

Melchizedek Priests

Introduction

As we saw in lesson one of this series, it was always God's intention to have a Kingdom of priests. It appears that this priestly order was to be of the same type as the one in the Heavens. Due to the sin and disobedience of Israel the Kingdom of priests was reduced to a tribe of priests, the tribe of Levi. The Levitical priesthood which served the Tabernacle in the wilderness was a type and shadow of the Heavenly priesthood just as the Tabernacle itself was a type and shadow of the True Tabernacle in Heaven.

However, Jesus was designated by God as High Priest after the order of Melchizedek not after the order of Levi. Since Jesus is High Priest forever, then we have to conclude that the priesthood of Melchizedek will remain forever. We have already seen in the previous lesson that the Levitical priesthood was changed, the law was changed, and the covenant was changed by the designation of Jesus as High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek. Therefore, when Peter says in the New Testament that we are a Kingdom of priests, he is referring to the priesthood of Melchizedek and not the Levitical priesthood.

The True Tabernacle in Heaven is being served by true heavenly priests. Since this priesthood will remain forever through eternity future, we can assume that it has existed in eternity past also, even though we have very little recorded information about this priesthood. We can see a few details of priestly function in the book of Revelation with the Millennium Kingdom and the New Heavens, New Earth, and New Jerusalem. Obviously, from this we can see that the subject of the Melchizedek priesthood is important and is something of which we need better understanding.

Most of us have steered clear of anything that speaks of “priesthood” because of the Catholic priest structure, even though it is patterned after the Levitical model and not the Melchizedek order. Others of us avoid any mention of the Melchizedek priesthood because of the corrupted and perverted doctrine concerning it that is put out by the Mormons. While the Latter Day Saints may call their order by the name of Melchizedek, their twisted version has nothing to do with the true Melchizedek priesthood. We cannot allow the enemy to rob of us of truth by obscuring it in cult religious doctrine.

So, to set the record straight, we have to begin this lesson with 'who is Melchizedek?'

Melchizedek

Melchizedek is only mentioned twice in the Old Testament. The first reference is in Genesis chapter 14 and the second is in Psalms 110. He is mentioned about 9 times in the New Testament mostly in the book of Hebrews. The first time that the word “priest” is used in the Scriptures, it is applied to

Melchizedek in Genesis chapter 14.

Abraham had just returned from defeating the ones who had taken Lot and his household captive when he met Melchizedek.

And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High. 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." He gave him a tenth of all. ([Genesis 14:18-20 NASB](#))

Melchizedek was both a king and a priest for Salem which later become known as Jerusalem; so Melchizedek was one of the first kings of the early version of Jerusalem and he was a priest of God Most High, that is, Jehovah, Yahweh, the Lord God.

Melchizedek served Abraham bread and wine and blessed him. This is what we would call a 'communion meal', a type of the blood and body of Christ. This was his priestly function toward Abraham.

Very little more is said about Melchizedek. We can only determine a couple of things from what is said here. First, he was priest of God Most High; therefore, he was not God appearing in human form. Second, he blessed Abraham; therefore, he was greater than Abraham. Anything else that we can learn must come from the revelatory understanding of the writer of Hebrews.

For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham as he was returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, to whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth part of all *the spoils*, was first of all, by the translation *of his name*, king of righteousness, and then also king of Salem, which is 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, he remains a priest perpetually. ([Hebrews 7:1-3 NASB](#))

The Hebrews' writer begins by interpreting Melchizedek's name as "king of righteousness". Melchizedek is made up of two words in the original: *Melek*, which means "King" and *Zedek*, which means "Righteousness". He was also king of Salem, which means "peace". Both of these designations are also applied to our Lord Jesus.

The writer then tells us an astounding fact: Melchizedek is "without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life". Some commentators believe this to mean that his records have been lost so that no one knows his genealogy. However, I think that is rather lame. If that was all that was meant, it would have been said much simpler than what is recorded. It is clear to me that the writer is saying that there is no physical or natural lineage for Melchizedek and then he adds "having neither beginning of days nor end of life". What does that mean? Read literally, it means he wasn't born and didn't die. Then the writer adds "but made like the Son of God". Not that he was the Son of God but was made like Him. Because of all of that, Melchizedek "remains a priest perpetually". He is eternally always a priest of God Most High.

So, who then is Melchizedek? He is not God Most High. He is not the Son of God. That doesn't leave us too many candidates who are qualified as a priest. Possibly he is an angelic type of being that serves in the heavenly Temple who appeared in human form. Possibly he is simply a righteous man fully

serving God as a priest in the age before the Law. However, neither of these possibilities seem to satisfy all that is said of Melchizedek.

