

Pentwater Bible Church

Hebrews Message 15

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Melchizedek Blesses Abraham, Artist Unknown

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Pentwater Bible Church

The Book of Hebrews

Message Fifteen

MELCHEZEDEK IS A TYPE OF CHRIST

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Hebrews 7:1-10

¹ For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; ² to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; ³ without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually. ⁴ Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. 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: ⁶ but he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham and blessed him that had the promises. ⁷ And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better. ⁸ And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth. ⁹ And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham. ¹⁰ For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him (KJV).

MELCHIZEDEK

Hebrews 7:1-3

¹ For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; ² to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; ³ without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually (KJV).

Melchizedek is a unique character who first in the Scriptures appears to Abraham.

In an effort to stop a rebellion of five vassal kings near the Dead Sea four powerful Eastern kings invaded the Jordan Valley near the Dead Sea and defeated all the forces in the region. In doing so they plundered five Jordanian kings and took Lot captive. The four kings formed a consortium under Chedorlaomer king of Elam and then conducted a military sweep north to the south of Canaan. The five kings from the Dead Sea area followed and confronted them. Abraham became involved when he learned that his nephew had been captured. He pursued

the offending party with 318 men. He successfully defeated them in a night attack, and recovered Lot, his possessions, and liberated the other captives.

After the battle of the kings and the rescue of Lot as well as those women that were captured with him Abram met with two additional kings. The first one mentioned is the king of Sodom (Genesis 14:17-24). This is the successor to the first king of Sodom because the first one perished in the slime pits with the king of Gomorrah in the vale of Siddim (Genesis 14: 10). Abram met with the new king of Sodom and a king named Melchizedek. This man has a Hebrew name, which is the combination of two names: *Melech* means King and *Tzedick*, which means righteous.

This righteous king goes out to meet Abram. He is further identified as the king of Salem, which is ancient Jerusalem (Psalm 76: 2). They meet in the vale of Shaveh, which is the valley of Jehoshaphat on the east side of the temple mount. On the east of that valley is the Mount of Olives. Today this valley is called Kidron.

Melchizedek is one of the most interesting characters in the Bible. He is said to be a priest of the “God Most High.” This is the first mention of a priest in the Bible and the title is *El Elyon*.

This Hebrew title of God is found four times in these verses. It is only found elsewhere in Psalm 78: 35. Frequently we find “Most High” but only here and in Psalm 78 do we see “God Most High.” With this designation appearing here so uniquely it has special significance. First it means that God is the possessor of heaven and earth. It also means that Jehovah God had a relationship with Melchizedek. And Melchizedek was a follower and minister of the Lord of Heaven and Earth. Some have suggested that he was a preincarnate appearance of the Lord Jesus or even a theophany. This designation is not accurate when compared to other preincarnate appearances of the Lord Jesus. In those instances, the Lord Jesus does not hold an office on earth. Those earthly preincarnate materializations of Jesus are for short periods and then they are gone. Here Melchizedek is said to be both priest and king. Abram acknowledged him as his superior and seemed to recognize that God had revealed Himself to this man.

During the Levitical priesthood under the Mosaic Law the offices of priest and king were separate and were not to be combined. The Lord Jesus did hold the office of priest while He was here and will as king when He returns because He is God Himself. Paul the writer of Hebrews is making a case for the necessity for the Lord Jesus to come into the earth as both king and our priest fulfilling the Law. It is only the Lord Jesus who can forgive sin. Melchizedek did not forgive sin. He blessed Abram but did not forgive any sin. In Hebrews we see that Melchizedek is used as a “type” of the Lord Jesus since he was a priest and a king. David knew that this was the case too as he wrote in Psalm 110.

Psalm 110: 1-7

1 The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. 2 The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. 3 Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the

dew of thy youth. 4 The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. 5 The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath. 6 He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries. 7 He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift up the head (KJV).

