

Title: The Mystery of Melchizedec

Text: Hebrews 7:1-3

Hebrews chapter 7. This tremendous chapter has been the source of much wrong interpretation and cultic thinking. Without laboring the point the teaching about Melchizedec and the priesthood is what I consider to be foundational principle behind the whole issue as to whether one is a mormon or not. The Melchizedec priesthood is a very vital factor in the thinking of that which is described as being mormonism.

There are also those in other cults get their opinion of the greatness of Christ from the Melchizedec priesthood. And they come to the conclusion that Melchizedec is someone other than Christ is therefore greater than Christ. And the passage, instead of teaching the superiority of Christ, is teaching the superiority of Melchizedec.

This is a very important passage. One could develop a very wild religious system based upon the Melchizedec priesthood. Maybe you don't know that. But it is definitely done on the bases of Hebrews chapter 7.

But this is a great chapter. It has been a chapter of battlegrounds and argument and all kinds of problems based on the simple fact of who is Melchizedec. So, I have intitled this message: **THEY MYSTERY OF MELCHIZEDEC.**

Who is Melchizedec.? And what is the meaning of this passage. Let me remind you before we read the first three verses that according to our study, Hebrews chapter 1 through the end of chapter 7, we are dealing with the **AUTHORITY OF CHRIST OVER EVERYTHING.** So, this chapter in no way takes away from the authority of Christ, who according to chapter 3 verse 1 is "our high priest of our confession". So, again this chapter is showing His superiority over everything. And the issue of Melchizedec is only the proof of that. To show how great Christ is..even over all of the priesthood of the O.T. That He is of a different order and a different nature. And thus superiority to it. So, that is a part of what we are looking at.

We are looking at Chapter 7 as a explanation about Melchizedec that proves the authority of Christ. We are going to examine, first of all, His identity in the first three verses. So, please follow along in your Bibles as we read the Word.

(Read Hebrews 7:1-3)

PRAYER

Father, we thank you once again for your Word. And we ask that you would bless our study today, as we examine the greatness of our Lord Jesus. As illustrated in the life of one called Melchizedec. And we thank you in the name of Jesus...Amen

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The chapter begins with the little phrase "For this Melchizedek:" This one he has been referring to. So, you have to look back and say, "What passages show us that he was referring to Melchizedec?" If you back up a little bit to chapter 5, you will notice in Vs 6, It says, quoting the O.T. passage from the book of Psalms, "just as He says also in another passage, Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedec."

Then in Vs 10 we read "being designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedec."

Both statements referring to Jesus. Then vs 11 deals with how we are dull of hearing in understanding this.

In chapter 6 verse 20 he says "where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedec."

Then in chapter 7, He begins a discussion of this Melchizedec. And the Priesthood of Jesus is according to this order of Melchizedec. And he also taught that this is a very difficult thing to understand. Especially if you are not mature in the Lord.

So, there is no wonder why there is such a big controversy over this order of Melchizedec and his priesthood. Because many of us are dull of hearing. And we haven't been using the Word of God. Therefore, we are not accustomed to it. And we are not able to comprehend how Jesus could be greater than the O.T. priest in that he is never a son of Levi or a son of Aron. He came out of the tribe of Judah. And thus, how could he be a Priest at all. And the answer is that Jesus is a priest after the order of Melchizedec. But, who is Melchizedec? That is the issue of what we are starting to look at in chapter 7. And I want you to see this in a number of ways.

(1) First of all, I want you to see this in the details of the O.T. background. Take your Bibles, please, and turn to Genesis 14. The book of Genesis chapter 14. The historical Melchizedec is only mentioned in two places: Genesis 14 and Psalms 110.

Genesis 14, Just to get into t~~ne~~ with what Genesis 14 is all about. Abraham has been in a little battle, here, with some kings. And he is rescuing Lot. And he has now wone this battle with around 318 of his own men. He has gathered together all the spoils of war. And he is coming back from that battle. Now, look at Vs 18 of Genesis 14...

(Read Gen. 14:18-20)

Now, that is all we know from Genesis about Melchizedek. That is the O.T. background about Melchizedek.

Now, I want to examine the details of these few verses in Genesis in a couple of ways.

