

Lesson 3 Hebrews 7-8-9 Handout - Levi in the Loins of Abraham

In biblical thinking each nation, and in a broader sense the whole of humanity, extending into both the past and the future, is not a collection of disparate individuals but rather a single, organic reality. This biblical principle is crucial to understanding the thought of Hebrews, particularly the argument based on Levi being “in his father’s loins” when Abraham met Melchizedek (7:10). It is also crucial to Paul’s teaching on how we inherit original sin based on our common descent from Adam (Rom 5:12–19). C. S. Lewis gives an illuminating explanation:

They [human beings] look separate because you see them walking about separately. But then, we are so made that we can see only the present moment. If we could see the past, then of course it would look different. For there was a time when every man was part of his mother, and (earlier still) part of his father as well: and when they were part of his grandparents. If you could see humanity spread out in time, as God sees it, it would not look like a lot of separate things dotted about. It would look like one single growing thing—rather like a very complicated tree. Every individual would appear connected with every other. And not only that, but individuals are not really separate from God any more than from one another.... Consequently, when Christ becomes man ... it is as if something which is always affecting the whole human mass begins, at one point, to affect the whole human mass in a new way. From that point the effect spreads through all mankind. (**Ibid.** Healy p. 135)