



## Antitype of Jesus Christ Beyond The Type of Melchizedek on Hebrews

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### Abstract

According to the book of Hebrews, the Priesthood of Jesus Christ is different from Levite in perfection, eternity. Still, Christ follows the order of Melchizedek for the priesthood. This research aims to compare the order of Melchizedek with Levite to show Jesus Christ as an antitype to Melchizedek, not Levite's order. In this study is used the literature review method with short exegesis and exposition. This study demonstrates two things: antitype determines type in typology, not type determines antitype, and second is that Jesus Christ is our perfect and eternal priesthood.

### Abstrak

Menurut kitab Ibrani, Imam Yesus Kristus berbeda dengan Imam Lewi dalam aspek kesempurnaan, kekekalan tetapi Kristus mengikuti aturan Melkisedek untuk imam. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk membandingkan urutan Melkisedek dengan orang Lewi untuk menunjukkan Yesus Kristus sebagai antitype untuk Melkisedek, bukan urutan Lewi. Dalam penelitian ini digunakan metode studi pustaka dengan eksegesis pendek dan eksposisi. Studi ini menunjukkan dua hal, pertama adalah bahwa antitype menentukan tipe dalam tipologi, bukan tipe menentukan antitype dan kedua adalah bahwa Yesus Kristus adalah imam kita yang sempurna dan kekal.

## Introduction

In Hebrews, the High Priest theory has a very fundamental and important position in the structure of the entire Hebrews. It can be said that it plays a central role in its quantity and content in the whole text. The words of Ellingworth are quite reasonable, "Perhaps the Hebrews author's idea of Christ is very likely to be two central pillars, the 'Son of God' (1: 2) and 'High Priest' (2:17)."<sup>1</sup> In particular, the idea that Christ in the high priesthood of Jesus Christ is a high priest following the order of Melchizedek is at the heart of the High Priesthood. Because the text of the book of Hebrews emphasizes Jesus Christ as a very different high priest who follows the order of Melchizedek directly and very repeatedly.<sup>2</sup> The texts of the high priesthood of Jesus Christ show the concept that Jesus is the only

<sup>1</sup> Ellingworth, *New International Greek Testament commentary* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1993), 67.

<sup>2</sup> Hebrews 5:6, 10, 11; 6:20; All of chapter 7

unique, special, and superior follower of the order of Melchizedek. Therefore, Melchizedek is an essential element in understanding the duty of the High Priest of Jesus Christ.

The subject that occupies most of the Hebrews is Jesus' high priestly Christology. This method of christological narrative is a comparative method using the modeling through Melchizedek. The method of modeling comparison has the characteristic that it advances to the phase through similarity. And the difference shows the completeness of the circle. The model is essentially imperfect. It is a type and a shadow. The antitype corresponding to this model is complete. It is reality, completion. A comparison of typology is a representative relationship established in the Old Testament to take a specific person, event, system, etc. and link it with the corresponding person, event, or system in the New Testament whereas typology which presupposes the presentation of the Old Testament and the response of the New Testament and pursues unity of the Old and New Testaments leads to the unity and completion of revelation.<sup>3</sup>

### ***What is the Typology?***

The etymological meaning of the Typology

Type is from τύπτειν. It has a meaning of any mark that is left by blowing or striking.<sup>4</sup> This is like a mark on a waxed stamp. Greek 'τύπος' has many meaning in the New Testament(NT), especially pattern and something is from any pattern.<sup>5</sup> And 'τύπος' is used for the meaning of types that is given by the God for the future's suggestion about certain person and objects.<sup>6</sup> And also the Greek adjective, 'αντιτύπος'(antitype) has the meaning of 'corresponding to something in the past'.<sup>7</sup> It can be said that the relationship between type and antitype is related to time, type is past, antitype is present, or type is present and antitype is present in the future.