(1) First of all, as to the names. Let's look at the names. Which we see from Hebrews 7 has some real sufficance, by way of interpretation.

(1) First of all, he is called the "king of Salem." We get our word "peace" from the Hebrew word "Salem."

Now, the problem is ..is it just a reference to "pe^lace". Or, is it a real place? It appears according to this accord in Geneis 14 which is a historical accord of a battle and so forth, that Melchizedec is acturally a ruler of a city called Sahlom, translated Salem.

In Vs 17 it says that the king of Sodom went out to meet him. And nobody argues that he is not a real king. Everybody believes that that is a real king of a city-state called Sodom. So, why should we argue any differently about verse 18? In the content Salem is a city in Palestine. It is a real place.

But, right at this point we face the problem as to who this man is because of what it says in Hebrews 7. So, I would like to give you the six most common or popular views.

(1) First, the view of Rabbi Hes'male. Now, I know that you are familiar with him. He lived in 135 B.C. This Rabbi taught that Melchizedek was Shem, Noah's son.

Now, remaind yourself of the time of the flood. Everybody is wiped out except Noah and his three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Shem means "name. And he is in the Messanic line. The Sheminites led to the Jewish line. The Godly line is through Shem. The blessing to the other sons is through Shem. So, this Jewish Rabbi, living before the time of Christ, argued that Melchizede is Shem. And he had many fine arguments for thinking so. As a matter of fact, Martin Luther, himself, held this opinion. That Melchizedec is really Shem. Interesting view. And therefore, he is blessing Abrham because of that...

Now, I have problems with this view. But anyway it is one of the views.

(2) Number two, one of the great church Fathers, named Origin, a wonderful man of God, much writtings, and much knowledge of the Word, he taught that this man Melchizedec was an angel being. Which many of the cults also teach. He said that it was Michael, the ach-angel. That is who Melchezedec is.

(3) Third view. In the third century A.D. A man named Harry'oxous said that Melchezedec was an incarnation of the Holy Spirit in the O.T. That is who he is.

(4) In the two hundred period of church history, a man named Theo'dous said that Melchezedec was a real person. But, he was greater than Christ. He taught that the original, of which Christ was just a copy, was Melchezedec. And therefor all prayers to God should be through the Melchezedec preisthood. Rather than though Jesus. Who is merely a copy of the original.

(5) Number five, many modern Bible teachers see in Melchezedec what many call a CHRIST-ophe^une. What is a Chris-0phene? A Chris0phene is an app^uearance of Christ in the O.T. There are many examples of Chrisophenes in the Bible. Where Christ acturally appeared in human form. And many believe because of the statement of Hebrews 7 ..like: "he is made like the son of God".. "He had no father or no mother"..and so forth...they say that can mean only one thing. It is talking about Jesus. Therefore, it is an appearance of Jesus in the O.T. Melchezedec is not a real person. It is Jesus himself. And to them that is the onbly explanation of Hebrews 7. This is probably the majority view.

(6) Six, and the correct view. Melchezedec was an actual historical person. He really lived. And Hebrews operating to the Jewish mind, as it does being a kosere book, Hebrews uses types constantly throughout the book, and there is no exception here using Melchezedec. He was a real historical figure who lived. But his whole life and the circumstance about him is a type of Jesus.

So, the writer of Hebrews uses that to prove Christ superiority to the O.T. system of the Priesthood through Araan. That is a very important point. And I hope you will get ahold of it.

Now, let me give you four reasons why I believe Melchezedec is a real person. And why he is not Christ, but a type of Christ rather than being Christ himself. Four reason.

(1) One, according to Hebrews 7, if you would turn back there please. And notice that little statement in Vs 3. It says "made like the Son of God."

Now, I find that very strange language if it is the Son of God, himself. No way would the Bible says "make like the Son of God" unless he was the son of God. Now, if that was Jesus Christ in the O.T. you wouldn't have that statement in Vs 3.

(2) Number two. In Psalms 110 verse 4, which is quote in Hebrews, where it says God says that Christ the Messiah is a Priest forever after the order of Melchezedec . I cannot understand for the life of me if Melchezedec is the same as Christ how you could say that a man was a priest after of the order of himself. There would be no point to that statement at all. Just say, "He is a priest. And there is no equal to it." Why say that he is after the order of himself". No! If it is after the order of something it is some one other than yourself. The very prediction in Psalm 110:4 that Christ would be Priest after a different order of Araan. But rather after Melchezedec. To me separates Christ from that man. They are two separate people. He is after the order of that man. Therefore, it argues against the idea that Melchezedek is really Christ.

