

Hebrews 7:1-4

This chapter brings us to what the writer of Hebrews previously expressed a desire to do, which was to develop Messiah being a priest after the order of Melchisedec - "Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec. Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing," Hebrews 5:10-11. The first 4 verses introduce us to Melchisedec, who is mentioned only twice in the earlier scripture (Old testament).

Genesis 14:18-20

- 18 **And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God.**
 19 **And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth:**
 20 **And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.**

Melchisedec is a king and a priest.

Psalms 110:1-4 A Psalm of David

- 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.**

The Messiah (King and Lord) is a priest after the order of Melchisedec.

- 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.**

There are at least 4 different interpretations:

1. He is Shem (this is the Jewish view).

"The ancient Targumim (Aramaic interpretive translations) identify Melchizedek as Shem—son of Noah. Shem was one of the links in the chain who transmitted the G-dly traditions that originated with Adam. These traditions were carefully handed down from generation to generation, and Shem—who headed an academy—was a key conductor of these teachings. The Midrash tells us that he was so perfect and so spiritually advanced that he was born circumcised."

So why did the priesthood pass from him to Abraham's children? The Talmud explains that this happened as a result of his having blessed Abraham before blessing G-d in the verses above. This is reflected in the only other place in Scripture where Melchizedek is mentioned: in Psalms 110:4, where we read, ". . . you are a priest forever because of the speech of Melchizedek." Because of Melchizedek's ill-chosen speech, the priesthood was taken from him and given to the seed of Abraham forever." https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/1326593/jewish/Who-Was-Melchizedek.htm

Jewish belief is that David is the priest after the "word [order] of Melchisedek in Psalm 110:4.

Definition of "order" - a reason, suit or style:--cause, end, estate, order, regard.

2. A celestial being, perhaps an angel, who took on human form.

"It seems more natural that the author meant that Melchizedek belonged to an order in which there was no end to the priesthood of those engaged in it. (He later said in 7:8 that Melchizedek "is declared to be living.") If this is correct, Melchizedek may have been an angelic being who reigned for a time at Salem (i.e., Jerusalem). If so, the statement that he was "without beginning of days" would not mean that he was eternal, but simply that he had a pretemporal origin. Nor would this concept of Melchizedek as an angel elevate him to the same level as God's Son, since the author painstakingly asserted the Son's superiority to the angels (1:5-14). There is indeed evidence that, at Qumran, Melchizedek was regarded as an angelic personage. If this is the case in Hebrews, then the Son of God is the High Priest in an order in which Melchizedek is simply a priest." Bible Knowledge Commentary

3. A theophany.

"The usual interpretation ... is that he (Melchizedek) was made into a type of Christ since as a "King of Righteousness" (meaning of Melchizedek) and "King of Peace" (meaning of Salem), he appears and leaves the record suddenly, with no mention of either ancestry or death. It seems better to take the words literally, in which case they could be applicable to Christ Himself, appearing here to Abram in a theophany. This would also solve the problem of how such a godly king and priest as Melchizedek could be ruling a city in such an ungodly land as Canaan and, why, if he did, Abram would have had no other contact with him. The fact that he was "like unto the Son of God" (Hebrews 7:3) accords with one of Christ's pre-incarnate appearances; at His human birth, he became the incarnate Son of God forever. Melchizedek was also said to be a man (Hebrews 7:4), but the same is true in the case of other theophanies, one of which was likewise manifested to Abram (Genesis 18:2,22; 19:1-24)." Henry Morris, Defenders Study Bible,. World Publishing

How could Jesus be a type of Himself - seems as though this would be illogical.

4. A gentile king who is a type of Jesus.

- 1) Priest of the most high God

- He was a Gentile priest
- Levitical priests served Jehovah for Israel
- Melchisedec served *El Elyon*, the most high God, for all the world.

Use in the Bible: In the Old Testament *El Elyon* occurs 28 times. It occurs 19 times in Psalms. *El Elyon* is first used in Genesis 14:18. *El* is another name that is translated as "God" and can be used in conjunction with other words to designate various aspects of God's character. *Elyon* literally means "Most High" and is used both adjectivally and substantivally throughout the Old Testament. It expresses the extreme sovereignty and majesty of God and His highest preeminence. When the two words are combined — *El Elyon* (el el-yone') — it can be translated as "the most exalted God." (Psalm 57:2)

- 2) King of Righteousness

- Righteousness always precedes peace

Psalms 85:10, 13	Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Righteousness shall go before him; and shall set us in the way of his steps.
Proverbs 11:4-6	Riches profit not in the day of wrath: but righteousness delivereth from death. The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way: but the wicked shall fall by his own wickedness. The righteousness of the upright shall deliver them: but transgressors shall be taken in their own naughtiness.
Proverbs 14:34	Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.
Isaiah 32:17	And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.

Isaiah 54:14 In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and from terror; for it shall not come near thee.

Isaiah 57:20-21 (wickedness leads to no peace) But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.

