

Hebrews 7:4-5 Commentary

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CONSIDER JESUS OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST
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| The Epistle to the Hebrews | | | | |
|--|--|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| INSTRUCTION Hebrews 1-10:18 | | | EXHORTATION Hebrews 10:19-13:25 | |
| Superior Person of Christ Hebrews 1:1-4:13 | Superior Priest in Christ Hebrews 4:14-10:18 | | | Superior Life In Christ Hebrews 10:19-13:25 |
| BETTER THAN PERSON Hebrews 1:1-4:13 | BETTER PRIESTHOOD Heb 4:14-7:28 | BETTER COVENANT Heb 8:1-13 | BETTER SACRIFICE Heb 9:1-10:18 | BETTER LIFE |
| MAJESTY OF CHRIST | MINISTRY OF CHRIST | | | MINISTERS FOR CHRIST |

| | |
|------------------------------|------|
| DOCTRINE | DUTY |
| DATE WRITTEN: ca. 64-68AD | |

See [ESV Study Bible "Introduction to Hebrews"](#)
(See also [MacArthur's Introduction to Hebrews](#))

Borrow [Ryrie Study Bible](#)

Hebrews 7:4 **Now observe how great this man** was to **whom Abraham**, the **patriarch**, **gave** a **tenth** of the **choicest spoils** ([NASB: Lockman](#))

Greek: [Theoreite \(2PPAM\) de pelikos outos o \[kai\] dekatan Abraam edoken \(3SAAI\) ek ton akrothinion o patriarches.](#)

Amplified: Now observe and consider how great [a personage] this was to whom even Abraham the patriarch gave a tenth [the topmost or the pick of the heap] of the spoils ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

KJV: Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils.

NLT: Consider then how great this Melchizedek was. Even Abraham, the great patriarch of Israel, recognized how great Melchizedek was by giving him a tenth of what he had taken in battle. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Young's Literal: And see how great this one is, to whom also a tenth Abraham the patriarch did give out of the best of the spoils,

Hebrews 7:4-10 elucidates and substantiates the Superiority of the **Melchizedekian** compared with the Levitical priesthood. The basic argument of the writer is to explain that Melchizedek was greater than the great patriarch Abraham, who himself was the "rich root of the olive tree" (the "fountainhead" as it were of the Hebrew nation - see note Romans 11:17).

A W Pink - The chief design of the (writer) in this chapter was not to declare the **nature** of Christ's priesthood, nor to describe the exercise thereof; instead, he dwells upon the **excellency** of it. The nature of Christ's sacerdotal (relating to priests or the priesthood) office had been treated of in the first half of Hebrews chapter 5 and is dealt with again, at length, in Hebrews chapter 9. But here he occupies us with the great **dignity** of it. His reason for so doing was to display the immeasurable superiority of Christianity's High Priest over that of Judaism's, and that, that the faith of the Hebrews might be established and their hearts drawn out in love and worship to Him. Unless the scope of the apostle's theme in this chapter be clearly apprehended, it is well-nigh impossible to appreciate and understand the details of his argument. ([Hebrews 7:4-10 Melchizedek Continued](#))

Wuest offers an excellent summation of the exceptional significance of this section of Hebrews observing that "The writer now proceeds to show that Melchisedec was better than Abraham, in order that he might show that he was better than Levi, and thus better than Aaron. It follows therefore that if Melchisedec is superior to Aaron, his priesthood must be better than that of Aaron. Since that is the case, Messiah's priesthood, being in the order of the priesthood of Melchisedec, must be better. That makes Messiah better than Aaron and, therefore, the New Testament He instituted, better than the First Testament, which Aaron was instrumental in bringing in. And that is the argument of the Book of Hebrews, namely, that the New Testament in Jesus' blood is superior to and takes the place of the First Testament in animal blood. ([Hebrews Commentary online](#))

The verbal inerrancy of the OT as Word of God is demonstrated by this NT argument which rest on a small historical detail (Hebrews 7:4-10)

