

Lesson Eleven

(7:1-10)

MELCHIZEDEK

7 For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him; ²and to him Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything. He is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then he is also king of Salem, that is, king of peace. ³He is without father or mother or genealogy, and has neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God he continues a priest for ever.

⁴See how great he is! Abraham the patriarch gave him a tithe of the spoils. ⁵And those descendants of Levi who receive the priestly office have a commandment in the law to take tithes from the people, that is, from their brethren, though these also are descended from Abraham. ⁶But this man who has not their genealogy received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. ⁷It is beyond dispute that the inferior is blessed by the superior. ⁸Here tithes are received by mortal men; there, by one of whom it is testified that he lives. ⁹One might even say that Levi himself, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, ¹⁰for he was still in the loins of his ancestor when Melchizedek met him.

TWENTY-SIX LESSONS ON HEBREWS

Melchizedek, the subject of this lesson and a type of Jesus, only appears in the Bible record in the days of Abraham, long before the Mosaic Covenant and the institution of the Aaronic priesthood. Genesis 14:17-20 gives a brief glimpse of this man who served God as high priest. A millennium later, God spoke through the Psalmist in 110:4 about him, that he was the sort of high priest that would be used as a pattern for a new priesthood. It is pertinent to comment that this was predicted during the time of Aaronic priesthood.

Many people over the years have made Melchizedek into all sorts of things: angel, Jesus, etc., partly because of a certain view of types and partly because of the nature of the Bible record, which is brief. These points will be treated below.

The chapter, while divided into two lessons for easier study, can be viewed as follows:

- 7:1-3 Characteristics of Melchizedek
- 7:4-10 Comparison of Melchizedek and Levi/Aaron
- 7:11-28 Contrast of priesthood of Christ and Levi/Aaron

7:1 — **Melchizedek** — The Hebrew is מֶלֶכ־צֶדֶק. The word מֶלֶךְ in English is MLK (the Hebrew letters are consonants), which mean "king." You can see it in Abelmelek, or Abimeleck. The Hebrew word צֶדֶק comes into English as TSDQ, and stands for righteous or just. Hence his name meant righteous king, or king of righteousness.

king of Salem — The Hebrew word for Salem is שָׁלֵם, which means peace, and is heard in Shalom, the common greeting today in Israel. It is part of the word Jerusalem. (Note v. 2.)

priest of the Most High God — While we do not know how this came to be, we need not suppose that Abraham would accept service from just any high priest. He had left idolatry to serve God, and it seems consonant with his faithfulness to worship God through Melchizedek, and receive his blessing.

V. 2 — **a tenth** — Why he gave this particular amount is not stated or known. Some say that the tithe was always God's portion, but no scripture asserts that fact. (It seems very poor hermeneutics to read into a text what is desired out of it.) If this be an example for tithers, it is a poor one — who has "spoils of war"?

V. 3 — **without father or mother** — These two facts and succeeding ones are simply observations from the Genesis record, which gives none of these things. Since said record is as it is, then it could be fairly said that, record-wise, his priesthood abides.

resembling the Son of God — Resemblance does not mean identity. Any type will, in some respects, resemble that which it is to typify. In some ways, it will differ. Many different things typified Jesus, but none were identical to him, whether Melchizedek, or a lamb, or whatever.

V. 4 — **See how great he is** — This statement calls attention to the person and all his characteristics. Compared to Levi and Aaron, Melchizedek is far better. Note that he combines the offices of priest and king, which the Levitical priesthood never did. Hence, he prophesied by type a greater and different sort of priesthood than they. Note also that his priesthood was not by any stated inheritance, contrary to that of the Aaronic.

V. 5 — The Levites served their own countrymen, and were chosen from among them, to serve in a religious way. All were descendants of Abraham, which fact relates to vv. 6-7.

V. 6 — An important point: Melchizedek, the type of Christ, was not out of Abraham, though Abraham, recognizing his religious superior, paid tithes to Melchizedek.

V. 7 — This is an accepted point by everyone.

V. 8 — **here** — Refers to Levitical priests, who were mortal (with genealogy, father, death, etc.) and received tithes from inferiors in rank.

there — Refers to Melchizedek and the incident with Abraham.

V. 9 — **Levi . . . paid tithes** — The clinching fact is here stated: Levi (and all the Aaronic priesthood, representing the Mosaic system) paid tithes to Melchizedek, the lesser in rank to the greater in rank.

Now, let us summarize from the Genesis record and the above verses:

1. Melchizedek was both king and priest
2. Melchizedek was without genealogy, and that which it implies
3. Melchizedek had no cessation of his priesthood
4. Melchizedek was greater than Abraham (and Levi, and Aaron).

On this basis, then, we consider the priesthood of Jesus. He was/is both priest and king; he did not receive his priesthood by inheritance; he ever lives and thus will have no cessation of his priesthood; and was/is greater than Abraham, since he is like Melchizedek (in fact, is "Son," 1:1).

QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 11:

101. This discussion about Melchizedek is for what purpose?
102. Make a list of those people out of Israel who have been shown to be lesser than Jesus.
103. Describe Melchizedek.
104. Compare Levi and the Aaronic priesthood to Melchizedek, both similarities and differences.
105. Jesus resembles Melchizedek in what respects?
106. Does a type correspond to the anti-type in all ways or just in some ways?
107. How was it shown that Levi was inferior to Melchizedek?
108. Was Abraham also inferior to Melchizedek?