοῦ πατρὸς ἦν ὅτε
 συνήντησεν αὐτῷ Μελχισέδεκ.

ἔτι still, yet

ὄσφυς, υος f see v.5

πατὴρ Noun, gen s πατηρ, πατρος m
 father

ὅτε conj when, at which time

συνανταω see v.1

"In this historic encounter, then, what was established was not simply a precedent but a whole relationship, the significance of which is permanent: namely, that the order of Melchizedek, fulfilled in Christ, is superior to the order of Levi, which with the advent of Christ is surpassed and superseded." Hughes.

Day 825: Hebrews 7:11-17

Verses 11-28

The writer now argues that the Levitical priesthood has been replaced by Jesus' Melchizedekian priesthood. The argument is similar, in some respects, to that of Paul in Romans 4 and Galatians 3 where he argues that the law was transitory in nature. "The Levitical priesthood and the Law, which it represented, were alike transitional and transitory... If ... there had been a bringing to perfection through the Levitical priesthood – if in other words there had been a bringing to perfection through the Law – there would have been no need for another priesthood." Westcott.

Verse 11

Εἰ μὲν οὖν τελείωσις διὰ τῆς Λευιτικῆς
 ἱερωσύνης ἦν, ὁ λαὸς γὰρ ἐπ• αὐτῆς
 νουμοθέτηται, τίς ἔτι χρεία κατὰ τὴν
 τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ ἕτερον ἀνίστασθαι
 ἱερέα καὶ οὐ κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Ἀαρων
 λέγεσθαι;

τελειωσις, εως f fulfilment, perfection

I.e. perfection of the worshipper or in respect of the worshipper's relationship with God.

Λευιτικος, η, ον Levitical
 ἱερωσυνη, ης f priesthood

See the note on verse 5.

λαος, ου m people, a people

νουμοθέτηται Verb, pluperfect pass indic,
 3 s νομοθετομαι be given the law

ὁ λαὸς γὰρ ἐπ• αὐτῆς νουμοθέτηται on the basis of it or in association with it (the Levitical priesthood) the people were given the law. I.e. the institution of the Levitical priesthood was laid down as part of the body of Mosaic law.

ἔτι still, yet

χρεία, ας f need

ταξις, εως f order, division

"The appearance of Melchizedek on the stage of patriarchal history is fleeting and dramatic. He is identified as king of Salem and priest of the Most High God, but nothing is said in Genesis 14 about an *order* of Melchizedek. Only in Psalm 110, in the mainstream, as it were, of the history of the Israelites, is there an isolated, and for this reason cryptic mention of one who is 'a priest after the order of Melchizedek.' The psalm, which expresses the expectation of the establishment of a messianic priesthood and kingdom, was written some hundreds of years after the inauguration of the levitical order... Thus the plain implication of this flash of revelation is that the old and inferior order is to be superseded by a new and superior order, which, compared with the inadequate and temporary nature of the former, will be distinguished by full and abiding efficacy." Hughes.

ἕτερος, α, ον other, another, different
ἀνίστασθαι Verb, pres midd infin ἀνίστημι
raise; midd rise, arise

Cf Acts 3:22

ἱερεὺς, εως m priest

"If God had intended the Aaronic priesthood to introduce the age of perfection, the time when man would enjoy unfettered access to Him, why should He have conferred on the Messiah (in Ps 110) a priestly dignity of His own – different from Aaron's and by implication superior to Aaron's?" Bruce

Verses 12-19

The mention of the Levitical nature of the priesthood (v.11) leads into a digression on how Jesus can be a priest since he is not of Levitical descent. Two arguments are used:

- The words 'order of Melchizedek' imply an abandoning of the old order, i.e. that involving Levitical descent;
- The old order required a principle of descent because of the transitory nature of those who hold office. In Jesus we have an eternal priesthood and an everlasting Priest.

Verse 12

μετατιθεμένης γὰρ τῆς ἱερωσύνης ἐξ ἀνάγκης καὶ νόμου μετὰθεσις γίνεται.

μετατιθημι remove, take back
ἀναγκη, ης f necessity
μεταθεσις, εως f removal, change

Since the priesthood formed part of the Law, it could not be changed without a change in or removal of the Law.