When Abraham returned to his home after the slaughter of the kings he was a hero, at the pinnacle of martial success. Can you see him proudly astride his lumbering camel, smeared with the dirt and blood of battle, leading his 318 proud men plus Lot and all the captives and all the plunder through Jerusalem? If so, you have the "feel" necessary to begin to appreciate Abraham's strange, mystic encounter with a shadowy figure of immense grandeur—Melchizedek

NOW OBSERVE HOW GREAT THIS MAN WAS TO WHOM ABRAHAM THE PATRIARCH: Theoreite (2PPAM) de pelikos

- Acts 2:29; 7:8,9
- Genesis 12:2; 17:5,6; Romans 4:11-13,17,18; Galatians 3:28,29; James 2:23)

The following renderings help bring out the meaning of this passage...

You can see that Melchizedek was very great. Abraham, the great father, gave Melchizedek a tenth of everything that Abraham won in battle. (International Children's Bible)

You can see how important Melchizedek was. Abraham gave him a tenth of what he had captured, even though Abraham was the father of the chosen people. ([GWT](#))

Now notice the greatness of this man. Even Abraham the patriarch pays him a tribute of a tenth part of the spoils. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Spurgeon - He was duly appointed both priest and king: king of righteousness and peace, and at the same time priest of the Most High God. It may be said of him that he sat as a priest upon his throne. He exercised the double office to the great blessedness of those who were with him; for his one act towards Abraham would seem to be typical of his whole life; he blessed him in the name of the Most High God. "See how great this man was," that he not only ruled his people with righteousness and brought them peace, but he was their representative toward God and God's representative to them. If Melchizedek was so great, how much greater is that man whom Melchizedek represents! If the type is so wonderful, what must the Antitype be! I invite you to consider "how great" is He of whom it is written that the Lord "has sworn and he will not change his mind, 'You are a priest forever according to the manner of Melchizedek" (Psa 110:4). I will not say "Consider how great this man was," for there is no verb: the "was" is inserted by the translators. We are to consider "how great this man." Say "was" if you will, but read also "is," and "shall be." Consider how great this man was and is, and is to be, even the Man Christ Jesus.

Observe ([2334](#)) (**theoreo** from **theoros** = a spectator <> **theaomai** = to look closely at; gives us our English word "theater") means to continually give careful consideration to the writer's logic in the following discourse, like a general would who is inspecting his army! Weigh with attentive contemplation. This word describes one who is a spectator although not one who is an apathetic spectator but one who looks with rapt attention and focused interest (-- Just like most men watch their favorite professional sporting event on the weekends!)

The **present imperative** is issued as a command calling for his readers to continue gazing at and discerning by giving careful consideration to how great Melchizedek was in light of how Abraham chose to demonstrate his reverential respect. The writer is calling his readers to make a critical, discriminating inspection of the facts regarding Melchizedek.

As **Pink** says the writer commands...

the Hebrews to attentively mark and seriously ponder the official dignity of this ancient servant of God. (Ibid)

Vincent writes that **theoreo**...

denotes calm, intent, continuous contemplation of an object which remains before the spectator. So John 1:14, we beheld, implying that Jesus' stay upon earth, though brief, was such that his followers could calmly and leisurely contemplate his glory. Compare John 2:23: "they beheld his miracles," thoughtfully and attentively. Here (Luke 10:18 [Jesus declared] "I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning") it denotes the rapt contemplation of a vision.

How great - An exclamation, not a question. The idea is "how important" or "how high is his status".

This man - The word **man** is added by the translators (Young's Literal = "how great this one"), and should read "now consider how great this", i.e. royal priest. His exalted rank appears from the fact that none other than Abraham, the father and head of Israel, had shown him deference.

It is also notable that the writer is careful in his argument to identify Melchizedek as the man (literally "this one"), lest his Jewish readers think it might be some other man of the same name.

Spurgeon thus encourages us to...