Characteristics of Typology

By examining the characteristics relations which is existing between the type and the antitype in the typology, we can broaden the understanding of the typology. There are several characteristics of typology, but the following are some typical examples. First, there is a correspondence between the type of model corresponding to the model and the antitype as the substance.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, in the typology, the antitype of the events, characters, and objects of the New Testament was used as being understood by describing it as an example target in correspondence with the Old Testament. Second, there is a historical

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<sup>3</sup> Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*, trans. (Seoul: Lifebook, 2008), 268.

<sup>4</sup> George Wesley Buchanan, *Typology and the Gospel* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1987), 3.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>6</sup> A. Berkeley Mickelsen, *Interpreting the Bible*, trans. Kim In Hwan (Seoul: Christian Digest, 1996), 312.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 312.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 309.

connection between typological expressions and antitypes.<sup>9</sup> The typology is to establish a historical link between any person, event, or object in the Old Testament and similar characters, events, or things in the New Testament. This means that the type as mentioned earlier indicates what appeared early in history, and the antitype is understood to have appeared historically later. Third, the typology is historically gradual. It is characteristic to go to the more concrete completion toward the realization as the antitype. Although typing indicates the meaning of the shadow of reality and implication, it is accomplished by reality and realization in history. Fourth, typology is futuristic. Typology always goes to the future. As if the fulfillment of prophecy is done in the future, the typology always faces the future. Therefore, it is natural to focus on what it means in the future, not the question of what sort of meaning it was in the past. Fifth, there is a clear and certainly noteworthy similarity or analogy between the type and the antitype.<sup>10</sup> It is a good example to make the prophecy and the model possible in the typology because of the remarkable similarity between the Old Testament and the New Testament. The core of typology is that the legitimacy of typology is weakened or meaningless if there is no similarity between the type and the antitype. This does not mean, however, that the similarities in the Old Testament or the Bible are noticeable. Sixth, people of the age were mentioned in which the characters, events, and objects represented by the type did not recognize it as a type. At that time there may have been only one meaning as an event, When it appeared more clearly, it became accepted as a typology.

### **About the Melchizedek**

In Hebrews chapter 7 draws Melchizedek to describe the priesthood of Jesus Christ. The argument for the priesthood of Jesus Christ depends on the priesthood of Melchizedek. First of all, scholars' opinion on what kind of Melchizedek the Hebrews authors present can be summarized in the following three points.<sup>11</sup> 1) Celestial being: Fitzmyer - Elohim, De Jonge and Van der Woude – Angel, 2) Historical being: Horton, Parsons - the first priest in the Torah, 3) Celestial and Historical being: Kobelski – not as a angelic being but a celestial and historical being – as a type of Jesus Christ.

Horton describes the tale of Hebrews 9 and the tent of the earth, expressing the relationship between Melchizedek and Jesus in a model and circular relationship. Because Melchizedek is a terrestrial type of Jesus, the celestial being of Melchizedek, to be merely a historical being.<sup>12</sup>

But Kobelski describes that in chapter 9 shows a contrasting relationship between the Jesus and Melchizedek but in chapter 7 shows a similar relationship between the Jesus and Melchizedek. So Melchizedek can become not only a historical being as a Jesus but also a celestial being as like a

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 310.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 320.

<sup>11</sup> Yang Yong Ui, “Jesus the High Priest following the order of Melchizedek,” *Journal of Church and Culture*, no. 8 (2002): 24.

<sup>12</sup> F. L. Horton, *The Melchizedek Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 161.

