

¹ For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, ² and to him Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything. He is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then he is also king of Salem, that is, king of peace. Hebrews 7:1-2

The full story is in Genesis 14. In those days there were battles over who would pay taxes to a superior power. The king of Sodom, along with some other kings, had decided to revolt against their overlords (Genesis 14:4), but they were defeated. A survivor of the battle went to tell Abram that his nephew Lot and family were taken captive. Abram rounded up some of his allies and together they attacked a much superior power and were victorious. On his way back to his home, he was met by the king of Salem, a priest of the Most High God. The Hebrew for this name for God is *Elyone*. There is no doubt it is referring to YHWH, for near the end of the passage Abram links the two names of God (Genesis 14:22). The name Melchizedek means king of righteousness. This mysterious person is king of peace and righteousness and a priest of the Most High God.

³ He is without father or mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God he continues a priest forever. Hebrews 7:3

Genealogy was very important to the Jewish people. That is why we have all the "begatitudes" in the early books of the Bible. Priests were to be from the tribe of Levi. Kings came from the line of Judah. Jews are descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob whose name was changed to Israel. Because this king was so great and yet had no genealogy listed the rabbis concluded that he had no parents, no beginning or end, and is like the Son of God with a perpetual priesthood. How can that be? Was he an angel or some kind of a god?

I will give you my conclusions. My favorite commentators believe the author is just pointing out the similarities with the text concerning Melchizedek and Jesus. A later king of Jerusalem's name ended in "zedek" so they believe it was dynasty name. I have come to a different conclusion. Others believe this person must be a theophany, a manifestation of God, for God alone is eternal. I don't think the author of Hebrews was simply using rabbinical conclusions from the silence of Scripture. I believe he was inspired and the wording of our text is inspired (2 Peter 1:20-21).

When we studied chapter four we saw that all God's works were finished on the sixth day (Hebrews 4:4), and we are still in the seventh day. We are invited to enter God's rest (Hebrews 4:11). Yet, we still see God intervening in the lives of people. Prayers are answered. Miracles occur. Jesus' ministry took place and atonement for our sins was accomplished. What does it mean that it was all done before the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8)?

To understand this, we must see that God is not bound by time. Time is only a dimension of the physical world, but there is a dimension beyond this one, the timeless spiritual realm. Theologians call it "the eternal now." Think of it like this, the vastness of

Commented [PW1]: Genesis 14:4 (ESV)

⁴ Twelve years they had served Chedorlaomer, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled.

Commented [PW2]: Genesis 14:22 (ESV)

²² But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have lifted my hand to the LORD, God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth,

Commented [PW3]: 2 Peter 1:20-21 (ESV)

²⁰ knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation.

²¹ For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Commented [PW4]: Hebrews 4:4 (ESV)

⁴ For he has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way: "And God rested on the seventh day from all his works."

Commented [PW5]: Hebrews 4:11 (ESV)

¹¹ Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience.

Commented [PW6]: Revelation 13:8 (KJV)

⁸ And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

space is like eternity, and the earth a little sphere in which there is time. God sees all at once, every revolution of the earth through space, from beginning to the end. He already planned the details before setting it in motion, knowing in advance every choice we would make. He is before it all, during all, and after all is concluded, right now and forever. He steps into time continually while always existing outside of it (Hebrews 13:8; Revelation 1:8).

Melchizedek is eternal, the king of peace and righteousness. If we take that literally, and I believe we should, He can be none other than Jesus, the manifestation of the invisible God (Colossians 1:15). In the time realm, that took place way before the incarnation. He was there in Canaan trying to teach the Canaanites the truth of God so they would be without excuse four generations later when the invasion of Israel came (Genesis 15:16). That's because they had the truth but turned to horrible practices.

