

# The Superiority of Melchizedek's Priesthood!

## Hebrews 7:1-10

East Berlin Community Church

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### Introduction

- The mystery of the *"boy in the box"*
- **The mystery surrounding the identity of Melchizedek.**
  - The only **historical reference** to him is in Genesis 14 after Abraham returns from war in delivering his nephew, Lot.
    - Genesis 13:12a-- *"Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain and pitched his tent even as far as Sodom."*
    - Genesis 14:11-12-- *"They took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their provisions, and went their way. They also took Lot, Abram's brother's son who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed."*
    - Genesis 14:14-16-- *"he armed his three hundred and eighteen trained servants who were born in his own house, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. He divided his forces against them by night, and he and his servants attacked them and pursued them as far as Hobah, which is north of Damascus. So he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his brother Lot and his goods, as well as the women and the people."*
    - Genesis 14:18-20-- *"Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said: 'Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand.' And he gave him a tithe of all."*
  - **Much conjecture over the identity of Melchizedek**
    - Some insist that he was an angelic being.
      - Hebrews 7:3-- *"neither beginning of days nor end of life"*
      - Hebrews 5:1-- *"For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins."*
    - Some believe that he was a preincarnate appearance of Jesus Christ.
      - Hebrews 7:3-- *"made like the Son of God."*
    - The normal reading supports that he was an historical human being, whose priestly ministry typifies that of Jesus Christ.
    - He was the king of Salem and a priest of the Most High God!
  - **The presence of priests prior to the Levitical priests in the Old Testament.**
    - Exodus 18:9-11-- *"Then Jethro rejoiced for all the good which the LORD had done for Israel, whom He had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians. And Jethro said, 'Blessed be the LORD, who has delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of Pharaoh, and who has delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. Now I know that the LORD is greater than all the gods; for in the very thing in which they behaved proudly, He was above them.'"*
    - Exodus 18:12-- *"Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took a burnt offering and other sacrifices to offer to God. And Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God."*
  - **David, in Psalm 110, links the kingship and priesthood of the Messiah with Melchizedek.**
    - Psalm 110:4-- *"The LORD has sworn and will not relent, 'You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.'"*
  - The preacher to the Hebrews connects Jesus Christ with Melchizedek.
    - Hebrews 5:10-- *"called by God as High Priest 'according to the order of Melchizedek.'"*
  - The preacher had more to say about Melchizedek but could not because of the immaturity of his listeners.
    - Hebrews 5:11-- *"of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing."*
    - He addresses the immaturity of his listeners in Hebrews 5:12-6:20

- He warns those Jewish seekers who have yet to embrace Jesus Christ as savior to do so before hardening sets in. (Hebrews 6:1-8)
- He encourages Jewish believers that they are genuinely saved by giving them a vote of confidence (6:9-10), and by encouraging them to keep on so that they might have an internal witness, the *“full assurance of hope until the end.”* (6:11-12) He ends with a expose on the sure and steadfast hope that we have in Christ-- a hope that is built on the very character of God who cannot lie, based on the nature of the unconditional promise God made to us, strengthened by the pledge God has given to us, and secured in heaven by our forerunner, Jesus Christ, who has become *“High priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek”* (Hebrews 6:20)

## ***The Superiority of Melchizedek’s Priesthood***

- Hebrews 7:1-10-- *“For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated “king of righteousness,” and then also king of Salem, meaning “king of peace,” without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually. Now consider how great this man was, to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils. And indeed those who are of the sons of Levi, who receive the priesthood, have a commandment to receive tithes from the people according to the law, that is, from their brethren, though they have come from the loins of Abraham; but he whose genealogy is not derived from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. Now beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better. Here mortal men receive tithes, but there he receives them, of whom it is witnessed that he lives. Even Levi, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, so to speak, for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.”*

### **A. Seen in the Superiority of the Person, Melchizedek**

- Hebrews 7:1-3-- *“For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated “king of righteousness,” and then also king of Salem, meaning “king of peace,” without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually.”*
1. **Melchizedek is a type of Jesus Christ.** He is *“like the Son of God.”* Key word: *“Like”*
    - a. A type pictures or prefigures the antitype. The type, though it is historical and real, is nonetheless imperfect and temporary. The antitype, on the other hand, is perfect and eternal.
    - b. Example of a type of Christ-- the serpent Moses lifted up in the wilderness
      - John 3:14-- *“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up.”*
    - c. Types are analogies, and thus correspond to the antitype in certain ways.
    - d. Melchizedek is a type of Christ, but is in no way equal to Jesus Christ.
  2. ***How does Melchizedek’s unique name and personhood typify Jesus Christ? How is Melchizedek’s priesthood and that of Jesus Christ superior to the Levitical priesthood?***
    - a. **Melchizedek’s priesthood was universal, not national.**
      - 1) The Levitical priesthood was confined to Israel, the Jewish people.
      - 2) Melchizedek was a *““priest of the Most High God, the possessor of heaven and earth.”* (Genesis 14:19)
      - 3) Jesus Christ is not just the Messiah for Israel, but for the whole world. His priesthood is universal.
    - b. **Melchizedek’s priesthood was royal.**
      - 1) Under the law, a Levite could not be a king.
      - 2) Melchizedek is the *“king of Salem”*, which is the ancient name for Jerusalem.
        - Psalm 76:1-2-- *“In Judah God is known; His name is great in Israel. In Salem also is His tabernacle, and His dwelling place in Zion.”*