3) King of Salem; King of peace

- Salem is, today, Jerusalem

4) Melchisedec was both a priest and king

- In the Genesis 14 and the Psalm 110 passage Melchisedec is spoken of in conjunction with the function of King and Priest.
- Under the Levitical system a priest could not be king (Numbers 8:14-16).

14 Thus shalt thou separate the Levites from among the children of Israel: and the Levites shall be mine.

15 And after that shall the Levites go in to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation: and thou shalt cleanse them, and offer them for an offering.

16 For they are wholly given unto me from among the children of Israel; instead of such as open every womb, even instead of the firstborn of all the children of Israel, have I taken them unto me.

- Messiah would be both priest and king - Zechariah 6:13; Psalm 110:1-4

13 Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.

"A more popular interpretation is that Melchizedek was Christ Himself in some preincarnate form. Thus, he would have been like the Old Testament "angel of the LORD" (e.g., Genesis 16:7, 8, 9, 10, 11; Ex. 3:2; Judges 13:3-21). Proponents of this view point to the language of Hebrews 7:3: "Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of day nor end of life." There are some serious problems, however, with this idea. Six times the writer of Hebrews cited Psalm 110:4-note when stating that Jesus is a priest "after the order of Melchizedek" (Hebrews 5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:11, 17, 21). If Jesus actually was Melchizedek, He would not be said to be "after the order of Melchizedek." Furthermore, language of similarity, not identity, is used to describe the relationship between the two. Hebrews 7:3 states that Melchizedek was "made like unto the Son of God," not that he actually was the Son of God. Finally, Hebrews 7:15 states that Jesus is a priest "after the similitude [likeness] of Melchizedek," not that he actually was Melchizedek. These verses indicate that Melchizedek was an individual who was a type of Christ, not that he actually was the preincarnate Christ." Dr. Will Varner, *Israel My Glory*, Volume 51 Issue 6. 1999

- 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;**

In verse one and two we have an introduction of Melchisedec with a reference back to the events of Genesis 14.

The interpretation of Melchisedec מלכי צדק is very important.

מלך (melek), meaning king and צדק (sadeq) means to be just or righteous - king of righteousness

King of Salem שלם (Jerusalem) meaning King of peace שלום (shalom).

Peace is intrinsically tied in with the city of Jerusalem and its King (see Zechariah 6:13).

"Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city;..." Isaiah 52:1

"Thus says the LORD God: This is Jerusalem; I have set her in the midst of the nations and the countries all around her." Ezekiel 5:5

"But I have chosen Jerusalem, that my name might be there;...." 2 Chronicles 6:6

"...the LORD had said, 'In Jerusalem I will put my name.'" 2 Kings 21:4

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.

Verse 3 tells us that there is no information on Melchisedec outside of the brief mention in Genesis 14.

"Without father, without mother, without descent..."

No genealogy is given for Abimelech (Genesis 20; 21; 26); Sarah; and Esther (Esther 2:7).

Esther 2:7 And he brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle's daughter: for she had neither father nor mother, and the maid was fair and beautiful; whom Mordecai, when her father and mother were dead, took for his own daughter.

'It is possible, therefore, for us to construe the language concerning Melchizedek's being without father and mother - having neither beginning of days nor end of life - as bearing the same connotation [as Sarah was without a mother]. In Hebrews, the writer probably meant to convey to the reader that there was no account related to Melchizedek prior to his appearance on the stage of history. Nothing is mentioned about his father, his mother or his birth day; neither is anything said about his death.'

Statement by David Cooper, from *Hebrews: Stream of Living Waters*, Robert L. Sumner, page 174-75

"having neither beginning of days, nor end of life;"

There is no record of Melchisedec's birth or death.

"But made like unto the Son of God"

This suggests that he is not the Son of God but *made like* (illustration of) the Son of God. Note that he is made like the Son of God, not that the Son of God is made like Melchisedec.

"abideth a priest continually."

This introduces an important contrast with the Levitical priests. Levite priests served temporarily. The Melchisedic priesthood continues forever.

Numbers 8:23-25 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, This is it that belongeth unto the Levites: from twenty and five years old and upward they shall go in to wait upon the service of the tabernacle of the congregation: And from the age of fifty years they shall cease waiting upon the service thereof, and shall serve no more.

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

We are commanded to consider how great Melchisedec was. If Abraham gave tithes to Melchisedec it is logical that the Levites and their priesthood (developed in the next few verses) who came from Abraham are not as important as Melchisedec and his priesthood.

"Beloved friends, if Melchizedek was so great, how much greater is that man whom Melchizedek represents! If the type is so wonderful what must the Antitype be! I invite you to consider "how great" is He of Whom it is written, "The Lord swore and will not change His mind, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." I will not say "Consider how great this man was," for there is no verb: the "was" is inserted in italics by the translators. We are to consider "how great this man." Say "was" if you will, but read also "is," and "shalt be." Consider how great this man was and is, and is to be, even the Man Christ Jesus." Charles Spurgeon quoted in http://www.preceptaustin.org/hebrews_74-5

The focus of Hebrews 7, actually the entire book of Hebrews, is to consider HOW GREAT JESUS IS, not Melchisedec, as he is only a type of Jesus.!