Theologians who do not agree with my conclusion point to one word to make their argument, the word "resembling." If that word were left out, they say, then it would be valid, however, Melchizedek only *resembles* the Son. That Greek word is only used here in the Bible. It means to be made like, or to assimilate. Humans are not made like Jesus, unless they are remade by being born-again. Even then, would you say anyone really resembles Jesus? Are we to believe this pagan culture happened to have a human king who was like Jesus? An often repeated phrase in the Old Testament is that there is none like the LORD (Exodus 8:10; 1 Samuel 2:2; Psalm 113:5). And there is still the problem of eternity and his titles. How can Jesus be the Prince of Peace and this man be the King of Peace? How can Jesus be the righteous one (Acts 3:14) and this man be the king of righteousness? I believe this is Jesus stepping from the eternal now into time giving everyone a chance to know the truth about God and His love for mankind and the destructiveness of sin. It was an action out of the eternal now and thus before the foundation of the world and yet man experiences it in the realm of time.

⁴ See how great this man was to whom Abraham the patriarch gave a tenth of the spoils! ⁵ And those descendants of Levi who receive the priestly office have a commandment in the law to take tithes from the people, that is, from their brothers, though these also are descended from Abraham. ⁶ But this man who does not have his descent from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. ⁷ It is beyond dispute that the inferior is blessed by the superior. Hebrews 7:4-7 Abraham was the father of many nations, including Israel. He is the father of faith, and yet, he gave his tithe to Melchizedek who was not related to him. Abraham's descendants, the Levites, receive tithes from their fellow Jews, so why is Abraham giving tithes to a Gentile? And how can this king give a blessing to Abraham, the man who had the promises of God, unless he is greater than Abraham? Once again, it seems clear to me that Jesus stepped into time and met with Abraham.³

If you read the story in Genesis 14, you'll see that Melchizedek serves Abraham bread and wine (Genesis 14:18). Does that remind you of anything? The elders serve you bread and wine to remind us of the price Jesus paid for us. Some say the mention of

Commented [PW7]: Hebrews 13:8 (ESV)

⁸ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

Commented [PW8]: Revelation 1:8 (ESV)

⁸ "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

Commented [PW9]: Colossians 1:15 (ESV)

¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

Commented [PW10]: Genesis 15:16 (ESV)

¹⁶ And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."

Commented [PW11]: Exodus 8:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ And he said, "Tomorrow." Moses said, "Be it as you say, so that you may know that there is no one like the LORD our God.

Commented [PW12]: 1 Samuel 2:2 (ESV)

² "There is none holy like the LORD: for there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God.

Commented [PW13]: Psalm 113:5 (ESV)

⁵ Who is like the LORD our God, who is seated on high,

Commented [PW14]: Acts 3:14 (ESV)

¹⁴ But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you,

Commented [PW15]: Qumran Cave 11, dating from around the time of Jesus' birth considered the Melchizedek as a heavenly figure. Commentary on the New Testament use of the Old Testament p. 967

Commented [PW16]: Genesis 14:18 (ESV)

¹⁸ And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.)

bread and wine was just a common simple meal, a coincidence. I prefer to say a "godincidence."

⁸ *In the one case tithes are received by mortal men, but in the other case, by one of whom it is testified that he lives.* ⁹ *one might even say that Levi himself, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham,* ¹⁰ *for he was still in the loins of his ancestor when Melchizedek met him.* Hebrews 7:8-10 The Levites were mere mortals, each priest only serving for his short lifespan. Melchizedek is eternal. You could say Levi paid tithes to Melchizedek, for some of the DNA that would result in Levi was still in Abraham.

¹¹ *Now if perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need would there have been for another priest to arise after the order of Melchizedek, rather than one named after the order of Aaron?* Hebrews 7:11 The author is referring again to Psalm 110. In this prophetic psalm about the coming Messiah, he is predicted to be a king and priest after the order of Melchizedek. The author asks why a different order of priesthood is needed if one could obtain perfection by the law? The Levites received and administered the law. If the law could make us right with God, why predict another priestly line?

The argument is quite logical. These Hebrews reading the letter accepted the premise that Psalm 110 was about the Messiah, Jesus. They were considering going back under the Levitical priests, but that priesthood can't make us right with God (Romans 3:20). That is why we needed the Messiah to be from a different priesthood, one that could make us right with God and change our hearts. This is further reason to believe that Melchizedek was a theophany, an appearance of God.² How could Jesus be in the priestly order of any human? While His kingship over men is in the line of Judah, his spiritual leadership must be higher than that of man, one who can make us right with God, and that is only attainable through the sinless Son. He is His own order.