‘resembling the Son of God’(Hebrews 7:3, NIV).<sup>13</sup>

The third theory out of three is more valid. For in Hebrews contrasts Melchizedek and Levi, and Melchizedek and Jesus Christ. The true figure of Jesus is not only a divine being, but also a human being, through the comparison with Melchizedek, which expresses the existence of Melchizedek as a model of Jesus, showing that it is not only a heavenly being but also a historical figure.<sup>14</sup>

The Hebrew preacher mentions the presidency of Melchizedek to account for the presidency of Jesus Christ. The argument about the presidency of Jesus Christ depends on the presidency of Melchizedek. To show this clearly Dale Leschert explains about the Syllogistic structure of Chapter 7 as follows:<sup>15</sup>

Statement 1: Jesus is a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek. (Heb. 5:6,10; 6:20)

Statement 2: High Priest in order of Melchizedek is greater than high priest in order of Levi.  
(Heb. 7:1-10)

Conclusion: Jesus is a greater than high priest in order of Levi. (7:11-28)

For this claim, the author of Hebrews uses Genesis 14 and Psalm 110: 4 with explaining that Melchizedek is superior to Aaron and Levi through Genesis 14, and that the high priesthood of Jesus Christ following the order of Melchizedek is superior to the high priesthood following Levi's order. In chapter 7, the content of Genesis 14 is also important, but in the preacher's argument, Psalm 110: 4 occupies a larger portion. Chapter 7 is divided into three major parts: v. 1-10 is that Melchizedek and his priesthood, vv. 11-19 is that Christ deals with the High Priest following the order of Melchizedek, vv. 20-28 is about the eternal High Priest.

The peculiar point of the first part, vv. 1-10, is that there is no mention of Christ. Based on the events of Melchizedek and Abraham in Genesis 14, demonstrate the superiority of Melchizedek and his priesthood. For this demonstration, the events of Chapter 14 occupies an important place. The author of Hebrews writes the contents of Genesis 14 as a chiasmic structure: A-A' meeting (v. 1 and 10), B-B' blessings (v. 1 and 6) and C-C' tithing (v. 2 and 4). It is presented as evidence that blessings and tithe are superior to Abraham of Melchizedek.

## **Analysis of relationship among the Jesus, Melchizedek and Levi**

Understanding of Background contexts (4:14 - 6:20)

Hebrews 4: 14-16 explains Christ's high priesthood office, which encourages his people. Jesus

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<sup>13</sup> P. J. Kobelski, *Melchizedek and Melchiresa*, CBQMS 10 (Washington: Catholic Biblical Association of America , 1981), 125-27.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>15</sup> Dale Leschert, *Hermeneutical Foundations of Hebrews: A study in the Validity of Epistle's Interpretation of some Core Citations from the Psalms* (NewYork: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1994), 199.

is already referred to his readers as "a high priest who is merciful and faithful" (2:17) and he who ascended, Jesus, the Son of God, is our high priest, the transcendent "great" high priest in heaven. He is a transcendent high priest, but he has the same humanity as ours. The authors of this letter referred that God's Son was "able to help those who are being tempted" because he was "had to be made like them, fully human in every way" to be "a merciful and faithful high priest". (2:17-18) Christ is able to sympathize with them in this way, for he himself has experienced all this by being like them. Therefore, by persevering, author of this letter urges to strengthen your faith in Christ as the high priest.<sup>16</sup>

In 5:1-10, describes about Jesus as a merciful priest.<sup>17</sup> Hebrews 5:1-10 is a unique paragraph that is complete in its entirety.<sup>18</sup> The features of the high priesthood office are listed one by one and compared with what happened in the life of Jesus Christ. In 5:5-10, the authors describe the evolution of these ideas using the The Chiastio arrangement method. (1) That Jesus Christ was called by God is verified by the two Psalms (Psalm 2:7; 110:4) (5:5-6). (2) Because God saved him from the plight of death and he himself had to learn obedience as a son, he shares the "weakness" of man (5:7-8). Jesus Christ became the founder of "eternal salvation" as "the one whose truth is proved" and he became a "high priest" in the order of Melchizedek. According to Chr.v. Hofmann and Fr. Delitzsch, it is said that 5:1-10 contributes to reveal the basis of imperative mood of κρατῶμεν of 4:14 and προσερχώμεθα of 4:16. This is two ideas that are parallel to each other.<sup>19</sup>