He knew that one would come from God who would be God and would usher in the establishment of a messianic priesthood and kingdom. This Psalm was written about 500 years after the inauguration of the Levitical order. This shows that David realized the imperfection and impermanence of the Levitical order. Melchizedek is only a follower of God and not God Himself. Jesus is forever a priest and king.

Some of the Orthodox Jews believe that Shem, Noah's son who is also the Messianic seed son of Noah is Melchizedek. This is not too farfetched a conjecture since Shem continued to live thirty-five years after Abraham died. Both lived in the same region of Mesopotamia. Of the three sons of Noah Shem was the most righteous and was chosen to bring the Messiah through his line of descendants. It is altogether possible that Melchizedek is Shem.

Paul in Hebrews treats Melchizedek as a Type of Jesus as well as king David writing in Psalm 110. He is never seen as the Lord Jesus. Hebrews says he was *like* the Son of God expressed in the KJV as *after the order*. The grammatical figure of speech used here is called a simile. It makes an expressed comparison between two different things. Melchizedek has no record of a genealogy. Not that he did not have one, there was just no record of it. What is important for us to realize is that Melchizedek is a very righteous man. He was a priest and a king and knew God. Abraham realized this and Paul in Hebrews says that Jesus is not a high priest after or like the earthly high priest but *after the order of Melchizedek*. The priesthood of Christ and Melchizedek are not the same. No mere man could possibly compare to Christ's priesthood. But knowing what God has revealed of Melchizedek we can see the comparison. Melchizedek, appeared without any ceremony, without visibly being made holy, appeared to Abraham as a high priest. This too was Christ, by the direct word of the Father, saying to him, *you are a priest forever*. In this sense, Christ is called a high priest in the order of Melchizedek because He was divinely appointed.

Back in chapter 5:6, which, God also said, in Psalm 110:4, *Thou art a priest for ever After the order of Melchizedek*. Melchizedek was introduced. The text of Hebrews digressed for the rest of chapter five and all of six to discuss their spiritual state of the Jewish members of the early Church who were considering returning to the Levitical Law. Now Paul commences a full exposition of this individual Melchizedek and his comparison to the Lord Jesus.

Psalm 110:4

⁴Jehovah hath sworn, and will not repent: Thou art a priest for ever After the order of Melchizedek (ASV, 1901).

There is very little information given in the Bible regarding Melchizedek. Genesis chapter 14:18-20 provides the most. There are six characteristics of Melchizedek that are similar to Jesus.

1. Melchizedek was a priest-king. His name and title characterized two things about his reign: he ruled in *righteousness*, which is what the name *Zedek* means; and he ruled in *peace*, which is what *Salem* means. These aspects of Melchizedek are also mentioned of the prophecy of the coming of the Messiah in Isaiah 9:6–7. Melchizedek was both king and priest and so is Jesus the Messiah. The king of righteousness is the *provider* of righteousness to others, just as God is said to be “*The Lord our Righteousness* (Jeremiah 23:6).” He also is the king of peace, in the sense that God is called “*The God of peace* (I Corinthians 14:33; I Thessalonians 5:23; Romans 15:33 etc.).” This was true of Melchizedek, as he was a type Jesus Christ.

Jeremiah 23:5-6

⁵Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land (ASV, 1901).

- Melchizedek blessed also Abraham which will be developed in verse four.
2. A recognition of superiority by the fact that Abraham, was tithing to Melchizedek. Abraham recognized Melchizedek as a superior person in his role. Jesus functions as a Melchizedekian priest which means He is superior to any other priest.
 3. Melchizedek as high priest shows that he was not tied or beholding to anyone as is Jesus.
 4. Melchizedekian Priesthood has no time associated with it There is no mention of the beginning or the end of his priesthood. He being a human must have had a father and mother but there is no record of this in the Bible therefore the apostle says this is another similar characteristic to the Lord Jesus. Jesus who is God has always existed. He only lived on earth in the flesh for thirty-three and a half years, but spiritually He is eternal.
 5. The Melchizedekian Priesthood ministered to all. The Melchizedekian Priesthood was universal. Jesus also has a universal priesthood.