¹² *For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well.* Hebrews 7:12 Since the priests administered the law, a change in the priesthood means a change in the law as well. The law had no solution for intentional sins. All its requirements were only shadows of the good things to come (Hebrews 10:1). The new priesthood is based on what He does for us, not our ability to obey rules and observe rituals (Ephesians 2:15).

¹³ *For the one of whom these things are spoken belonged to another tribe, from which no one has ever served at the altar.* ¹⁴ *For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests.* Hebrews 7:13-14 Jesus was from the line of Judah, the tribe that was prophesied to be the tribe that would hold the scepter of ruling power (Genesis 49:10). No priest ever came from the tribe, though David seemed to almost cross that boundary (2 Samuel 6:17). The Messiah was clearly to come from the line of Judah, through David who was of the tribe of Judah. He can't be a Levite and of Judah. Mary's family line is listed in Luke 3 as going back to David and Judah, not Levi (Luke 3:30-31).

Commented [PW17]: Romans 3:20 (ESV)

²⁰ For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

Commented [PW18]: Philo uses Melchizedek as symbol of Logos in *Alleg. Interp.* 3.70-82

Commented [PW19]: Hebrews 10:1 (ESV)

¹ For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near.

Commented [PW20]: Ephesians 2:15 (ESV)

¹⁵ by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace,

Commented [PW21]: Genesis 49:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.

Commented [PW22]: 2 Samuel 6:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ And they brought in the ark of the LORD and set it in its place, inside the tent that David had pitched for it. And David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD.

Commented [PW23]: Luke 3:30-31 (ESV)

³⁰ the son of Simeon, the son of Judah, the son of Joseph, the son of Jonam, the son of Eliakim,
³¹ the son of Melea, the son of Menna, the son of Mattatha, the son of Nathan, the son of David,

¹⁵ This becomes even more evident when another priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek, ¹⁶ who has become a priest, not on the basis of a legal requirement concerning bodily descent, but by the power of an indestructible life. ¹⁷ For it is witnessed of him, "You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek." Hebrews 7:15-17 The priesthood of Levi is one of ancestry. You had to be a bloodline descendant. But the basis of the priesthood of Melchizedek is the power of an indestructible life. So if He wasn't Jesus, where is he? The basis of the psalm's predicted Messiah is also of that same power of an indestructible life. And aren't you glad that we won't wake up one day and find out Jesus is no longer interceding for us? If that were the case, we probably wouldn't wake up at all, for He holds all things together (Hebrews 1:3). The Melchizedek and the Messiah predicted in the psalm had to be someone death could not conquer (Acts 2:24). This is only true of Jesus.

¹⁸ For on the one hand, a former commandment is set aside because of its weakness and uselessness ¹⁹ (for the law made nothing perfect); but on the other hand, a better hope is introduced, through which we draw near to God. Hebrews 7:18-19 The commandments Moses received involved moral, religious, and societal laws. While the moral ones remain, the religious and societal laws served for a time. The author is saying they were weak and useless because they did not change the heart of man (Romans 8:3). Now they are set aside because what they were anticipating has come.

Even the rabbis saw this in the naming of Perez whom they correctly believed to be the lineage of the Messiah (Genesis 38:29). He somehow was able to come first from the womb of his mother even though his brother's hand had preceded him. The rabbis see in this account that the Messiah will break out from the confinement of the 613 laws of Moses.

It is through faith in Jesus' atonement for our sins, that we are made righteous by the blood of Jesus shed on our behalf, and that we draw near to God. We would not dare come before God in our sinful state for any other reason than to repent (Hebrews 10:31). Now we can come freely and present our requests. We can draw near our holy, all-powerful God at any time to present our petitions. How we undervalue this incredibly priceless opportunity! Prayer is a privilege. No wonder we are to pray without ceasing! (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

²⁰ And it was not without an oath. For those who formerly became priests were made such without an oath, ²¹ but this one was made a priest with an oath by the one who said to him: "The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, 'You are a priest forever.'" ²² This makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant. Hebrews 7:20-22

While the Levitical priesthood was to be a perpetual order (Exodus 29:9 - though some uses of the word forever simply meant from that time forward until death. See Exodus 21:6), the priesthood of the Messiah came with an oath and the LORD'S vow to never change His mind. We can be doubly sure that Jesus will always be our Great High Priest who understands our weaknesses and paid the full price for our redemption. Jesus is the guarantor of a better covenant than the one made with Moses. We can't have a better guarantor!

