THE MYSTERIOUS MELCHISEDEC

**DATE: 2/19/2014 Wed.**

**TEXT: Hebrews 7:1-10**

**INTRODUCTION**

After the strong warning given in **chapter 6**

The writer now resumes his discussion of Christ's Priesthood

He continues to express the Superiority of Christ

In **Chapters 1-6** he revealed Christ as being better than -

The Prophets, the Angels, Moses, and Joshua

In **chapter 7**, Jesus is compared to Melchisedec and Aaron

We will see His superiority to these 2 also

Apart from the book of Hebrews there are only 2 other passages in the Bible dealing with this man Melchisedec

**Genesis 14:18-20** & **Psalm 110:4**

We actually learn more about him from the Book of Hebrews than from the other OT passages

Here in **chapter 7** we have the 3rd mention of Melchisedec

Let’s pray and begin to think on this thought tonight -

***“The Mysterious Melchisedec”***

***~~~Prayer~~~***

**I. HIS “ROYAL POSITION” – v.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;”***

Melchisedec is identified as the *“****king of Salem”***

Salem was an ancient name for Jerusalem

**Psalm 76:2 – *“In Salem also is His tabernacle, and His dwelling place in Zion”***

**A. A ‘Blessed’ Man**

Melchisedec is also called the ***“priest of the most high God,”***

This fact is stated back in Genesis where we have the first mention of Melchisedec

**Genesis 14:18, 19 – *“And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God” “And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth:”***

The Hebrew word for ***“Most high God”*** is *Elyon*

This word occurs over 50 times in the OT and depicts God in His ultimate supremacy

As seen in the phrase ***“Possessor of heaven and earth”***

The term stresses God's exclusive supremacy over the created order

Not only was he a **‘Blessed’ Man** being the *“****priest of the most high God”***

But also a …

**B. A ‘Unique’ Man**

We see that Melchisedec was a Unique Man, in that …

He is the only human in the history of the Bible to hold the dual position of King and Priest (outside of Christ)

Under the OT Covenant, the Throne and the Altar were separated

Kings descended from the tribe of Judah, and Priests from the tribe of Levi

This was God's order

No Jew could hold both offices

Uzziah tried and was judged by God and smitten with leprosy for his pride

**II Chronicles 26:16-21**

Melchisedec however, was allowed to be both King and Priest

Why?

For the purpose of foreshadowing the Great High Priest / King that was to come

**HIS “ROYAL POSITION”**

**II. HIS “RIGHTEOUS PEACE” – v.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;”***

At this historic meeting Abraham gave ***“a tenth part of all”***

These are the goods which had been retrieved from the conquered kings

We’re told that Abraham gave a Tithe to Melchizedek – **v.5**

This ***“tenth part”*** came out of ***“the spoils”***

This phrase literally means *from the top of the heap*

Indicating the best of the spoils of the conquest

**Genesis 14:11, 12; 16; 20**

The tithe was presented to God through His priestly representative

At this point in the argument for the superiority of Christ’s Priesthood …

(which we have been looking for some time now)

… Melchisedec’s Name and Position are put forth

The proper name ***“Melchisedec”*** is a Hebrew compound word composed of the words for *king* (melek) and *righteousness* (zedek)

The city name ***"Salem"*** is the Hebrew word *Shalom* and means *peace*

He was a King whose person and realm were marked by Righteousness and Peace

Melchisedec was both *“****King of righteousness”*** and *“****King of peace”***

Notice the Divine order here

It’s first Righteousness, then Peace

No one will enjoy Peace with God until his sins are forgiven and God's Righteousness is imputed

**A. King of ‘Righteousness’**

Our God is Righteous and Just

He cannot and does not wink at sin

His Righteousness demands Justice and therefore sin must be dealt with

Lost men are at enmity (hostility) with God

**Romans 8:7 *– “Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be”***

The Bible tells us in –

**Psalm 7:11- *“God is angry with the wicked every day”***

And that’s because the wicked are angry with God

**John 3:36 – *“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him”***

**Romans 1:18 – “*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;”***

**Ephesians 5:6 – “*Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience”***

There can be no Peace with God until the enmity is removed

Only Jesus Christ, as our High Priest, can remove the enmity that exists between God and sinful man

**Ephesians 2:13-18 …**

There can be no Peace with God apart from the work of Jesus Christ

**Romans 5:1 – *“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ”***

It is the blood of Christ that makes such peace possible

**Colossians 1:20 - *“And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself...”***

**King of ‘Righteousness’**

**B. King of ‘Peace’**

We have been talking about Peace ‘With’ God,

But there is also the matter of The Peace ‘Of’ God

We receive Peace with God as a result of our *Salvation*

However, we enjoy The Peace of God by *Submission*

This Peace is the ***“the peace of God, which passeth all understanding”*** found in **Philippians 4:7**