- 3) Together, Melchizedek's universal priesthood and royal office typifies Jesus Christ as the perfect Priest and King. (Psalm 110:1)
  - Zechariah 6:13-- *"Yes, He shall build the temple of the LORD. He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule on His throne; So He shall be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both."*
  
- c. **Melchizedek's priesthood was both righteous and peaceful.**
  - Hebrews 7:2-- *"To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated "king of righteousness," and then also king of Salem, meaning "king of peace,"*
  - 1) There was not permanent righteousness nor peace related to Aaron's priesthood.
  - 2) Melchizedek could not make men righteous nor give them peace. But he was the type of One who could.
  - 3) True righteousness and peace comes through faith in Jesus Christ.
    - Romans 5:1-- *"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."*
    - Isaiah 32:17-- *"The work of righteousness will be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever."*
  
- d. **Melchizedek's priesthood was personal, not hereditary.**
  - Hebrews 7:3-- *"Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually."*
  - 1) The Levitical priesthood was entirely hereditary.
    - Ezra 2:62-- *"sought their listing among those who were registered by genealogy, but they were not found; therefore they were excluded from the priesthood as defiled."*
  - 2) Melchizedek was *"without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life."*
    - a) Does not mean that he had no parents, but just happened to appear, but rather there is no genealogical record of Melchizedek's family, the date of his birth nor his death.
    - b) The point is that Melchizedek's parentage and origin is irrelevant to his priesthood for he was appointed based on the quality of his life, not on who his father was. His life was characterized by righteousness and peace.
  - 3) Jesus Christ's priesthood is not based on heredity, for He was of the tribe of Judah, not Levi. But it was based on the quality of His life.
    - Hebrews 7:16-- *"not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life."*
  
- e. **Melchizedek's priesthood is eternal, not temporary.**
  - Hebrews 7:3-- *"without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually."*
  - 1) A Levitical priest faced mandatory retirement at the age of 50. Collectively, the Levitical priesthood which began at Mount Sinai when the Law was given ended when the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed in AD. 70. There is no Levitical priesthood in Judaism today.
  - 2) Melchizedek's priesthood continues from eternity in the priesthood of Jesus Christ, who is a *"priest forever after the order of Melchizedek"*
    - Hebrews 7:24-25-- *"But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them."*

## **B. Proven by the Interaction between Melchizedek and Abraham**

- Hebrews 7:4-10-- *"Now consider how great this man was, to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils. And indeed those who are of the sons of Levi, who receive the priesthood, have a commandment to receive tithes from the people according to the law, that is, from their brethren, though they have come from the loins of Abraham; but he whose genealogy is not derived from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. Now*

*beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better. Here mortal men receive tithes, but there he receives them, of whom it is witnessed that he lives. Even Levi, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, so to speak, for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him."*

**1. Abraham gave a tithe of the spoils to Melchizedek.**

- a. The Jew venerated Abraham as both the physical and spiritual father. They believed he was superior to all. So, if it can be shown that Abraham viewed another as superior to himself than it follows that he would also be superior to Abraham's posterity.
- b. Under the Law, God commanded that a "tithe" be given to support the Levites and priests.
  - Hebrews 7:5-- *"And indeed those who are of the sons of Levi, who receive the priesthood, have a commandment to receive tithes from the people according to the law, that is, from their brethren, though they have come from the loins of Abraham."*
  - Numbers 18:21-- *"Behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tithes in Israel as an inheritance in return for the work which they perform, the work of the tabernacle of meeting."*
  - 1) The Levites received a "tenth" rather than territory, to compensate for the work that they performed in the tabernacle and later in the temple.
  - 2) The Levites received the "tithe" from the people. They, in turn, gave a tenth of what they received to the sons of Aaron, the priests.
  - 3) They received the tithe *"from their brethren, though they have come from the loins of Abraham."* It was brothers helping brothers as equals.
- c. Melchizedek was not a brother. He was not a descendant of Abraham.
  - Hebrews 7:6-- *"But he whose genealogy is not derived from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises."*
- d. Abraham recognized Melchizedek as his superior, as a faithful and deserving priest of God Most High, and subsequently voluntarily gave him a "tenth" of the spoils in thanks to God.
- e. Levi and his descendants seminally paid the tithe to Melchizedek, thus proving that the Melchizedek priesthood was superior to the Levitical priesthood.
  - Hebrews 7:9-- *"Even Levi, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, so to speak, for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him."*

**2. Melchizedek blessed Abraham.**

- Hebrews 7:1-- *"For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him."*
  - Hebrews 7:6-7-- *"But he whose genealogy is not derived from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. Now beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better."*
- a. Abraham was promised by God to be the source of blessing in this world.
    - Genesis 12:2-3-- *"I will bless you and make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."*
  - b. The lesser is blessed by the greater.
  - c. The permanence of Melchizedek's priesthood lives on in the priesthood of Jesus Christ, the only One who can bring God to men, and men to God.
    - Hebrews 7:8-- *"Here mortal men receive tithes, but there he receives them, of whom it is witnessed that he lives."*