

“When Moses Spake Nothing”

“... Now if there was perfection through the Levitical priesthood (for under it hath the people received the law), what further need was there that another priesthood should arise after the order of Melchizedek, and not be reckoned after the priesthood of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of law. For he of whom these things are said belongeth to another tribe, from which no man hath given attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord hath sprung out of Judah; as to which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priests ...” (Heb. 7:11-14).

The writer continues to build his case for the priesthood of Christ. He has shown the difference between the priesthood of Levi and Melchizedek in that the priesthood of Levi was always changing because of men dying, while the Melchizedek priesthood was unchanging (7:3f). He has shown the inferiority of the Levitical priesthood to that of Melchizedek in that Levi *“paid tithes”* through Abraham to Melchizedek and *“without dispute, the less is blessed of the better”* (7:7). Now in this section (Heb. 7:11-14), he cites two more major arguments to bolster his claims. First, indisputably Old Testament scriptures projected another priesthood to arise which would be different: the priesthood of Melchizedek. Jews could not argue with this truth without arguing with their own scriptures for the Psalmist had written, *“Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek”* (Ps. 110:4). Another priesthood was coming and the Jews could ill afford to dispute that fact. Their own scriptures declared so.

Secondly, Jews conceded that the Psalms passage regarding Melchizedek’s priesthood was a reference to the coming Messiah. The earlier portion of that Psalm certainly was so understood. *“The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand till I make all thine enemies the footstool of thy feet”* (Psalms 110:1). Furthermore, the prophet Zechariah had distinctly shown that the Messiah was to be a priest. He wrote, *“Thus speaketh Jehovah of Hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is the Branch: and he shall grow up out of his place: and he shall build the temple of Jehovah, even he shall build the temple of Jehovah, and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both”* (Zech. 6:12f).

It is universally recognized among Jewish scholars that reference to one called the *“branch”* was reference to the Messiah, a branch from David, from Jesse. Isaiah refers to the *“branch of the Lord”* (4:2) and to a *“branch that would grow out of his roots”* (11:1). Jeremiah has two references to such a man (Jer. 23:5; 33:13). Zechariah only lends support to the fact that the

Psalmist reference to the priesthood of Melchizedek was a reference to the priesthood of the Messiah.

Be it further recognized that universal agreement among Jewish scholars was that the Messiah should spring out of Judah. In addition to such a promise given to Judah (Gen. 49:10), there were continued references both to David and to him who was to be his Son. Thus, although it is unlikely that Jewish scholars were conscious of the ramifications of their concession that the Messiah was to be a priest would signal the end of the Levitical priesthood; that was the ultimate conclusion for "*the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of law*" (Heb. 7:12). Why? Because Moses spoke nothing concerning priests from the tribe of Judah of which tribe the Messiah descended.

What a powerful argument this is! For Christ to be priest, the law had to be changed! Why? Because Moses forbade it? To the contrary, it was necessary that the law be changed because of the silence of Moses' words! Let all those who argue for anything upon the basis "God has not forbidden it" take note!

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