

**The Greatness of Melchizedek**  
**Hebrews 7:1-3**  
**Part One**

We are presently studying the Book of Hebrews. This book was written by an unknown author to a group of struggling Hebrew Christians living in Rome, who under a great persecution were considering leaving the Christian faith in order to return to Judaism.

The author in response to this struggle wrote this particular book in order to strengthen their faith so that they, in having their faith strengthened, might be able to persevere.

And what was at stake? Their souls, for if they did not persevere it would demonstrate that they never truly possessed genuine, living saving faith, that kind of faith that is given by God and is protected by God. So obviously there was a lot at stake in the mind of this author as he wrote this book.

So how did author go about strengthening the faith of his readers as he wrote this book? He focused on Christ's superiority.

So in regards to Christ's superiority what have we seen so far in our ongoing study? We have seen that Christ is superior to the Old Testament prophets in **Hebrews 1:1-4**. We have seen that Christ is superior to the angels in **Hebrews 1:5-2:18**. We have seen that Christ is superior to Moses in **Hebrews 3:1-4:13**. And now we are seeing in our ongoing examination of this book that Christ's priesthood is superior to all other **priesthoods**. This section began in **Hebrews 4:14** and will continue all the down through **Hebrews 10:18**.

So, what have we seen so far within this particular very lengthy section? First of all, we have seen the author in **Hebrews 4:14-16** challenging his readers to hold fast their confession based on the fact that Christ was indeed their great heavenly high priest, a fact that he had already introduced earlier in **Hebrews 2:17**.

So after he had challenged them to hold fast their confession, based on the fact that Christ was their great heavenly high priest, what then did the author do? The author in **Hebrews 5:1-10** quickly pointed out to his readers, by

way of introduction, that Christ's heavenly high priestly ministry was according to the order of Melchizedek. So then what happened?

This introductory thought, that this author introduced to his readers in **Hebrews 5:1-10** about Christ's heavenly high priestly ministry being according to the order of Melchizedek, then triggered this author to write a warning section that started in **Hebrews 5:11** and did not conclude until **Hebrews 6:20**. And this is where we left off in our study.

So why was this warning section, that we just completed two weeks ago, triggered? The author had just introduced the fact that Christ's heavenly high priestly ministry was according to the order of Melchizedek and he wanted to expand on that person and on that thought but his readers had a problem? And what was their problem?

They were dull of hearing. They were lazy of hearing. They were lethargic of hearing. They had no appetite for God's Word. They were indifferent to God's Word.

And that had to change if they were going to be able to profit from what he wanted to share with them about Melchizedek and about Christ's appointment as high priest according to the Order of Melchizedek.

So what did the author put forward in order to bring about this change? He exhorted them to "**pursue maturity**" to be far more energetic in listening to God's Word, far more energetic in seeking to understand God's Word and far energetic in seeking to apply God's Word. This is what the author put forward in order to bring about this change.

And what was the downside for them if they chose against making this change, if they chose to continue to be so indifferent to the word of God and what God had to say about such things as Melchizedek and Christ's priesthood that was according to the order of Melchizedek?

They could fall away from their confession, and if they fell away from their confession the author made it very clear to them that it would be impossible to renew them to repentance. This obviously was a very harsh declaration by this author.

But this harsh declaration was not meant in any way to communicate to his readers or to us that a true believer can lose their salvation but rather it was meant to communicate to his readers and to us that pseudo believers can very easily render themselves unreachable if they after having been surrounded by light then choose to reject the light they had been surrounded by or in other words the “light of the gospel.”

So did this author, after giving this harsh warning, believe that his readers would heed his exhortation and thus avoid this potential consequence of falling away? Yes, he did. This is why this author then went on to soften his warning by calling them “**beloved**” and assuring them that he was convinced of “**better things**” concerning them.

He then, concluded the warning section by emphasizing God’s **trustworthiness** and thus the certainty of his reader’s future hope.

So, what was their future hope? In the context of these verses we determined that their future hope that this author was referring to was their hope of heaven. And what did this author tell his readers to do with that hope? He told them to take hold of it in **Hebrews 6:18**. And if they were to take hold of that hope, in the way he wanted them to take hold of that hope, what would happen according to **Hebrews 6:19**?

If they took hold of their hope, in the way that he wanted them to take hold of that hope, their hope, figuratively speaking like an anchor, would enter the veil or in other words would enter the heavenly holy of holies, where God is presently dwelling.

And what would their hope acting like an anchor have been anchored to within the veil or in other words within the heavenly Holy of holies? Based on **Hebrews 6:20** it would have been, figuratively speaking anchored to Christ their forerunner and hopefully our forerunner who having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek had already entered.

We have now come full circle. For the author will now beginning in **Hebrews 7:1** return back to the person Melchizedek and to Christ’s appointment as high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

And what is my hope for the message this morning? My hope is this that we will not be dull of hearing but that we might purpose ourselves to energetically listen to what God will be speaking to us through His Word this morning.