(3) Number three. I believe the O.T. background which we have just read clearly teaches that Melchezedec was a king of a city-state in Palestine.

If this is an appearance of Christ, then it is totally unlike any other Chris-ophene in the Bible. Because they are manifestations without any historical facts with such detail as recorded in Genesis 14. It is a real history. It is a real account. it is something that really happened. A man who really lived. And he becomes a type of Jesus.

(4) And Fourth...The name Melchizedek, itself. The last part of that name, the "zedek" refers to an ancient dynasty. A dynasty of Jub-u-site kings. They were a group of people ruling Jersuelm when David came in and got them out of there. So, he could take it over. I believe it was a dynasty of Jub-u-site kings, in the land of Canaan.

How do I know that? In Joshua chapter 10 verse 1 it speaks of a man named Ad-oni-zedek as King of Jerusalem. And He was a wicked king.

Why should I say that Melchezedek means and appearance of Christ, and not say that Ad-oni-zedek is also an appearance of christ? Some people say, YES, it does. NO IT CANNOT. Because Ad-oni-zedek was a wicket king. And in no way could he refer to Christ.

The point that I am making is that the last part of his name, "zedek" is also used of another king mentioned in the Bible who is the king of Jerusalem. And that I believe is clearly taught in the Bible that Salem in Hebrews 7 is referring to Jerusalem. Literally, the city of Jerusalem.

You say, "How do you know that? Is there any proof of that?"

Yes, I believer there is. Or, I would not have said it. The Bible teaches that Salem, in Psalms 76:1-2, is the city of Jerusalem. And I would like you to turn there, please.

I know that some of this seem like heavy background. And you might wonder why we are doing this. Because I believe for christian growth we need to understand background so that we might understand the real meat of the Gospel.

Psalms 76 verse 1 and 2: :God is known in Judah; His name is great in Israel, And His tabernacle is in Salem, His dwelling place also is in Zion."

Listen, dear friends, Mt Zion is in Jerusalem. Salem is Jerusalem..the place where God has his tabernacle. His dwelling place in Zion.

So, Melchizedek is a king who lived in Jerusalem, called Salem at the time that Abraham had that great battle with those evil kings mentioned in Genesis 14.

Now, that was just the first point. Cheer up..Back to Hebrews 7.

(2 E) The second name that is given to Melchizedek is: "the priest of the most high God. A priest of the most high God.

Now, how in the world did this man become a priest as well as a king before the law was ever given to Moses? That is the problem. Because you see when the law was given to Moses, around 1400 B.C., Araan becomes the high Priest. The son's of Levi, or the tribe of Araan, become the Priest.

Now, we have no instruction for that until the law is given around 1400 B.C. Yet, 700 years before that, we have a man who is called a Priest as well as a king. And that is a part of the problem that people like to point out. In other words, here is the argument:

Melchizedek cannot be a real person who lived because there wasn't any priestly system. That God had before the law was given. And to that I say very theological: baloney.

No, God did have a priestly system. As a matter of fact, I believe His principles have always been the same. He had sacrificial principles established right in the Garden of Eden. When Adam and Eve sinned, what happened? How did God cloth them? People say: "Well, they used fig leaves, but God used animal skins."

Now, the point is that they sacrificed animals. Blood sacrific. Look at Adam and Eve's sons: Cain and Able. Cain brought the fruit of the ground., Able brought the sheep to be sacrificed.

And ~~pe~~ople say : "wasn't God cruel to Cain? I mean, he only brought that which was from his own work?"

OH, No! Not at all. As a matter of fact, God's method has always been sacrific. And Cain deliberately ignored God's method.

Look at Genesi 22 as Abraham takes his son Isaac up to Mt. Maraya. What is the issue? It is sacrific.

Isaac ask his father, "Dad, where is the lamb?" And all that Abraham said was: "God will provide himself as the lamb." What confidence. Where did Abraham get that? Did He jsut make it Up?