Consider how great Melchizedek was. There is something majestic about every movement of that dimly-revealed figure. His one and only appearance is thus fitly described in the Book of Genesis...We see but little of him, yet we see nothing little in him. He is here and gone, as far as the historic page is concerned, yet is he

“a priest for ever,” and “it is witnessed that he liveth.” Everything about him is on a scale majestic and sublime.

“**Consider how great this man was**” in the combination of his offices. He was duly appointed both priest and king: king of righteousness and peace, and at the same time priest of the Most High God. It may be said of him that he sat as a priest upon his throne. He exercised the double office to the great blessedness of those who were with him; for his one act towards Abraham would seem to be typical of his whole life; he blessed him in the name of the Most High God.

“**Consider how great this man was,**” that he not only ruled his people with righteousness and brought them peace, but he was their representative towards God and God’s representative to them; and in each character distributed divine blessings.

“**Consider how great this man was**” in the power of his benedictions. Abraham had already been greatly blessed, so much so that he is described as “he that received the promises.” Yet a receiver of promises so great, a man with whom God had entered into solemn covenant, was yet blessed by Melchizedek, “and without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better.” This great man yet further blessed the blessed Abraham, and the father of the faithful was glad to receive benediction at his hands. No small man this: no priest of second rank; but one who overtops the sons of men by more than head and shoulders, and acts a superior’s part among the greatest of them.

“**Consider how great this man was**” in his supremacy over all around him. He met Abraham when he was returning as a conqueror from the overthrow of the robber kings; and the victorious patriarch bowed before him and gave him tithes of the best of the spoil. Without a moment’s hesitation the man of God recognized the priest of God, and paid to him the tribute of a subject to the officer of a great king. In Abraham’s bowing all the line of Aaronic priesthood did homage unto Melchizedek; for as the apostle saith, “Levi also, who receiveth tithes, paid tithes in Abraham, for he was yet in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.” So that all kings in Abraham, and all priests in Abraham, did homage unto this man, who, as king and priest, was owned to be supreme.

“**Consider how great this man was.**” When the writer of Hebrews had once proved that Melchizedek was greater than Abraham, he felt that he had clearly proved him to be greater than all others, at least to the Hebrews; for the seed of Abraham can recognize none greater than Abraham; and since Abraham by paying tithes acknowledges his subordination to Melchizedek, it is clear that the priest of the Most High God was the greatest of men.

“**Consider how great this man was**” as to the singularity of his person, “without father, without mother, without descent”: that is to say, we know nothing as to his birth, his origin, or his history. Even this explanation hardly answers to the words, especially when it is added, “Having neither beginning of days, nor end of life.” So mysterious is Melchizedek that many deeply-taught expositors think that he was veritably an appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ. They are inclined to believe that he was not a king of some city in Canaan, as the most of us suppose, but that he was a manifestation of the Son of God, such as were the angels that appeared to Abraham on the plains of Mamre, and that divine being who appeared to Joshua by Jericho, and to the three holy ones in the furnace.

At any rate, you may well “**consider how great this man was**” when you observe how veiled in cloud is everything about his coming and going — veiled because intended to impress us with the depth of the sacred meanings which were shadowed forth in him. How much more shall this be said of him of whom we ask —

**“Thy generation who can tell,
Or count the number of thy years?”**

“**Consider how great this man was**” in the speciality of his office. He had no predecessor in his priesthood, and he had no successor. He was not one who took a holy office and then laid it down; but as far as the historic page of Scripture is concerned we have no note of his quitting this mortal scene; he disappears, but we read nothing of his death any more than of his birth. His office was perpetual, and passed not from sire to son; for he was the type of One “who is made not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.”

“**Consider how great this man was**” in his being altogether unique. There is another “after the order of Melchizedek,” the glorious Antitype in Whom Melchizedek himself is absorbed; but apart from Him Melchizedek is unique. Who can equal this strange, mysterious priest, prophet, king, sent of the Most High God to bless the father of the faithful? He is altogether alone: he receives no commission from the hands of

men, nor from God by men; and he does not transmit to a successor what he had not received from a predecessor. Melchizedek stands alone: one mighty crag, rising out of the plain; a lone Alp, whose brow is swathed in cloud sublime. "Consider how great this man was;" but think not to measure that greatness.