And it comes from a submissive walk with Christ

**Isaiah 48:18 – *“O that thou hadst hearkened to My commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea:”***

A lot of people have Peace with God because they are saved,

But fall short of having the Peace of God because they don't submit to His Word

**Psalm119:165 – *“Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them”***

Such people do not Stumble at the Word of God, they

Submit to it

**Matthew 21:44 – *“And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder”***

The point of the writer’s argument is …

Christ is the Messianic King Whose kingdom will manifest the Righteousness of God and Peace among men

**Isaiah 32:17 – *“And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever”***

One of the Messiah’s titles is ***"The LORD our Righteousness"***

… Found in **Jeremiah 23:5, 6 – *“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth” “In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is His name whereby He shall be called, The LORD our Righteousness"***

He is also ***"The Prince of Peace"*** found in **Isaiah 9:6 –**

***“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given:***

***and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace”***

Melchisedec thus typified both the Royalty and Priesthood of Jesus Christ

**HIS “ROYAL POSITION”**

**HIS “RIGHTEOUS PEACE”**

**III. HIS “REMOVED PEDIGREE” – v.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”***

Melchisedec appears and exits, from the historical record, without notice

Neither the name of his father ***“without father”*** nor that of his mother ***“without mother”*** is stated

The phrase ***“without descent”*** literally means *no genealogy*

No genealogy contains his name

The statement …

***“Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life...”***

… is a unique statement used only here in the Bible

It’s talking about having No genealogy or lineage

**1.** This is in sharp contrast to Jewish custom

The Jews were sticklers when it came to their lineage

The OT abounds with genealogies showing how important ancestry was to the Jew

Every priest had to prove his lineage

**Ezra 2:61, 62 – *“And of the children of the priests: the children of Habaiah, the children of Koz, the children of Barzillai; which took a wife of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite, and was called after their name:” “These sought their register among those that were reckoned by genealogy, but they were not found: therefore were they, as polluted, put from the priesthood”***

This is a case where some became priests who were not Levites

When a search was made of their genealogy and their names were not found

***“therefore were they … put from the priesthood”***

**2.** Why does the Writer get into all of this?

Remember, this letter is written to Hebrew Christians

These converted Jews were very familiar with the Scriptures

Some of these Hebrew Christians might have said,

*“Wait a minute, Christ was of the tribe of Judah. He is not qualified to be a High Priest. He is from the tribe of Judah”*

The writer then reminds them that there is precedence

Melchisedec was also a non-Levitical priest

This is the thrust of the writer’s argument

The writer says - *“...* ***abideth a priest continually”***

The author concludes that these facts of silence cause Melchisedec to be ***“made like unto the Son of God”***

Since Melchisedec had no genealogy on record, his priesthood was typical of Christ's eternal Priesthood

As God, Christ is eternal, with no beginning or ending

Some commentators have concluded that Melchisedec was actually a Theophany, an appearance of Christ in human form before His incarnation

However, it would be difficult to argue that He was a priest after the order of Himself

It is better to conclude that the typical significance of Melchisedec lies in the fact that he was both a King and a Priest

Christ is the King, possessing the royal birthright of David out of the tribe of Judah,

And is Priest by Divine Fiat of His Sacrificial death

**Hebrews 2:17 …**

Levitical priests ministered for only twenty years, from the age of thirty to fifty

**Numbers 4:3 – *“From thirty years old and upward even until fifty years old, all that enter into the host, to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation”***

Melchisedec ***“abideth a priest continually”*** in that there is no record of the finish of his priestly service

Christ, with His eternal divine nature and resurrected human body, likewise has a never ending priesthood

**HIS “ROYAL POSITION”**

**HIS “RIGHTEOUS PEACE”**

**HIS “REMOVED PEDIGREE”**

**IV. HIS “REVERENT POSSESSION” – vs. 4-10**

The author now challenged his readers to ***“consider how great”*** Melchisedec is / was

The verb ***“consider”*** stresses *constant contemplation with insight and discernment*

The author wanted the readers to recognize the historical facts and the theological deductions in them

**A. He is Better than Abraham – vs. 4-7**

The historic meeting between these 2 key men produced 2 actions which support the assertion that Melchisedec is better than Abraham

(Note, The superiority is in Position, not in Person)

It’s Functional, not based on Merit

**1.** Abraham gave a tithe to Melchisedec

**Genesis 14:20b – *“And he gave him tithes of all”***

The significance of Abraham tithing to Melchisedec ..