And if we do this what will be the result? I believe that we will be blessed. We will be blessed with a greater appreciation of Christ and His high priestly work thus producing in us, Lord willing, an even greater appreciation of the certainty of our salvation.

So after the author finished the warning section, what did the author do next? The author in Hebrews 7:1-10 highlighted the greatness of Melchizedek.

So why would this author want to highlight for his readers the greatness of Melchizedek? The author wanted to highlight the greatness of Melchizedek because the author saw Melchizedek as a type of Christ. Or in other words, he saw Melchizedek as a picture drawn by God in the Old Testament to communicate something important about Christ, that would later, after His coming be more perfectly and completely revealed.

So was this the only time that God used someone or something in the Old Testament to draw a picture of a future far more complete and perfect reality? No!

When God commanded Moses to lift up a bronze serpent on a standard in **Numbers 21:8**, God was at that time also drawing a picture of a far more complete and perfect future reality. And what was that more complete and perfect future reality? It was the lifting up of Christ on the cross.

God at times used types in the Old Testament to picture far more complete future realities that would later be revealed in the New Testament. And this is why this author at this point in our text here in **Hebrews 7:1-10** chose to emphasize the greatness of Melchizedek for in emphasizing the greatness of Melchizedek, who he believed to be a type of Christ, it would then provide him a platform to argue not only for Christ's superior greatness but also for the superiority of His priesthood. So how did this author begin?

The author in Hebrews 7:1-3 began with a foundational summary of Melchizedek's meeting with Abraham based on **Genesis 14:17-20**.

**“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, (2) 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. (3) 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.”** This is a foundational summary of Melchizedek's meeting with Abraham that had been recorded in **Genesis 14:17-20**. And these are the verses that we will be considering this morning.

So, what was the background for this meeting based on **Genesis 14**? The background for the meeting was that four kings from the east had marched on a confederation of five kings from the Jordan Valley: The kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zebolim, and Bela. The armies of the latter were defeated in a valley called Siddim and their cities plundered. Lot, Abraham's nephew, was among the captives taken from Sodom, a fact that was brought to the attention of Abraham by a servant who had escaped the battle. Abraham pursued the invaders to Dan, where he staged a nighttime attack, and soundly defeated these kings from the east and recovered everything they had been taken, which also included their captives. As Abraham was returning home from this battle, both the king of Sodom and Melchizedek, the king of Salem, met Abraham. And where were the details of meeting recorded? They were recorded in **Genesis 14:17-20**, which the author in **Hebrews 7:1-3** under the leading of the Spirit selectively summed up, so that we might be able to better appreciate the masterpiece that God painted in Melchizedek, a type or picture of the coming Christ, the far more complete and perfect reality.

What did the author of Hebrews choose to highlight about Melchizedek?

First of all, the author chose to highlight the fact that Melchizedek was the king of Salem. How does **Hebrews 7:1** begin? **“For this Melchizedek, King of Salem.”** So let me ask you this. What is another name for Salem? Another name for **“Salem”** based on **Psalms 76:2** is Jerusalem. Before David

was king of Jerusalem, Melchizedek was king of Jerusalem. So, what was the first thing that this author chose to highlight about Melchizedek?

The first thing that the author chose to highlight about Melchizedek in **Hebrews 7:1-3** in his summation of **Genesis 14:17-20** is that he was the king of Salem. So, what was the second thing that this author chose to highlight?

The author chose to highlight the fact that Melchizedek was not only king of Salem but was also a priest of the Most High God. So let us go back to **Hebrews 7:1** and see if this is not so. **“For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God.”**

This is very interesting. Nowhere in the Scriptures will we find a person other than Melchizedek that was recognized by God as both a king and priest. But here it is very clear that that God did in fact recognize Melchizedek as both. And what is even more amazing is the fact that Melchizedek was an inhabitant of Canaan, a truly godless land filled with all kinds of godless people. But here in the midst of this land was this king of Salem, who was not only a king but also a **“priest of the Most High God.”** This certainly on the face of it is absolutely shocking for this is something we could never have anticipated. But there he was the king of Salem, priest of the Most High God meeting with Abraham as he returned from his victorious battle over the kings from the east.

So, what was the second thing that this author chose to highlight in his summation of **Genesis 14:17-20**? The second thing that this author chose to highlight in his summation of **Genesis 14:17-20** was the fact that Melchizedek was not only the king Salem but he was also priest of the Most High God. So, what was the third thing that this author chose to highlight?

The author chose to highlight the fact that Melchizedek blessed Abraham. So let us now go back once again to **Hebrews 7:1** and see if this is not so. **“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.”** So did Melchizedek bless Abraham? Yes, he did.