I shall leave you to that consideration; for my business this morning is not with Melchizedek, but with a greater than he. I shall take my text in its connection, but lift it up to a higher application.

Beloved friends, if Melchizedek was so great, how much greater is that man whom Melchizedek represents! If the type is so wonderful what must the Antitype be! I invite you to consider "how great" is He of Whom it is written, "The Lord swore and will not change His mind, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." I will not say "Consider how great this man was," for there is no verb: the "was" is inserted in italics by the translators. We are to consider "how great this man." Say "was" if you will, but read also "is," and "shalt be." Consider how great this man was and is, and is to be, even the Man Christ Jesus. (If you have time read Spurgeon's application of these truths to our Great High Priest Christ Jesus in his message entitled [The Man Christ Jesus](#))

Unto whom even the patriarch Abraham (KJV) - The KJV accentuates the significance of the interaction between Abraham and Melchizedek. To Melchizedek as his superior, Abraham **even** paid a tithe from the best of his spoils.

Abraham the patriarch - This designation is important to the writer's logic and he accentuates in the original Greek sentence by placing **patriarches** emphatically at the end of the sentence. Since Abraham is the forefather and head of the Jewish race and nation, it is legitimate to make a comparison between Abraham's descendants (the Levitical priesthood) and Melchizedek. The point is that Abraham as the ancestor of the Levitical priests, represents (as it were) his entire group of descendants -- he stands at the fountainhead of all the subsequent offspring.

Expositor's Greek Testament adds that...

Abraham is in emphatic place, but the emphasis is multiplied by the position of **ho patriarches** ("the patriarch"). It is as if he heard some of his readers saying, "He must be mistaken or must refer to some other Abraham and not the fountain of all our families and of Levi and Aaron". He adds **ho patriarches** ("the patriarch") to indicate that it is precisely this greatest of men to whom the people owe even their being, of who he says that Melchizedek was greater."

Melchizedek was superior because he was a specially consecrated king-priest (as emphasized in Hebrews 7:3), and was above the later **patriarch**-priests.

The argument goes like this - Since Abraham was himself one of the founders of Israel, the implication is that he, although a patriarch of the Jews, nevertheless chose to recognize Melchizedek as more important than himself.

Patriarch ([3966](#)) (**patriarches** from **patria** = lineage, family <> from **pater** = father + **archo** = to be chief, to lead, to rule or **arche** = beginning or head) is literally the chief father (or "first father"). **Patriarch** in Scripture was applied to important male ancestors who were the father of a tribe or nation. The **patriarch** represented the primary ancestor of a national entity, which in this case was Israel or the Hebrew nation.

In short, Abraham is the "first father" of these Jewish readers. He is their great progenitor, and yet, as the writer explains, Melchizedek is even greater!

Smith's Bible Dictionary writes that patriarch was...

(father of a tribe), the name given to the head of a family or tribe in Old Testament times. In common usage the title of patriarch is assigned especially to those whose lives are recorded in Scripture previous to the time of Moses, as Adam, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

"In the early history of the Hebrews we find the ancestor or father of a family retaining authority over his children and his children's children so long as he lived, whatever new connections they might form when the father died the branch families did not break off and form new communities, but usually united under another common head. The eldest son was generally invested with this dignity. His authority was paternal. He was honored as central point of connection and as the representative of the whole kindred. Thus each great family had its patriarch or head, and each tribe its prince, selected from the several heads of the families which it embraced." --McClintock and Strong.

"After the destruction of Jerusalem, patriarch was the title of the chief religious rulers of the Jews in Asia and in early Christian times it became the designation of the bishops of Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch

and Jerusalem." --American Cyclopedia (see [Dictionary Definitions](#))

There are 4 NT uses of patriarches...

