

Understanding Hebrews 7:12

By Matthew Janzen

I have at times encountered those who use Hebrews 7:12 to do away with Yahweh's law. Hebrews 7:12 does teach that there has been a change in the law, but the question is, "What law?" We must understand that the use of the term "law" does not always mean the entire law of Yahweh. While there are many times when the word law is used to refer to the entire law of Yahweh, this is not true in every case. Such is with the case of Hebrews 7:12. In order to perfectly understand the context, a short commentary will be given on verses 4-19 of the 7th chapter in the book of Hebrews.

Commentary on Hebrews 7:4-19

4 - Now consider how great this man was unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils.

The reference to this man refers to the priest Melchisedec. Abraham gave Melchisedec a tithe on all the spoils of war he brought back from the slaughter of the kings in Genesis 14. This Melchisedec is of such greatness because he is a type of the Messiah as Hebrews 7:3 tells us.

5 - 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.

Even though Levi came out of the loins of Abraham (who paid tithes to a non-Levite), they are still required under the Mosaic Law Covenant, to take a tenth from the people, their brethren.

6 - But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises.

Melchisedec, though not a Levite, received tithes from Abraham and blessed Abraham.

7 - And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better.

There is no dispute that Abraham was blessed by the better priest. The next verse begins to tell us why.

8 - And here men that die receive tithes; but there he received them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth.

The Levites who received the tithe, only received it up until their own death. But in Melchisedec's case it is witnessed that he (the order) lives.

9, 10 - And as I may so say, Levi also, who received tithes, paid tithes in Abraham. For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him.

This is another proof as to which priesthood is the better one. The tribe of Levi traced its descent to their forefather Abraham. Therefore, in a sense, they paid tithes to Melchisedec while in Abraham's loins.

11 - If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?

The Levite priests handed down the law of Yahweh to the people, but their handing down of the law stopped at their death. Their death prevented them from receiving tithes, and their death prevented them from handing down Yahweh's law. They were in place to offer the sacrifices for sin, temporarily, until the one time offering of the body of Yeshua took place. The author's question is somewhat rhetorical in verse 11 in that we can clearly see that perfection was not by the Levite priesthood.

12, 13 - For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar.

The priesthood has been changed from Levite to Melchisedec. It is simply going back to how it was in the days of Abraham. Because of this change in the Priesthood, there must be a change in law as well. What is this change? Verse 13 tells us *why* there must be a change in the law. It is because Yeshua did not descend from the tribe of Levi, and the law required you to be from that specific tribe in order to be a priest. Therefore the law which stated you must be from Levi to be a priest of Yahweh has changed, seeing that there was a change in the priesthood from Levite to Melchisedec.

14 - For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.

This is simply a reiteration of verses 11-12 showing that it is very obvious that the Messiah was not a Levite, but rather a Judahite. So the law saying you must be a Levite to be a priest has been changed.

15, 16 - And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.

We can also definitely see that Yeshua is after the resemblance of Melchisedec, because he was not made after the fleshly law which said a priest must come from Levi, but rather his life does not end.

17, 18 - For He testifieth, “Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.” For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof.

Psalm 110 verse 4 testifies that the Messiah is a priest of Melchisedec’s order. This also shows that there is a cancellation of the commandment stating a must for physical Levite descent. This is because of the weakness of the commandment seeing that the Levite priests died, but Messiah ever liveth.

19 - For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by which we draw nigh unto Elohim.

This particular law being discussed made nothing perfect with its temporary sacrifices. It is not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to permanently take away sins. This is seen by the repeating of the Day of Atonement year after year (Hebrews 10:1-3). The bringing in of the Messiah after the power of the endless life does make us perfect. His death, burial, and resurrection cleanses us of our conscience and dead works to serve the living Elohim (Hebrews 9:14).

Hopefully you will study these verses for yourself to see if I have done justice with them. I do believe that I have, and as you can see Hebrews 7:12 does not teach an abolishing of Yahweh’s law as a whole (His morality), but rather the law of the Levite priesthood and everything associated with the Levite in his service. Any law that was particular to a Levite would therefore not be binding under this current New Covenant dispensation.