COMPARISON TO THE AARONIC PRIESTHOOD

Hebrews 7:4

⁴ Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. (KJV).

The nature of Christ’s office was treated in the first half of chapter five and will again in a lengthily exposition in chapter nine. Here the apostle shows the unknowable superiority of our High Priest over that of the Levitical law. He is making this known to the Hebrews so they would love Him so much that they would not consider going back to the Levitical Law.

Now consider how great this man was, Melchizedek, has been established as great and wonderful. One measure of his greatness is the fact that, *unto whom the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils* from the battle of the kings. Abraham gave tithes to him. Considering Abraham's position as a *patriarch*, who did it; it is important to realize that he was the patriarch of patriarchs, as the sons of Jacob are called, (Acts 7:8, 9) he is the patriarch of the whole Jewish nation, and of many nations, and of all believers, and the friend of God. So, this then makes Melchizedek to be greater because Abraham paid tithes to him. Now we see how much greater the Lord Jesus is, who is the antitype of Melchizedek.

Hebrews 7:5

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 (KJV).

And verily they that are of the sons of Levi. It was the tribe of Levi; whose descent is from Abraham: *who receive the office of the priesthood.* Some of them were priests, and Zadokites but not all. Levites are sometimes called priests (Ezekiel 44:15). In Numbers 18:20–26 these were separated out of all the tribes of the Children of Israel for their service in the tabernacle; and because they had no inheritance in the land. There were 48 cities in ancient Israel set aside for the them because they were not allocated their own territorial land in the Levitical law (Numbers 35, Joshua 21).

This was a demonstration that the Levities were devoted to God himself for work unto the other eleven tribes: *that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham;* who are their brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh, though of different tribes; and from these they receive tithes. They are still the sons of Abraham.

Levites that were priests received the tithes from the people for God's work, and then they received a tenth part of those tithes, or the tithe of tithes from the Levites (Numbers 18:26; Nehemiah 10:38).

Hebrews 7:6–7

⁶ but he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham and blessed him that had the promises, ⁷ And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better (KJV).

Melchizedek blessed Abraham. Although it says that Melchizedek's genealogy was not *from them*—he had no direct genealogical connection to the Levites. Still he received tithes from Abraham and then blessed Abraham. The one performing the blessing is superior to the one being blessed. We see that Melchizedek blessed Abraham who had the covenant promises from God. It is stated in verse seven that the one who blesses is superior. He states that this is fact (non contradiction) and it was a recognized truth of that day. The lesser is blessed by the greater. Abraham did not bless Melchizedek. Melchizedek blessed Abraham and he is therefore superior.

Hebrews 7:8

⁸ And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth (KJV).

Here the apostle compares how the Levitical priests and Melchizedek received tithes. The tenth is the basis of the comparison between Melchizedek and the Levitical priests. They both received tithes.

This now begins the contrast between Melchizedek and the Levitical priests. For the Levitical priests were men subject to death. They were mere mortal men who lived and died as any human does as they carried out their duty. As the Scripture shows, Melchizedek's death is not recorded. He probably did die as a human being but in keeping with the Scripture's limited revealing of his existence we do not know of him to have died. In contrast with the Levitical priests, Melchizedek is declared to be living. This is said about Melchizedek, taking him to be a type, for we know that he probably would die. Our salvation depends on the everlasting or eternal life of Jesus Christ the God-man. So as a comparison of Melchizedek, as he was a type of him, him who is declared to be living. Christ also lives—forever.

The difference here noted is between a succession of mortal priests and one perpetually living. Verse three says "*having neither beginning of days nor end of life;*" We see in Genesis that there is no mention of either death, birth, or ancestry, and so he is presented as the ideal of "a priest forever" to the psalmist.

We see Jesus *not* appointed to the order of the Levitical Priesthood of which the highest order was the high priest, but to one much higher in stature than that. This is the order of the office of Melchizedek.

Next message: THE AARONIC PRIESTHOOD WAS NOT PERFECT

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