It is my opinion that Melchizedek was a pre-incarnate appearance of the Lord, not as the Son but as He was before He was incarnated—the *Logos* or Word of God.

NOTE: Sometimes in our doctrinal expositions we confuse ourselves about the Godhead by emphasizing the Trinity as too separated and making too much distinction. It is clear from John that Jesus was the Word or *Logos* before He was incarnated as a man.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. (John 1:1-3 NASB)

It was through Him that all things came into being—God spoke and it was. The Word was in the form of God, who is Spirit, but then He emptied Himself of the form of God and took on the form of a man.

Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. (Philippians 2:5-8 NASB)

So, the Son of God did not appear as a man until He took on the form and likeness of a man by being born of a woman. After His incarnation as man, His appearance has remained as a man, even in His resurrection.

It is therefore possible that the Logos of God appeared in human form in the same manner that is recorded of angels appearing in human form. He was not born of a woman but merely appeared in the form of a man. That is my opinion but you are perfectly free to disagree.

It is not really important about who Melchizedek was beyond what is said about him. He typifies the priesthood that is named after him of which our Lord is now the High Priest.

Priesthood Before Aaron and Levi

As you can see from what has been said, it is clear that there was a priesthood that served the Most High God before the Levitical priesthood was initiated. This priesthood served before the Law was given and apparently still serves now after the Law has been fulfilled by Jesus.

Besides Melchizedek, it appears that Jethro or Reuel, Moses' father-in-law, may have been a part of the Melchizedek priesthood. He is called the priest of Midian in the Scriptures and, according to some, he is also called the prince of Midian.

Now Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law, heard of all that God had done for

Moses and for Israel His people, how the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt. ([Exodus 18:1 NASB](#))

Moses told his father-in-law all that the LORD had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, all the hardship that had befallen them on the journey, and how the LORD had delivered them. Jethro rejoiced over all the goodness which the LORD had done to Israel, in delivering them from the hand of the Egyptians. So Jethro said, "Blessed be the LORD who delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of Pharaoh, and who delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. "Now I know that the LORD is greater than all the gods; indeed, it was proven when they dealt proudly against the people." Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took a burnt offering and sacrifices for God, and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat a meal with Moses' father-in-law before God. ([Exodus 18:8-12 NASB](#))

Jethro was certainly no heathen priest or he would not have rejoiced over the way that God dealt with the Egyptians and the deliverance of the children of Israel. Jethro blessed the Lord and took a burnt offering and sacrifices for God. This sacrificial meal was provided for Moses, Aaron and the elders of Israel. This is certainly a Melchizedek type of priestly function that Jethro was performing.

Zadok Priests

In Ezekiel we have the picture of two categories or classes of priests: those who were restored after falling away and those who never fell away. While both groups continued as priests, there was a limitation set on those who had fallen away. There were some priestly functions that they could not perform.

"But the Levites who went far from Me when Israel went astray, who went astray from Me after their idols, shall bear the punishment for their iniquity. "Yet they shall be ministers in My sanctuary, having oversight at the gates of the house and ministering in the house; they shall slaughter the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall stand before them to minister to them. ([Ezekiel 44:10-11 NASB](#))

"And they shall not come near to Me to serve as a priest to Me, nor come near to any of My holy things, to the things that are most holy; but they will bear their shame and their abominations which they have committed. "Yet I will appoint them to keep charge of the house, of all its service and of all that shall be done in it. ([Ezekiel 44:13-14 NASB](#))

This first group of priests who fell away and were restored could not come near to the Lord to minister to Him but, instead, were allowed to minister to the house, its services, and to the people.

The second group, those who never fell away but had maintained their commitment and purity, were allowed a much deeper priestly function.

"But the Levitical priests, the sons of Zadok, who kept charge of My sanctuary when the sons of Israel went astray from Me, shall come near to Me to minister to Me; and they shall stand before Me to offer Me the fat and the blood," declares the Lord GOD. "They shall enter My sanctuary; they shall come near to My table to minister to Me and keep My charge. ([Ezekiel 44:15-16 NASB](#))

What does this have to do with Melchizedek? Remember that Melchizedek is made up of two words in the original with the second one being “*zedek*”, which comes from the same root as “*zadok*”. Both mean “*righteousness*”. Therefore, Zadok priests are priests of righteousness. This typifies the priestly ministry under the New Covenant. Each aspect of the Zadok priests' functions listed in Ezekiel have their spiritual fulfillment in our priestly service to the Lord.

Our next lesson will look at the functions of a Melchizedek or Zadok priest and how they apply to us today.