Chapters 5:11 to 6:20 speak of admonition, warning, encouragement, and promises. First in 5:11-14 explains why the author does not immediately explain Christ's Melchizedekical high priesthood in more detail. It is difficult for the teachings to explain, and it is dangerous for the receivers to demonstrate in immature situations, and insensitive to accepting them. Beginners and traditional teachings are not enough. The difficult teaching should be given and accepted with the associated things. However, the receivers are worse than before (6:1-3) and there is no possibility of recovery from that condition (6:4-8). But this bad condition is not reality yet. Positive encouragement hold the balances the preceding warning (6:9-12). This positive evaluation of the condition of the recipients is not in the good things the recipients did and not because they are still doing good. It is because of the promise of God to Abraham and to the people of God as a whole (6:13-20). The reference to Abraham is naturally connected to Chapter 7 and the theme of central doctrine is naturally opened again by the explanations of the meeting of Abraham and Melchizedek in Genesis 14:17-20.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: New International Commentary on the New Testament*, Trans. (Seoul:lifebook, 1986), 163-165.

<sup>17</sup> Ellingworth, *New International Greek Testament commentary* (Grand Rapids:Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1993), 271.

<sup>18</sup> Michel, Otto, *Der brief an die Hebraer: International Biblical Commentary 43*, Trans. (Seoul: Korea Theological Study Institute, 1987)

<sup>19</sup> Michel, Otto, *Der brief an die Hebraer*, 296-297.

<sup>20</sup> Ellingworth, *New International Greek Testament commentary* (Grand Rapids:Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1993), 297-298.

### Superiority of Melchizedek (7:1-10)

Hebrews 7: 1-10 is divided into two paragraphs, 1-3 and 4-10, with the following cross-symmetrical structures:<sup>21</sup>

- A. Meeting (v. 1a)
- B. Blessing (v. 1b)
- C. tithe (v. 2)
- C'. tithe (v. 4)
- B'. Blessing (v. 6)
- A' Meeting (v. 10)

Indeed, these two paragraphs are complementary. Vv.1-3 introduce Melchizedek, and vv. 4-10 illustrate the significance of the incident in which he met Abraham. The issues of these two paragraphs are common; In other words, Melchizedek is superior to the Levitical priests. Melchizedek's superiority to the Levitical priesthood is evidenced by two facts; 1) The Levitic priests are not eternal, but Melchizedek is eternal (vv. 3, 8). "There is no day to begin, no end of life" this develops another the fact in the principle of 'quod non in thora, non in mundo'. The fact that there is no mention of the birth or death of Melchizedek in the Torah means that Melchizedek did not die or had not been born. Based on this interpretation, the Hebrew author allows readers to form a consensus on the eternity of Melchizedek.<sup>22</sup> The standard of Melchizedek's eternity lies in the eternity of the Son of God. "resembling the Son of God, he remains a priest forever." suggesting that God, who "resembling", has appointed Melchizedek as a type for the priesthood of the Son of God.<sup>23</sup> In fact, making the type of Melchizedek an eternal priest have no mention of his succession in the Bible and keeps silence about itself. However, the eternity of the priesthood of Jesus, which the Hebrew author intends to present through the type of Melchizedek, derives from his own nature. Here we can find an important principle of typology. The type (Melchizedek) does not define the antitype (Jesus), but the antitype defines the type. In other words, Jesus is not defined according to the type of Melchizedek, but Melchizedek is defined in the image of Jesus, the Son of God.<sup>24</sup> 2) Abraham's tithing and paying homage to Melchizedek shows that Melchizedek is superior to Abraham, the father of the tribe of Levi, and thus he is superior to the priests of Levi (vv. 1-2, 4-10). First, Melchizedek received tithing from Abraham (ancestor of Levi), and second, Melchizedek blessed Abraham. While Melchizedek possessed eternal life, the Levitical priests were mortal

### Contrast to the order of Levi (7:11-25)

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<sup>21</sup> Lane W. L., *Hebrews 1-8*, World Biblical Commentary 47a (Dallas:Word Books, 1991), 160.

