

You remember that the mention of Melchizedek back at the end of chapter five led the writer to the Third Great Warning of Hebrews: the necessity of growing up, of not remaining babies: that they needed their senses exercised to discern good and evil; This warning was designed to warn the Hebrew Christians that Moses was not a final resting place, but was the infancy of the church, and they were to grow up into Christ His fullness, the “perfection” of chapter six, because if they did not that which was satisfactory under the Old Testament would not be sufficient in the new; not even faith in God, if it were not matured into faith in Jesus Christ. He introduces a new figure, that of sowing seed. If you sow good seed, but the field does not bring forth good fruit, but thorns and thistle, you will not rest in the satisfaction that you have sown good seed.

Hence, it was expected that the Hebrews would bring forth the faith and love for Jesus Christ for which the nation of Israel was called. He says that God gave Abraham a promise, sealed with an oath, that He would bless and multiply Israel, and the immutability of God and His promise and oath give the believer the hope that is the anchor of the soul, for people perish when they have lost hope. By its very essence, faith in Christ involves the hope of eternal life. So at the end of chapter six, the author returns to Jesus Christ who became High Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. He had introduced the concept of High Priest in chapter five after speaking of the eternal rest that God had promised in Christ, our priest after the order of Melchizedek, who by His sufferings was perfected and became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him. Now, after reproving the Hebrews for their dullness of hearing and perpetual babyhood, he now comes back to Melchizedek. There must be something very important to say about this man, and there is: the author says it in chapter seven, and it is profitable for us as well as for the Hebrew.

I want to say several things about chapter seven. I will not exposit it line by line, for I have done that before, but highlight several important things that will help us understand this mysterious person in the first book of the bible: Melchizedek, the king/priest of Salem. Who was he, and why is he important? 1st, the meeting of Abraham with Melchizedek after the slaughter of the kings; 2nd. The greatness of Melchizedek; 3rd, The implication of this greatness as to the Mosaic Covenant at Sinai; Finally, I want to make application.

I. The Meeting

- A. This history is given in Genesis 14. You remember that Abraham’s nephew, Lot, had gone to live in Sodom. The iniquity if Sodom was not yet full and God had not yet brought wrath upon the city. But an alliance of kings from Mesopotamia, headed by Chedorlaomer, King of Elam, had invaded the plains and had defeated the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah with their allies and placed them under tribute, which they paid for twelve years. In the thirteenth year, the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah with their allies rebelled against Chedorlaomer, and the next year he came back with his armies and devastated the land of Canaan. When the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah went out against him, they were defeated. Chedorlaomer and his allies sacked the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and went on their way, taking Lot and his family and goods with them.
- B. When Abraham heard that Lot and his family were taken, he armed the servants of his household, some three hundred and eighteen, for Abraham was very rich and great, and pursued after Chedorlaomer and overtook him at what later became the city of Dan. In a brilliant military maneuver, he surprised Chedorlaomer, utterly defeated him and recovered all the goods of Lot, of Sodom, and of Gomorrah. When Abraham returned with the goods and the people that he had delivered from captivity, he was met by king of Sodom and returned him all his people and his goods. Meeting Abraham at the same time was this man Melchizedek who was said to be “king of Salem, priest of the most high God.” Melchizedek brought wine and bread and blessed Abraham, “Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth. And blessed be the most high God which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand.” Abraham paid tithes of everything to Melchizedek.
- C. I think it is fruitless to speculate about who Melchizedek was. I do not think he was Shem, although Shem would have been alive at that time, having lived more than five hundred years after the flood. Besides, we know the father and mother of Shem, and Hebrews says that Melchizedek was without father or mother, at least as far as the biblical record is concerned. This is an important detail that would have been relevant for a high priest according to the flesh. All the high priests of Israel were descended from Aaron, the brother of Moses, who were children of Amram and Jochabed. We also know the lineage of Jesus of Nazareth, recorded in both Matthew and Luke.
- D. Further, Hebrews says that his birth and death are not recorded; he had no beginning and no ending. No mother and no father. Melchizedek is like Christ in these three very important considerations: He was king of righteousness, which designation strictly belongs to Christ alone; He was King of Peace, and Christ is Lord of peace and rest; He has no ending nor beginning, for Christ is God. With Melchizedek this is according to the Biblical account but this is important, because Jesus is said to be a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. Melchizedek was “made like the Son of God” that is, God ordained that the account would be written in such a way that Melchizedek would serve to teach us some very important things about the Son of God.
- E. The significance of Abraham paying tithes to Melchizedek would not be important to the modern Christian and it might very well be something they would miss. But it was inexcusable for a Hebrew to miss it. Two things in the account should have had obvious implications: the blessing and the tithe. So this brings us to the greatness of Melchizedek.