Acts 2:29 "Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the **patriarch** David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.

Acts 7:8 "And He gave him the covenant of circumcision; and so Abraham became the father of Isaac, and circumcised him on the eighth day; and Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob of the twelve **patriarchs**.
9 "And the **patriarchs** became jealous of Joseph and sold him into Egypt. And yet God was with him,

Hebrews 7:4 Now observe how great this man was to whom Abraham, the **patriarch**, gave a tenth of the choicest spoils.

There are 5 uses of **patriarches** in the Lxx (1 Chr. 24:31; 27:22; 2 Chr. 19:8; 23:20; 26:12) as exemplified by the following use...

2 Chronicles 19:8 And in Jerusalem also Jehoshaphat appointed some of the Levites and priests, and some of the heads of the fathers' (2 Hebrews words, rosh = head + 'ab = father; Lxx = patriarches) households of Israel, for the judgment of the LORD and to judge disputes among the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

As **MacDonald** reasons that...

Since Abraham was one of the greatest stars in the Hebrew firmament, it follows that Melchizedek must have been a star of even greater magnitude. ([MacDonald, W & Farstad, A. Believer's Bible Commentary: Thomas Nelson](#))

A W Pink adds the force of the writer's

reasoning here is easily perceived. To give tithes to another who is the servant of God is a token of official respect, it is the recognition and acknowledgement of his superior status. The value of such official tokens is measured by the dignity and rank of the person making them. Now Abraham was a person of very high dignity, both naturally and spiritually. Naturally he was the founder of the Jewish nation; spiritually he was the "father" of all believers (Romans 4). In his person was concentrated all the sacred dignity belonging to the people of God. How "great" then must be Melchizedek, seeing that Abraham himself owned his official superiority! And therefore how "great" must be that order of priesthood to which he belonged!

That upon which the Jews insisted as their chief and fundamental privilege, and which they were unwilling to forego, was the greatness of their ancestors, considered as the high favorites of God. They so gloried in Abraham and their being his children, that they opposed this to the person and doctrine of Christ Himself (John 8:33, 53).

With regard to official dignity, they looked upon Aaron and his successors as to be preferred above all the world. Whilst they clung to such fleshly honours, the Gospel of Christ, which addressed them as lost sinners, could not be but distasteful to them. To disabuse their minds, to demonstrate that those in whom they trusted came far short in dignity, honour, and greatness, of the true High Priest, the apostle presses upon them the eminence of him who was a type of Christ, and shows that the greatest of all their ancestors paid obeisance (deferential respect and respectful submission, such as when one bows in an attitude of homage) to him. (Ibid)

GAVE A TENTH OF THE CHOICEST SPOILS: edoken (3SAAI) ek ton akrothinion o patriarches:

- Genesis 14:20

Notice how this second "sentence" in this verse brings out the reason for recognizing the greatness of Melchizedek.

Leon Morris makes the point that " In the ancient world, it was generally recognized that there was an obligation to pay tithes to important religious functionaries. This implies a certain subjection on the part of those paying to those to whom the tithe was paid. ([Gaebelein, F. Editor: Expositor's Bible Commentary 6-Volume New Testament. Zondervan Publishing](#))

Spurgeon - He met Abraham when he was returning as a conqueror from the overthrow of the robber kings; and the victorious patriarch bowed before him and gave him tithes of the best of the spoil. Without a moment's hesitation the man of God recognized the priest of God, and paid to him the tribute of a subject to the officer of a great king.

Gave a tenth - More literally it reads "gave from or out of (ek)". The point is that the tithe was taken out of the **best portion** of the

plunder. The giving of "tenths" or "tithes" is a custom in a number of cultures today (including many churches).

Ryrie explains the significance of the transaction this way...