<sup>22</sup> Moffatt J., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, ICC. (Edinburgh: T. &T. Clark, 1924), 92-3.

<sup>23</sup> Lane W. L., *Hebrews 1-8*, WBC 47a, 166.

<sup>24</sup> Parson, M. C., "Son and High Priest: A Study in the Christology of Hebrews," *EQ* 60 (1988), 213.

Hebrews addresses the inevitability of the priest of Levi and the need for a new priest at 7: 11-25. First, Hebrews deals with the problem of the integrity of the priest (7: 11-19). The Levi priesthood can not give a perfection. “If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood” (7:11). For the law itself is changed (v. 12), because the old commandment is frail and unprofitable (v. 18), and the law can not make anything perfect (v. 19). Therefore, we need a new priest (7:16) who does not follow the law of the commandments of the flesh but follows the power of everlasting life. The new priest is the priest who follows the order of Melchizedek (7:17). Jesus Christ is the priest who follows the order of Melchizedek (5:5-6). Hebrews quotes Psalm 110: 4 directly several times (5:6; 7:17, 21) to prove this, and indirectly several times (5:10; 6:20; 7:11,15). The important reason for doing this is to provide a biblical foundation for the priestly Christology of Jesus Christ. Secondly, Hebrews explains the basis of the eternal Melchizedek priesthood (7:20-22). To illustrate this, the Hebrew compares the Levites and the Jesus priests. The Levite priest was sworn without priest (7:21). Then what is the oath? This is an oath made by “when God said to him” (7:21). Hebrews directly applies Psalm 110:4 to Jesus Christ. This oath is an oath that never collapses. Because of the personality of the person who spoke. He is the Lord who swears and does not repent (7:21). Third, the priests of Levi must be many because they can not always be due to death (7:23). But one Jesus is enough because the Jesus priest is eternal and does not divide.<sup>25</sup>

The right of Christ to the priesthood is based on a totally different foundation than the Levitical priesthood. His right is an inherent right over tribal eligibility, and one can find the type in Melchizedek, a mysterious figure in the patriarchal age. The Hebrews author replaces “the order” of v. 11 with ‘similarity’ in describing the relationship between Melchizedek and Christ in v. 15. This shows that the order of Melchizedek is not based on the physical lineage of Aaron's order, but on the similarity of its nature.<sup>26</sup>

In v. 14, “For it is clear that” suggests that the facts about which tribe Jesus belonged to were widely known. In addition, v. 14 reveals that Jesus, who is in agreement with the statement of v. 13, is Jesus. Hebrews suggests the identity of Jesus' royal Messiah by referring to the fact that Jesus appeared “from Judah”.<sup>27</sup>

In vv. 18-19, two contrasting references appear along with an introductory explanation: 1) A reference to the weakness of the law related to the priesthood office; There are three references to the law: First, it is weak - even though the law performs its worthy function, it does not give a life and a vitality by itself. Second, it is futile - because this alone does not make people perfect. Third, it was abolished. 2) A reference to hope. It is being formulated with the word “better”. “a better hope” allows Christians to achieve what could not be achieved under the weak, futile law. As a result, Christians were

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<sup>25</sup> Cho Byoung Su, “Priest which is Higher than Priests,” *Christian Reformed Press* no.199 (1997).

<sup>26</sup> Attridge H. W., *The Epistle to the Hebrews: Hermeneia*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989), 202.