Verse 13

ἐφ' ὃν γὰρ λέγεται ταῦτα φυλῆς ἑτέρας μετέσχηκεν, ἀφ' ἧς οὐδεὶς προσέσχηκεν τῷ θυσιαστηρίῳ·

ὁφ' ὃν γὰρ λέγεται ταῦτα i.e. Ps 110, speaking of the Messiah from David's line, from the tribe of Judah.

φυλη, ης f tribe, nation, people
ἕτερος, α, ον see v.11
μετέσχηκεν Verb, perf act indic, 3 s μετεχω
share in, belong to
οὐδεὶς, οὐδεμία, οὐδεν no one, nothing
προσέσχηκεν Verb, perf act indic, 3 s
προσεχω pay close attention to, watch
θυσιαστηριον, ου n altar (of incense)

Verse 14

πρόδηλον γὰρ ὅτι ἐξ Ἰούδα ἀνατέταλκεν ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν, εἰς ἣν φυλὴν περὶ ἱερέων οὐδὲν Μωϋσῆς ἐλάλησεν.

προδηλος, ον very obvious or evident
Ἰούδα Noun, gen s Ἰουδας

This and Rev 5:5 are the only references, apart from the nativity genealogies, that refer to Jesus' descent from Judah.

ἀνατέταλκεν Verb, perf act indic, 3 s
ἀνατελλω rise, dawn, shine

Cf. Mal 4:2. The use of this verb carries a distinctly messianic connotation.

λαλεω speak, talk

Verses 15-19

An exposition of the imperfections of the Levitical order.

Verse 15

καὶ περισσότερον ἐτι κατάδηλόν ἐστιν, εἰ κατὰ τὴν ὁμοιότητα Μελχισέδεκ ἀνίσταται ἱερεὺς ἕτερος,

περισσοτερος, α, ον adj more, much
more

ἐτι see v.11

κατάδηλος, ον very evident

This word occurs here alone in the NT

ὁμοιοτης, ητος f likeness, similarity
ἀνίσταται Verb, pres midd indic, 3 s
ἀνίστημι see v.11

Verse 16

ὃς οὐ κατὰ νόμον ἐντολῆς σαρκίνης γέγονεν ἀλλὰ κατὰ δύναντιν ζωῆς ἀκαταλύτου,

ἐντολη, ης f command
σαρκινος, η, ον fleshly, belonging to this
world

So termed because it was concerned with the externalities of religion – the physical descent of the priests; a physical temple etc.

γέγονεν Verb, perf act indic, 3s γινομαι
ζωη, ης f life
ἀκαταλυτος, ον indestructible, without
end

"There is a double contrast between 'law' and 'power' and between 'commandment of flesh' and the 'indissoluble life'... The possession of the indissoluble life is not only the characteristic of Christ's exercise of His priestly office: it is the ground on which he enters upon it. Other priests were made priests by virtue of special ordinance: He was made priest in virtue of His inherent nature. He could be, as none other, victim at once and priest." Westcott

Verse 17

μαρτυρεῖται γὰρ ὅτι Σὺ ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ.

μαρτυρεω bear witness, testify
αἰων, αἰωνος m age, eternity

The Aaronic priesthood itself is described as "an everlasting priesthood" (Ex 40:15; Jer 33:18), but no individual member of the priesthood is described as an everlasting priest.

On the phrase κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ Hughes writes, "There is, however, no more than a *likeness* between Christ and Melchizedek, a likeness which is suggested by the mysterious silence of the Genesis narrative concerning the birth and death and the parentage and posterity of Melchizedek. Within this setting, the figure of Melchizedek is a semblance or shadow, a signpost pointing to someone greater than himself. He is like a primeval John the Baptist who testifies in effect: 'After me comes one who ranks before me, for he was before me' (Jn 1:30). The *reality* foreshadowed by Melchizedek is Christ, the one who is *for ever*, first, because he is the eternal Son, and, second, because by his incarnation and sacrifice of himself he *has become* mankind's high priest, who by the power of his resurrection from the dead and the glory of his exaltation to the right hand of the Majesty on high has redeemed and raised up with himself our fallen nature. He who died once for us now lives, never again to die (Rom 1:4; 6:9; 1 Cor 15:20). The crown has followed the cross, and it is this *power of an indestructible life* which guarantees that he is indeed our priest *for ever*."