AH, Isaac about 700 years from now this will be the practice in Israel. But, God will provide a lamb. And I am telling you this 700 years before it happens so that you will not worry. And this means that I will probable have to kill you on the altar. Which I know isn't to acceptable to you right now. But, 700 years from now there will be hope for you.

OH, NO, dear friends. How did Abrhamm know on that occcasion? How did express such faith and confidence and trust in God? Because it was clearly God's revealed way. Sacrifice.

So, I believe this man, Melchezedek, is simple the result of the Godly line . The true relegion. Left of Noah. And his sons.

"Most Hisgh God", by the way indicates in contrast to all the other so called pagan gods. They were living in the midst of a pagan inviorment. Abraham came into the land and the Bible says that the Canaanites lived there. And now we know that the Canaanite religion was corupt. It was wicked and dirty to the core. It is was immoral. It was paganist. It was just beyond discription. And in the midst of that there were a few people who still followed God's true method. And Melchezedek was one of them. And He was a preist. He was just what the Bible called him. Both a king of a little city state. As well as being a priest.

God has always used the same method. Blood sacrifice. When Jesus died on the cross he was the passover lamb. When John saw Jesus and introduced him to the world he said, "Behold the lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world." God's method has always been sacrifice from the time of Adam and Eve sin in the garden.

(2 Now, number two, I believe we also see the identity of this man in the nature of his meeting with Abraham.

Look at Hebrews chaper 7 verse 1 carefully. It says he met "Abraham as he was returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him."

Two things I want you to notice here.

(1) One, according to Genesis 14, this man ministered to Abraham needs.

The Bible says in Genesis 14 that he brought him bread and wine. Some people say that he served him communion. I don't believe that. I believe it is simply food for nourishment. But he brought it. And he ministered to his need which was the common responsibility of Priest.

(2) And number two. he was also aware of the Abrahamic covenant. When Melchizedek met Abraham, according to Genesis 14, he blessed him knowing that he had received the promise from God. He was aware of God's covenant to Abraham when this man came forth to bless him.

Only God can truly bless our life. Unless you are talking about how the Priest would bless. It was an official blessing based upon revelation given from God. Melchizedek knew, obviously from God, that Abraham was chosen by God to possess the land. To have his seed as the stars of the sky. And the sand of the sea shore. That God would fulfill his covenant through this man's life. And so Melchizedek blessed him in an official priestly function, of recognizing revelation that had already been given to Abraham about God's promise.

So, Melchizedek is simply doing what a priest does. He was a real person who really lived.

(3) Third, in looking at his identity, look at the need of Abraham to give him a tenth. Vs 2. According to this verse Abraham gave him a "tenth part of all."

Now, I know that some of you this morning, with bated breath, are just waiting to hear what I am going to say about the Tithe.....Right?.... Well, maybe some of you do.

So, what does God say about that? Well, unfortunately that is in verses 4 to 10. And that will be next week.

However, I will answer this much. Abraham clearly recognized the Priestly function of Melchizedek. And he responded accordingly.

Even when you take a look at the Mosaic law and find out how the Levitical priesthood would take tithes, this man Abraham was clearly responding to that priest, because he blessed him just as a Priest do. He responded in the right and correct way. By giving him a tithe.

The only probable is that we have no background for this. We have one other statement after this by Jacob who gave tithes on one occasion. We have no teaching before this happened.

And we do have the teaching of tithes according to the Mosaic Law. And that will be a part of the discussion of Hebrews 7. To prove how great Christ really is. He is going to discuss giving a tithe under the Mosaic law as it relates to Abraham giving a tithe to Melchizedek. What effect does that have upon us right now. You will learn next. Not now.

(2) Number two. We see this mystery of Melchizedek unfold, also, in a description about this man Melchizedek that has to, no matter what your view, reminds you of Jesus.

Vs 2 ,, in the middle of that verse it says: "was first of all, by the translation of his name, king of righteousness."

There is going to be 7 statements about Melchizedek that remind us of Jesus, a type. Here they are.

(1) One. He is the king of righteousness. So, also is Jesus. Melchizedek was not the king of righteousness meaning attribute. That is only the fact of what his name means. It is by interpretation. But by way of interpretation his name also makes us think of Jesus as a type.