This should not surprise us that Melchizedek, a priest of the Most High God, would have done this. For this would have been a part of the priestly office

as we learn from **Deuteronomy 21:5** where it says, “**Then the priests, the sons of Levi, shall come near, for the Lord your God has chosen them to serve Him and to bless in the name of the Lord.**”

And what was the blessing that Abraham received from Melchizedek according to **Genesis 14:19**? It was this, “**Blessed be Abram of God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth.**”

So, what was the third thing that this author chose to highlight in his summation of **Genesis 14:17-20**? The third thing that this author chose to highlight in his summation of **Genesis 14:17-20** was the fact that Melchizedek blessed Abraham. So, what was the fourth thing that this author chose to highlight?

The author chose to highlight the fact that Melchizedek received tithes from Abraham. So let us once again go back and read our text and see if this is not so, but this time we will read into **verse 2**. “**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, (2) to whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth part of all the spoils.**” So did Melchizedek receive tithes from Abraham? Yes!

Melchizedek in blessing Abraham had exercised his priestly function. Abraham in giving his tithes to Melchizedek was in essence acknowledging the validity of his priesthood.

Abraham had just won a memorable victory over the kings of the east, he knew that it was a victory that was given to him by God, and he wanted to acknowledge that. So what did he do? He voluntarily gave a tenth of all the spoils that he had obtained in that victory to God’s priest or in other words to Melchizedek, the one whom he believed was the priest of the Most High God.

So, what was the fourth thing that this author chose to highlight in his summary of **Genesis 14:17-20**? The fourth thing that this author chose to highlight in his summation of **Genesis 14:17-20** was the fact that Melchizedek received tithes from Abraham. This was the fourth brushstroke in God’s masterpiece. So, what was the fifth thing that this author chose to highlight?

The author chose to highlight two specific names. So let us once again go back and read our text and see if this is not so but this time we will read through verse 2. **“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, (2) 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.”** So did the author highlight two specific names based on what we just read? Yes, he did. He highlighted the name of Melchizedek by providing his readers its literal translation, which is **“King of righteousness”** and he highlighted the name of Melchizedek’s dynastic title, which was “king of Salem” by also providing his readers its literal translation, **“king of peace.”**

These two names, as well as the order of these two names, which was **“King of Righteousness”** first and then **“King of Peace,”** provide us a beautiful picture of Christ, who through His righteousness as “king of righteousness” has made it possible for us to enjoy His peace “as king of peace.” This is the correct order, which was the order that God had in fact purposed to record in the order He recorded them in Genesis 14:14-17 and which this author in **Hebrews 7:1-3** did not want his readers to overlook.

So, what was the fifth thing that the author chose to highlight in his summary of **Genesis 14:17-20**? The fifth thing that this author chose to highlight in his summation of **Genesis 14:17-20** was highlighting of two specific names by providing their literal translation. So, what was the sixth thing?

The author chose to highlight certain facts about Melchizedek that had not been mentioned and then drew a very important conclusion based on those facts.

So, what were those things that had not been mentioned about Melchizedek in his original account of his meeting with Abraham that the author was now drawing his reader’s attention to?

Let me now read for you the beginning of **Hebrews 7:3**. Referring to Melchizedek, **“Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life.”** So, what did this mean?



Does this mean that Melchizedek was some kind of supernatural being? No! He is simply acknowledging the fact that there was no record of his father or his mother or his genealogy nor birth or death in the biblical record.

So why was this an important point? The author looking at Melchizedek as a type of Christ saw this lack of information within the biblical record as an opportunity to establish a point that he will develop later within the chapter. And what was that point? The point was that since the Genesis text says nothing about the identity of Melchizedek's parents or his genealogy nor his birth or death, the priesthood according to the order of Melchizedek has neither the qualifications nor the parameters that would have been found within the Levitical priesthood.

It was therefore in that sense that Melchizedek's priesthood, being a type of Christ, was made by God like the Son of God, which is exactly what the author stated near the end of **Hebrews 7:3**

The Son of God was not made like Melchizedek but rather Melchizedek was made like the Son of God. And why was this? Melchizedek was a type of Christ, he was not the reality but he was simply a picture of the reality, a masterpiece for sure, that God in His sovereignty brought about and had it written about in the way He had it written about in **Genesis 14:17-20**, but even so Melchizedek as a type was only a picture of the reality.

And what was the author's conclusion after he had detailed these various certain unknown facts about Melchizedek and also noted how he in light of those unknown facts that he had been made like the Son of God? He concluded, **"he remains a priest perpetually."**

So how is this possible? It is only possible because Christ's priesthood is forever and Christ's priesthood is according to the order of Melchizedek. Yes, in that sense Melchizedek remains a priest perpetually, but it is only Christ's priesthood that is forever.

This material is not easy but let us not be dull of hearing but let us pursue maturity expending the necessary energy to reap the rewards that are before us, which brings us to our prayer.

May God give us the grace to see Christ and His high priestly work more clearly through our ongoing study of Melchizedek to the praise of His glory.

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