<sup>27</sup> Rooke D. W., “Jesus as Royal Priest: Reflections on the Interpretation of the Melchizedek Tradition in Heb 7,” *Biblica* 81(2000), 85-86.

able to draw closer to God.<sup>28</sup>

The priesthood of Jesus was established by God as 'oath' in contrast to the Levitical priesthood (vv. 20-21). The theme of the oath, which was introduced in the exhortation of chapter 6, is now being utilized appropriately to demonstrate the superiority of the Melchizedek's order to the Levitical priesthood, alonged with the quotation of Psalm 110: 4. Jesus, the 'eternal priest', who fulfilled his oath promises, became a sure "guarantor" of the "a better covenant" (v. 22).<sup>29</sup> The better covenant in 7:22 will be discussed in detail in chapter 8, Connected with "a better hope" of 7:19, and in verse 8:6 which Jesus Christ is portrayed as the mediator of a "better promises".<sup>30</sup>

The Aaronic Priesthood was appointed under the hereditary principle. For none of them perpetuate the authority of the priesthood. Aaron, the first priest of the family, served his people as a high priest in the wilderness, but eventually had to hand his high priesthood and garments to Eleazar his son (Num. 20:28). In the latter days Eleazar also must die and be succeeded by his son Phinehas . On the other hand, Jesus has forever hold his first president. Though our high priest Jesus died on the cross, his priesthood ceased to be handed over or handed over to another. Because his death was not the final event. His death was obscured by his resurrection, and as a result he became an eternal priest, distinguished from other priests. Beyond the limits associated with Melchizedek, the high priest himself became a complete sin's offering by being presented at once.<sup>31</sup>

The author begins at the end of chapter 7 with the description of "who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners" (v. 26) as the high priest, and concludes with a statement that Jesus is the "the Son, who has been made perfect forever"(v. 28). But Jesus became this way as a result of complete obedience and death on the cross in spiritual and moral terms that revealed his life. In fact, these requirements have already been emphasized in reference to the fact that when the author begins to deal with the subject of the high priest in 4:14-5:10, the high priest must be a perfect human being able to sympathize with the human.<sup>32</sup> In this sense, the perfect priest that the Hebrew author present is not only a divine being, but also a conditioner of perfect humanity. This is the only priest, Jesus Christ.

## Conclusion

Putting together the various discussions, Let us briefly summarize the characteristics of the priesthood of Jesus Christ through Melchizedek. The author of the book of Hebrews shows a strong interest in using Melchizedek as a type in introducing Jesus as a high priest in chapter 7 above all. In Chapter 7, Melchizedek is used as a type in explaining Jesus' priesthood office in order to explain four different christological facts. The priest who is established by oath, A royal priest, and an eternal priest,

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<sup>28</sup> Attridge, *Hebrews*, 204.

<sup>29</sup> Koester, C. R., *Hebrews*, AB 36 (New York:Doubleday, 2001), 363-64.

<sup>30</sup> David Peterson, *Hebrews and Perfection*,(London: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 113.

<sup>31</sup> Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 191.

<sup>32</sup> Guthrie D., *Hebrews*, TNTC 15, (Leicester: IVP, 1983), 1685.



a high priest who give a perfection.

Unlike the priests of the Levites, the priesthood office of Jesus was established by oath, and is appropriately used to demonstrate the superiority of the Melchizedek order to the Levites. Also, by mentioning Jesus as the priest from the tribe of Judah, he strongly implies that he is a royal Messiah, bringing forth the age of righteousness and peace. In Hebrews 7:3 shows that Melchizedek's eternal antitype is the Son of God himself. The arrogant high priesthood is inheritance, but Jesus is forever having his priesthood. He also made it possible for Christians to attain the perfection that weak and futile laws did not fulfill, because he himself was “made perfect forever” through perfect obedience and one-time death as perfect human beings. In conclusion, the author of the book of Hebrews shows the character of the priesthood of Jesus through the Old Testament type of Melchizedek, which is different from the Levitical priesthood, and explains to the reader that the priesthood of Jesus is complete and eternal.

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