Jeremiah 23:6 says of the Messiah who will come, that he is the Lord, our righteousness.

In I John 2:1 Jesus is called "the righteous one, who will take away the sins of the whole world." Jesus is the righteous one. And he is the king of it. The Messiah is called the king of righteousness. Melchizedek cannot help but remind us of the Messiah.

(2) Number two. It says that the same Salem means "Peace". He is also king of peace. Peace, by the way, always follows righteousness in the Bible

Such as: Isa 32:17 which says "The work of righteousness shall be peace. Or, Romans 5:1, "Therefore, being pronounced righteous, we have peace." First righteousness, then Peace.

Watch this in relationship to Jesus. Isa 9:6 says that he is the prince of peace. He is going to have a kingdom. He is going to rule. But you must have righteousness before peace.

James says the same thing in his book. James chapter 3:18. Righteousness always precedes peace.

Well, when was Jesus demonstrating that he is the king of righteousness? Answer: At the cross. The greatest demonstration of righteousness happened when Jesus died on the cross. It was a righteous act by God. It was Jesus paying the full penalty of all the righteous demands of the law. There is not a one of us who doesn't deserve to die for our own sins. But when Jesus died on the cross he took all the penalty of a righteous law which says that the soul that sins it must die. He paid for it at the cross. Righteousness was established. All of my righteousness in the future, whatever I might have, is simply based on my faith in what Christ did at the cross.

I don't have any righteousness of my own. And neither do you. The only righteousness that is transferable to you and to me is the righteousness that has already happened at the cross. To be righteous..to be justified means simply this: God declares you and me righteous because we accept what His son already did, We will never be righteous in our own strength. Or, our own performance, Or by doing good deeds. We only believe what Christ accomplished at the cross and God declares us righteous.

The question is then ask: Has anyone ever been made righteous? You say, "I have been a christian for 10 years. I feel more righteous now then when I first became a christian." Wrong! You are not. You are not more righteous 20 years from the day you got saved. When you jgot saved, the Bible says that God declared you righteous. The Bible teaches that you are only made righteous at the time of the second coming of Christ. So, stop trying to kid yourself, now.

Now, I know this is going to blow your argument. You are seeing there feeling how spiritual you are this morning. But you stand in the righteousness of God. And that is the beauty of the Christian experience. Some people look at Christians and say, "Man, I know what they are like. I don't want anything to do with Christianity."

Hey! Listen, it is Christ that is the whole issue. I am a Christian because of what I believe Jesus did at the cross for me. I am absolutely righteous, today, positional. My standing is perfect. There is no sin against me. I have been totally forgiven of every sin that I have committed or will commit in the future. WHY? Because I have believed and received what Jesus did for me at the cross. That God was in Christ reconciling the whole world unto Christ. That anyone could come to God and be saved because of the sufficiency of Christ's death on the cross. He paid for my sin. And now he can establish peace because of it. There is no peace in your life or in mine or in the world except we have righteousness first. Without righteousness there is disharmony, disharmony. There is no peace.

(3) Number three is the phrase, "without father". Vs 3 of Hebrews 7. People say, "You see it has to be Jesus." No it doesn't. As a matter of fact if it is referring to Jesus' earthly life, he did have a father. At least after he was born of a virgin.

Joseph married Mary. The Father point is an important point because it means "through whom the line is traced." You see, Jewish genealogy is through the father.

And this says that there is no father for Melchizedek. Does that mean that he didn't have one. NO! It means that there is none known. There is no record of him having any father. And as I read the Bible, I find that that is true. I don't find one passage in all the genealogies that tell's me who the father of Melchizedek is.

Now, again it is a type. There is no record of Melchizedek's Dad. And that is a type of the deity of Christ not his humanity.

This is not picturing Christ in his humanity as some people teach. No! It is picturing Jesus in his diety and in his greatness. Without Father there is no line.

(4) Number four, without mother". Now, the mother is the channal by which someone comes into the world. Now, Melchezedek had a real mother. But her name is not recorded.

