

1. Bible Scholars and Theologians have long been divided on the issue of whether Melchizedek is simply a scriptural symbol (typology) or a heavenly being of some sort.

Different views:

Origen - he was an angel (Michael)

Calmet - Enoch

Jews - Shem, son of Noah

Others - the Divine Word

Melchisedekites - he was the Holy Ghost

2. The writer continues his description of Melchizedek in v. 3. This sets the stage for the remainder of the argument in Hebrews 7.
3. The phrases “without father, without mother, without descent/genealogy” translates three words in the Greek text. It is possible to lift the words literally and imply a supernatural origin.
4. Also - the phrase “having neither beginning of days nor end of life” in v. 3 has been taken literally by some to suggest that Melchizedek was a divine being.
5. If this is the writer’s intention - the problem of a dual eternal priesthood develops.
6. It is hermeneutically, contextually and theologically more likely that the writer is not attempting to establish a factual point but to show the wide difference that existed between the priesthood of Melchizedek and the Aaronic Priesthood.
7. Because there is no mention of the origin or death of Melchizedek in the Genesis account, the writer concludes that “He is without father or mother or genealogy.”
8. He has obviously placed in this letter detail which does not appear on the surface in the Genesis account. But his train of thought is clear.
9. Unlike the Aaronic priests - where genealogy was essential for eligibility to hold office, the order of Melchizedek is of a wholly different kind.
10. There is no account of his father or of his mother in Genesis or in Psalms. As one Bible scholar wrote “He stands mysteriously apart from all need to establish his genealogy.”
11. This word (genealogy) expands the meaning of the previous two phrases and places the focus on priestly qualification and not a miraculous birth.
12. Then - when the writer added that Melchizedek “has neither beginning of days nor end of life,” he pushes his argument from silence still further.
13. Taken simply from this one verse would suggest that Melchizedek must have been a heavenly being, in which case the historical account (Genesis 14) would have to be spiritualized since there is no suggestion in the Genesis narrative that Melchizedek was anything other than flesh and blood.

14. It is somewhat unexpected to find that Melchizedek is considered to be a priest forever, just like the Son of God.
15. The real key to understanding this highly important part of the letter is found in the phrase “*but made like unto the Son of God*” or “*resembling the Son of God.*”
16. The word translated “*made like unto or resembling*” occurs only here in the New Testament. It is a suggestive word, used in the active of ‘a facsimile copy or model’ and in the passive of ‘being made similar to’.
17. It is because Jesus Christ is of the order of Melchizedek that the representative of the order is seen to be a model of the true.
18. In other words, it is Christ’s priesthood that is the standard, not that of Melchizedek. Yet the important factor which the writer wishes to establish is the eternal priesthood of the Son of God rather than Melchizedek’s - of which you must take into account Psalm 110:4.
19. What makes Melchizedek’s order appear perpetual is that Scripture says nothing about the succession. What makes Christ’s eternal is - His own nature.
20. Because of these features of the scriptural portrait of Melchizedek he is “likened to the Son of God.” The phrases, “without father or mother,” “beginning of days, “nor end,” “abides continually,” belong to Melchizedek only in respect to his priesthood, and in so far as he is the type of the Son of God, and are strictly true of Him alone.
21. The fulfilment is more glorious than the type. The title *Son of God* takes the thought back to Hebrews 4:14 where Jesus our High Priest is given this title.
22. There is nothing in the account, Genesis 14:18–20, to mark Melchizedek as a superhuman or divine being: he is placed with the other kings in the chapter as a living historic person.
23. The purpose of the comparison of Jesus with Melchizedek now becomes clear. By grounding Christ’s priesthood in Psalm 110:4 and connecting it with the historical source of Genesis 14:17–20, the writer establishes the eternalness of Christ’s priesthood.
24. The remainder of Hebrews 7 demonstrates the implications of this fact with respect to the Levitical priesthood, and lays the groundwork for the next step in the theological argument taken up in Hebrews 8.
25. Abraham was certainly a key figure in Judaism, the father of the race, but for all his greatness he offered tithes to, and received a blessing from, the priest-king, and “*the less is blessed by the greater.*”