By taking the role of the one who tithed and the one who received the blessing (v. 1), Abraham, to whom God gave the promises, doubly acknowledged his inferiority to Melchizedek. ([The Ryrie Study Bible: New American Standard Translation: 1995. Moody Publishers](#))

Choicest spoils (205) (**akrothinion** from **akron** = topmost point + **this** = a heap) means literally "the topmost part of the heap" and originally meant "first fruits" but came to be used of the choicest spoils of war, the finest booty, the best of the plunder. This is the only use of this word in Scripture (NT or OT)

From these spoils an offering would be made to the gods as a thanksgiving for victory. Abraham gave a tenth of the very best to Melchizedek.

Expositor's Greek Testament notes that...

The Greeks after a victory gathered the spoils in a heap (Greek = "this") and the top or best part of the heap ("akron") was presented to the gods.

Vine writes this word depicts the

"firstfruit offerings," and in war "the choicest spoils

Wuest adds that "The Greeks after a victory, gathered up the spoils in a heap, and the top, or best part of the heap, was presented to the gods. The fact that Abraham gave a tenth of the pick of the spoils to Melchisedec, magnifies the latter's greatness in the eyes of the readers of this letter. But it was not any ordinary man called Abraham who paid tithes to Melchisedec. It was Abraham, the patriarch. The writer is careful to identify him, lest his Jewish readers think it might be some other man of the same name. ([Hebrews Commentary online](#))

THOUGHT - Abraham voluntarily gave his best to a "shadow" of Messiah without being asked! Do I give the Lord who is the Substance my best (time, talent, finances) or just throw Him my leftovers?

Hebrews 7:5 And **those indeed** of the **sons** of **Levi** who **receive** the **priest's office** **have commandment** in the **Law** to **collect** a **tenth** from the **people**, that is, from their **brethren**, **although** these are **descended** * from **Abraham** (**NASB: Lockman**)

Greek: [kai oi men ek ton huion Leui ten hierateian lambanontes \(PAPMPN\) entolen echousin \(3PPAI\) apodekatoun \(PAN\) ton laon kata ton nomon, tout' estin \(3SPA\) tous adelphous auton, kai per exeluthotas \(RAPMPA\) ek tes osphuos Abraam:](#)

Amplified: And it is true that those descendants of Levi who are charged with the priestly office are commanded in the Law to take tithes from the people—which means, from their brethren—though these have descended from Abraham ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

KJV: And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham:

NLT: Now the priests, who are descendants of Levi, are commanded in the law of Moses to collect a tithe from all the people, even though they are their own relatives. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Young's Literal: and those, indeed, out of the sons of Levi receiving the priesthood, a command have to take tithes from the people according to the law, that is, their brethren, even though they came forth out of the loins of Abraham;

AND THOSE INDEED OF THE SONS OF LEVI WHO RECEIVE THE PRIEST'S OFFICE HAVE COMMANDMENT IN THE LAW TO COLLECT A TENTH FROM THE PEOPLE: kai oi men ek ton huion leui ten hierateian lambanontes (PAPMPN) entolen echousin (3PPAI) apodekatoun (PAN) ton laon:

- Heb 5:4; Exodus 28:1; Numbers 16:10,11; 17:3-10; 18:7,21-26
- Leviticus 27:30-33; Numbers 18:26-32; 2 Chronicles 31:4-6; Nehemiah 13:10

The point the writer is building toward is that if Melchizedek was greater than Abraham, he was also greater than Abraham's descendants, some of which would include the Levites including the priests from Aaron's lineage.

The **UBS Handbook** however adds this interesting observation noting that...

The differences between Levites and priests are complex and partly uncertain. It is not even certain that the author of Hebrews distinguished between priests and Levites, that is, between those Levites who descended from Levi through Aaron, and those who belonged to other branches of the Levi family. Those descendants of Levi who are priests assumes that the writer did make this distinction, but it is made nowhere else in Hebrews, not even in verse 11 where one might expect it. ([Ellingworth, P., & Nida, E. A. A Handbook on the Letter to the Hebrews. New York: United Bible Societies](#))

Sons of Levi - Sons speaks of the male lineage and the Greek is rendered literally "out of the sons of Levi". So what? The implication is that the reference here is not to **all** Levites, for not all were priests but only those who were **out of** (preposition **ek** = out of or from) the tribe of Levi and from the house of **Aaron** and thus were duly qualified to be priests.