Commented [PW24]: Hebrews 1:3 (ESV)

³ He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

Commented [PW25]: Acts 2:24 (ESV)

²⁴ God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.

Commented [PW26]: Romans 8:3 (ESV)

³ For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh,

Commented [PW27]: Genesis 38:29 (ESV)

²⁹ But as he drew back his hand, behold, his brother came out. And she said, "What a breach you have made for yourself!" Therefore his name was called Perez.

Commented [PW28]: Hebrews 10:31 (ESV)

³¹ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Commented [PW29]: 1 Thessalonians 5:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ pray without ceasing,

Commented [PW30]: Exodus 29:9 (ESV)

⁹ and you shall gird Aaron and his sons with sashes and bind caps on them. And the priesthood shall be theirs by a statute forever. Thus you shall ordain Aaron and his sons.

Commented [PW31]: Exodus 29:9 (ESV)

⁹ and you shall gird Aaron and his sons with sashes and bind caps on them. And the priesthood shall be theirs by a statute forever. Thus you shall ordain Aaron and his sons.

²³ The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, ²⁴ but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. ²⁵ Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them. Hebrews 7:23-25 A Jew may have had the privilege of knowing a priest in the temple who understood what he was going through and could really sympathize with him. But that priest would die. A new one would come who didn't know him or his trials. Good ones and some not so good ones filled the office through the generations. But Jesus is there forever, and He is the best by far! You won't find a better priest, a more merciful and gentle priest. He knows our every trial and sorrow. He saves us to the uttermost. You can't get any more righteous than you are in Him (2 Corinthians 5:21). You certainly won't find another through whom you can draw near to God.

The best part is that right now He is constantly interceding for you. Right now in the eternal now, which means throughout time, Jesus is asking God for things for you and me, things like strength and endurance, the power to resist temptation, that we have insight to make the right choices, that we grow in our sanctification. I really value the prayers of others for me and the ministry and this church, but most of all we should all value Jesus' intercession.

²⁶ For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. Hebrews 7:26 How fitting indeed! What other high priest could really meet our need but one who is holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens? If He were not holy and innocent, He could not stand before God. If He were stained, He could not have died for our sins, as He would have had to die for His own. If He were not exalted above the heavens, we would not have His intercession for us. Jesus is exactly what we need now and forever!

²⁷ He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself. ²⁸ For the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever. Hebrews 7:27-28 The daily routine of sacrifice ended a generation after Jesus offered Himself up once for all. God gave the Jewish people signs within the temple for an entire generation to help them see that there was a new priesthood and the old order was over. Some saw it and became believers in Jesus as the Messiah. Others refused to see it. For them, the destruction of the temple was an unimaginable shock. They could no longer even attempt to live out the laws of Moses.

Today there are those of Levite lineage, but there is no temple in which to serve. The synagogue has replaced it, however, it would be contrary to the law to sacrifice there. The weak priesthood of man ended, for long after the law was given God made an oath that the Son would be our perfect and eternal high priest. Are you going to Him? Are you experiencing that priceless privilege of drawing near to God through Jesus? Jesus,

Commented [PW32]: 2 Corinthians 5:21 (ESV)

²¹ For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

our eternal high priest, is our access to God, always lifting our needs up to Him. Realize what a gift of goodness and grace is ours in Jesus, our great high priest.

Questions

- 1 Go over the Old Testament encounter with Melchizedek.
- 2 Why is genealogy important to Jews?
- 3 What might lead us to believe Melchizedek is Jesus?
- 4 What did Mel serve Abram?
- 5 Why did we need another priesthood?
- 6 Why did the law change?
- 7 What does the better hope allow us to do?
- 8 How can we be sure of the better hope?
- 9 Why are we saved to the uttermost?
- 10 Why does the oath supersede the law?