II. The Greatness of Melchizedek.

- A. First of all, the blessing. The lesser is blessed by the greater.

1. But didn't Melchizedek bless God; yes, but this is in a different sense: we bless the Lord when we acknowledge that He is the only truly blessed one and all blessings come from Him. It is an acknowledgement as to His true nature, and our blessing adds nothing to God. Not so of His blessing to us, or when God blesses us, He adds very important things to us, chiefly the gift of the Holy Spirit.
 2. Melchizedek then, acted as a priest, offering on Abraham's regard blessings to God, from whom all blessings flow, and blessing Abraham in the name of the God He served. He acted as Abraham's priest.
 3. Melchizedek must, therefore, be greater than Abraham.
- B. Melchizedek received tithes from Abraham, and this must have been a very great tithe indeed of all the things that were taken from the Chedorlaomer and the kings that were with him. This is another indication of the subordination of Abraham to Melchizedek, according to Hebrews.
- C. This means, that not only did Abraham receive blessings from Melchizedek, and paid tithes to Melchizedek, but also Levi did also, meaning that Melchizedek is not only greater than Abraham, but greater than Levi also.
- D. This means that if Melchizedek is greater than Abraham and Levi, then Jesus Christ, of whom Melchizedek is a type, is also greater than Abraham and Levi, because Christ is a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek.
- E. The writer knew that this would require mature thought and effort on the part of the Hebrews. That is the reason for the frustration—the whistles and bells should have gone off when the Hebrew read Psalm 110 that their Messiah would be a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. You might have missed it, especially if you are young in Christ, but the Jews were not young in their exposure to the Scriptures. They were blind leaders of the blind, and ignorant of the meaning of their own Scriptures.
- III. The Implications to the Mosaic Covenant at Sinai
- A. The former commandment is annulled: everything relating to Aaron and the high priest office, for a greater than Aaron has come and the former order passes away, for there is a better covenant. Vs. 24
 - B. The former order of sacrifices and regulations is gone; all of it. Only that which eternal remains.
 - C. The weakness of the old order is gone, replaced by the living strength of the Living Christ. Vs. 15
 - D. The priesthood of Christ is established by the oath of God [Ps. 115] just as the promise to Abraham was. Vs. 21
 - E. The multitude of Levitical priests is replaced by the One Mediator who lives forever: Vs. 23

Application

- A. What is eternal remains: every one of the Ten Commandments precede the giving of the law and are found implied in the consciences of men in the book of Genesis.
 - B. Public worship remains: Abraham publicly worshipped and paid tithes, recognizing that his blessings come from God. We are therefore required not to neglect our public assemblies, not by being absent, not by withdrawing from fellowship with the saints, not by withholding support through tithes and offerings, as we will see in Hebrews 10 and HC 103
 - C. Aaron's priesthood was a temporary establishment, with the Passover, Jewish Sabbaths, offerings, etc. until Christ should come.
 - D. This also shows that God does deal with children yet unborn in blessing their fathers, and children can serve the Lord in their fathers. The branch does not sanctify the root, but the root the branches.
 - E. Jesus is the High Priest of which Melchizedek and Aaron were types; Jesus is the King of which Melchizedek and David are types; Jesus is the Prophet, of which Moses was a type. Perfection is not found in any of the types, but in Christ alone.
- May God bless you. Amen and Amen.