

## Melchizedek

*"For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of God most high, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, to whom also Abraham divided a tenth part of all (being first, by interpretation, 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 unto the Son of God), abideth a priest continually"* (Heb. 7:1-3).

The close of chapter six tells that Christ as a forerunner, entered into that which is within the veil *"having become a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek"* (Heb. 6:20). The writer had frequently spoken of Jesus as a priest, but it is not until the fifth chapter is reached that he likens Jesus as a high priest *"after the order of Melchizedek"* (Heb. 2:17; 3:1; 4:14; 5:1, 5, 10; 6:10). Now in chapter seven the writer lists those areas in which Melchizedek and Jesus are alike. There are at least three common similarities: both were kings and priests simultaneously; both were said to have neither father, mother or genealogy and both were said to have an abiding or unchanging priesthood.

*"Melchizedek: king of Salem, priest of God most High."* This characteristic of Melchizedek made him different from the priesthood initiated under Moses, the Levitical or Aaronic priesthood. During the long history of Israel from Mt. Sinai to Mt. Calvary, Israel had a continuing priesthood of succeeding priests and high priests, many in number although all were from the tribe of Levi. However, there was not a single king chosen from their number. After God rejected Saul (who was from Benjamin) as king and then chose David, Judah always produced the legitimate heir or king for the nation. Melchizedek was a priest of God but he was also king of Salem ("peace," Jerusalem). This uniqueness of the Messiah was prophesied. While He was to come from Judah (Gen. 49:10; 2 Sam. 7:14); He was also destined to be priest. Zechariah had spelled out that the man called the Branch (i.e., the Messiah) would be a priest upon His throne (Zech. 6:12f). Because Jesus is now Priest, He also is now King. There is no future, earthly reign of Jesus, save in the imagination of deceived and deceiving teachers of the doctrine of Premillennialism.

*"Without father, without mother, without genealogy."* This is the second of the common characteristics of Melchizedek and Jesus. We must understand the object of this writer's argument. The very nature of a priest is to be a mediator, a "go-between"; one who shares the nature of those for whom he mediates (Heb. 2:17; 4:14, 1 Tim. 2:5f). Melchizedek was a man; yet he left

no record behind of any who came before or followed him. No items of his birth, death nor the length of his life. He appeared as a meteor on the pages of history and these things lacking of his history, made him a perfect type for Him who had no beginning or ending (although in His human role one can read of His genealogy, birth and death). Because He is God, thus forever and ever, He, as God, was not begotten by anyone for, like the eternal father and Spirit, He also is eternal.

*"Abideth a priest continually."* This is the third common quality of Melchizedek and Jesus. There is no record that anyone was priest before or after Melchizedek in his order. He was "one of a kind." The writer uses this point extensively later in the book. He became typically an eternal priest of Christ who is eternal. Because Jesus is eternal, He is always able to serve as a priest for His people and His one-time sacrifice is continually called upon to obtain forgiveness for the sins of man. Obviously in this latter respect, Melchizedek was no different than the priests of Aaron. He did not, and could not offer blood that would forever remit man's sins. Had that been possible, there would have been no need for Christ's priesthood!. Still, his was a true type of the priesthood our Lord.

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