It terms of the diety of Christ he is without a mother. In terms of his humanity, of course, he has a mother. So, this is referring by way of type to his diety. Jesus is without mother. Christ didn't begin to exist at the momment of the Bethleham manger. I get so tired of hearing this falsehood. Jesus did not begin his exists in that manager in Bethlehem. Jeus has always existed. Befopre the worlds were created, he was there. "In the beginning was the Word, Jesus, And the word was God."

Don't you ever forget that Jesus is the eternal son of God. He never had a beginning or an end. And that is why Melchezedek about whom we have no record or information, about his father or mother, why he is such a type of the diety of Christ in his greatestness which is the point of the argument in Hebrews. Christ is greater than anyone.

(5) Number five, it says that he is without genealogy. The point here is dealing with the continueous line of priest. There was always a continueous line. You knew when a man became a priest. And you knew when his priesthood would end. If you are interested that is found in Numbers chapter 8.

By the way, a Jewish Priest begain his service at the age of 25. And at age 50 it was all over. And he retired. That is it. 25 years.

But, concerning Melchezedek there was no record of when he started as a Priest, or, when he would retire. And thus it is a type of Jesus Christ.

(6) Number 6, it says that he had neither beginning of days nor end of life. Does that mean that Melchezedek has always lived? NO! It means that there is once again on record. Down at the city hall they didn't have a birth or death record.

Again that is not a type of the earthly life of Christ. Because we know that he was born. And we know that he died.

No! It is a type of Christ in his diety. We have no record of Melchezedek' Thus he becomes a type. No beginning of days. No ending of life. He is an eternal priest.

(7) And number 7, Vs 3, "Made lilke the Son of God." Likeness! Likeness to what? The son of God. Emphasig His diety. Not his humanity. Because then we would not have a likeness. Because he did live and die. And we know about his family. NO! It is related to the diety of Jesus Christ. And there isn't anyone to be compared with Him. Melchezedek is simply a historical type. With all that we don't know about Melchezedek, the writter takes that an applies it to the greatness of Jesus Christ.

() And finally, I believe you see the identity of Melchezedek in the duration of the Priesthood. Look at verse 3: the last phrase. It says "he abides a priest perpetually.,"

And the whole point here is that Melchezedek has a priesthood that never stops. The word "perpetually" means "continuing. It deals with the office and function.

Now, the question is: If his office and function is continuing, how come there isn't any record of anyone accept Melchezedek?

I mean God certainly knew that this priesthood would continue. Because he said in Psalms 110 verse 4, that the Messiah would be a priest after the order of Melchezedek.

But, Araan's priesthood ended. A lot of people don't know that, by the way. The Priesthood of the O.T. It ended, dear friends. HOW DID IT END? It ended with the destruction of the Temple and the sacrificial system in 70 A.D. It is all over. There is no priestly system in operation from 70 A.D. down to the present. As a matter of fact, you would be hard pressed to find out who wads in the line inoder to be the priest. It is over. It is ended.

Doss that mean that there is no preisthood today? Has God's method ever changed? NO! It has never changed. God has always used Priest and sacrifice.

Then what is God's method today? The only argument that shows us that anyone of us can be saved is that there must be a priest after some order. AND WHO IS THAT PRIEST? The Bible says that it is the Messiah who is after another order, then Aaron, which ceased with the destruction of the Temple, it is after the order of Melchizedek. The continuation of that Priesthood is in the person of the Messiah. Jesus is a priest perpetually.

Now, the interesting thing is that he is not only the Priest, but he is also the sacrifice. As a matter of fact, if you want to just summarize the whole book of Hebrews, Jesus is the whole thing.

You can take the letters J E S U S and just write them over the entire book. Jesus ... That is what Hebrews is all about.

He is everything. He is the Priest. He is the Sacrifice. He is the whole system. Everything is fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Now, he is from the tribe of Judah. Therefore, he is the king. The scripture shall never pass from the loins of Judah," Jesus is in the royal line. The line down from David to Joseph and Mary. He is the King!

But, Jesus is also a Priest. After the order of Melchizedek.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO YOU AND TO ME? That means that there is salvation in Jesus, today, and Jesus alone. There isn't any other name under heaven where by we can be saved. God has always used his Priestly Sacrificial system to teach his method of salvation. And the whole answer is in Jesus Christ and Christ alone. He is a priest who abides forever. And the only one who can save you.

LET US CLOSE IN PRAYER