Lies in the fact that there was no ancestral connection between the two men

Jacob, the grandson of Abraham through Isaac, had twelve sons including Levi

After the exodus of Israel from Egypt, God appointed the tribe or ***“the sons of Levi”*** to ***“the office of the priesthood”***

**v. 5a – *“And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood,”***

**Numbers 3:5-13 …**

They were originally designed to assist Aaron and his sons in the service of the tabernacle

The Levitical tribe itself was divided into 3 units based upon the 3 sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari

**Numbers 3:17 – *“And these were the sons of Levi by their names; Gershon, and Kohath, and Merari”***

**v. 5b** - The Levites received from God ***“a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law”***

We see this commanded in …

**Numbers 18:21 *–“And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an …***

***… inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation”***

They had no inheritance in the land of Canaan after Joshua conquered it

**Joshua 13:33 – *“But unto the tribe of Levi Moses gave not any inheritance: the Lord God of Israel was their inheritance, as He said unto them”***

They were to live in cities within the various tribal allotments and to be supported by the tithes of the other tribes

**Deut 12:12 – *“And ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God, ye, and your sons, and your daughters, and your menservants, and your maidservants, and the Levite that is within your gates; forasmuch as he hath no part nor inheritance with you”***

In turn, the Levites had to give a tithe to the family of Aaron

**Numbers 18:25-32 …**

This brotherly support reinforced their common origin from Abraham

**v. 5b - *“their brethren”*** in the flesh

Melchisedec, however, had no ancestral ***“descent”*** or genealogical connection with either Abraham or his physical descendants

**v. 6a – *“But he whose descent is not counted from them”***

Yet he received tithes from Abraham

**2.** Melchisedec Blesses Abraham

The second basis of superiority can be seen in the fact that Melchisedec blessed Abraham,

The one who had received the covenant promises

**v. 6b – *“…and blessed him that had the promises”***

The author then referred to a natural law of human relationships with which we all would agree

**v. 7a - *“without all contradiction”***

The principle is clear and simple

**v. 7b - *“...the less is blessed of the better”***

Based upon that presupposition,

We see that Melchisedec was thus better than Abraham, the father of the Hebrew nation

**B. He is Better than Levi – vs. 8-10**

There are two lines of support for this statement

**1.** The reception of tithes by the Levites ended at their respective deaths,

… whereas no end of the ministry of Melchisedec is recorded

**v.8 – *“And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth”***

The contrast is further indicated by the adverbs:

***“here... there”***

**2.** Melchisedec Superiority is further seen

By the theological conclusion that Melchisedec blessed Levi and that Levi gave tithes to Melchisedec

**vs. 9, 10 – *“And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham”
“For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him”***

The author, by the Spirit of God, then declared a biblical truth which could never be detected from the historical events or the characters

The writer starts **v. 9** by stating ***“and as I may so say”***

Indicating he’s been given liberty by the Holy Spirit to say what he’s about to say

He charged that Levi ***“payed tithes in Abraham”***

The family descent of the patriarchs was: Abraham—Isaac—Jacob—Levi

Levi thus was the great-grandson of Abraham

When the historic encounter occurred,

Abraham had no children at all, and he definitely died before Levi was born

We know this from **Genesis 25:7-11**

The author then answered this obvious rhetorical question:

*“How could Levi pay tithes to Melchisedec when he was not yet alive?”*

The answer is found in a theological Mystery,

A truth which could only be known through divine revelation and illumination

That Truth is that Levi was genetically present in Abraham

The writer states that Levi ***“was yet in the loins of his father [Abraham], when Melchisedec met him”***

Levi did not begin to exist as a person until his own conception by Jacob and Leah

**Genesis 29:34 – *“And she conceived … and bare a son; … [and] his name [was] called Levi”***

We all know life passes from one generation to another

The genetic and physical-psychical constitution of a person is derived from his parents, grandparents, and ultimately back to the first human pair, Adam and Eve

The Scriptures teaches our genetic identification with past ancestors

We find this great truth in that …

- The entire human race sinned in Adam and shares in his judgment of death

**Romans 5:12 – *“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:”***

- Christ was genetically present in His physical ancestors through Mary when Israel came out of Egypt

**Hosea 11:1 – *“When Israel was a child, then I loved Him, and called My Son out of Egypt”***

**Matthew 2:15 – *“And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called My Son”***

- Through regeneration, a believing sinner participates with Christ in His crucifixion and resurrection

**Galatians 2:20 – *“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I,***

***…but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me”***

This spiritual position assures the believer of his total acceptance by God

The regenerated mind of a Christian, therefore, must accept by faith the paradox that Levi was present in Abraham

Since Melchisedec received tithes from Abraham and blessed the patriarch,

The King-Priest consequently received tithes from Levi and blessed Levi

Melchisedec is than shown as better than Levi

Because, as we stated earlier …

The less is blessed by the better **– v. 7**

**CONCLUSION**

Melchisedec is an historical figure who serves as a Type or Picture of Christ

That is how the writer of Hebrews presents him

Our text says in **v.3** he was... ***“made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually”***

It doesn't say that he was the Son of God,

But that he was ***“made like unto the Son of God”***

Notice the wording here

Jesus is the Primary and Melchisedec is the Picture

Melchisedec’s life was like the Son of God’s in order to serve as a type of Christ's Priesthood

Melchisedec beautifully typifies the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ

He is our King of Righteousness, and when we received Him, He became our King of peace

All this to show these Hebrew believers that Christ is superior to all that came before

And is the fulfillment of all that came before

**HIS “ROYAL POSITION”**

**HIS “RIGHTEOUS PEACE”**

**HIS “REMOVED PEDIGREE”**

**HIS “REVERENT POSSESSION”**