

A Priest Higher than Aaron Heb. 7:1-10

A consideration of the security and confidence we have in Jesus gives way to an extended discussion of the peculiar greatness that belonged to Melchizedek.

The setting is that of the miraculous raid conducted by Abraham recorded in **Genesis 14:5-12**.

At the high point of Abraham's life he is met by Melchizedek, the priest-king of Salem. It is a mysterious incident followed by nearly 1,000 years of silence. The silence was broken in the 10th century when the Holy Spirit inspired David to write **Ps. 110:4**.

This was something new and extraordinary. God revealed His intention of bringing into history one who would be a priest like Melchizedek. Like Melchizedek, He would be both priest and king. **Cf. Ps. 110:1**. God was going to establish an entirely new priesthood in and through His Messiah!

The writer to the Hebrews is led to reflect on the significance of this and he presents it to this Church as a source of encouragement.

1. **The significance of Melchizedek. Vv. 1-3.** The author sees two things as significant in Melchizedek.
 - a. **He typifies the unique character Christ would serve in. Vv. 1-2.**
 - i. **Melchizedek bore the title of king.** This is mentioned four times in **vv. 1, 2**.

Jesus is the ultimate king. **Cf. Rev 19:16**.

- ii. **Melchizedek was a priest-king.** No Levitical Priest could ever be king. Christ became the ultimate priest-king precisely fulfilling the prophecies. **Cf. Ps. 110:1, 4; Zech. 6:13**.
 - iii. His name itself signified things that would be ascribed to Christ. **Cf. Isa. 9:6-7; 1Cor. 1:30; Eph. 2:14**.
- b. **He typifies the unique qualifications that would fit Christ for His work. V. 3.** The author notes the manner in which Melchizedek appeared as typological of two important qualifiers of Christ for His work. The description doesn't necessitate a Christophony. He draws attention to two things:
- i. **He appeared without genealogy.** Every Levitical priest had to have a genealogy that could be traced back to Aaron. Melchizedek couldn't be traced to Aaron or Levi. Christ's lineage was also outside of Levi. He like Melchizedek was priest based not on bloodline but by a direct divine call.
 - ii. **He had no beginning or end.** The Levitical priesthood was not in perpetuity. It had term limits placed upon it- no more than thirty years. Melchizedek's sudden appearance and

equally sudden disappearance evokes thoughts of eternity. This Christ fulfilled.

2. **The greatness of Melchizedek. Vv. 4-10.** The writer notes two aspects of Melchizedek's meeting with Abraham evince superiority over Abraham.
 - a. **He received a tithe. V. 4.** In the ANE paying tithes to another was without question recognition of superiority and subjection. Abraham paid a tithe to Melchizedek. Someone may say, "so what! Levitical priests receive tithes as well!" The author responds in two ways:
 - i. **Levi received tithes by birthright. Vv. 5-6a.** Melchizedek didn't trace descent to Levi didn't get the tithe from the people but from Abraham himself.
 - ii. **Levi paid Melchizedek tithes in Abraham. V. 9.** It was a common thought in the ANE that a man's descendants were within Himself.
 - b. **He bestowed a blessing. Vv. 6b-7.** Biblical etiquette demands that the superior blesses the inferior. Abraham, *who had the promise*, was blessed by Melchizedek.
- So in every way imaginable Melchizedek's priesthood was superior to the Levitical priesthood. Yet it was only a type of the priesthood of Christ.

- He was 'king of righteousness' but he wasn't able to make anyone righteous. He was 'king of peace' but he could not actually give peace to anyone. He was a great type of the one who would.
- The implications for this first century Jewish church were immense. The one so great, who procured their righteousness and peace has risen into the highest heaven and sat down to pray them through their present storm.
- For us the implications are equally stunning. There is an additional type the writer doesn't bring out. Melchizedek set bread and wine before Abraham. This too was emblematic. Our priest offers us the same and we too enjoy blessing by feasting on His person.