

Hebrews 7:28

“The Son Appointed as High Priest”

“For the Law appoints men as high priests who are weak, but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, *appoints* a Son, made perfect forever.”

In comparison to Yeshua functioning in exaltedness at the right hand of the Father, “The high priests appointed by the law are men in all their weakness” (Hebrews 7:28, REB).²⁰³ The human priests required for the Levitical priesthood are mortal, have a fallen sin nature, and could only offer animals for sacrifice. *This is especially true given the First Century circumstances by which the corrupt party of the Sadducees controlled the priesthood.* In contrast to this we see the Divine Son of God who offered Himself up for the sins of men and women, who continually intercedes before the Father in Heaven on their behalf. On *Yom Kippur* the priests would have their sins atoned for *before* the offerings were offered on behalf of all the people (m. *Yoma* 8:8), to make sure that the priests were in right standing with God before interceding for the people. Yeshua, in stark contrast to this, is always in right standing with His Father.

Too many of those who read and interpret what our author is saying often think that he is demeaning the Levitical priesthood and its occupants. He is not, and this trend has actually been significantly changing in contemporary Hebrews’ scholarship. As deSilva remarks,

“Attention to classical rhetoric leads to a promising solution. Encomia (speeches in praise of some person and his or her achievements) regularly included comparisons between the subject of the speech and other persons of renown....The author of Hebrews selects the levitical priests as material for *synkrisis* for a number of reasons. They provide the ‘type’ or ‘pattern’ from which the priestly activity of Jesus beyond the heavens can be credibly ‘constructed.’ They are a revered part of the work of God in the past, and their limitations can be used to highlight the surpassing honor of Jesus and value of having this Jesus as one’s mediator of divine favor.”²⁰⁴

Some holding to a low Christology, believing Yeshua to be a created being or entity, could provide Hebrews 7:28 as proof: “For the law appoints as high priests those who are subject to weakness, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever” (NRSV). It is entirely incorrect to take the “made perfect forever” as being “created perfect forever.” The issue of *ton aïōna teteleiōmenon* (τὸν αἰῶνα τετελειωμένον) involves the character of the Messiah, with the passive perfect participle *teteleiōmenon* also legitimately rendered as “perfected” (American Standard Version, HCSB).

The analogy made in Hebrews ch. 7 is not one between “the Law and Christ” as too many interpreters have concluded, but rather of the Levitical priesthood given in the Torah for Israel and the Melchizedekian priesthood which preceded it. Yeshua the Messiah can serve as High Priest because He occupies the office of Melchizedek. The priesthood of Levi has been temporarily put aside until it is reinstated in association with events subsequent to His Second Coming. Yeshua’s priesthood has been established by “the promise of the oath...[appointing] a Son, who has been perfected forever” (HSCB). The oath that the Father has made (Psalm 110:4) cannot be revoked, and we would not want it to be revoked as Yeshua is serving before Him in Heaven, ever interceding on our behalf. It is His service as High Priest in Heaven that is able to introduce the New Covenant into the lives of the redeemed, which our author will proceed to explain in Hebrews ch. 8.

²⁰³ This entry has been adapted from the author’s commentary *Hebrews for the Practical Messianic*.

²⁰⁴ deSilva, 263.