Spurgeon - In Abraham's bowing all the line of Aaronic priesthood did homage unto Melchizedek. So that all kings in Abraham, and all priests in Abraham, did homage unto this man, who as king and priest was owned to be supreme.

Who receive the priest's office - Genuine God honoring ministry is not something one "achieves" but a privilege one "receives". And all believers have received this high privilege -- priests of the Most High God. How are you fulfilling your purpose as His privileged priest? Are you interceding? Are you offering up sacrifices?... "of praise to God"? see **note** Hebrews 13:15; of thanks for everything? see **note** 1Thessalonians 5:18; How is it possible for saved sinners, as even we yet non-glorified priests are, to offer acceptable sacrifices? see note Hebrews 13:21.

THOUGHT - Dear priest of the Most High God, is His praise continually in your mouth and on your lips as it was for David, even in the miserable circumstances of Psalm 34:1? You are encouraged to ponder the psalm and Spurgeon's note below, especially taking note of his comment "I will"...

(A Psalm of David when he feigned madness before Abimelech, who drove him) (away and he departed.) I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. (Psalm 34:1)

I will bless the Lord at all times He is resolved and fixed, **I will**; he is personally and for himself determined, let others so as they may; he is intelligent in head and inflamed in heart -- he knows to Whom the praise is due, and what is due, and for what and when.

To Jehovah, and not to second causes our gratitude is to be rendered. The Lord hath by right a monopoly in His creatures praise. Even when a mercy may remind us of our sin with regard to it, as in this case David's deliverance from the Philistine monarch was sure to do, we are not to rob God of His need of honour because our conscience justly awards a censure to our share in the transaction. Though the hook was rusty, yet God sent the fish, and we thank Him for it.

At all times, in every situation, under every circumstance, before, in and after trials, in bright days of glee, and dark nights of fear. David would never have done with his praising, because he would never be satisfied that he had done enough but always feeling that he fell short of the Lord's deservings. (Ed note: Oh, may the Spirit of the Living God be pleased to ignite the flame of similar passion in the hearts of his believer-priests in a day of all too often apathetic attitudes toward the eternal, almighty, Holy One, Whom we are to worship and serve in Spirit and in truth!)

Happy is he whose fingers are wedded to his harp (You might want to read that sentence again and picture what Spurgeon is saying.).

He who praises God for mercies shall never want a mercy for which to praise.

To bless the Lord is never unseasonable.

His praise shall continually be in my mouth, not in my heart merely, but in my mouth too. (Amen!) Our thankfulness is not to be a dumb thing; it should be one of the daughters of music.

Our tongue is our glory, and it ought to reveal the glory of God.

What a blessed mouthful is God's praise!

How sweet, how purifying, how perfuming!

If men's mouths were always thus filled, there would be no repining (repine = to fret, be discontent) against God, or slander of neighbours (or husbands or wives or relatives or pastors, etc).

If we continually rolled this dainty morsel under our tongue, the bitterness of daily affliction would be swallowed up in joy. (Amen again!)

God deserves blessing with the heart, and extolling with the mouth -- good thoughts in the closet, and good words in the world. ([Spurgeon's Note](#))

The Law ([3551](#)) (**nomos**) - Beginning in this passage, the writer mentions **Law** for the first time in this book and then some 13 times in Hebrews 7-10 ([click for all uses](#)). **Nomos** can denote law in general or a principle according to which one acts, but in this context it is used for the law of Moses.

Not only was the payment of one-tenth widely customary in the ancient world, the Mosaic law required that a tithe be paid to the priests.

"And to the sons of Levi, behold, I have given **all the tithe** in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service which they perform, the service of the tent of meeting...

"For **the tithe** of the sons of Israel, which they offer as an offering to the LORD, I have given to the Levites for an inheritance; therefore I have said concerning them, 'They shall have no inheritance among the sons of Israel.'" (Numbers 18:21,24)

The significance of this act of tithing is seen when one understands that the Aaronic priests took tithes of their brethren by law only. When they paid tithes in this way, there was no acknowledgment of inferiority on the part of those who paid tithes. Their tithing reflected an obligatory compliance with the law. But in the case of Abraham, there was no law that obligated him to pay tithes to Melchizedek. When he paid Melchizedek tithes, it was an acknowledgment on his part of his own inferiority and a personal tribute to Mel's greatness and superiority.

Guzik explains that...

The priesthood of Levi received tithes from Israel as a commandment. Abraham **voluntarily** gave tithes to Melchizedek. This makes Abraham's giving to Melchizedek greater than Israel **payment** of tithes to the priesthood instituted by Moses.

Expositor's Greek Testament agrees adding that...

The significance of this tithing is perceived when it is considered that, although the sons of Levi take tithes of their brethren, this is the result of a mere legal appointment. Those who pay tithes are, as well as those who receive them, sons of Abraham. Paying tithes is in their case no acknowledgement of personal inferiority, but mere compliance with law. But Abraham was under no such law to Melchizedek, and the payment of tithes to him was a tribute to his personal greatness.

THAT IS FROM THEIR BRETHREN ALTHOUGH THESE ARE DESCENDED FROM ABRAHAM: kata ton nomon toutestin tous adelphous auton kaiper exeluthotas (RAPMPA) ek tes osphuos abraam:

- Heb 7:10; Genesis 35:11; 46:26; Exodus 1:5; 1 Kings 8:19

From their brethren - This refers to the countrymen of the Jewish priests.

Although these - "These" refers to the priests.

Leon Morris explains that "The law required tithes to be taken of people of whom the priests were "brothers." There is a sense in which the priests had no inherent superiority. They were kin to those who gave tithes to them. They owed their ability to collect tithes to the provision made in the law and not to any natural superiority. But with Melchizedek it was different. He "did not trace his descent from Levi." Melchizedek was not simply one among a host of brothers. He was a solitary figure of grandeur. And he exacted tithes not simply from his brothers but from Abraham. His greatness stands out. ([Ibid](#))

Melchizedek had no part in the Levitical genealogy, and therefore no legal right to exact tithes, and yet he took tithes from the great patriarch himself! And thus Melchizedek was greater than Abraham. The writer emphasizes that the right of the Levitical priest to

receive tithes was only their right because it was ordained by a specific law and therefore their receiving tithes implied no intrinsic superiority of the priests to their Jewish brethren. On the other hand, to reiterate, Melchizedek, though he had no legal right, nevertheless received tithes from Abraham as a voluntary gift (Abraham was under no legal obligation to give a tithe to anyone), which implied Abraham's recognition of the personal greatness of Melchizedek.

Although they are descended - JFB explains "although" writing...

Though thus on a level by common descent from Abraham, they yet pay tithe to the Levites, whose brethren they are. Now the Levites are subordinate to the priests; and these again to Abraham, their common progenitor; and Abraham to Melchisedec. "How great" (Heb 7:4) then, must this Melchisedec be in respect to his priesthood, as compared with the Levitical, though the latter received tithes! and now unspeakably great must "the Son of God" be, to whom, as the sacerdotal archetype (in God's purpose), Melchisedec was made like!

Thus compare the "**consider**," (observe) Hebrews 7:4, in the case of Melchisedec, the type, with the "**consider**" (Greek, "contemplate attentively," see on Hebrews 3:1 [note], a stronger word than here) in the case of Christ, the archetype. ([Hebrews 7](#))

Descended from - There are 4 words in Greek, the verb **exerchomai** (literally to come out of) and the phrase "**ek tes osphuos**" which are rendered more literally "to come out of, from the loins of" Abraham